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THE BATTLING NELSON STORY

BAT BECOMES A COWBOY.



Here I met up with a cowboy and he took me out to one of the big ranches close by, where I became a regular cowboy. Another wild ambition of mine had been gratified. I had read novels of Buffalo Bill and other famous men of the plains, and greatly admired their personalities and records. So here I was astride a horse now and actually herding cattle. When winter set in I jumped the "chaps" and tossed the lariat aside and hiked over to Miller, S. Dak. Here I secured a job as waiter in the Vanderbilt hotel owned by B. F. Torrey. There was a pretty nice boxing club at Sioux Falls, S. Dak., at the time and fights were being held over there weekly. That clinging ambition to become a great boxer wouldn't down in me and early in May I jumped over to the Falls.

Despite the many hardships encountered since leaving home I was determined to become "**A Boxer of World Renown.**"

I called on the manager of the club and asked him to be good enough to bill me for a bout. He looked me over Critically, felt my arms, looked into my eyes, and then said. "Well, Kid, I'll take a chance with you. Be around here next Saturday night and I'll put you on with the famous lightweight, Freddie Green. If you manage to make good, why, I'll give you a chance the next day (Sunday) to fight Soldier Williams. This latter battle to take place at our annual picnic and field day."

WINS FIGHT IN SIOUX FALLS.

I was Johnny on the spot Saturday evening, all beaming with smiles over my good fortune and serenely confident. I wore, for the first time in my life, regulation fighting shoes and had purchased a pair of pretty green trunks. (I have worn that lucky color ever since.) In fact, I was togged up like a real fighter, even though I was an unknown and from a place called Hegewisch. "Hegewisch, Illinois !" exclaimed the Master of Ceremonies. "Where in the world is that located?"

"Battling Nelson ! Whew! what a good fighting name! A regular Admiral Nelson, eh?" "I'm just starting out, sir," I answered in all humility. "I have fought two battles to date and win both that's all." It's a funny thing, indeed, about this Hegewisch business. I made up my mind when I left home that if ever I should be fortunate enough to become famous as a boxer I would certainly not go back on my old town, Hegewisch.

The wheel of fortune turned in my favor, and of course, as the entire world knows, wherever you see the name of Battling Nelson so you will see the name Hegewisch, Illinois.

Bat's Third Battle, Fought May 10, 1898, at Sioux Falls, S. D.

IN WHICH HE DEFEATED FREDDIE GREEN, KNOCKING HIM OUT IN 7 ROUNDS. PURSE, \$7.50.

I was up against a real classy fighter in Freddie Green. He had been bucking the padded arena for several years and was then known as "the Champion of the Dakotas." He was a shifty, clever fellow, raw of bone and had a reach like a gorilla. I entered the arena, unknown and unannounced, as it were. I didn't even have a trainer.

From the tap of the gong in the first round to its finish Green danced around me like a grasshopper, pecking bad jabs into my face repeatedly, and then dancing out of harm's way. My style then was slow and awkward, but I felt from the start that he couldn't knock me out, so as the fight progressed I became confident. He drew first blood in the fourth round. It was the first time in my short career that I had suffered such humiliation and you can bet I was angry. I grew a bit wild and commenced to carry the fight to him. I worked him into a clinch and almost put him out. This round he was overly cautious and kept away from me.

CLEVERNESS A NOVELTY TO BAT.

It was a new experience for me, this slapping and getting away business of Green. I was really tiring, as I could not catch up with him at all. I changed my

tactics then and laid back a while. The crowd, under the impression that I was giving in, began to cry frantically to Green to rush in and finish me.

This was in the sixth round of the battle. Green was a game sort of a fellow and right there I didn't doubt the stories told about his many successful battles and many knockouts. He tried to exchange blows with me. and there's where he made the same mistake as did Wallace's Terrible Unknown, as well as Ole Olson. Ah! how I did tickle his ribs and crack my left into his jaw during that round.

I was warming up to the real fighter's work then. At the end of the round I had the champion hanging on to me, tired and badly battered, though still in the ring. He came up at the call of time in the seventh round in an extremely cautious manner, not making the slightest move to follow up his rushing tactics of the early rounds.

