

THE PIT BULL DILEMMA

The Gathering Storm

*1000 Annotated Abstracts from Books, Journals,
Magazines, Newspapers and Reports*

Donald H. Clifford, D.V.M., M.P.H., Ph.D.

*Professor and Director
Division of Laboratory Animal Medicine
The Medical College of Ohio
Toledo, Ohio*

Kay Ann Green, B.S.

*Instructor and Supervisor
Division of Laboratory Animal Medicine
The Medical College of Ohio
Toledo, Ohio*

Ronald M. Watterson, M.S.L.S.

*Librarian of the Raymon H. Mulford Library
The Medical College of Ohio
Toledo, Ohio*

The Charles Press, Publishers
Philadelphia



Vet. Med.

016.3633

C6124

1990

Acknowledgments

Thirty-two fighting dogs were seized in raids in Lucas County (Toledo, Ohio) in 1981 and impounded at the Medical College of Ohio prior to litigation. This book dealing with pit bulls was initiated while searching for information in preparation for court trials, presentations before varied groups and the writing of articles for newspapers, journals and magazines. It was soon apparent that there were several books, magazine articles, and newspaper stories which contained considerable information and/or insight into the subject. The excellent narrative and photographs in the article by Beno Kroll and William Strode,¹ the description of the world of pit bulls and dogfighting in the books by Richard F. Stratton,² and Bobby Hall,³ the investigative reporting in the newspaper articles by Jeff Klinkenberg,⁴ and Mark Vogler,⁵ the overview of dogfighting by Christopher Hoff,⁶ and detailed genealogic material in the "History of the Pit Bull Terrier" by Wayne Brown⁷ are a few examples. We would like to salute these and other creative and talented people who have described the cruel sport of dogfighting, the many attributes of pit bulls and related subjects.

We would like to thank Ms. Sharon Summersett and Ms. Karen Kina, who tirelessly added the abstracts to the word processor, typed letters to newspapers and performed a myriad of other related tasks. The staff of the Raymon H. Mulford Library were extremely helpful in verifying citations. Contributions by personnel in Photo/Graphics with the drawings and charts, are acknowledged. Hundreds of people contributed clippings and other material from many states and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. People at the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Humane Society of the United States, American Humane Association and the Toledo Humane Society contributed material. Animal control organizations, crime laboratories, attorneys, newspaper reporters, librarians at newspaper and public libraries, kennel owners, dog fanciers, police officers, meter readers, concerned dog owners, colleagues at the Medical College of Ohio, postal workers, families of the victims of pit bull attacks, friends and relatives contributed over 2,000 clippings and other pieces of information during approximately one year.

The first part of the title was derived from the common reference to the pit bull dilemma in the media. It is indeed a true dilemma to try to cope with a group of dogs in which there are gentle, as well as dangerous and unpredictable animals. Should they be treated as other dogs or be subject to breed-specific laws to restrict or ban them? Both choices have emotional proponents and opponents.

The cut-off for published material was December 31, 1986. As viewed from that date, the problem has grown to threatening proportions with no clear solution. Thus, the subtitle, "The Gathering Storm," (imperishably linked to the author-statesman, Sr. Winston Churchill) seemed most

¹ Kroll, B.: The savage pit. *Geo.* 1:7, (November, 1979): 56-78.

² Stratton, R.F.: "The Book of the American Pit Bull Terrier." T.F.H. Publications, Inc., Ltd. (Neptune, New Jersey). (1981): 1-349.

Stratton, R.F.: "The World of the American Pit Bull Terrier." T.F.H. Publications, Inc., Ltd. (Neptune, New Jersey). (1983): 1-288.

³ Hall, B.: "Bullyson and His Sons." Walsworth Press, Inc. (Houston, Texas). (1986): 1-246.

⁴ Klinkenberg, J.: Pit bulls. Friend or foe? Part 1. Breed's ancestry traced to England. *St. Petersburg Times.* (St. Petersburg, Florida). 102:291, (May 11, 1986): F-3.

Klinkenberg, J.: Pit bulls. Friend or foe? Part 2. Some biting statistics about "man's best friend." *St. Petersburg Times.* (St. Petersburg, Florida). 102:292, (May 12, 1986): D-2.

