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Summary of the APBT history.

Many scholars have written about this subject this is a summery that take you through the journey of the APBT's history.

The APBT is world renowned as the most versatile ultra-sporting game dog ... still today as the original APBT of yesterday – **At Manjaro's it is the same APBT we have today** – the working catch dog, sporting, game and family dog - this is and should be **the crux of APBT**.

Readers who are interested are also encouraged to read in Dr. Carl Semencic's book.

The world of catch, fighting and athletic ability dogs - and or Google various other data related on the internet.

You can also read the following

<http://www.nyx.net/~mbur/apbtfaqpre.html>

In 1868 **Darwin** wrote about the origins of the pit dog;

"We shall probably never be able to ascertain their origin with certainty."

On this I and "many more" agree and then will agree to disagree peacefully.

Fact! >> The domesticated dogs origins ***cannot be traced "to the very beginning"***, but it was established that their origin are from various wolf types and wild dog strains – and the Pit Bull origins are from various Bull and Terrier types and then "some".

First let's consider ... what dogs are labelled Pit Bull terriers?

There many confusion over exactly which breed of dog is the "pit bull" – yep definite confusion.

The definition includes the "real" American Pit Bull terrier accepted as the APBT and various APBT registries – the only breed with "Pit" in the name commonly known as the APBT, the Staffordshire terrier and at times, the various bulldog types and then also any look-alike APBT dog and mix breeds look a-likes and also "some" other breeds.

Looking at the interpretation and possible history of the APBT – fondly call "pit bulls or pits".

Know this! >> The concept of a "pet" was never the intention for domesticating wild wolves or wild dogs – know they are animals not humans – yep could be part of a human family but still an animal – don't never treat an animal – more so a APBT as human.

A quote from John Holmes *"A dog is not "almost human," and I know of no greater insult to the canine race than to describe it as such"*

A quote from Edward Hoagland "In order to really enjoy a dog, one doesn't merely try to train the dog to be semi human - the point of it is to open oneself to the possibility of becoming partly a dog."

The dog become your friend, your partner, your defender ... your dog.
You are his life, his love ... his master.

He will be yours - faithful and true, to the last beat of his heart.

You owe it to him to be worthy of such devotion.

Domestication resulted because "these canine animals" could run and kill more efficiently than man - the principal was for a working aid for man and for the survival or specific purposes man desired to keep them ... whatever man wanted or trained this animal to be.

In one theory, "Pit Bulls" began during antiquity taken from the wild and domesticated, the so-called Molossus dogs – the fighting dog were always their the forerunners of the Pitbull fighting dog – 40000 years ago in Egypt they were tested, a now-extinct breed that was also used by the Greeks as shepherds dogs, guard dogs and general homestead dogs.

In times of war, they marched off to battle with their human masters. Eventually, so the theory goes ... the Molossus dogs traveling with man and made it to early Britain.

Descendant of wolf and other wild dog types – became known as the Molossus >>> the original old English and Irish style family bulldogs and fighting dogs horizontally bred from the existing old type game Bull baiting, hunting, farm catch dogs and Gypsy dogs, with working and performance goals in mind.

Just as today - bred for performance or bred as game dogs or bred as fighting or catch dogs – with super intelligence levels to think, to plan, to strategize, to defend, to concur with super endurance, specific traits and abilities to do just that

In the first century CE, Rome discovered this Bull and terrier types "breed" after defeating the Britons.

Back in Rome these dogs and their descendants spread all over the Roman Empire.

For the next four hundred years, they were used as war and catch dogs, and intermixed with various local domesticated household and especially at arena fighting dog contests – this all over the European continent, thus becoming the forerunners of the modern APBT.

A competing theory places the origin of the Pit Bull in England at the time of the Norman Conquest in 1066, when farmers and butchers would use large, game Mastiff-type dogs as "Bullenbeissers," which translates as "bull biter."

Trained to latch onto a ferocious wild animal on a bull's nose and not let go until the animal was subdued, these dogs were the only way that humans could regain control when a bull (some wild in nature) became agitated and of course also used by the farming communities as hunting and catch dogs and naturally serves as homestead dogs to farmers and general small town people and the aristocrats alike - for sporting dog disciplines and security dogs.

First time registration as "Pit Bull".

During 1909 the ADBA – The American dog breeders association was started by Mr. Guy McCord - officially registering the "Pit-bull" for the first time.

About the "**Pit-Bull** **and America.**

British immigrants to the U.S. at that time brought these fighting dogs, to the New World and other countries.

Then in America.