WINS CHAMPIONSHIP OF DAKOTAS.

On the other hand, I assumed the aggressive, and when the old bell tapped I was out of my corner in a jiffy and was on him like a tiger cat. I cut out a dizzy pace for Freddie, which I don't think he will ever forget, if he is still on earth and I hope he is.

I boxed and cuffed him all about the ring until he was groggy. Then I stepped back and handed him a left hook full on the jaw. They carried him out of the ring unconscious. I was thereupon proclaimed the Champion of the Dakotas before I had shed my boxing gloves. My titles so far acquired were: Champion of Hegewisch, Champion of Wallace's Circus and Champion of the Dakotas.

Pretty good, boys, for a kid who had only fought three battles. The purse for the fight amounted to \$7.50, which was collected from the ringside in hats. As I had been doing all along, I sent half of the purse back to mother at Hegewisch.

FIGHTS SOLDIER WILLIAMS.

I was, of course, the town topic of Sioux Falls that evening and the next morning. The manager of the club came around to see me early and made good his promise to fight me against the noted Soldier Williams that afternoon. He raised the purse to \$10, which I readily accepted. Soldier Williams was no spring chicken at the game. He was a successful fighter and had a string of victories to his credit up to the time he met me.

We met in the open ring which was pitched on the picnic grounds of the fight club. You can bet I was a bit stiff and tired after my night's battle, but was out to win myself some reputation and as a result was chuck full of ginger. Williams was not a fancy boxer, but a rough, determined strong fellow like myself.

Gee ! but we certainly busted the atmosphere with wild punches right from the jump. He came at me in the first round determined to finish me right then and there and, of course, knock my reputation and ambition as a kid champion into smithereens. I, of course, loved just that sort of game. He was there with the aggressiveness and stamina, and in him I found the toughest fellow whom I had met to date.

He really had the edge on me up to the sixth round of the battle, just as Green had had the night before. His condition, however, was beginning to tell on him, and I was watching for just such signs of weariness.

THE SOLDIER IS BEATEN.

In the seventh round I reached out and planted my right deep into his wind in order to see how he would stand the gaff. Then I broke ground to discover if he was game enough to come back again and counter. Instead he retreated, muttering something under his breath. "Ha ! ha !" said I, handing over a left hook on the jaw. **"So you're quitting, are you?"** Biff! came another from my right, and then I set sail and fairly smothered him with uppercuts, full swings and body blows.

The gong in this round saved him. He came back all out in the eighth, which proved to be the final round. I again carried the fight to him, and in a few seconds had him stretched out on the floor, more dead than alive. He did manage to get to his feet, but I wheeled and then planted my right hard on his wind, and over he went for the count.

Down went Soldier Williams, the champion of the army.

RETURNS HOME AND FIGHTS DRAW.

After defeating several Northern champions I decided to return home and secure, if possible, a few good bouts in the neighborhood of Chicago. Eddie Herman, another Hegewisch product, had been cleaning up every fighter in the vicinity when I arrived and my admirers in Chicago and at home prevailed upon me to go after him. My great success in the North had reached home before me, and I was greeted as the coming champion.

I was received at home with open arms by father and mother and settled down studying faithfully and "training secretly at night or whenever the opportunity presented itself. I could see nothing then but a ring career for the Battler.

On New Year's Day, Jan 1st, 1899, I began my professional career as a boxer in earnest. On this date I tied up with Eddie Herman at Hegewisch, going to a six round draw with him. My battle had caused so much talk at home and school that I immediately decided to cease my studies, and go after a reputation as a boxer. I

continued to battle around Chicago with varying success until May 17th, 1902. Then I made my historic march into the hilly state of Arkansas where I gained my first real reputation as a coming fighter.

It is unnecessary for me to go into further details as to what happened after as it is contained in detail in other chapters of the book.