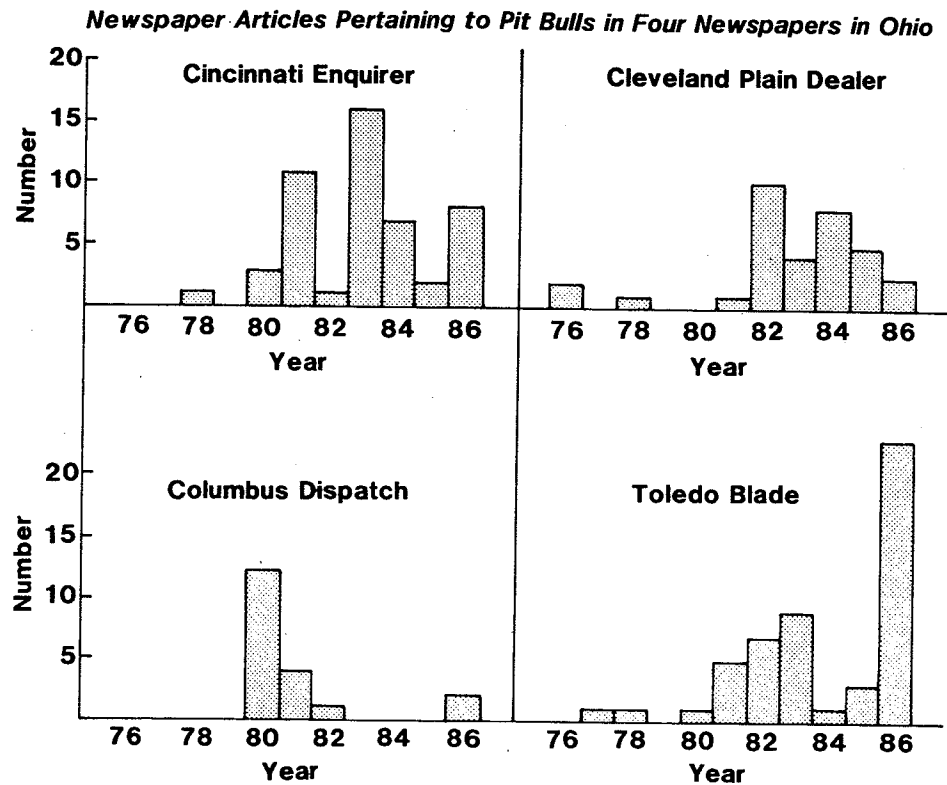
⁵ Vogler, M.: The pit bull dilemma. Friend or foe? Attack history. *Sun Tattler.* (Hollywood, Florida). 51:209, (September 2, 1985): A-10.

Vogler, M.: Trainer is a pit bull's best friend. Pastor has respect, concern for breed. *Sun Tattler.* (Hollywood, Florida). 51:210, (September 3, 1985): A-3.

⁶ Hoff, C.: "Dogfighting in America." A National Overview. The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. (New York, New York). (1981): 1-381.

⁷ Brown, W.D.: "History of the Pit Bull Terrier." PDQ Instant Printing. (Dallas, Texas). (1987): 1-160.

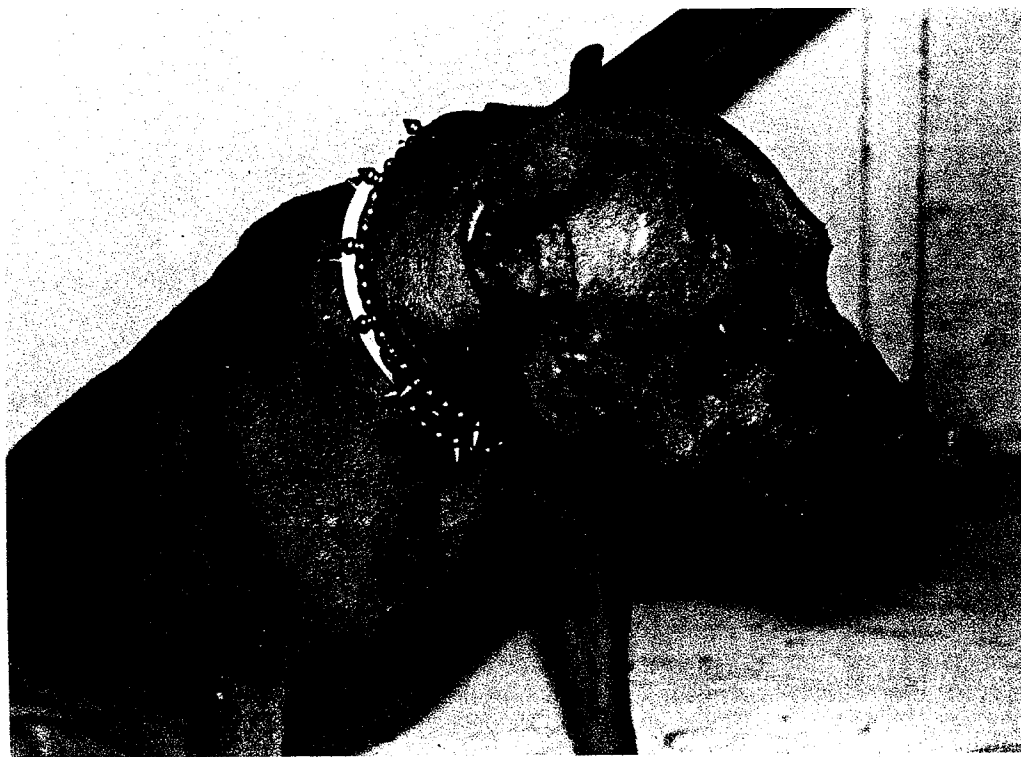
appropriate. During 1987, there was a torrent of additional articles and media reports on pit bulls. The numbers of articles dealing with pit bulls published by four major newspapers in Ohio alone, available prior to 1987, summarize this phenomenon most eloquently and are included below. The cluster of articles during a short period of time usually represented a major incident.



