

The Irish Wolfhound in America

100 years of the Irish
Wolfhound Club of
America

1926-2025



Sue Williams Glenn Eyrie Irish Wolfhounds

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California Irish
Wolfhound Club



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▶

The Irish Wolfhound was one of the first dogs brought to what would become America by Europeans. Reportedly, Christopher Columbus brought several with him in his third or fourth voyage to America.



- The governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, John Winthrop, imported wolfhounds to his colony in 1633 to save his sheep from wolves.
- Governor Winthrop imported them partly because an Irish Wolfhound was a breed known for its loyalty and strength, symbolizing the companionship and protection valued by settlers.

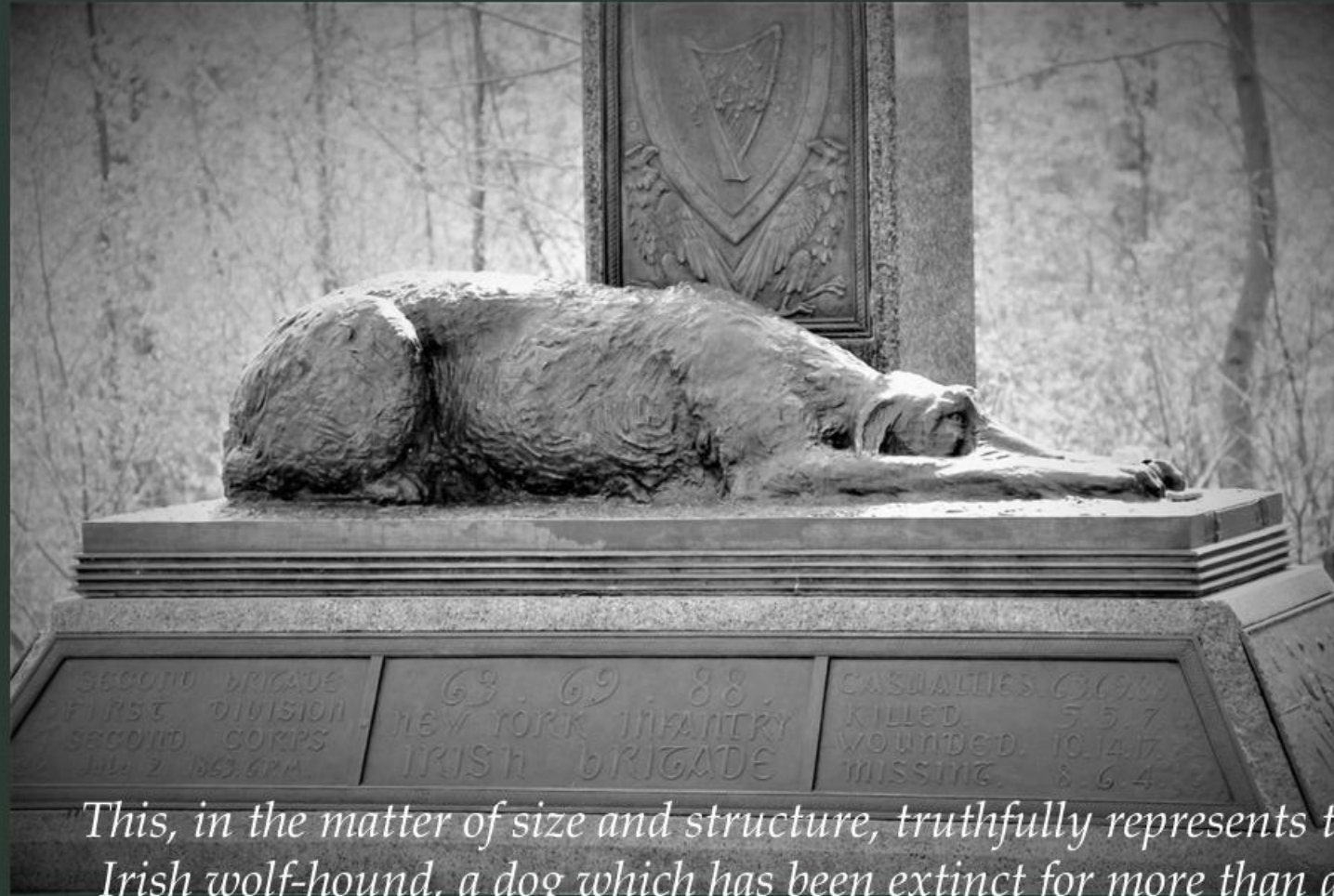




George Washington wanted Irish wolfhounds to help protect the colonies from wolves but in the late 1700s, he was too late.

But, where Washington had been unable to find “wolf dogs” farmers and ranchers secured deerhounds and lurchers to keep wolf & coyote populations under control.

Irish Brigade Monument at Gettysburg



"This, in the matter of size and structure, truthfully represents the Irish wolf-hound, a dog which has been extinct for more than a hundred years."

William Rudolph O'Donovan

“The giant, legendary hounds were brought to America by various wealthy Englishmen to hunt big game here, elk, wolves and even buffalo, but once here, most of them loped off into the murk of history.”

In the early 1800's, Henry Hastings Sibley, a fur trading agent for the American Fur Company, and later the first Governor of the state of Minnesota, received two famous wolfhounds named Tiger and Lion from England.

1879: Registered in the AKC studbooks.

1897: Officially recognized as a breed by the AKC.

By the late 1880s to 1890s, Lieut. Col. Francis Junkin (Lake Geneva, Wisconsin) and Robert M. Barker (Syracuse, New York) owned, bred, and exchanged correspondence with British breeders.



Moving into “Modern” Times

In an Irish Wolfhound club publication in 1926, Mrs. Norwood Smith, breeder of renowned Cragwood Wolfhounds and first president of the IWCA, wrote, “There are two distinct groups of Irish Wolfhounds in America. Both are registered yet they are as different as Collie and Shetland Sheepdog.”