Many persons and critics are of the opinion that the name BATTLING is a nickname of mine. Such is not the case. It was handed me when I was born, the selection of the splendid name falling to my Daddy. I was such a scrappy, lusty lunged, busy child that he decided that there was but one name for me "De Battler" or Battling. I have used the name to good advantage ever since, of course. Matthew was tacked on by my mother. She probably named me after the famous Father Matthew founder of the well known temperance order. True to this good name I have followed the principles of this man all my life. I don't drink intoxicants, don't chew tobacco, nor do I smoke. The possessing of these virtues is not much to brag about because they were no doubt born and bred in me, that's all. After that it required but a good strong will power to offset these temptations. I have six brothers and one sister. Albert is a machinist ; Henry is a blacksmith ; Johnny is a moulder ; Charlie a Junior at the University of California, and is studying to become an M. D., but I wouldn't be surprised if he should turn out to be a preacher. Arthur is a motorcycle racer and once rode a mile and a quarter in a minute. My younger brother Harry is the smartest kid of them all, at present he is going to the Boys School at Quincy. Ill. He is inclined to be scrappy, and is already exhibiting signs of following my footsteps. My only sister Ida is living with the folks at home, Hegewisch. My father's name is Nels Nelson, and my mother's name is Mary Nelson.

THE CHAMPION RETURNS TO HEGEWISCH.

Upon my arrival I lost no time in getting a match with Herman who agreed to fight me on my own doormat. Yes, and he certainly made me go some during the six rounds fought. He was fast on his feet, shifty on the order of Abe Attell, and for the first three rounds I could not get inside his guard. He refused to mix things with me, and as the scrap was for points the fourth round opened with his having the edge because of his cleverness. He tired in the fourth after I had reached him a few times, and then the fun began. I forced the fighting, and at the conclusion of this round poor Eddie was a sight. He stalled during the first half of the fifth, but I got him and broke down his defense prettily. In the final round I beat him badly. The referee, however, gave him a shade when he held up both our hands for a draw decision. I had done well, his friends said, even to stand him off that long. I say to this day that I defeated him in this bout. The purse in this fight was \$10.

**Defeats The Noted Eddie Penny in One
Round in Chicago, April 6, 1899.**

FIGHT WAS RESULT OF AN OLD GRUDGE.

Eddie Penny was doing an all star stunt about Chicago, and he was not slow to challenge me for battle. We fought on the South Side on April 6, 1899. Penny had defeated a number of shifty fellows, and was, as was usually the case in those days, a top-heavy favorite over me ii/the betting. I fixed Penny's championship aspirations in just one round, which was perioded with great slugging on my part mostly.

In fact, Penny hardly touched me with one good punch during the short mix-up, from the call of time up to the point where I reached out and cracked him into unconsciousness. After this clean cut victory over such a big Chicago favorite things began to break a bit better for me and the managers of the various clubs were hot on my trail.

THE CHAMPION HANDS BULL WINTERS THE SLEEP PRODUCER.

Bull Winters wanted some of my game after I had bested his chum Penny. I obliged him on May 3, in Chicago. Bull came at me in the opening round like an uncaged wild cat and endeavored to smother me with wild swings and fierce rushes. I don't usually do much ground breaking in my fights, but the Bull would certainly have pushed me off the stage but for my alertness in side stepping him and backing up. He handed me just about 12 seconds of wild work and then stopped short He was tired and winded. He stood panting in the middle of the ring inviting a lead from me. Here I got busy. I walked up with both hands down, shifted a bit, and batted the Bull doubly hard on the chin with my right : then came back with a left hook which went hard into his wind.

Down he went **"THEY CARRIED HIM OUT A BELLOWING."** The club members there assembled evidently favored Winters, and when the hat was passed around they only handed me a paltry \$2.50. However, since that evening things have changed. I have met a dozen or more of this same crowd, and all have informed me that they have paid as high as \$25.00 a seat to see me fight.

EVERYTHING COMES TO HIM WHO WAITS.

After defeating Eddie Penny and Bull Winters they tried to stack me up against a ringer in Chicago, who will be found in my "morgue" of knockouts under the name of John Smith, the Unknown. This man Smith was a strong, well built, tough looking customer. He looked the part of a ringer all over, but I feared him not. I was out to fight my way up to the top, and didn't care who he was, or what he had done previously. Well, anyway, the plans of Smith and his followers went sadly astray, as I handed the fellow the neatest trimming of his life. The bout

went only two rounds.

