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Going to the Dogs: Greyhound Racing, Animal Activism, and American Popular Culture

Anna Thompson Hajdik
University of Wisconsin-Whitewater

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munities. A review of the rise and demise of the periodical and its consolidation with *Farm Magazine* to create *The American Home Magazine* would have added evidence to the end of the bicycling boom of the late 1890s.

Wheel Fever is a rich model for bicycling history. Wisconsin and Iowa shared many traits during the era. The states had similar population statistics; in fact, Iowa's population actually exceeded the Badger state's through 1900. Both states had highly homogeneous populations, and southern Wisconsin's geography is similar to Iowa's. Finally, both states pride themselves on an active cycling culture, although Wisconsin can boast Trek bicycles. Gant and Hoffman are to be commended for a work that is useful to both historians and general readers.

Going to the Dogs: Greyhound Racing, Animal Activism, and American Popular Culture, by Gwyneth Anne Thayer. CultureAmerica Series. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2013. xv, 296 pp. Illustrations, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. \$39.95 hardcover.

Reviewer Anna Thompson Hajdik is a full-time lecturer in the English Department at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. She is the author of "'You Really Ought to Give Iowa a Try': Tourism, Community Identity, and the Impact of Popular Culture in Iowa" (*Online Journal of Rural Research & Policy*, 2009).

In *Going to the Dogs*, Gwyneth Anne Thayer traces the fascinating but fraught history of greyhound racing in America. She offers insights into how the history of this sport/spectacle intersects with a number of major themes, including social class, consumerism, and ethics. In the introduction, "Rover or Racer," Thayer argues that her study "is not limited to greyhounds in pursuit of a mechanical rabbit; it is the story of Americans at work, at play, and at odds" (20). The author largely succeeds in that goal.

Her first chapter chronicles the early history of coursing in Europe, chiefly Great Britain. Coursing, the predecessor to racing, shared many similarities to fox hunting and other recreational pursuits of the European elite. Chapter two focuses on efforts to legitimate the sport in the United States in the 1920s and 1930s, emphasizing how the state of Kansas became the focal point of the industry in its early years.

Although Thayer characterizes the 1920s as the "golden age of sports," greyhound racing faced early opposition from progressive reformers who viewed it as unsavory because of its associations with gambling and organized crime. In contrast to thoroughbred horse racing, greyhound racing attracted a chiefly working-class audience. Thayer explores at length this tension between horse-racing interests

and the world of greyhound enthusiasts, and it proves to be a major thread of the entire book. The two industries fought for supremacy (and the gambler's dollar), but greyhound racing usually came up on the losing end.

One weakness of the book is that the author spends a significant amount of time on the litigation of multiple court cases involving horse- and dog-racing turf battles. This results in a rather dry narrative at times. While those details provide intellectual heft to the work, the author might have focused more attention on the voices of audiences who attended these events. Thayer does devote significant attention to "dog men," individuals who derived their livelihoods from raising, training, and racing greyhounds, which is a valuable element of this study.

The fourth chapter, "Halcyon Days and Florida Nights," is the book's most entertaining as Thayer discusses the success of greyhound racing in Florida in the mid-twentieth century. More than a measure of glamour surrounded the industry as celebrities and beauty queens posed for pictures with champion racers.

The final two chapters trace the sport's decline, brought on by a number of factors, including the emergence of the Animal Rights Movement, high-profile cases of mass greyhound slaughter, a crowded entertainment marketplace, and the general shift in attitudes about pet keeping. As Thayer argues, the greyhound adoption movement played a huge role in changing attitudes about the breed as the animals transitioned in the public's imagination from working athletes to beloved pets.

Going to the Dogs is a valuable addition to the robust field of animal studies, and it would also prove useful to potential courses on American popular culture or twentieth-century U.S. history.

The Ghosts of NASCAR: The Harlan Boys and the First Daytona 500, by John Havick. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2013. xvii, 201 pp. Map, illustrations, sources, notes, index. \$19.95 paperback.

Reviewer Daniel J. Simone is adjunct professor of history at Monmouth University. His Ph.D. dissertation (University of Florida, 2009) was "Racing, Region, and the Environment: A History of American Motorsports."

Iowa has an important place in American motorsports history. For decades, the state fairgrounds at Des Moines featured some of America's most well-attended and prestigious dirt races. Every August, the Marion County Fairgrounds in Knoxville—home to the National Sprint Car Hall of Fame—hosts the biggest sprint car race of the year. Numerous nationally recognized competitors hailed from Iowa as well.