



# Citizens Against Greyhound Racing

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## Brief Introduction to the Greyhound

Sometime around 6000 BC, an anonymous artist captured the beauty and grace of a long-legged, slender hound on the walls of a tomb in present-day Turkey. Today, the greyhound captures our hearts with that same beauty and grace, along with its affectionate nature and nobility of spirit. Greyhounds trace their roots back to the time of the ancient Pharaohs, and perhaps even farther. The name greyhound is thought by some to be derived from the Saxon word "grei", which means beautiful. In the late sixteenth century, Gervase Markham wrote that of all dogs, greyhounds were the most noble and princely and, truly, the master of all other dogs whatsoever. Anyone who has ever been lucky enough to own one of these beautiful animals will surely agree.

### Did you know...

- The greyhound is the fastest breed of dog and can reach a top speed of over 40 miles per hour.
- The greyhound's tail acts as a rudder, enabling it to turn quickly at high speeds.
- According to the American Kennel Club of America, the greyhound's gentle nature makes him a good children's dog.
- Greyhounds need a bed to sleep on and a coat when it is cold, due to their lack of body fat and thin skin and coat.
- Greyhounds actually spend a lot of time each day relaxing and sleeping.
- In ancient Egypt, only members of the royal family owned greyhounds. When one of these highly-prized dogs died, the entire family went into mourning.
- Among the pharaohs known to keep greyhounds were Tutankhamen, Amenhotep II, and Cleopatra VII.
- In 1493 BC, Queen Hatshepsut traded four of her finest greyhounds to the ruler of the land of Punt. In return, she received eye cosmetics, ivory shells, ebony, a live panther, panther skins, huge piles of myrrh twice a man's height, 31 myrrh trees, over 3000 small cattle and rings of commercial gold weighed in balances ten feet high.
- In 800 BC, the greyhound became the first dog mentioned in literature, in Homer's The Odyssey.
- Coins and art from ancient Greece depict shorthaired hounds that are remarkably similar to the greyhounds of today.
- Greek and Roman gods and goddesses, such as Hecate, Pollux and Diana, were often portrayed with Greyhounds.
- When greyhounds were first introduced into England just prior to the ninth century, they nearly became extinct.
- In the tenth century, King Howel of Wales declared that the penalty for killing a greyhound was the same as that of killing a person – death.
- In 1014, King Canute established Forest Laws that prohibited slaves and serfs from owning greyhounds.

- Commoners who hunted with greyhounds in defiance of these laws favored dogs whose coloring allowed them to blend in with the forest, such as black, fawn, red, and brindle. The nobility favored white and spotted dogs that could be more easily seen, making it easier to recover a dog lost in the woods.
- Not only is the greyhound the first dog to be mentioned in English literature, it is the only breed of dog mentioned by name in the Bible and a favorite reference of William Shakespeare in his plays.
- The greyhound is the most common heraldic dog. Over 400 French families show the greyhound on their coats of arms.
- H.R.H. Prince Albert, Queen Victoria's husband, had a favorite greyhound Eos, who appeared in numerous court portraits and ate from a fork.
- Greyhounds accompanied Christopher Columbus, Francisco de Coronado, Ponce de Leon, Hernando de Soto, Vasco de Balboa and Cortez as they traveled throughout the Americas.
- English explorer George Cartwright explored Canada in the late 1700's with a greyhound by his side.
- In the mid-1800's, greyhounds were brought to North America in large numbers from Ireland to control a jackrabbit epidemic in the Midwest.
- George Custer reportedly took his greyhounds (nearly 40 of them!) with him wherever he went, often sleeping on the floor in the midst of them.