This victory marked the ending of my schedule for the season. I returned to Hegewisch, and took up my training in our White House Club.

LICKS NEGRO IN PICNIC FIGHT.

Now here's what I call a funny one. After I had taken a long rest in which I learned how to shoot big game on a Western hunting trip, I decided to fight a negro. His name was Feathers Vernon, and I met him at a picnic which was held in Dalton, 111., on July 4, 1900. I did not knock him out for the reason that he never would get close enough to me so I could land "my sleep producer." I batted him all around the ring, however, and but for the "no decision" clause would have won easily.

We fought for the sum of \$10, which of course, was easily divided. When the president of the club was in the act of paying us off a fight was started and the money was knocked out of his hand. I managed to save a dollar and a half of it. I have the torn dollar still in my possession. I tried to pass it, but it was too badly torn, so I kept it as a memento of my first mixup with a "***cullud person.***"

I have fought close to one hundred battles so far, but I had more fun during that scrap than I have ever had since. I licked a dozen negroes during the melee.

HIS FIRST BIG FIGHT.

You readers can easily imagine how tickled and proud I was when the manager of the old Star Theatre Club in Chicago offered me the chance to fight before a regular club and the big sports. This first big battle was with Charles Dougherty. This being the first time that I had appeared before thousands of people, many of whom were regular fight fans, cheering and rooting for their favorites, one would imagine that I would have been nervous, but not so with yours truly.

I naturally was worked up to a high pitch of excitement at times, but I never lost my head. As soon as the fight was started I went after Dougherty in such vicious style he imagined a Kansas cyclone had broken into the building and taken my place in the ring.

I fought more determined than ever, as I knew if I was lucky enough to score a knockout it would be the means of securing good engagements and large purses. I knocked him out in the first round, exact time being one minute and ten seconds. From this time on I got offers galore, a whole bundle of press advertising and was kept busy. I received \$15 for putting out the lights on Dougherty, which was handed to me in nickels and dimes.

BATTLER GETS GOOD BEATING.

Luck was not so good, however, for it was right after this that I lost my first battle. Joe Hedmark is a name I shall never forget. We fought at the Star Theatre, in Chicago, on Sept. 14. He licked me good and clean. Hedmark was a combination of Terry McGovern and Dal Hawkins. He was fast as a bullet, strong, shifty, and could hand out a punch like Jeffries. He had it on me in weight, height and experience. I did my utmost to hold my unbroken string of victories. I fought harder that night than in all my previous battles put together. Poor Joe, I wonder where he is now? I'd like to see him and shake his hand.

In the opening round of the fight he stalled me into leading at him. I fell for it, and as I came in he hung a full swing under my chin, which boosted me off my feet and sent me sprawling to the floor. That was something new to me, and you should have seen me fight back. I went after him, and we mixed it up hard for the balance of the round. It was a dandy round, and I think I had the better of it. However, he had a shade in the second, third and fourth. In the fifth I went out and tried to finish him.

HIS RIBS WERE PELTED.

I carried the scrap to him, but as he had it on me in reach he simply pelted my ribs with rights and lefts. I gave him a "good mill here, but he had me very tired when the bell rang. In the sixth he tried his utmost to put me out, but could not. We finished in the centre of the ring, battling like demons. The referee gave him the fight amid great cheering. I was licked thoroughly, fairly and squarely, and readily admitted it.

I received \$15 for my end of the purse. I consider this one of my hardest battles experienced during my entire fighting career. This was one of the real fights that each and every spectator who attended will never forget. It was very spectacular in many respects. I was floored by actual count seventeen times in the six rounds. I was not to be denied altogether, as I put Hedmark down five times for the count as well.

The entire audience was in a continual uproar from start to finish, first cheering for Hedmark, and then for me. This was due to our continual slugging and our earnest efforts to knock each other out. The people all over the city of Chicago will talk about this great battle even to this day. As you can see, fights were coming pretty regular now for the boy from Hegewisch, and I was losing no opportunity to make a little coin.

