

## American Pit Bull Terrier (APBT) Breed History

The history of the Pit Bull varies depending on the sources you refer to.

One of these stories, and in my opinion the most reliable, goes back to the time of the Romans. During the time of Minos, in Crete, the sport of bull baiting was quite a popular form of entertainment. This sport was developed as a part of the worship practice in honor of the warrior god Mithras. During this time, most dogs were wild and ferocious by nature. As the Roman tribes of the time conquered and moved across the land, they also took the sport with them. Due to the selective breeding of the best dogs, a distinctive breed began to emerge.

By the 1700's there were two primary bull fighting dogs that had developed. This was the Blue Poll of Scotland and the Alunt from Ireland, both of which were referred to as Bulldogs. The Alunt of the time resembled something closer to a Great Dane but is presumed to have later developed into the Alono of Spain.

As this and other dog sports were developed, people selectively bred different dogs to achieve the fighting attributes that they desired. They often mixed these breeds with the great dogs of England also used to bait bulls. During this time it was thought that the use of the dog on a bull had a tenderizing effect on the meat. In reality this was a myth perpetuated by dog men and gamblers in order to encourage participation and thus draw the profits of gambling.

By the time of the early 1800's, due to selective breeding, a dog had emerged which was very similar to the American Pit Bull of today. Due to a slow economy and a law that prohibited people of low economic means from owning a sporting dog the practice of bull baiting began to diminish. In 1835, bull baiting was officially banned. This forced people, especially of the lower classes, to find alternatives for their dogs. This resulted in a sport known as ratting where a number of rats were placed in a pit for a specified time with the dog. This is in fact where the "Pit" in the American Pit Bull Terrier name came from, not from fighting other dogs. The Terrier part of the name came from its ability to hunt small game and was one of the reasons why ratthers knew it would excel in the rat pit. The larger the number of kills, the better the dog placed in the match. Due to the constraints of space and the agility of Black and Tan and now extinct White Terriers of England, these Terriers were often being mixed with the old bull baiting dogs to achieve dogs that were premium for these purposes.

It is believed that this practice of mixing Bulldogs and Terriers began in the town of Staffordshire, England and became known as the Staffordshire Bull and Terrier. Due to the agility and gameness of this newfound breed, many began to also fight dogs with each other. Soon, dog-on-dog fighting and ratting became so popular that practically all inns and pubs were equipped with a fighting pit.

As colonization of America and Canada began, these people also brought their dogs. These dogs soon became known by the name of Pit Bull Terriers. As time progressed, a gentleman by the name of Chauncy Bennett founded the UKC in 1898 with the American Pit Bull Terrier as its foundation dog breed. Although some are fortunate enough to own a UKC registered Pit, the majority of the public has chosen to not register their dogs due to financial constraints and subsequent loss of bloodline determination.

Here at The American Pit Bull Registry, we seek to turn this trend around and to register peoples' otherwise unregistered American Pit Bulls and to encourage people with otherwise registered Pit Bulls to dually register their dogs here.

By the time of WWI, the American Pit Bull Terrier had become a well-loved and desired dog. In fact, the Pit Bull was used as America's canine mascot of the time and seen in such posters as the one on the right during wartime. In 1917 a Pit Bull by the name of Sgt Stubby became a war hero for saving several soldiers lives and even capturing a German spy while in the trenches of France with the 26th Yankee Division.

Later the Pit Bull was used to signify sturdiness, dependability, and loyalty by such organizations as RCA, Buster Brown shoes, and even the loveable Pete of the Little Rascals.

In fact, the first dog to travel across America in a car was a Pit Bull (Bud) and did so with the first persons (Horatio Jackson and his assistant and bicycle mechanic Sewall Crocker) to cross America in a car (a Winton, named the Vermont). Horatio later donated Bud's goggles to the Smithsonian Institute in Washington DC. Riding in front, Bud would assist in watching for large bumps in the road and often received as much, if not more, attention by the press than did Jackson. After the trip was completed, Bud bravely guarded the Jackson home until his death of old age.

Many famous people such as Fred Astaire, President Roosevelt, Jack Dempsy, Thomas Edison, Madonna, Michael J Fox, Brad Pitt, Bernadette Peters, Sinbad, Alicia Silverstone, Linda Blair, Humphrey Bogart, Usher, Mel Brooks, Ann Bancroft, John Stuart, Jan Michael Vincent, Pink (the singer), Kelli Williams (actress from The Practice), Ken Howard (father in Crossing Jordan - his Pit Shadow saved his life), Malcolm Jamal Warner, Stephan Jenkins, Rosie Perez, Ananda Lewis, Amy Jo Johnson, Mary Tyler Moore, Steve and Terrie Irwin, Jack Johnson (Hawaiian singer), Bill Berloni (Broadway show dog trainer who has said that the Pit is the breed of choice for training), Anthony Robbins, Molly Price (actress from Third Watch), President Woodrow Wilson, Frankie Muniz, AJ Mclean, Barbara Eden, and even Helen Keller have been lucky enough to own this magnificent animal.

Well known sports figures who own Pit Bulls include: tennis star Serena Williams (Bambi), professional basketball players Desmond Mason (Zane, Capone), Rashard Lewis (Cookie, Angel, Ginger), Amare Stoudemire (JT, Ace, Deuce), Alton Ford (Mischief, Rosy, Spicey, Diable + 3 pups with names unknown), Tamika Dixon and Mo Vaughn. Photos from the APBR and The Smithsonian websites.



From the excellent home page for this movie, <http://www.pbs.org/horatio/>

On the centennial of Jackson's achievement, Ken Burns and Florentine Films have now made a documentary film that follows his historic — and hilarious — journey. *Horatio's Drive: America's First Road Trip* is a one-episode, two-hour film.

