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History Of The Pit Bull

By John Foley

No other breed of dog has experienced as many discriminations and misconceptions as has the Pit Bull. While some people would tell you that Pit Bulls are a gentle and harmless pet, other people consider them as wicked and evil enough to be Satan's guard dog. Although neither viewpoint is accurate, both have some basis in fact and in the dog's controversial origin.

Humans and dogs have long shared a bond that was based on function. Early dogs that were the least valuable and useful did not make it into today's time. On the other hand, the most valuable and helpful of dogs remained and created others like them. Ultimately, breed predecessors were produced by breeding the best hunters to the best hunters and the best guards to the best guards. Those that proved to be the toughest and the bravest, which are traits that were most valued during the early times, became more and more specialized.

By the Greek era, large and powerful dogs which were called Molossians, were very popular and valued as a high price piece. Phoenician traders regarded them as an expensive commodity and used them as a bartering item. By means of bartering, the Molossians were distributed along the Phoenician shipping course which included stopovers in ancient Britain. The Molossians who remained in Britain became further specialized and brought about the beginning of the mastiff line of dogs.

The Mastiffs were polished as war dogs in Britain. When the Romans invaded Britain, they were impressed by the Mastiffs' stance and strength that they brought some back to their country. The Mastiffs then became known as fighters or "dog gladiators" who went against humans, lions, bears, and even against each other.

Like Rome, the British also reveled in this vicious sport. They also placed high worth on contests that showed animals fighting to death. The display of a powerful dog fighting and ultimately killing a bull was the biggest entertainment that the villages could provide its citizens. This form of entertainment extended over all classes and by the sixteenth century bull-baiting and bear-baiting became the finale for a royal night of entertainment.

The dogs' owners gained popularity for their animal's impressive act, and the offspring of these dog

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gladiators were desired and sought after for their capability of delivering high prices. And because of their power, strength, and ability to bring wealth to their owners, more and more of these dogs were produced over the course of time. This is where the Pit Bull claims his heritage.

During part one of our brief history of the Pit Bull we touched up on the origins of the fighting arena which included this dog. From Rome to Britain, these dogs were used as fighting sport dogs which ranged in battles with other Pit Bulls, to lions, to animals as fierce as cage bulls, in which this dog invariably got its name.

In order to understand the influence that created the Pit Bull of today and what could be a dire future for the Pit Bull of tomorrow, you should be aware of its roots and origin. This remarkable and yet controversial dog is a mixture of strength and softness, between fun and serious business, all wrapped up in loyalty and love.

Where did Pit Bulls come from and why were they branded as the most vicious dogs that were ever to walk the planet?

During the sixteenth century, the cruel practice of bull-baiting was the favorite pastime of the British. Bull-baiting is a spectator sport in which one or two dogs were released and would try to grab a bull (which was chained to a stake) by the nose. This exhibit of tormenting the bull often lasted for hours for the purpose of entertainment. The British also had a misguided belief that torturing the animal before killing it made its meat more tender. For these reasons, bull-baiting became very popular to everyone from all walks of life.

This atrocious sport finally became illegal in England at around 1835, but that only forced the dog fighting fans and gamblers to conduct their own covert matches underground. And although organizing an underground bull-baiting event would have been a difficult task, setting up a dog fight in a barn or back room without being caught was quite easy.

The sport favored a somewhat smaller and swifter dog than the ones that were used at baiting bulls and other large animals. Many historians believe that the stocky bull-baiting dogs were crossed with the more swift and alert terriers to create a small, strong, and agile breed that was named Bull and Terrier. Other historians think that the Bulldog of the time was very similar to today's Pit Bull and it was a simple process of choosing and breeding the most successful fighters.

As the Bull and Terriers or Bulldogs became less recognized for their bull-baiting ability and began to be more popular for their fighting skills in the pits, these breeds became known as Pit Bulldogs, or as we call them today, Pit Bulls.

Nowadays, Pit Bulls are recognized as fun loving dogs that would make wonderful additions to any family. But that way of thinking has not always been the case. Before they were considered great pets, these dogs once endured awful prejudice and unfairness because of their ability and strength.