After my go with Hedmark I signed up to meet Harry Griffin, in Chicago, on Sept. 21. My opponent gave me a pretty stiff argument of it, up to the forepart of the third round, when I got to him hard and forced him to break ground like a race horse. We boxed before a splendid crowd, due probably to the fact that Griffin

had been putting away a number of good men, and the fight fans naturally expected him to beat me as well. I fooled them, however, and won the decision easily at the end of the sixth round.

During this engagement I had the pleasure of knocking Griffin off his feet just thirteen times by actual count- This battle was almost a repetition of the battle I had the week previous only I was on the winning side. I drew down thirty five dollars in cash, and you can just bet I was the most pleased kid in Chicago that night. It was the biggest purse received by me up to that time. On October 8th I was asked to meet Young Bay, another shifty 135 pounder, at Billy Gain's Logan Square Club. I went the six rounds with him, and at its conclusion the referee awarded me the decision.

Young Bay was at that time unquestionably one of the best of all lightweights, he having won 20 straight battles up to our go, mostly by the knock-out route. Clarence Class was anxious to try conclusions with me after I had defeated Young Bay, and I obliged him on November 2. Class was fast on his feet, and throughout the fight forced me to chase him around the ring like a six day pedestrian. As a result he managed to stay the full six rounds, getting a draw because of his clever footwork and scientific blocking. I did however, punish him severely, whenever he got into close quarters. We split the pot, each receiving \$7.50.

was a pretty busy sort of a kid just then, and the day following I was booked to box Joe Curtain, and Jack Readle, exhibition bouts in the same ring at Eddie Santry's benefit. I was there all right and I went the double bill of 3 rounds each at a merry clip. Of course neither of the boys were in my class and I had little trouble in outboxing them.

In Chicago Nov. 22, Ed. Burley, another member of the "Ham What Am" brand, was selected by the Chicago fight promoters to try his hand and break, if possible, my winning streak. Their selection again proved a poor one. As was the case with Griffio, I treated Burlev rather roughly, and for five rounds I hammered him about the ring as though he was a punching bag. I finished him in the fifth round with a series of right and left swings to the jaw. His picture can be viewed in another section of the book in my "**Colored Morgue.**" I received \$10.00 for the finished job.

LOST FIGHT ON A FOUL.

It is not up to me to begin to knock but, strange as it may seem, the only two fights in which I lost on a foul the referee was George Siler, the well known referee and pugilistic expert of the Chicago Tribune. The first was to Pete Boyle in Chicago, Dec. 1, 1900, and the second was to Gans in Goldfield. Incidentally I fought two fights on the day I lost to Boyle, and you can bet I was a very busy person.

The battle with Boyle was a slashing one from the jump, with me doing all the punishing, leading and real scrapping. I was a mile in front in the fourth round and had Boyle hanging on the ropes and all but out, when Mr. Siler sprang forward and stopped the fight. His contention was that I had fouled Boyle. He thereupon, with the assistance of Boyle's seconds, helped him to his corner and gave him the battle. When Siler interfered and declared my opponent the victor there was quite a demonstration in the club in my favor, mind you, the members being of the unanimous opinion that I had done nothing during the round which warranted my being disqualified. I was paid \$25 for my participation in the "fiasco."

TWO BATTLES IN ONE DAY.

Not satisfied with the ending of the Boyle go, and remembering that I had dated up with Danny McMahon to meet him in a four-round go at the Hibernian Society entertainment, booked to take place at their hall, I instantly donned my street clothes, grabbed a rattler and in a few moments I was on the spot ready to proceed with my second fight of the day. Danny and I mixed things up rather lively for four full rounds, and at its conclusion the referee decided that we had both fought a valiant scrap and he held up both our hands, signaling a draw. When the friendly Irish handed me a crisp \$5 note for my workout I was tickled; and I rolled home fairly well pleased with the busy day's doings. To make \$30 in one day was not so bad, eh?

LAST FIGHT IN 1900

MY FINAL GO of the season was with Jack Martin at Chicago.

It was a warm mix-up of six rounds. We went the route all right and Martin gave me quite a tussle of it, although I put him down six times during the fight. I tried hard to add his name to my already long list of knock-outs but to no avail. I won the decision, receiving \$25.00 for my end of the purse. During the latter part of the second round while going in Martin caught me on the jaw and dropped me to the mat for the count of 8. I got up, cut in and almost knocked him out. He lost heart and another round would have finished him. Louis Zimmerman acted as referee.

