

Beagle Lineage and Origins

Learn the origins of the beagle and how it has come to be the dog you know today.

Excerpts from Comprehensive Owner's Guide: Beagle

THE BEAGLE ON THE CONTINENT

In France, during the reign of the Bourbons (1589–1848), the lavishness of the chase was unparalleled. At Chantilly, where Prince Louis Henry de Bourbon resided, records of the sport have been preserved. The records from 1748 to 1779 show that 77,750 hare were accounted for in the chase, as well as 3,364 stags and hinds.

The Foxhound is thought to have descended from four different types of French hounds. In George Turberville's *Art of Venerie*, written around the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, the French hound types were described, "...the White, used principally for stag hunting; the Fallow, used on all sorts of game, mainly the stag; the Dun, used more frequently than any other hound breed and good on any game and the Black or St. Hubert's, of many colors and no doubt the forebear of the Bloodhound and the Southern Hound." The Southern Hound, when crossed with the smaller Harrier (often called a small edition of the Foxhound), is thought by many experts to be the forebear of the Beagle.

As in the breed's British homeland, fanciers of the Beagle on the Continent enjoyed the merry little hunting hound as the all-around dog, a devoted hunter on a variety of game as well as an attractive companion for the drawing room. In modern times, the Beagle's popularity has remained strong and the breed a major entry at dog exhibitions through Europe.

THE BEAGLE IN THE UNITED STATES

Beginning in Colonial times, Europeans emigrating to America brought dogs with them, some to serve as guards, some to pull carts and others to secure game for food. Some of these dogs were brought because of their innate ability to scent, to trail and to capture game.

The first recorded mention of the Beagle was in Joseph Barrow Felt's *History of Ipswich, Essex, and Hamilton*, published in 1834. The book was based in part upon early town records and, in the records for the year 1642, the Beagle is mentioned as having helped local hunters to keep

Prior to the Civil War (1861–1865), hunters in the Southern states used small hunting hounds, including Beagles, to pursue fox and hare. During the war, almost all hunting ceased, but, after the war, interest again picked up. Wanting to improve the quality of their stock, some more affluent hunters imported Beagles from Europe. In the early 1870s, General Richard Rowett from Illinois became highly interested in Beagles. He imported dogs from England and from them bred what fanciers during those times thought were very good representatives of the breed. The Rowett Beagles were known for their consistency of type, evenness of markings and ability in the field.

Another noted breeder of that period was Mr. Norman Elmore, who imported some influential dogs in the development of his Elmore line. Ringwood and Countess were two of these imports, with Ringwood being used at stud extensively and his offspring often taken to the Rowett strain. The two gentlemen, General Rowett and Mr. Elmore, worked together and the two strains produced what many thought were the best Beagles of the time.

About 1880, Mr. Arnold of Rhode Island imported a pack of Beagles from the Royal Rock line in northern England. Approximately six years later, Mr. James L. Kernochan imported another pack from England, all of which had considerable influence on the quality of Beagles in America. From these times forward, the popularity of the Beagle rose steadily.

In 1885, a dog named Blunder was the first Beagle to be registered in the Stud Book of the American Kennel Club. The National Beagle Club was founded in 1888 and the club held the first field trial for the breed two years later in Hyannis, Massachusetts, with an entry of 18. It is believed that the first American standard for the breed was drawn up by General Rowett, Mr. Norman Elmore and a Dr. L. H. Twaddell.

On December 21, 1901, Ch. Windholme's Bangle, a five-year-old bitch owned by Mr. Harry T. Peters, became the breed's first all-breed Best in Show winner. By 1917, the popularity of the Beagle as a show dog was evidenced by an entry of 75 at America's premier show, the Westminster Kennel Club event, held in New York City. At this show, Beagles enjoyed great success, winning first in the Sporting Group (there was no Hound Group at that time), as well as Best Sporting Brace and Best Sporting Team in Show. It is interesting to note that it was at this event that Beagles were first shown as two varieties based on size: one class for Beagles 13 inches and under, and the other for Beagles over 13 inches but

under 15 inches. The breed has been shown in America in these two separate varieties ever since.

Interest and enthusiasm for this clever little hunter have never waned in America. Today, the Beagle is one of the most popular all-around breeds, as a companion, an enthusiastic hunter and trailer and a highly competitive member of the Hound Group.

History of the Beagle

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