The dramatic increase in articles in newspapers in the 1980s is apparent. The largest number of reports for this period occurred in 1986, which is illustrated here under source and distribution of abstracts.

Introduction

This compilation of abstracts was not gathered in praise or condemnation of pit bulls, but to offer the varied ideas of many authors about the history, biology and behavior of these unusual animals. We have developed a great respect for pit bulls during this undertaking. Their behavior ranges from the gentle, well-mannered show dogs and lovable pets to the savage and wanton killers of animals and people. The pit bull illustrated below was being confined in an animal shelter. He has a friendly appearance but his scars mark him as a killer of other dogs.

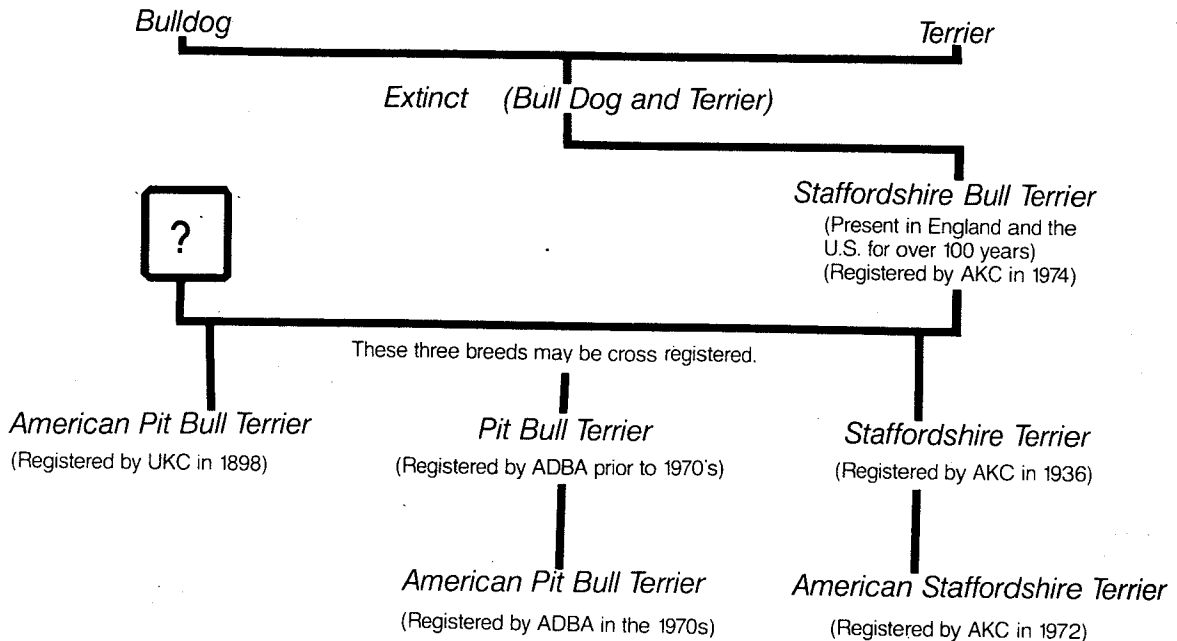


A pit bull of unknown lineage. Such animals may be surrendered to animal control centers (dog pounds) or humane societies, picked up on the streets or impounded following complaints, incidents or dog fighting. In most instances, they are euthanatized since they are considered unfit for adoption.

