



Analysis of 115 years of pet burial records reveals the changing trends in how Americans name - and relate to - their best friends

Data scientists at the newly-launched video consultation platform for pets, **FirstVet** (www.firstvet.com/us), have analyzed - for the first time - over a century of names of American cats and dogs buried in the nation's oldest site for animal interment, **Hartdale Pet Cemetery** (www.petcem.com) (based in Westchester County, New York).

Analysis of the names of 25,000 four-legged friends buried since 1905 in the cemetery, which has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places since 2012, has revealed the most popular names for dogs and cats, as well as the trends that have influenced the naming of pets over the decades.

Key findings from the analysis

115 years of animal names

- Perhaps reflective of a cultural fascination with monarchies and fairy tales, 'Princess' is the most popular overall pet name in the U.S. over the last 115 years (with both dogs and cats frequently receiving the name).
- 'Princess' is also proved most popular dog's name of the last 115 years. 'Princess' has consistently been in the top-ten most popular dog names since the 1960s, but has never been the number 1 most popular name in any single decade.
- 'Tiger' is the most popular cat's name of the last 115 years. This might be a legacy of the earliest domesticated cats in America being European 'tabby' cats, with distinctive tiger-like striped markings (prior to the importation of Asian breeds). The acquisition in 1961 by Disney of licensing rights to Winnie The Pooh (from the estate of English writer A. A. Milne), likely further contributed to the popularity of naming a small cat after its bigger cousin: Tigger being Christopher Robin's bouncy toy-tiger friend.

The most popular names of each decade

Note: Assuming the average dog and cat to have a lifespan of approximately 10 years, the following is based on pets being buried in the decade subsequent to their naming.

- The most popular name in each decade for **dogs** is as follows:
 - 1930s: Queenie
 - 1940s: Tippy
 - 1950s: Sandy
 - 1960s: Lady
 - 1970s: Brandy
 - 1980s: Max

- 1990s: Max
- 2000s: Max
- The most popular name in each decade for **cats** is as follows:
 - 1960s: Cindy
 - 1970s: Ginger
 - 1980s: Tiger
 - 1990s: Smokey
 - 2000s: Smokey

Regnal numbers

- The pet name with the highest regnal number (a number denoting that the pet is one in a series of pets with that name) is Virgo XIII.
- The name with the second-highest regnal number is Silvia IV.

Noble aspirations

- In the U.S., which became a republic when it rejected the British monarchy and aristocracy, nobility-related names such as 'Princess', 'Duke', 'King', and 'Lady' featured consistently in the top-ten animal names in the U.S. throughout the latter half of the 20th century.
 - This contrasts with the U.K., a constitutional monarchy, where royal or noble names never featured in the top-ten most popular animal names in the latter half of the 20th century.
- 'Princess' was only the sixth-most popular pet name in the 1970s, but shot to being the most popular pet name in the 1980s, and the second-most popular pet name in the 1990s. This coincides with the rise in popularity of Princess Diana, who visited the U.S. on a royal tour in 1985, during which she famously danced with John Travolta at the White House.

Note: The above takes culturally significant events from the previous decade as correlating to naming trends, based on the aforementioned average lifespans of pets.

Pop culture inspirations

- 'Max' was the most popular dog name for three decades in the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s. This may be partly as a result of the launch of the wildly successful *Mad Max* film series, the first of which was released in 1979, as well as Russell Crowe's character Maximus in the movie 'Gladiator'.
- 'Smokey' was the most popular cat name for two consecutive decades, in the 1990s and 2000s, rising from being the 9th most popular cat name in the 1980s. This might be linked with 1977 American road action comedy film, *Smokey And The Bandit*, starring Burt Reynolds (and its many TV and movie sequels), as well as the enduring popularity of Motown singer William "Smokey" Robinson, who regularly featured in the Top 10 charts throughout the 80s.
- 'Baby' appears third in the list of most common names for cats buried in Hartsdale in the 1990s, and remains popular throughout the 2000s and 2010s. *Dirty Dancing* was released in 1987, with its famous line 'Nobody puts Baby in the corner'. An alternative explanation might be that this reflects declining

birth rates in the US, and the corresponding consideration of pets occupying a position in both affections and the family equivalent to that of a child.

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Gabriel Corredor, US Country Manager at FirstVet, comments: "Naming a pet is one of the strongest indicators of human love and companionship, which is what inspired us to conduct this intriguing analysis of how Americans have named their furry friends over the last century. Our vets, when providing video consultations, are often surprised and impressed by the creativity of owners when it comes to naming their much-loved pets. It is unsurprising to see that what we call our companions often reflects the popular culture of the time, as we ordain these new members of the family with titles adopted from TV or film. And like any family member, their wellbeing is a primary concern both to their owners, and to us as veterinary practitioners."

*****ENDS*****

About Hartsdale Pet Cemetery (www.petcem.com)

Hartsdale Pet Cemetery was founded in 1896 to address the growing need for a secure and dignified resting place for the pets of New York City. Today, Hartsdale is the oldest continuously operated pet cemetery in the world and the final resting place for over 80,000 animals, including not only dogs and cats but horses, birds, primates, myriad smaller pets, and even a lion who lived at the Plaza Hotel.

In 2013, the cemetery was added to the U.S. Department of the Interior's National Register of Historic Places, making it the first and only animal burial ground to be recognized as a place of profound cultural significance. Additionally, it is the first pet cemetery in New York to receive accreditation from the International Association of Pet Cemeteries and Crematories, that today counts more than 800 animal cemeteries worldwide.

About FirstVet

FirstVet (www.firstvet.com/us), the platform which provides pet owners with on-demand video consultations from local, licensed veterinarians, has launched its video-based vet consultation service in the United States: enabling pet owners in all 50 states to receive 24/7 expert advice via their mobile devices for a variety of different animals, ranging from cats and dogs to horses and reptiles.

www.firstvet.com/us

**For media enquiries please contact
Benedict Bunyard / Leisa Valentine
benedict@deliberate-pr.com / leisa@deliberate-pr.com
0044 7534 914 026 / 0044 7875 666 360**