



# Bill Pickett Invitational Rodeo

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FOUNDED 1984

## PRESS RELEASE

**“Bull Doggin’, Bull Ridin’ & Barrel Racin’ the Bill Pickett Invitational Rodeo is Back!!!!**

**NATIONAL EQUESTRIAN CENTER – ST. LOUIS, MO will host the  
2005 Bill Pickett Invitational Rodeo**

Grab your cowboy hats, don those boots and saddle up, the 21st Annual Bill Pickett Invitation Finals Rodeo (the nations only touring Black Rodeo) is back at the National Equestrian Center, St. Louis, MO area on Saturday, October 22<sup>nd</sup> at 1:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. for two performances.

For an in depth overview of the drama and the excitement, visit the web site at [www.billpickettrodeo.com](http://www.billpickettrodeo.com).

Heralding the legacy of the Black Cowboy and Cowgirl, president and event producer, Lu Vason has been unrelenting with his vision to keep the history alive. Armed with the knowledge that one out of every six cowboys was Black American, Vason is a true champion of the cause. “The rodeo was named after the legendary creator of Bull Doggin, William “Bill “ Pickett. This rodeo serves as a tribute to the original ‘Bull Dogger’ and is dedicated to all the Black cowboys and cowgirls of the past who helped shape the West, and those today who help to keep the spirit of the West alive, ‘cites Vason.

Motivated by his experience after attending the Cheyenne Frontier Days (the grand daddy of rodeos in Wyoming), Lu Vason, producer of the Bill Pickett Invitational Rodeo states, “My experience was exciting, but lacked one thing, **Black Cowboys**”.

Celebrating our 21st season and hundreds of performances later, Lu Vason, President and Producer of the Rodeo continues to challenge the false perception of an absentee presence of Black’s in the development of the West.

The Black Rodeo has been a powerful tool in his goals of educating people on the Black west experiences and the cultural pride associated with all the contributions made by Black Americans.

“People know the name Will Rogers,” said Vason, “but who they hadn’t heard of was Bill Pickett, and if they had, they didn’t know he was black”. Bill Pickett born in 1870 in Tyler, Texas created “Bull Dogging”, a move in which he rode along side a steer, jumped onto its shoulders and brought the steer down by digging his feet into the ground, and biting the steers lip. The modern day version of the move is called “steer wrestling” and remains the most intriguing exhibition throughout rodeo history.

Bareback riding, calf roping, steer undecorating, bull riding and cowgirl barrel racing are only a smidgen of the excitement that awaits the rodeo spectator. Better than any old Western movie, more exciting than a day at the horse track, and hotter than a Fourth of July celebration, the Bill Pickett Invitational Rodeo is the most fun you will have this year. We guarantee it.

Touring from February through October each year, the rodeo can be seen in cities, arenas and fairgrounds across the country including: Memphis, TN, Atlanta, Beaumont, TX, Los Angeles, Oakland and San Diego, CA, Denver, CO and Washington DC.

This years’ impressive list of sponsors for the St. Louis, MO Area include: Title Sponsor - Glory Foods; Presenting Sponsor - Dodge Rodeo; Event Sponsor - Afro World; National Magazine Sponsors - Upscale Magazine, Black Meeting & Tourism and American Legacy; National Newspaper Sponsor – Rolling Out Newspaper, St. Louis American Newspaper and Radio One Station as Local Media Sponsors.

Tickets for children two (2) and under are free, ages 12 and up - \$12.00 in advance, and \$14.00 the day of the performance; adults - \$15.00 in advance, and \$18.00 the day of the performance; seniors over 65 are \$12.00. Box seats - \$20.00 and Mezzanine \$25.00.

Tickets can be obtained at all Metrotix Outlets including, Famous Barr, Fox Theatre, Schnucks, Afro-World, Best Talent Center, St. Louis Black Pages and Treasure Island (formally The Palace). National Equestrian Center Box Office (Day of Performance). Tickets online at



For additional rodeo and ticket information contact Catherine Givens (314) 388-4107 or visit our website at [www.billpickettrodeo.com](http://www.billpickettrodeo.com).

LETS RODEO!