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WESTWARD HOUND!

With “forty horses, forty servants, forty guns, forty dogs, and forty of everything else,” Lord Gore left some unusual legacies in America—including four-footed ones named Speed, Lady, Possum, Fly, and Burster.

By Brian Patrick Duggan

At Rabbit Ears Pass on the Great Divide, Jim Bridger shows Gore their next hunting ground. Named for the distinctive rock formation, the pass is on U.S. Hwy 40 in Colorado.

The Hunting Party on the Continental Divide, by Jack Roberts, 1968

19TH century America was no stranger to British “pilgrims,” including Charles Dickens, Rudyard Kipling, and Oscar Wilde. But perhaps the most extraordinary was Sir St. George Gore, who came to hunt the wilderness with his hounds—but in the highest style.

An Oxford-educated baronet with 7,000 acres in Ireland, Gore was beyond wealthy. He devoted his life to sport—shooting, fishing, and running his Scottish Deerhounds and Greyhounds.

Gore’s Greyhounds, Shade and Magician, won the Waterloo Cup respectively in 1848 and 1849. With Deerhounds, he stalked the red stag in the Scottish Highlands. Lord Saltoun observed “... he had

a great number [of Deerhounds], selected or bred with great care ...” Others had different opinions. Gore exhibited at early dog shows and in 1865 was criticized for “... a deerhound that was almost smooth, a big coarse, ugly greyhound in appearance, that of course did not take a prize.” Another peer asserted his were “very fine Deerhounds.”

Good or not, he brought them to America.

HIS DRY-LAND ARK

In 1854, 43-year-old Gore disembarked with servants, animals, and a mountain of baggage. By rail and steamboat, he journeyed to St. Louis—the jumping-off point for emigrant wagon trains.



With the Rocky Mountains in the distance, Gore's lengthy wagon train fords one of several rivers in a high Colorado valley. His custom-made parlor wagon is at the right.

Lord Gore Entering North Park, Jack Roberts, 1968

Staying at the ritzy Planters House to organize his trek, Gore kenneled hounds and horses on a convenient island in the Missouri River. A reporter disdainfully characterized his like as "... my 'Lord Fitz Snooks' and so many dogs and servants on route for the Plains"

No expense was spared for comfort. Unique was Gore's special wagon, with spring suspension that converted into a rainproof room with a crank. Living quarters were a 180-square-foot, green and white striped tent furnished with rugs and take-apart furniture. There were barrels of whiskey, brandy, and gunpowder, a small library, crates of cigars, and three milk cows. His large staff included valet, cook, gunsmith, fishing lure maker, and horse grooms. Wisely, Gore hired the famous Jim Bridger as his guide, along with a small battalion of mountain men for bodyguards.

The gear was loaded in 21 carts and six wagons. All were hauled by horses, mules, and oxen, with hounds trotting alongside: "Between forty and fifty dogs, mostly greyhounds, and staghounds, of the most beautiful breeds"

Bridger led Gore's party beyond the

isolated Army forts, trappers' stockades, homesteads, and river towns to lands abundant with big game. He hunted alone each day, returning at dusk with his trophies. There were constant hound-chases after hoofed game, coyote, and wolf.

The baronet spent some \$500,000 (many millions today) and traveled over 6,000 miles. On his way home in 1857, he was back in St. Louis with horses and his "40 hounds." But during that nearly three-year journey, dogs died and dogs were born. Many of those pups were left at Army posts.

THE DOGS HE LEFT BEHIND

At least one turned up in northeast New Mexico in 1858. In charge of Fort Union's arsenal, Capt. William Rawlee Shoemaker lived with his family on post. Shoemaker had 10 Greyhounds kenneled in the commissary's corral and cared for by Cpl. Thomson, a keen hound-man from Virginia. Possum, a cross from one of Gore's, was their leader. Tall and long, he was acclaimed for speed and strength. Possum and the pack (slightly assisted by Toots, a black setter) hunted regularly for

jack rabbit, antelope, wolf, buffalo, and occasionally unwanted skunk.