CHAPTER V.

The Battler Gets \$2 a Word for Making a Speech, Later Fights Battle in Snow.

While I am a great admirer of President Roosevelt, I think he is laying claim to a record that I held eight years ago. I notice from the papers that he is to receive \$1

a word for writing stories about shooting lions, and some of the magazines say that that is the record price. But it isn't. Right after my fight with Mickey Riley in Milwaukee, in 1901. I made a speech for which I was paid at the rate of \$2 a word. It happened like this : Riley danced around me and would not give me a chance to land on him hard enough for a knockout. As a result the referee gave him the decision on points. My friends in the crowd thought that I got a little the worst of it, however, and they began to yell for me. "Speech! Speech!" was yelled from every side of the ring, and me a poor little lad, had to try and say something. I would rather have taken a whipping, as I had never said a word in public in my life.

"Go on and say something, kid," said Tom Andrews. "Pull something, boy!" urged my second. **"You might get a piece of money."**

Everybody in the crowd began to yell again, and with a sickly grin, on my face I stood up in the middle of the ring and looked around. You would have thought that I was deaf and dumb. To save my life I couldn't think of a word to say. "Hurry up," said Teddy Murphy "Pull it."

HIT IN MOUTH WITH DOLLAR.

A great big lump rose in my throat, but finally I managed to start a word around it. "Gentl" and before I could get the word out of my throat on account of that lump - zip - some fellow hit me squarely in the mouth with a silver dollar. I came near swallowing the dollar, lump and all. That ended that speech. As I had only said half a word and got a dollar for it that was at the rate of \$2 a word, and I claim the record even over Mr. Roosevelt.

As I was about to duck under the ropes money came raining from every part of the house, dollars, halves, quarters, dimes, nickels and pennies. A lot of it rolled off the sides of the ring, and right then I got the idea of being a business man. "I'll give you fellows 10 per cent, of all you find," I said to my seconds, and there was a wild scramble to pick up the scattered money. Finally they got together \$109.23. Having paid the 10 per cent, this left me \$98.31, in addition to which I got \$35 from the club management. I nearly broke my neck getting to the post office the next morning so that I could send my mother \$100. That was by far the largest amount of money I had ever made up to that time.

BAT BUYS SOME SWELL CLOTHES.

The next day I made a tour of the gent's furnishing stores and finally landed at Messrs, Sisson and Selwel's and attired myself in a swell-looking outfit, made up of a \$7 suit of clothes, a \$1 derby hat, a \$1.50 pair of kicks and the prettiest green necktie you ever saw in your life. I am not Irish, but I certainly do love the green.

You can imagine how tickled I was over this enormous amount of money, as a little while before that I had been robbed out of \$2.50, which I needed badly, in my first fight with Joe Percente, the Italian. I was to have received \$17.50 win, lose or draw. I won the fight on a foul, but instead of giving me \$17.50 they gave me \$15. "If you had lost the manager said to me when I kicked, "I would have given you but \$10." I didn't understand how men could be dishonest up to that time, and it was a pretty bitter lesson. Talking about fouls, though, that fellow Percente fouled me and knocked me down and then jumped on top of me. I fought Percente four times altogether. I beat him twice, fought to a draw once and lost one on points. I never was knocked out by anybody.

MILWAUKEE STILL A HOODOO.

As I have said before, Milwaukee was always my hoodoo, but I decided to make one more try, anyway. On May 3, I danced into the ring for the third time in the old hard-luck town. On this occasion I hooked up with Charlie Berry in our first meeting. He didn't make much of a showing at that, being content with standing off and boxing a la Attell. He refused to come in and fight, and as a result the best the referee could do was to declare the engagement a draw. I received \$50 for my end of the pot.

I moved up the State a bit here, and on the evening of May 18 I found myself ready for action at Omro, Wis. Harry Fails was my opponent. He was a hefty sort of a scrapper and he went one of the warmest old six-round battles seen there in many days. It was one of those "no decision" affairs and both were dissatisfied with the affair. The ending of this battle was so unsatisfactory to both of us and there was so much talk among the fans, that it was decided to match us again.