Cragwood Brigit (pictured right)



■ The Need for Standardization

- Mrs. Smith continues...
- “They are apparently produced in great numbers and find a ready market for \$25. They are bought by ranchers for coyote dogs, for which purpose they are well suited.
- “However it happened, these weird creatures are masquerading as Irish Wolfhounds. The time is not far distant when these little counterfeits will be crowded out.”

The Irish Wolfhound Club of America – 1926

Ch. Killabuck with
L.O. Starbuck of Ambleside

While the club was officially established on October 2, 1926, the breed itself was recognized by the AKC in 1897.

First president: Mrs. Norwood Browning Smith. Other board members were Robert Davis, E. Francis Riggs, and L.O. Starbuck.



The AKC Standard of the IWCA

Originally written in 1885 by Captain George Augustus Graham, the AKC Irish Wolfhound Standard dictates that the breed must be "of great size and commanding appearance".

The American Irish Wolfhound Standard closely followed The Standard of Excellence that was drafted by Captain Graham and Colonel J. R. Garnier and formally accepted by the Kennel Club of England in 1886.

IRISH WOLFHOUND CLUB OF AMERICA

Standard of Excellence

General Appearance

Of great size and commanding appearance, the Irish Wolfhound is remarkable in combining power and swiftness with keen sight. The largest and tallest of the galloping hounds, in general type he is a rough-coated, Greyhound-like breed; very muscular, strong though gracefully built; movements easy and active; head and neck carried high, the tail carried with an upward sweep with a slight curve towards the extremity. The minimum height and weight of dogs should be 32 inches and 120 pounds; of bitches, 30 inches and 105 pounds; these to apply only to hounds over 18 months of age. Anything below this should be debarred from competition. Great size, including height at shoulder and proportionate length of body, is the desideratum to be aimed at, and it is desired to firmly establish a race that shall average from 32 to 34 inches in dogs, showing the requisite power, activity, courage and symmetry.

