

Cockfighting

I came across this cover some time ago, and I had to look twice to figure out that it was advertising cockfighting, an activity that's certainly seen as unsavory in today's society. But, cockfighting, itself, goes all the way back to the beginnings of civilization, with the Sumerians, and is still popular in a number of areas of the world today. And the United States certainly hasn't been above cockfighting. Indeed, in earlier years, it was quite popular here.

A cockfight is a blood sport between two roosters (cocks), held in a ring called a cockpit. Cockfighting is now illegal throughout all states in the United States, Brazil, Australia and in most of Europe. It is still legal in several U.S. territories, however.

The gamecocks are specially bred birds, conditioned for increased stamina and strength. The comb and wattle are cut off in order to meet show standards of the American Gamefowl Society and the Old English Game Club and to prevent freezing in colder climates. Cocks possess congenital aggression toward all males of the same species. Cocks are given the best of care until near the age of two years old. They are conditioned, much like professional athletes prior to events or shows. Wagers are often made on the outcome of the match. While not all fights are to the death, the cocks may endure significant physical trauma. In many other areas around the world, cockfighting is still practiced as a mainstream event; in some countries, it is government controlled. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cock_fighting]

“In the United States, famous presidents who were lovers of the game were George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Andrew Jackson, and Abraham Lincoln. It was socially acceptable and encouraged for a gentleman to have a flock of gamecocks and to be an expert on the sport. At one point, the U.S. Became a center for cockfighting activities and events. Cockfights were even held in the committee rooms of the president. It is said that the fighting-cock almost became the national emblem. It lost by one vote to the American eagle. Cockfighting declined when the Civil War started.” [<http://www.kplctv.com/story/1886116/history-of-cockfighting?redirected=true>]



“At the turn of the twenty-first century cockfighting remained legal in Oklahoma despite intense, emotionally charged wrangling to change its status. In 2000 and 2001 attempts to proscribe the activity, both sides engaged in devious and complex parliamentary stratagems in the state legislature and in the courts of public opinion. In this context it was evident that the cockfighters, through their organizations and spokespersons, clearly outmaneuvered their opponents and temporarily won the day. But theirs was a short respite as they continued to fight this battle against the forces of modernity, "progress," and evolutionary meliorism. In 2002 Oklahomans approved State Question 687, which made cockfighting a felony. In 2004 the Oklahoma Supreme Court unanimously upheld the constitutionality of the ban.” [<http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/C/CO012.html>]

“SAN DIEGO — State and federal authorities described a weekend [2007] cockfighting raid as the biggest in U.S. history after agents found more than 4,400 birds being raised and trained to kill at the same compound where they carried out what was then the largest bust six years ago.” [http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/21326017/ns/us_news-crime_and_courts/t/cockfighting-raid-may-be-biggest-us-history/]