GOES IN BATTLE IN SNOW.

To have a second match sounded all right, but I am here to tell you that we had our troubles right then and there. The sheriff of the county came over and told us that if we attempted to fight at Omro that he would arrest the whole bunch, and that a few of us might get in the pen. That gave us a scare, because that penitentiary thing didn't make much of a hit with me. The sheriff said the authorities higher up had notified him that if he didn't prevent the fight his job would go to some other man.

The fight "bugs" wouldn't have any delay, however, and they got busy. Being a mere kid and searching for adventure this idea of doing something on the sly got next to me and I was right in for it. Fails was also willing to take a chance. So, the sports went to work and hired all the rigs in town and early in the morning we set out for Rheinlander, Wis., which was just across the county line.

Our troubles were not over yet, for, just as we started there came up a heavy snow. That was the first time I had ever seen it snow in May, but it was bitterly cold. We two fighters didn't have any way to ride, and while some of the fellows offered to let us sit in their laps we decided to hoof it, as it would be good training, anyway. The snow came down in great sheets. In fact, it snowed so hard that we couldn't see 100 yards ahead of us, and we were afraid all the time of being stopped by some constable who was just as liable to let his gun go off as not. I had on my little \$7 suit, but before I had gone two miles the wind had blown it out of shape and I almost cried.

FOUGHT IN AN OLD BARN.

The whole gang of country sports finally landed safely across the line and, frozen nearly stiff, we fighters were taken into a big barn that had formerly been used by goats. We had to jump up and down to keep warm, and when I donned the fighting togs the goose pimples broke out on me as big as small peas.

After everybody had got their bets down a long, lank country "sport" was selected as referee. The influence that caused him to be selected was the fact that his daddy owned the barn.

Well, we finally went at it hammer and tongs. It was ten rounds and every minute was filled with tough fighting. The crowd was howling all the time and urging each of us to knock the other out, 'but we couldn't. At the end both of us were fresh and ready to go on, but the "sport" who had been refereeing grabbed both our right hands, and holding them aloft, exclaimed : "Even up, boys, hang-fiddled if she wasn't." Of course, he meant by that peculiar decision that we had fought a draw bout.

MONEY ROLLED THROUGH CRACKS.

There was no purse to fight for, but the generous sports began showering us with coin. We immediately decided to divide evenly all that was picked up. There were some tall pickings, too. The cracks in the floor were very large and a lot of the money rolled through. Not to be done out of anything we got a hammer and a crowbar and pried up the floor planks. When we had gotten all the coin together we each had \$150. That was enough to make up for the hardships we had suffered, and having learned something about \$7 clothes I went right back to town and planked down \$12.50 like a real "sport" and told the clerk to give me the best in the house.

ANOTHER TILT IN A BARN.

AFTER MY GO with Fails at Rhinelander, I hit the road for a tour of the northern resorts, intent on resting up a bit. I did not even view a fight until November 10th, when I tied up with Bill Heck, at West Pullman, Ill. This was not much of a battle, as we fought but four rounds, it being one of those "no decisions" affairs. My end of the purse amounted to \$5.00. We fought in Pete Kelley's barn.

COMPLETE TABLE OF BOXERS WHO SECURED THE VERDICT OVER THE CHAMPION.

OPPONENT	ROUNDS	DECISION
Berry, Charles	6	Won
Berry, Charles	6	Won
Boyle, Pete	4	Won on foul
Britt, Jimmie	20	Won
Britt, Jimmie	20	Won
Gans, Joe	42	Won on foul ?
Hedmark, Joe	6	Won
Neary, Charles	6	Won
Percente, Joe	6	Won
Riley, Mickey	6	Won
Santry, Eddie	6	Won
Stearns, Eddie	9	Won

Total Fights Decided Against Me... Twelve

Unlike most fighters who reach the top and then immediately take steps to cover up their old records, I am herewith giving out for the very first time, a correct table of record showing in detail just how many boxers defeated me. The battles with Berry, Boyle, Hedmark, Riley, Percente, et al, were, as will be observed, all limited goes, and were fought when I was a "green kid." You will observe the names of the two BIG ones GANS and BRITT, above. Well, on another page among my list of Knock-outs you will also find their names boldly inscribed. It is from this pair that I won the **WORLD'S CHAMPIONSHIP**.