IWCA's commitment to the original standard

In 1934, some novice breeders pushed to change the standard. In response, Florence Nagle wrote, “hands off the standard. I don't believe in too much amplification of giving the points in greater detail. It is a great mistake to tie a judge down to too many details that are not half so important as the dog as a whole”.

Throughout the history of the IWCA and to this day, the members support not making changes to the standard. The standard has been slightly revised only twice since its inception by the club: once in 1947 to increase minimum heights and weights, and again in 1950 to remove historical comparisons to the Great Dane and Deerhound.

THE TROUBLE WITH BIG DOGS



"THE TROUBLE WITH BIG DOGS."

■ Kennels Who Influenced the Breed

- Cragwood: Mrs. Norwood Smith sent Cragwood Darragh sent to England after the WWII. An example of how American-bred dogs were being considered within a more global breeding context
- Cragwood Darragh, Cragwood Conrad, Cragwood Brigit appear in early American discussions around type not as individual dogs but as examples that were repeatedly brought up when breeders and judges attempted to describe what the standard looks like in practice.
- Ambleside: L.O. and Alma Starbuck. - Extraordinary breeders and participants in the founding of the IWCA. Alma wrote The Complete Wolfhound (two editions).

Kennels Who Influenced the Breed

Mrs. C. Groverman Ellis - Killybracken - Over 30 years, Mrs. Ellis and Killybracken played an important part in the success of the IW in America.

Mr. & Mrs. Edward Clarke - Halcyon (New York) - Halcyon owned or bred 6 BOB winners at IWCA in the 1930's.

The Wright Sisters, Elizabeth & Martha - Rathmullan- took the Ambleside and Halcyon lines to their estate in New Mexico and showed throughout the Southwest.

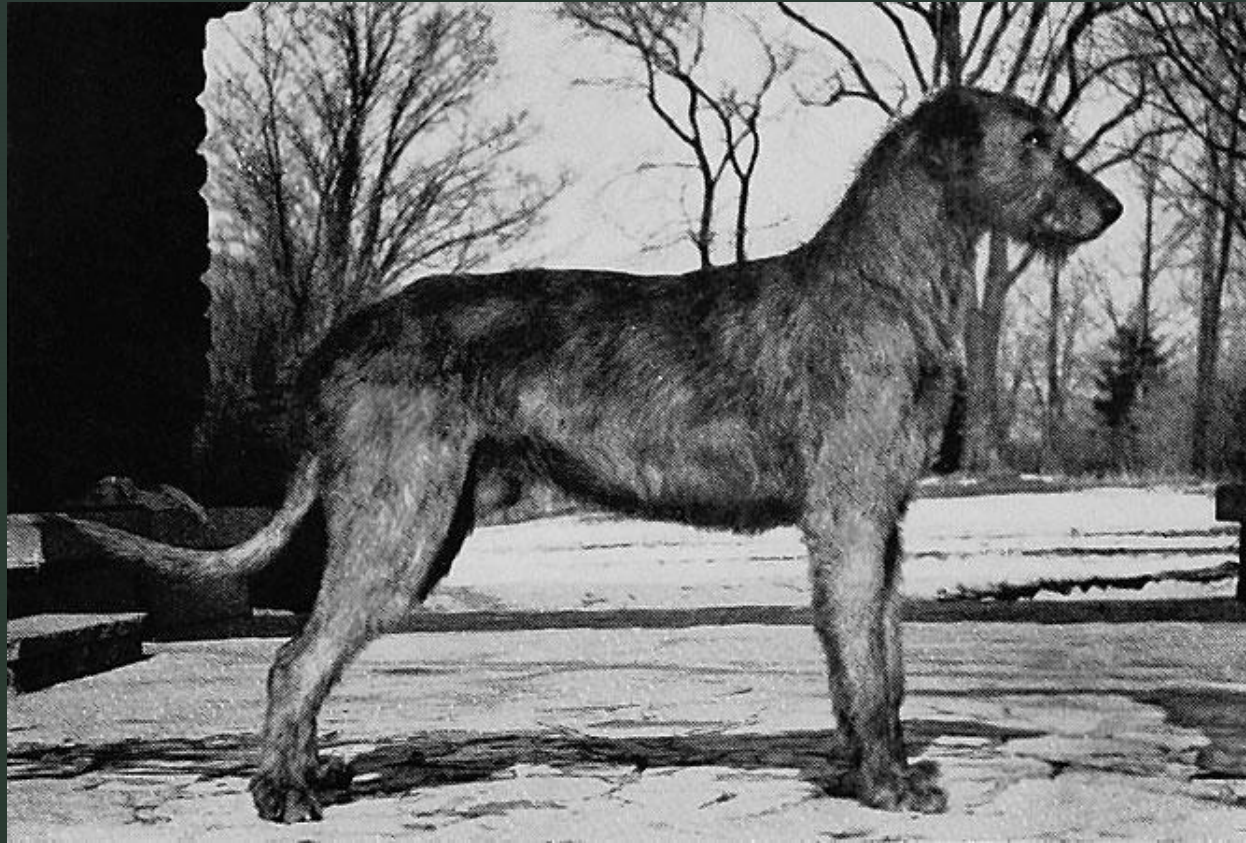
Samuel Ewing III – Eagle – Most modern American wolfhounds have Eagle in their pedigrees somewhere