However, as the breed spread to Americans and Americans spread across the continent, "Pit Bulls" began to be put to their original use, catch work, fighting and as sought after general family, farm - homesteads, herding, hunting and working dogs.

Breed selection principals.

The breeding selection in proportion chosen by the various owners of these dogs was aimed to result to improve specific game and working breed traits, pleasant temperament towards owners and sought after characteristics and abilities for the breeders and owners immediate needs.

These dogs ideal for and because of their strength, willingness to control, grip control success to conquer domesticated farm and wild animals, their unbelievable gameness and prey drive to hunt much bigger wild boar and bear, and because of their fighting ability.

These dog the Pit Bull with an American flavor ... became sought after and valuable – for those wanting such a dog **by choice.**

Their sought after attributes and gameness **was tested** between outstanding performance dogs by hunters and by cattle farmers as baiting dogs and by fighting them to prove best of the best.

Their prey drive, endurance and gameness then tested against almost any wild animal - Lions, Hyenas, Wolves, Boar, Donkey and many more.

Only to use best proven performing dogs in breeding's and future breeding and to create a sporting working dog by enhancing sought after traits and size.

Sporting working game dogs.

Bull baiting.

Bull baiting in Britain became a regular sporting activity well supported by the everyday public and the Royalty alike – this to compete for the best of these dogs.

These organized bull baiting competitions also brought gambling to the table and wages accepted on the outcome of these confrontations and this became news worthy.

In time ... laws prohibited this public “bull bating” as a blood sport (1835)” and then growing interest in various ability dog sport as well as dog to dog fighting became more and more popular.

These slow bigger bull bating dogs and crosses had to make way for smaller more agile dogs with more speed, fighting and wrestling abilities, stronger jaw, various desired agilities, bite and controllable human friendly temperament.

This resulted in breeding them to various terrier lines enhancing gameness and dog-to-dog fighting styles and traits and for naturally desired friendly human temperament – this for controlling these dogs’ in actions when needed.

Ratting.

This sporting activity was in reach of the everyday man and them mostly also for the “Gentlemen” of the day.

Testing skills with outer dogs, other animals and rat fighting contest also became popular.

The origin of the “Pit bull” is compounded by the fact of the extreme secrecy of breeders breeding them, as not to fight or compete with their own blood.

Dog fighting.

Dog fighting became the everyday man's sport and eventually this dog sport was also banned (but continued underground), therefore resulted into "pit" fighting "type dogs" with strong developed fighting skills and amazing gameness coupled with an unsurpassed fighting spirit and unreal human friendly disposition.

Family dogs.

These Pit dogs became a supremely athletic, highly versatile and easily adapt to a variety sporting and working dog activities and also excelled as sought after ordinary family dogs (as we see today as well).

Of course these dogs were naturally and generally favored as fighting dogs but more so as family watch dogs and could be found on as catch dogs on farms, with hunters and also with the ordinary family man of the day - with the rich and the poor.

Dog fighting went underground (in countries that banned dog fighting) and the proven game pit dogs became sought after by the dog-fighting population for dog fights – for and with the rich and the poor alike.

The APBT sought after also by popular demand to become the everyday house family as a dog to have.

The by now called "Pit-bull or pit-dog" came into a class of their own recognized by their typical muscular bulldog like body and head and terrier like appearance.

These dogs, from the Irish and English "pit fighting" dogs have found their way into America and later were also specifically imported by the Americans and outer countries alike.

With these characteristics and traits and with added unreal affectionate and eager to please attitude for their human masters, the Pit bull also became the all-round sought after family dog watch dogs and rightfully called and proven to be the American “nanny dogs” .

In America, the breed diverged slightly from their British counterparts and was used not only as pit fighters, but also as catch dogs, as guardians of the common family and farmers and utilized as guard and attack dog trained for security, dog sport and for the drug lords and saloon keepers.

From 1900 to 1975, “Pit bull” breeders started producing slighter larger and leggier dogs.

However, this gain in size and weight was small, without any corresponding loss in abilities, performance, gameness and their unreal human friendliness.

Name change and development.

Even named American Staffordshire terrier these dogs were called Pit-Bulls.

Pit dog fighting intensified in the United States and these fighting dogs kept their name as Pit bulls.

These sought after dogs commonly owned by prize-fighters, saloonkeepers, and ranch and farming communities, dog sporting men and ordinary households the like – then not to say only for dog fighting.

Unjustly labelled and recognized because of their name, reputation, and those who actively fought their dogs.

The Pit-bull was severely tested in the pit and produced a generation of Pit bulls bred from the very best game fighting dogs with finely horned traits and skills.