Although dog fighting is considered illegal, fans and supporters continued to carry out the sport with minimal interference from law enforcement. In the 1970's however, the American Dog Owner's Association (ADOA) decided to lobby against dogfights. The association successfully brought public

attention to pit fighting, helping to push it into the shadows and completely put an end to the sport.

But that did not stop the supporters and enthusiasts to carry on with the game. Dog fighting continued and went underground. Instead of turning people away, the sport's illegal nature only attracted more people, many who whom knew more about the game's pay-offs but had very little knowledge about the Pit Bulls.

Knowledgeable breeders of fighting Pit Bulls could no longer disclose information about training methods for fear of getting caught by the authorities. For this reason, novice dog trainers as well as Pit Bull breeders began using cruel practices to train these dogs. They would often use stolen puppies and other dogs to try to encourage the Pit Bulls to kill. These breeders and trainers would go as far as feed them with gunpowder to make them mean. In addition, they used other people to beat the dogs with clubs in order for them to turn aggressive toward strangers.

Needless to say, these poor methods of training were unsuccessful and the dogs rarely won at matches. The breeders and trainers had no other choice but to discard these dogs. The terrible harm that was done to these dogs made them very difficult to bring home as pets and the harm done to the dog's reputation was beyond measurable.

While most people shun these dogs because of their notorious reputation, some people seek them in order to have the toughest dog on the block. Although certain types of breeds filled the position throughout the years, it was not until the early 1980's when the Pit Bull made it to the top of the list.

While most people think that the Pit Bull makes the supreme macho dog, a lot of them do not understand the instinctive nature of the breed and the training it requires. In an attempt to create a bigger and more aggressive dog, these people promote random aggression and even cross their dogs with larger and more aggressive breeds. This mixture of bad breeding and bad training produced more aggressive dogs that have resulted in the Pit Bull's notorious popularity.

Article Written By J. Foley

http://travelguy.typepad.com/just_about_dogs

Pit Bull Terriers: What Are The Best Dog Toys?

By Tim Amherst

It is important to provide your Pit Bull with toys that are safe for him. Due to the strength and aggression that Pit Bulls naturally have, it is often hard for owners to find suitable toys that are strong enough to hold up to the dog. Many Pit Bulls are also hard to please when it comes to toys, they want just the right size, shape, and texture, or they won't have anything to do with it. Purchasing toys that are Pit Bull suitable can get expensive, but can often help prevent your Pit Bull from chewing up your belongings. Many Pit Bull owners prefer a toy called the Galileo Bone. It is produced by Nylabone,

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and proves to be able to hold up pretty well with the average Pit Bull. AT least, it lasts long enough to kind of make you feel like you have gotten your money's worth. Nylabone also makes the Crazy Ball, which is also a really tough toy designed for Pit Bulls. Kong toys can in many different sizes and colors, and many can be stuffed with your Pit Bull's favorite treats. They have tremendous durability, so are especially great for Pit Bulls that like to chew a lot. Most Pit Bulls will occupy themselves for hours with these toys. Many companies also produce interactive toys, some of which are tough enough to withstand your Pit Bull. These toys hold his interest with sounds and lights, usually good for a few hours of play before he gets bored with it.

Plush toys are also good for some Pit Bulls, it is important to make sure that you purchase one that doesn't have small parts that could easily be chewed off and swallowed. These are probably toys that you would want to supervise your Pit Bull playing with, or use them to just play fetch with.

Rope toys can soon become a favorite for you both. They help to clean your Pit Bull's teeth, and can be great for fetch. They work well for getting you involved in your Pit Bull's play, as they work great for tug of war matches. It is important to keep in mind when pulling that you need to be careful not to pull too hard, as you may accidentally break one of your Pit Bull's teeth.

Balls are popular with almost any dog, again the important thing here is to purchase one that is made of material durable enough to hold up to your Pit Bull. Larger balls will probably work better, as they will be harder for him to get in his mouth.

Toys are a necessity for your Pit Bull. Just keep in mind your Pit Bull's personality and strength, so that you can buy the best toy for him. There are several sites online that sell toys suited for Pit Bulls, or your local pet supply may have them as well.

To learn all about owning, raising, and caring for American Pit Bull Terriers, visit

<http://www.PitBullsRevealed.com/>

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