1926 The Iconic “Route 66” Opened

- Known as the "Main Street of America," it symbolizes freedom and adventure.
- It connected Chicago, Illinois to Santa Monica, California spanning over 2,400 miles.



Halcyon Baronet 1932 & 1933 BOB IWCA



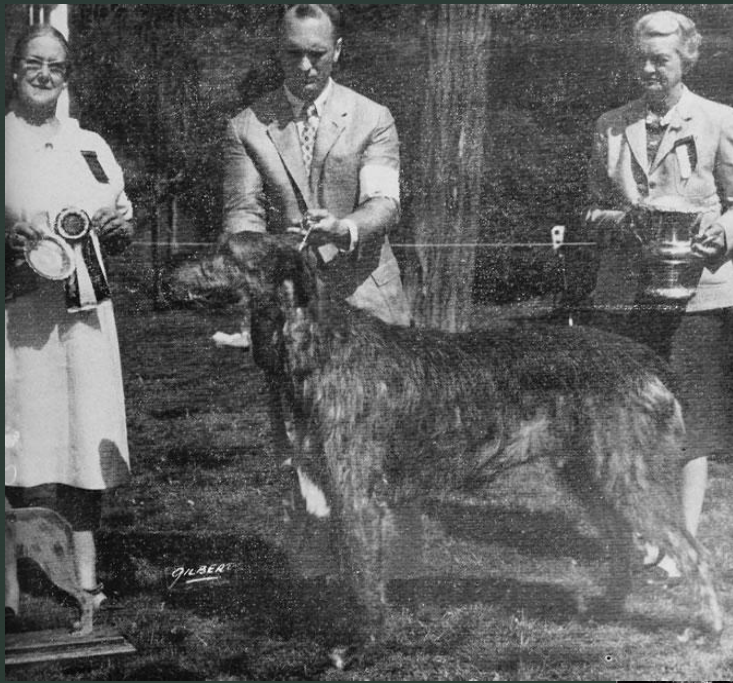
Ch. Killary of Ambleside 1946 & 1947 BOB IWCA



CH Sulhamstead Matador of Killybracken

1960 BOB IWCA





Irish Wolfhound Club of America Timeline

1927-1928

Published the "Club Book" (only 4 issues were published)

1930

During its second decade the IWCA produced annual reports "Bulletin Style". Businesslike in nature, each contained vital club records, membership lists, the rules and club by-laws, registrations and other such detailed club related data.

1935-1937 as Edward T. Clark (Halcyon) who served as president. VP's: Mrs. C. Groverman Ellis (Killybracken), Mrs. Norwood Smith (Cragwood), & Miss Amelia White (Rathmullen) & Mrs. Alma Starbuck (Ambleside) served as secretary/treasurer.