These purposely and selected game bred dogs generally known as Pit Terriers, Half-and-half bull & terriers, Staffordshire fighting dogs, Pit bulls, Old family dogs, Yankee terriers and Rebel terriers – but the same dog ... the ultimate game fighting dog.

1936 - American Staffordshire terriers.

Because of their natural abilities and fighting history, the *American Kennel Club (AKC)* would not recognize the breed "as a breed" until 1936, although then they defined it as an American Staffordshire terrier, distinct from the American pit bull terrier.

1972. Officially accepted as a breed – the American Pit Bull Terrier.

During 1972, the name American Pit-bull terrier became official and accepted as a separate breed of dog.

1980' – Popularity worldwide.

The American Pit bull terrier became so popular that nefarious and criminal individuals with little or no knowledge of the breed started to own and breed them and predictably, problems started to crop up.

Many of these newcomers did not adhere to the traditional breeding socializing and training goals of the old time real American Pit Bull terrier breeders and purity, size and temperament was thrown out with the bath water.

In typical backyard home breeding - style, they began randomly breeding dogs in order to mass-produce puppies as profitable commodities and opposite to the criteria that have prevailed up to then.

Their goals were human aggressive tendencies– trained for attack dog purposes - and of course for organized dog fighting.

Media worthy news and propaganda.

The media illustrated these pit fighting as animal abuse, cruelty to animals and as human aggressive dogs (even up to today) – then of course “any dangerous dog” was labeled APBT.

Naturally all relating Pit-bull stories became news worthy, (even today) insomuch as dog fighting became an illegal sport where money is wagered at the pit side.

Dog fighting continued.

All this said ... as long as the Pit-bull and many other fighting dogs are bred, dog fighting will continue – man’s desire is to have the best and will compete to prove it.

Dog fighting is not decreasing and is actually increasing, which prove that this sport still holds a fascination.

Pit fighting is still legal in some countries.

New dogs, new breeders and new dog fighters gain recognition and reputation each year and the game is on an upward trend that will see no equal.

Living down an unjust.

To this day, as family dog or working sport dog these dogs are still trying to live down an unjust and undeserved reputation by those who are good breed stewards, show dog enthusiast and ordinary owners keeping and perpetuating them as family and working sporting dogs.

Suffice to say “still” advancing in popularity as sought after game sporting and family game dog.

Early perceptions of Pit Bulls.

Far from being considered only as a fighting dog and or killing machine on 4 legs, “Pit Bulls” became an all American and mostly worldwide favorite sought after dog to have in the early half of the century -

during World War I, USA itself is personified as a "Pit Bull" on army recruitment posters – acknowledge "can they fight" implicating America's capabilities as a nation, and several "Pit Bulls" go on to become famous in the American military.

Referring to an athlete as a "Pit Bull" is a very common sports metaphor and it is meant as the highest compliment.

There is also a famous racehorse in the late 1930's named Pit Bull, as well as a number of "pit bull dogs" stars of early motion pictures.

Frequently, Pit bulls are associated with children, as in the "Our Gang" comedies, as well as with Buster Brown, both in short films and as the corporate mascot for a shoe company.

The famous RCA Victor image of a dog and a gramophone also featured a "pit bull terrier".

The tide is continuously turning.

Pit Bull continues to be a popular description for dog athletes.

Today nearly thirty years after the beginning of this anti APBT hysteria, the tide seems to be turning a little bit, but every step forward is followed by a step back.

Yet it only takes a brief look at the history of APBT's to realize that the dogs are not the problem; the humans who misuse them are.

This breed was generally perceived as sought after family dog, very child-friendly and a dog of choice for the family man and as athlete in organized Pit bull show competition to test their awesome athlete capabilities and endurance.

With outreach and education, it may be possible to restore that image and rehabilitate the real APBT's reputation, restoring an iconic all American dog to its rightful place among mankind's best friends.

Describing the American Pit-Bull terrier today.

Without making it complex, the APBT is supremely athletic, highly versatile, and all round adaptive breed, with unreal human affection, eager to please and all round family or sporting dog to have.

Then with unsurpassed courage, gameness, prey drive, resolve, somewhat indifference to pain because of a game disposition and stubborn perseverance in overcoming any challenge.

Contrary to popular belief the purebred game APBT **is not inherently aggressive towards humans.**

However, because of the historically genetically breeding goals, definitely inclined towards dog and animal aggression and high prey drive, this and with their strength endurance and determination should be reckoned as a most suitable all round breed if you think of making the Pit-bull an addition to your family.

As with any companion dog, socializing and constant fair-minded training is necessary from a very young age.

