

Advice on Getting A Puppy in 1915

By Nancy Secrist, Easdale: the best pet care

I have 14 generation of my Airedale Terriers and sometimes get strange calls. A few years ago, I had a beautiful litter of nine-week-old male puppies, raised in my home with two sons. I had invested many sleepless nights, high quality foods, genetic testing of the parents, timely veterinarian care and so on. A caller asked if I had puppies....

"Yes" I replied and spoke a little about them.

"All males? But I have been told that females are more affectionate, more obedient, and more loyal," said my caller.

"Both sexes are very affectionate to their owners while obedience and loyalty depend more on socialization and training than on gender," I replied, having earned AKC obedience titles on both sexes, and attempting to provide more information to my caller.

"Nine weeks old?" the caller exclaimed. "But I will only buy an eight-week-old puppy!"

To which I replied, "Then I guess you should have called a week ago."

People get lots of advice on how to select a puppy but that has changed over the years. In 1915 and before, you would be told to get only a male puppy and that puppy should be more than six months old--why, you say?

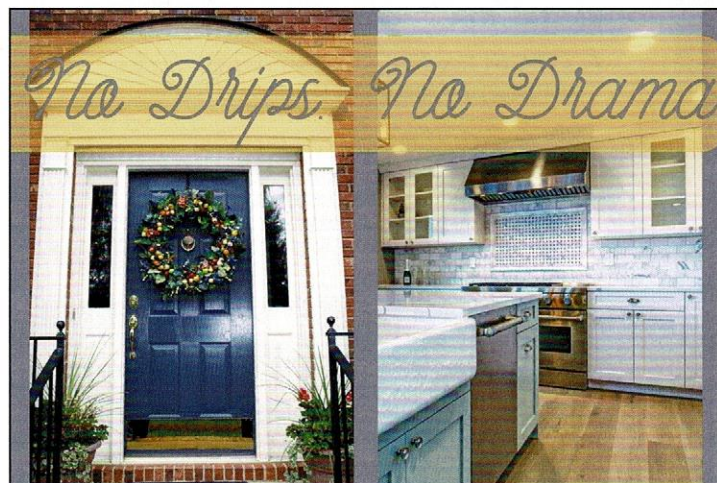
Early in the 20th century, there were no vaccinations for distemper or other diseases. Therefore, a six-month-old puppy would have already had distemper and, if lucky, survived it. Only 50 to 20% of dogs survive being ill with distemper and puppies are much more susceptible. The logic was that by getting a puppy with the natural immunity of a survivor that you would then be able to enjoy raising your new pet and not have to go through the sad experience of losing a puppy! Need I say that we should all be very grateful for advances in our care of pets. Puppies should get a complete puppy series of vaccinations to avoid tragedy.

So why a male? One hundred years ago, anesthetic for pet surgery was not available. Due to this a female could not be spayed as



internal surgery was impossible. Males were not usually neutered either. But if people had to pick a sex to keep intact and sexually mature, they did not like the idea of red spotting from the female's heat cycle and the wonderful opportunity to find homes for puppies--every 6-8 months! Not to mention nursing puppies through distemper as well. Males didn't have that problem.

If you have a dog, either sex, give them a little extra attention today and appreciate that they are healthy, well adjusted, and living long lives with you!



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