1941 -1945

No Specialties held due to WWII

1949

"Harp & Hound" was first published. Mr. LeRoy Fess, "Mr. Harp & Hound" proposed the idea of H&H and was the first editor.

1956

Ch. Tralee of Ambleside is first wolfhound to win 3 IWCA National Specialty BOBs

1958

Miss F. Jeanett McGregor served as president. She exported Ch. Sanctuary Rory of Kihone to England who had a major impact on the revival of the wolfhound in the UK following WWII.

1967-69

Sam Ewing III – Eagle – president

1977

Heartworm preventative approved for use by FDA

1978

Parvovirus is identified

First to Win Three Best of Breeds at IWCA National Specialty: Ch. Tralee of Ambleside (bitch)

Best of Breed: 1956, 1955 and 1954
DOB April 1, 1951. Breeder: Robert C. Ewing.
Owner: Charles H. Morse, Jr.





1979

First (and only) dog to win four IWCA National BOBs - Ch. Wildisle Warlock

1981

Parvo diagnostic test and vaccine developed.

1983

Brig. Gen (ret) Alfred deQuoy – Keltic – president, author of many books, and instigator to move the ownership of the standard to Ireland

1988

First time Sweepstakes offered at the National, there were 92 entries

1988

First time Obedience was offered at the National, there were 19 entries.

1997

First time that a lure coursing event (ASFA) in conjunction with the National.

First to Win Four Best of Breeds at IWCA National

▀ Specialty: Ch. Wild Isle Warlock (dog)



Best of Breed: 1979,
1976,
1975, and 1974

DOB April 1, 1973
Breeder/Owner:
Jill R Bregy

Additional Judges who Awarded Warlock BOB

1976

Mrs. L S. Jenkins



1975

Mrs. Kelly Fox



1974

Mrs. Florence Nagle



2001

First time that LGRA (straight racing) was held in conjunction with the National.

2002

Irish Wolfhound Foundation was founded.

2016

The IWDB (Irish Wolfhound Data Base) website went live.

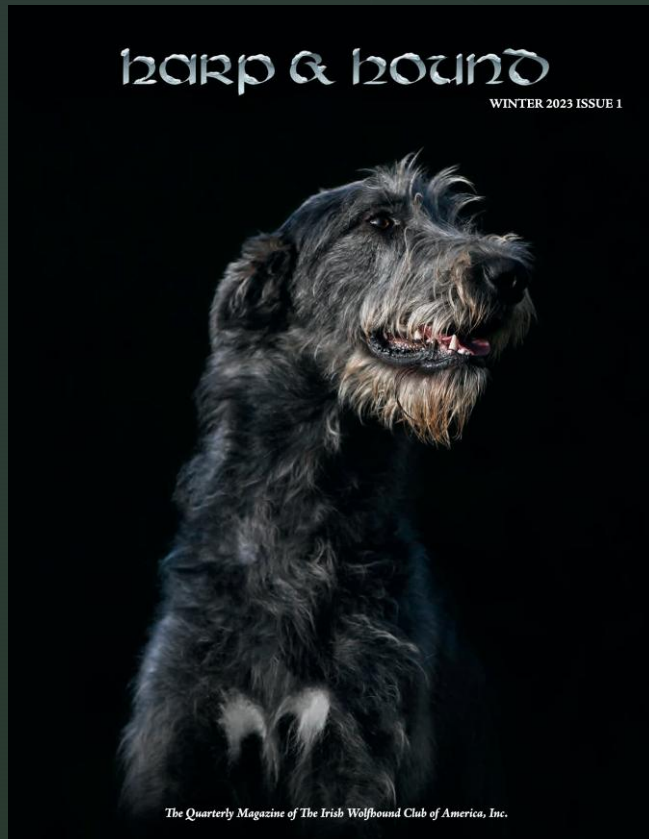
2017

The Dog Writers Association of America awarded *Harp & Hound* their 2017 Maxwell Award for club publications and in 2018 the magazine was again honored with a nomination.

