

BLACKIE

Part I – How Blackie Came to Live With Us

This is the story about Blackie, a mixed breed dog that seemed to be mainly Labrador Retriever. Before Blackie adopted us approximately 8 ½ years ago, he lived with neighbors, Larry and Betty, for about a year, but we did not know that. Much later we learned how they came to have the dog. They had been out riding the back roads in Loudoun County and as they drove by one of the intersections, they saw a black puppy beside the road at the intersection. Later at about 4 pm that day on the way back home, Larry and Betty approached the intersection on which they had seen the black puppy that morning. The puppy was still waiting at the intersection apparently for his owners to come and pick him up.

Our neighbors stopped and opened their car door and the puppy got in the car, apparently tired of waiting for his owners to come back and pick him up.

After Larry and Betty returned home, they decided to keep the abandoned puppy. They named him Jake. Larry and Betty both worked and they let Jake run loose during the day. He took advantage of his free time by visiting us while we were outside working in the yard. If we were working inside our fenced in yard, he would jump the fence into the yard.



Blackie checks out a new home—
and decides he likes it here!

At night he would jump the fence and go home. I played with Jake a lot and he in effect became my dog. When he first came to our house we did not know he belonged to the neighbors and that his name was Jake. I wanted him to have a name so, because of his black hair, I named him Blackie.

After a while we were talking with Larry and Betty and we all learned that we were “sharing” a dog. We all laughed about it but it seemed to be the dog’s choice.

Some time later he started visiting us during the day and he didn’t go home at night; so I would walk him home after dark. This arrangement lasted for a while until one evening I was walking back to my house from Blackie’s home, and I heard the patter of feet; he was following me home. I gave up and we let him stay with us when he wanted to and go home when he wanted to. Then one Saturday, Larry visited us and asked if he could borrow his dog as he was going out of town for a while and wanted to take his dog with him. What could we say? Blackie was Larry’s and Betty’s dog and they could take him home whenever they wanted to.



Blackie made his choice—he is here to stay!

Shortly, thereafter, Betty visited us and gave us Blackie’s vaccine and dog license records and, in effect, gave Jake to us. Blackie had made a choice and now the transfer of ownership was complete.

Part II – Blackie Shows His Personality

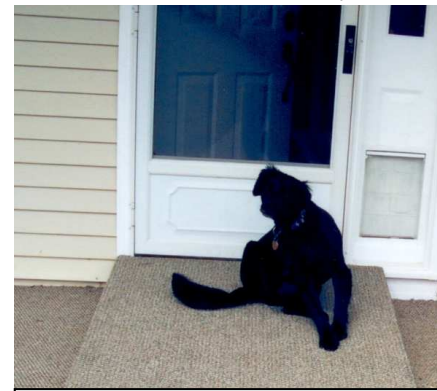
We soon learned that Blackie hated UPS trucks with a passion. We guessed that a UPS driver in a protective mode had at one time used Mace on Blackie. We have no knowledge that such an event ever took place. Blackie could just as easily be upset with UPS trucks on the theory that he was abandoned by a UPS driver.

Who knows the reason for his dislike?

Blackie, to this day, will jump our fence to get out of the yard but he will not jump the fence to get back in. We trained him not to jump in or out the back yard although we could never train him not to jump out of the front yard, especially when UPS trucks are going by.

Blackie soon made the decision that it would be in his best interest to be my wife's dog rather than for him to be my dog. After that decision was made, wherever my wife goes, Blackie goes.

Blackie has been with us now for about 8 1 / 2 years. He stopped visiting Larry and Betty several years ago. They recently separated and moved away from the area so it appears that Blackie had made the right choice.



Blackie takes a rest

After he moved into our house with us, we became more knowledgeable of one another. He definitely does not like for a stranger to reach out and grab hold of him. My wife constantly tells visitors just to say his name "Blackie" and this

reassures him that every thing is okay. He then becomes a tail-wagging friendly dog.



Blackie on patrol

A few months ago, we used three painters to paint part of the interior of the house. The painters' supervisor told the men that when they met with Blackie they should call him by name and not to try to pet him at first. After that, he would accept them without any problem. Apparently, the men didn't quite understand what their supervisor told them

because in addition to painting they spent the entire day singing, "Blackie," "Blackie, " "Blackie ,"and some other words not understandable in English. Blackie apparently liked the serenade as he didn't give the painters any problems during their visit at our home.

He has several boxes of toys which he really enjoys. He especially likes to play with stuffed animals that contain bells and whistles.. I am not sure how but he can recognize a toy when someone brings one into the house for him. The first thing he does is to examine the stuffed animal for his noisemaker.

In February 2008, my wife brought a stuffed animal (fox) for me, the purpose of which was to function as a small pillow. Because of the design of the pillow, this one is at high risk. .If Blackie were to get a hold of the stuffed fox, he would do his best to make the fox play non-existent bells and whistles.



A high risk stuffed animal

For some reason, Blackie allows the cats to eat first. He lies on the floor looking at them and making them nervous, but he lets them eat first.

I have been attending the Day Care Center Agency on Aging on Fridays for about a month and one-half and I find the staff to be motivated to provide excellent training for its members. They have gone the extra mile to provide me with time and attention. Blackie knows a good thing when he sees one for, without an invitation he hopped aboard the Agency Bus recently ready to Rock and to Roll.

I wouldn't be surprised to see Blackie attempting to attend both the Day Care Center and Carver Senior Center. As I said, he knows good things when he sees them.

H. Ervin Lowell.