Capt. Eugene F. Ware, 7th Iowa Cavalry (pen name "Ironquill"), discovered the "large number of splendid greyhounds" at Fort Kearney, Nebraska in 1864. Built to protect emigrants on the Oregon and Mormon Trails, Gore's party had camped there in 1854. Several Greyhound pups became the fort's common property with ownership assigned by the commanding officer. Ware and Capt. O'Brien were given Lady and Kearney—"beautiful animals." Lady was jet black and the finest hunter. Bugler, a powerfully voiced scent hound, was purchased from a wagon train to join the hunts. His nose prevailed when antelope, jack rabbit, and wolf disappeared into cover (Bugler's replacement was a "Virginia stag-hound" named Bugler No. 2). Ware's pack increased with Fannie, Fly, and Nellie, a large white girl ranked as second fastest. Sadly, Nellie died after gobbling strychnine-laced wolf bait. Ware countermanded that practice and dryly wrote, "After that, the poisoning of wolves was discontinued."

In Dakota Territory at Fort Sully, the 22nd Infantry had their own Sporting Club. Capt. Javan Irvine was posted there in 1867, bringing along his Greyhounds to combine with the post's Greyhounds, staghounds, and foxhounds. The commanding officer, Gen. David S. Stanley, was elected club president and Irvine secretary/treasurer. Their pack had offspring of cup-winners in England and Ireland, including the celebrated Waterloo Cup winner Master McGrath.

Irvine's foundation pair, Speed and Drew, were both from Gore stock. Speed's sire was an "imported, rough-haired Scotch greyhound" and his dam an English Greyhound. Speed himself could catch buffalo and wolf. Had it not been for his badly healed, broken foreleg, Speed might have been as swift as their best hounds—Harry, Sweep, and Mulsie. Drew, a Greyhound, wasn't the

fastest but had powerful endurance. Notable pups from Speed and Drew's, born August 1871, were Burster, Diamond, and Louisa (Speed sired two more litters that summer). Diamond was energetic, tough, and foolish; not as fast as nervous Diamond, Louisa had better sense. Burster stood 30 inches high, "... *the largest dog* in a pack of sixty" (Irvine's emphasis). In turn, Burster sired Leo out of Gipsev. Both Burster and Leo (another big boy at 75 pounds) could handily run down either antelope or jack rabbit.

From June through September 1873, Stanley commanded elements of several regiments as escort for a railroad survey expedition into the Yellowstone country. The Sporting Club voted to send Given, Sweep, Donovan, and George along with their contingent. Newly arrived from Reconstruction duty in the South, Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer's 7th Cavalry would accompany the column. George and Libbie Custer had their own pack of Deerhounds and Greyhounds. Friendly rivalry between Stanley and Custer was

ARMY GREYHOUNDS AT WESTMINSTER

In 1878 at the 2nd Westminster Kennel Club Bench Show, in a class of 23 Greyhounds, Gen. Stanley had two entries—Fleet from Fort Sully and imported Pencawon of Master McGrath's line. If Custer had not been killed in 1876 at Little Bighorn, he might well have competed in that ring with his own Greyhounds against his former commanding officer.

To learn more about Gore's extraordinary expedition, see *Baronets and Buffalo: The British Sportsman in the American West 1833–1881* by John I. Merritt. For the Fort Sully Sporting Club and the Custers' hunting hounds, see my own *General Custer, Libbie Custer and Their Dogs: A Passion for Hounds from the Civil War to Little Bighorn*.

immediate. A refereed match took place but despite Custer's braggadocio, his hounds didn't win (to be fair, they'd just trekked 400 miles in 16 days and the Sully hounds *were* on home ground).

After 12 years at Fort Sully, in 1879, the companies of the 22nd would be reassigned to posts across Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas. Now at Fort Griffin, 50 miles from Abilene, Irvine proudly recorded that his old girl Drew, at 12 years, was still catching jack rabbits.

GORE'S LEGACY

A loner all his life, Gore died childless in Scotland in 1878. Namesake places are a permanent reminder of him—the Gore Range, Mountain, Pass, Hill, Canyon, Creek, and Lake (and I do wonder about South Dakota's Greyhound Gulch and Montana's White Hound Canyon).

However, Gore's more obscure bequest is the distributed DNA from Possum, Lady, Kearney, Fannie, Fly, Nellie, Speed, Drew, Burster, Louisa, Diamond, Leo, and so on. **FD**

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Crow's Breast and Gore at Like-A-Fishhook Village in what is now North Dakota. Before the baronet finished his extended hunt, he and a few of his men (with hounds and horses) wintered in a spare earthen lodge, courtesy of Hidatsa chief Crow's Breast.

Lord Gore with Crow's Breast in Hidats, by Jack Roberts, 1968

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