Excellent as watch dogs, they may be suspicious of strangers, as most dogs are, and will protect loved ones if necessary, but in general do not excel in protection work if not specially trained to do so.

There are many other breeds that will be better guard or attack dogs but without the characteristics and traits of the American Pit-bull terrier.

Other breeds of dog commonly confused with the American Pit-Bull terrier are all types of Bull and terrier breeds, then more specifically the American Staffordshire, English Staffordshire, Am -staff terrier, Bully breeds, Ban dog, Blue Pits, mix pit-bull breeds and Staff bull.

South Africa Pit-Bull participation.

In 1979 the first American Pit-Bull terriers was introduced to and imported into South Africa by Mr. Charley Bensch from Liq. Kid's Kennel's – fondly called by South Africans as Oom Charley and the godfather of our breed in South Africa today - and soon followed by Mr. Murry Jürgen's and Mr. Chris Bekker and many more.

Today many serious breeders of this breed import best of the best bloodlines from various countries into South Africa.

The Pit-bull Digest and the South African Dog breeders Association was formed to register South African bred American Pit-Bull terriers, their offspring and bloodlines on a database and focus on the Pit-Bull breed's working traits in every aspect - not only as fighting dog but as working game dog- sporting dogs in weight pulling, long hanging, agility, obedience as well as in conformation and many other dog sport and prey drive and endurance disciplines.

Today also other APBT breed registries and also online registries are available for education and breed registry.

Dog fighting in South Africa.

Organized dog fighting in in the 80's in South Africa was also an active dog sport in testing Pit-Bull gameness and formed a part in our history of these dogs.

Even today with South African legislation preventing dog fighting we still have the illegal dog fighting aspect, the same as in all countries, even if it is illegal.

Today many APBT breeders in South Africa import American Pit Bulls directly (because of proven gameness and proven completion ability rewards), thus adding this sought after genes to the gene pool.

Different breeding goals.

Today organized dog shows (not blood sport as it is known) pave a way for the Pit-Bull dog fanciers to test their dogs in active abilities sport, in dog various other dog sport, conformation and obedience competitions this with different disciplines.

This is where agility, athleticism, determination abilities can be viewed with appreciation.

Then, also utilizing this game dog as family dogs, in protection, guard work, as hunting and catch dog with defined sought after prey drive and then still by some as a fighting dog.

The house and guard dog fanciers enjoy the APBT as family dog with a difference, **no fear, protective and never give up attitude when the need arise** and unreal friendly placid human temperament.

What cannot be denied is that the APBT is the oldest purest Bulldog breed of dog.

The Pit-Bull breed are one of the oldest and purest Bulldog blood surviving today, with handwritten pedigrees dated back to the early 1800's, long before most of today's registered breeds existed.

Many other recognized dog breeds today have APBT blood in their genes.

Sadly with non-historical proven breeding goals, non-selection and because the vast majority of American Pit bulls are no longer game bred to the traditional selective best to best pit fighting standards (understandably, since the traditional performance test, the pit contest itself, is now a felony) but only with show performance breeding, mix or miss breeding ... resulting in their offspring loosing 150 years of specific inbred Pit-Bull gameness, temperament and other specifically sought after traits are lost.

These “bigger”, “ballooned” and “special” colours bred for human aggression and as attack dogs today ... portrayed to be Pit Bulls.

These type breeding results in Pit-Bull offspring having an un-repairable downward slide in physical, trait and stable mental quality of the “real APBT breed”.

To be a conscientious steward of the real Pit-Bull breed, will mean **you** have to manage the breed for the breed sake and put the American Pit Bull’s future as game dog first.

This means “real passionate breeders” knowing when and with what and how to breed and then by carefully selection in breeding and when not.

To aim at intensifying sought after typical Pit Bull traits and gameness. Some Pit Bulls breeding’s have been well served by those who made it their life and passion to protect the heritage of the American Pit-Bull as breed, most others did not.

Breeding an American Pit-Bull successfully is a long-term project and should be purposeful with utmost consideration to type temperament, gameness and genetics a lifetime quest.

With given respect to those breeders proudly still breeding the “real” APBT like yesteryear.



Do not let the few - still fighting these magnificent fighting dogs – in our modern world regulated by not fighting dog legislation, destroy the APBT's place as family dog and in dog sport in South Africa by forcing breed legislation.

Today "some" worthy breeders still import proven top well pedigreed game bred performace based dogs {see on this website under The breeder and his breeding – the meaning of "well-bred or well pedigreed"} and at the same time export of our best blood to many countries in the world. **Gawie MK**