The pit bull is commonly reported to contain the following registered breeds of dogs*;

1. Staffordshire Bull Terriers (AKC)**
2. American Staffordshire Terriers (AKC) and
3. American Pit Bull Terriers (UKC*** AND ADBA)****

The pit bull family tree illustrated below contains the lineage of these dogs with significant dates:



N.B.: the Bull Terrier and Boston Terrier derived from Bull and Terrier stock, are 1) generally exempt from ordinances and laws pertaining to pit bulls; 2) selected away from gameness (tenacity and courage); 3) not involved in dogfighting; 4) identifiable as separate breeds by the AKC; 5) relatively uncommon, and 6) controlled or regulated by their owners.

Most of the troublesome dogs are scatterbred and derived primarily from dogfighting stock. Thus, in our opinion, the uncommon and identifiable Bull Terrier and Boston Terrier should be excused. The rare Staffordshire Bull Terrier is considered to be the original fighting dog which was brought from the British Isles to give rise to the American fighting dogs. The American Staffordshire Terrier (AKC) and American Pit Bull Terrier (UKC and/or ADBA) may be dual-registered and can be considered to be the same dog. They are the purebred animals which are associated with the pit bull dilemma. The early issues of the official publication of the American Dog Breeders Association which registers American Pit Bull Terriers was called the *Pit Bull Gazette*. Crossbred or mixed-bred animals may inherit the instincts of fighting dogs and be as dangerous and unpredictable as scatterbred animals. Thus, they should be included under the generic term of pit bull for purposes of animal control.

Professional dogfighters register their dogs but amateur, novice garage or alley - dog fighters may or may not register their animals. It is estimated that only one out of every 10 or 20 pups born to a fighting bitch and pit stud dog will be worthy of training for combat. Thus, there was and continues to be a pool or surplus of fighting dogs from serious dogfighters as well as backyard breeders. In the past, professional dogfighters (aficionados) would destroy young dogs that were

*The breeds of dogs, i.e., Bull Terrier, are capitalized.

**American Kennel Club

***United Kennel Club

****American Dog Breeders Association

not game. Following World War II there was an increasing demand for pit bulls for dog fighting, as guard dogs and companion animals. The puppy peddlers were there to fill this market. Unfortunately, these dogs have now caught the attention of young men looking for status, as well as that of drug dealers, teenagers and irresponsible or immature individuals. Further deterioration of pit bulls has been caused by indiscriminate breeding. Increased publicity of pit bulls and dogfighting by humane societies, dog clubs and press led to greater popularity with irresponsible people. Unfortunately, many responsible people obtained pit bulls but did not have the knowledge or means to control them. Insight into canine behavior, physical strength, special facilities and determination on the part of the owner are required to keep pit bulls safely. Often it is the children of pit bull owners that pay the price of their parents' folly. The dilemma of dangerous and unpredictable dogs in the hands of cruel and irresponsible owners is being addressed in the courts. Legislative groups have become involved and restrictive or prohibitive (banning) ordinances have been enacted. One state (Ohio) passed a law in 1987 which defines pit bulls as vicious dogs and restricts them.

Ralph Greenwood, former President of the American Dog Owners Association and Editor of the *American Pit Bull Terrier Gazette*, has been one of the staunchest supporters of pit bulls. His comments on the American Pit Bull Terriers, and laws which are designed to regulate them, are as follows⁹:

1. Breed-specific ordinances and laws violate the civil liberties of American citizens and are a violation of due process of law;
2. Breed-specific ordinances and laws are discriminatory and threaten the existence of pit bulls;
3. Breed-specific ordinances are unenforceable due to vagueness of the pit bull group;
4. Pit bulls have been bred not to bite humans;
5. Pit bulls do not bite people more frequently than do other dogs;
6. The jaws of pit bulls do not lock onto their victim during a bite;
7. Pit bulls do not bite harder than do other dogs;
8. The holding bite produces less injury than the slash-and-tear bites by other dogs.

One of the early trials involving pit bulls took place in Albuquerque, New Mexico, following the attack on Angela Hands by pit bulls in Tijeras, New Mexico. A breed-specific ordinance was challenged by pit bull owners and the Duke City Pit Bull Club, Inc.