Early in the trip, Jackson began looking for a small dog to accompany him. In Idaho, he finally got his chance -- thanks to the kind of misadventure that had now become almost routine. After only a few miles from Caldwell early on June 12, Jackson realised he had left his coat at the hotel. "On the way back, they were stopped by a man and asked they wanted a dog for a mascot. Jackson wrote to his wife. "As I had been trying to steal one we were glad to get him, so accepted the present (consideration \$15.00). So Bud is now with us."



from the excellent website, <http://www.pitbullregistry.com>

## American Pit Bull Registry Breed profile

The American Pit Bull Terrier (APBT) is a medium sized breed of dog. It has short hair that is relatively smooth to the touch. Pit Bulls come in all colours and patterns.

The Pit Bull breed has been developed over hundreds of years to be a worker and is well suited to most any task requiring strength, agility, and intelligence. A well-developed APBT should be muscular in build with well-pronounced chest and legs. A Pit Bull's head is often described as brick-like but is actually more in the shape of a wedge. The muzzle of the Pit may vary in length but a Pit with a well-developed head will have a wide muzzle at maturity ending at a muscular jaw.

The tail is often described to resemble a lever and ends in a tip. Although some Pits may have their tail cropped, this is not suggested as it affects their balance. A Pit Bull's tail is never in the shape of a corkscrew.

The ears of Pit Bulls are set rather high on the head and may be cropped or un-cropped based on preference. When a Pit shows interest or expresses joy in something, its ears will often move toward each other revealing wrinkles on the forehead.

Pit Bulls eyes are round or oval in shape and come in all colours, including blue which is caused by the Merle gene. Merle genetics may also reveal itself in blotches on the coat and is typically manifested this way in reds and blues.

The nose of a Pit Bull can be any natural colour but in most cases are black, red, blue, or speckled.

A well-mannered and properly socialized Pit Bull will exhibit confidence in most every situation. When a task brings itself to light the Pit Bull is typically inquisitive and exhibits a can do and don't give up attitude. The Pit Bull's intelligence is unsurpassed and can sometimes get it into trouble once it figures out it is a natural escape artist and can climb trees almost as good as a cat. Because of this ability, it is of the utmost importance to keep objects and trees away from any fences that are intended to confine them. Pit Bulls have a natural tendency to want to please their owners and strive for human attention. Pit Bulls make excellent family pets but should be watched around children as their exuberance, size, strength and weight may be overpowering.

Pit Bulls can be trained for most any occasion ranging from service and therapy work, guarding, hunting, rescue and the activity it loves best; couch or bed-warming. Although all Pit Bulls need physical activity to help release their large stores of youthful energy, head pats and belly rubs are always a welcomed second.

A well-developed and socialized Pit Bull is like a chivalrous knight clad in an armour of muscle covered with a well polished glossy covering of skin. Like the great knights of old, the APBT will show unflinching courage, dedication, be honourable in action and have a heart to do what is right by his king or queen, you!

Of course sometimes they will just insist on being the joker.

### Pit Bull uses in Therapy, Service and other work

For hundreds of years, the Pit Bull dog has been bred to have a human friendly disposition and an overwhelming sense of need to please their owners. Dogs of all breeds have been man's assistants since the beginning of domestication and this is an area the Pit Bull has great opportunity and desire for.

Pit Bulls currently are, or have been, used in drug detection, emergency rescue, service and therapy work, military service, and much more.

Pound for pound, the American Pit Bull Terrier (APBT) is the strongest breed in existence and has a tenacity to meet its objectives as no other. Because the Pit Bull puts its own interest second to that of its owners, the chances of it achieving a task are greater than that of other breeds.

The APBT is additionally one of the most intelligent and easy to train breed of dogs. The trainer of the show dog Lassie has even remarked on how the Pit Bull is his choice of breed for training. This is due to the Pit Bulls ease of training, focus on task, desire to please their owner, and don't give up attitude.

Because the Pit Bull has such strength, intelligence, desire to please, and a don't give up attitude it would make a good choice as a disabled assistant service dog to those who are facing issues of mobility.

Pit Bulls are widely discriminated against and many organizations will not consider them for service or therapy work. We are looking at developing a course of study and recruiting a base of volunteers (especially those with handling and/or training experience) to assist us in becoming the first organization that certifies the APBT for service and therapy work.

The American Pit Bull Registry (APBR) is additionally looking for individuals who think they could benefit from such assistance and are willing to give the Pit Bull dog a chance.

The APBR believes that by showing good ambassadors of the breed with positive contributions to society this will lend greatly to reducing its negative stereotype in the general community.

It is our opinion that Pit Bulls used for such work could not be banned in areas subject to Breed Specific Legislation (BSL) and that by having such representatives in areas where BSL exists that we can help to counteract the ignorance of such localities and work to dismantle these discriminatory laws.



Bud was a young, light-colored bulldog, and he almost immediately began attracting as much attention as the Vermont. Some newspapers would report that Jackson had rescued Bud from a savage dog fight; others wrote that he was a lonesome stray who had chased after the car for two miles before being taken on board.

Bud soon became an enthusiast for motoring, especially after his masters put a pair of their goggles on him to keep the stinging, alkali dust out of his eyes. His owner said Bud was "the one member of [our] trio who used no profanity on the entire trip."

Bud apparently lived a full dog's life after the cross-country trip, content to guard the Jackson home in Vermont and take short automobile trips around Burlington with his master. Following Bud's death, the Jacksons always kept at least one dog in their house, although none ever became as celebrated as the begoggled-bull pup who had crossed the continent.