2020□

Due to Covid lockdown the National was not held.

Harp & Hound Award Winning Magazine of the IWCA





**THE Irish Wolfhound
Foundation**
a 504 (c)(3) charity

Founded in 2002, the Irish Wolfhound Foundation is an all-volunteer charitable organization dedicated to the welfare of the Irish Wolfhound. It conducts health studies, runs health screening clinics at IW specialty shows and gatherings, disburses grants to IW-related research, sponsors educational seminars, and coordinates and funds rescue efforts.

Studies Awaiting Results

- *Bleeding Disorders in Irish Wolfhounds*
- *Canine Osteosarcoma Early Detection Pilot Study*
- *Comparison of DEPOHGEN and Functional Coagulation and Fibrinolysis Tests in IWs*
- *Canine Osteosarcoma Early Detection Study*

Completed Studies:

- *Comparison of Incidence of Atrial Fibrillation in the Irish Wolfhound 2000-2007 and 2007-2014*
- *Irish Wolfhound (IWH) Screening Clinic for Occult Dilated Cardiomyopathy and Evaluation of Biomarkers*
- *The Irish Wolfhound Lifetime Cardiac Study*
- *Startle Disease: A New Genetic Disorder in Irish Wolfhounds*
- *Changes in Hormonal Measurements in IWHs with Atrial Fibrillation*

IW Foundation Completed Studies, continued

An Evaluation of Heart Rate in Irish Wolfhounds with Lone Atrial Fibrillation with Assessment of Digoxin as a Sole Means of Providing Heart Rate Control

Clinical and Immunological Outcomes in Dogs with Osteosarcoma Treated with Intratumoral Interleukin-12 Microspheres

The Irish Wolfhound Osteosarcoma Treatment Study: Alendronate (Fosamax) for Palliative Treatment of Irish Wolfhound Osteosarcoma

www.iwfoundation.org

Acknowledgements









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IWCA Timeline, 2025-2026

First Breeders' Cup at the 2026 National Specialty National Rescue Committee becomes official IWCA committee

Upgraded and Updated the IWCA website

Increased educational programs

Continuing close association and cooperation with the Irish Wolfhound Foundation

Re-established our relationship with and membership in the Federation of Irish Wolfhound Clubs

Began the 100 year Anniversary Book to be published spring 2027

The Future of the Irish Wolfhound - Challenges

The Internet as a source of dogs

Backyard Breeders & Puppy Mills

Fewer youth entering the sport

The declining entries at AKC Dog shows, and dog clubs closing

The ever-increasing popularity of "designer dogs",

The Animal Rights contingent's claims that breeding and showing dogs is inhumane.



Stepping back in time: To see that those who undertook to protect, improve and perpetuate the Irish Wolfhound made us not only heirs to the breed, preserved in every basic respect, but heirs to its staunch guardianship, passed as a trust from one era to the next.”

The Irish Wolfhound Club of America is dedicated to protect, improve and perpetuate the Irish Wolfhound, in America and globally.





100th Anniversary Yearbook

Thank you to the many members who contributed to and are currently working on the IWCA 100th Anniversary Yearbook to be published in Spring 2027.

Jeanne Patterson, Editor; Ginny Chapin; Linda King; Jocelyne Gagne; Elissa Culp; Kerri Shandro; Jim Bouziane; Donna & Joe Pitt; Angela Hunter-Knight; Ellen Kroll; Mindy Ballinger, Tina Berry, David Berzins, Pat Cobb, Mariellen Dentino; Eugenia Hunter; CathieJo Jacobson, Carla Martinez; Mel Mercer; Margie Milne; Paul Plummer; Beth Renstrom; Deborah Sanders; David Smith; Bev & Sue Stobart and Briget Wandruff.

Thank you from the
Irish Wolfhound
Club of America

If you would like to join, go to

<https://iwclubofamerica.org/iwca-membership>