On March 17, 1986 Judge Richard B. Traub found that Ordinance No. 32 of the Village of Tijeras was constitutional. The following findings were included with this judgment¹⁰:

1. The breed known as the American Pit Bull Terrier is a recognized breed and readily identifiable by laymen;
2. the breed is unique amongst dogs in that it possesses characteristics of aggression, strength, gameness, viciousness, predaceousness, unpredictability and savageness not possessed by any other breed of dog;
3. the breed attacks without warning, and for the purpose of killing or destroying its victims;
4. the breed has been the one breed universally and historically selected and bred for dog fighting;
5. the breed possesses an unusual bite in that it bites and holds its jaws locked shut, frequently requiring the dog's jaws to be pried open in order to release the bite;
6. the breed is almost impossible to confine without resorting to fortress-like measures; the American Pit Bull Terrier can climb over high chain link fences and trees, tear metal shetting with its teeth, attack through chain link fencing, tear loose its collars; digs under fences and walls, all making the normal laws relating to use of leashes and keeping dogs confined ineffective and useless with respect to this breed;

⁹ Greenwood, R.: In Defense of the American Pit Bull Terrier. *Community Animal Control*. 5:5, (September/October, 1975): 13, 30-32, 35-36.

7. the breed is considered twice as strong as any other dog, and is able to defeat other dogs or animals in a fight, usually resulting in the death of the victim;
8. although other breeds of dogs have attacked and killed or seriously injured humans and other animals, the American Pit Bull Terrier has been guilty far in excess of any other breed in proportion to its population;
9. as a result of the matters mentioned above, and in view of the several serious pit bull attacks in The Village of Tijeras, a rational basis exists for the enactment of the ordinance."

Evidence presented at the trial supported the fact that the American Pit Bull Terrier closely resembles the American Staffordshire Terrier and that a dog can be registered with more than one registry. It has been found that the Staffordshire Bull Terrier is the original breed brought from England and Ireland as foundation stock for the American Pit Bull Terrier and the American Staffordshire Terrier.

One thousand pieces of literature were selected and abstracted for inclusion in this book. The key or descriptive words in the abstracts have been alphabetized and are contained in the index. Although the titles may be scanned for an overview, the index is the key to the content. It is imagined that a word in the index would be photocopied by the reader and the reference number(s) used as a guide to the location(s) of useful articles.

¹⁰ Segrest, M.A. and Clifford, D.H.: Are pit bulls different? Part I. *Community Animal Control*. 5:4, (July/August 1986): 14-17, 26-27.

About the Abstracts

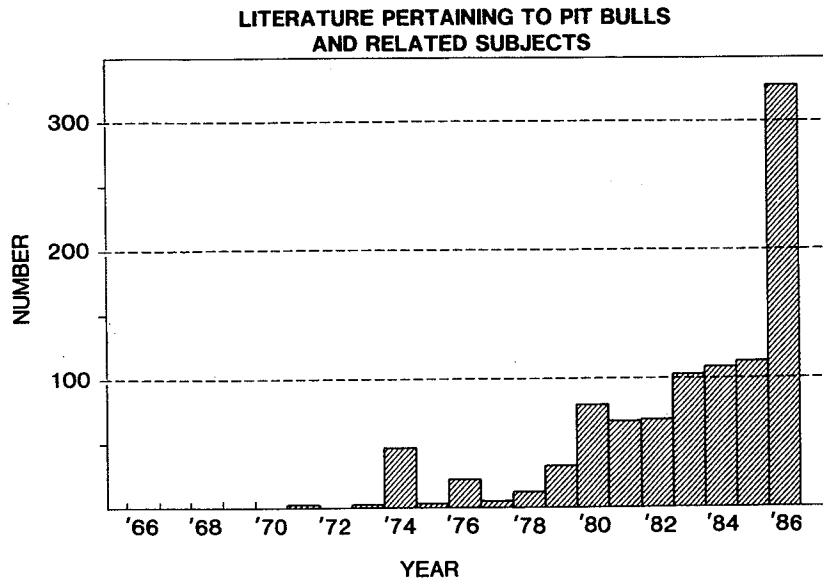
The abstracts were derived from a random compilation of information. They are listed alphabetically in magazine style rather than newspaper style, although a majority are derived from newspaper articles. Courts are reticent about using news stories as evidence, do but they represent a continuing account of events. The source and distribution of abstracts according to year have been tabulated and are included below. Comments on the style of the citation, composition or context of the abstract, editorial comments and code for illustration(s) and reference(s) in addition to the location of the story are included.

Source and Distribution of Abstracts According to Year

The distribution of the abstracts according to source is as follows:

Books	19
Journals and Magazines	196
Newspapers	764
Reports	21
	<u>1,000</u>

The distribution of the abstracts included in this book are illustrated below according to the year in which they were published.



¹¹ Dumanoski, D.: A hot dog gets the cold shoulder. Pit bull breed banished in Lynn, loyalists attack "canine racism." *Globe*. (Boston, Massachusetts). 230:19, (July 19, 1986): 2.

¹² Anon.: Dogged by cats. *The Blade's Pages of Opinion*. *Blade*. (Toledo, Ohio). 137:206, (July 25, 1987): 8.