**PRES. THEODORE ROOSEVELT AND BATTLING NELSON
AT WHITE HOUSE, WASHINGTON, D. C.**

On February 14, 1909, I paid a short visit to the White House to call on President Roosevelt and was received royally and had the honor of spending about an hour in his company, Theodore Roosevelt's name is one that will be associated in the minds of the American people with that of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln.

CHAPTER VI.

Nelson Learns of Dishonesty for First Time. Was "robbed" in Fight With Eddie Santry.

The worst evil that a young pugilist has to encounter is the tendency on the part of certain men connected with the game to make him dishonest. These smooth talking fellows who are not game enough to take an even chance and bet their money on the man they think will win, hang around a fighter's training quarters like wolves. They are continually making propositions to the coming champions to sell out. These offers of large amounts of money sometimes turn the head of the boy whose will isn't too strong at best, and they frequently become dishonest.

I shall never forget how one of these human wolves came to me before my fight with Aurelia Herrera and offered me \$10,000 and half of the money he won on bets if I would lose.

"You had better go and bet that \$10,000 on me and pay nothing," I told him, "for I am going to win anyway." He went away saying he was afraid to take the chance. After that I would not let him near my training quarters.

But that is getting a little ahead of my story. The young fellow just starting out is often trapped into things which hurt his record, even though he is perfectly honest. This is one of the pitfalls that all pugilists encounter at the start. They are so ignorant of the ways of the world that they think everybody connected with the game honest.

BAT'S FIRST RAW DEAL.

The first raw deal that I got was in my fight with Eddie Santry at Chicago Nov. 29, 1901. It was for six rounds. Immediately after my mill with Percente, Santry's manager challenged me for a go. I, of course, accepted, but wanted a longer fight. He refused to go over six rounds, so I had to accept, being glad at the time to get a chance to box him at any distance.

The fight was pulled off at the famous old Pyramid Athletic Club. From the very tap of the gong in the opening round clear down to the conclusion of the sixth I battered Santry all over the ring. I made him break ground every inch of the way, carried the fight to him and did 75 per cent, of the leading. In the final round I clipped Santry on the jaw and he went to the mat. He was all but out. I was dancing around in glee, waiting for him to get up, and the crowd was yelling like mad men. I noticed Santry say something as he was falling, but I could not make out the words.

GIVES DECISION TO FALLEN MAN.

Imagine my surprise when a minute later Referee Jimmy Bardell grabbed the fallen Santry by the right hand and held it aloft. That meant that Santry had won the fight. I was almost knocked dumb with surprise. I had been winning all the way and saw a chance for new honors. As I afterward found out, Santry old fox that he was got the ear of Bardell before he went on and said: "Bardell, everything is all fixed. I am going to allow Nelson to stay the limit so he can win a reputation by going this far with ME. I am, of course, to receive the decision on points."

It was a beautiful frame up indeed from Santry's end. At the time I was an unsophisticated kid and little suspected that I was being robbed. That's why they put one over on me. After Bardell had given Santry the decision I was very angry. I stepped up to him and asked an explanation. Here's what he said:

"Why, Nelson, Santry told me everything was fixed for him to win."

Evidently Bardell and the club managers at that time imagined I should be willing to stand for such a game. They were badly mistaken, I'll tell you. It was my policy to fight on the square at all times. After the Santry robbery I went over to Milwaukee and fought another draw with Joe Percente, the Italian. I didn't stay there long, however, as I wanted to be in Chicago the following day.

THE FRESH KID MAKES GOOD.

The second day after I arrived in Chicago I was playing pool with a pal of mine on Wabash avenue. The boys standing around got to talking about prize fighting and I cut in as if I knew something. "I can fight some myself," I remarked to a fellow who had started up an argument. "So you can fight, can you," he replied in a sarcastic way, and everybody laughed. He was a kind of a bully around there, and everybody always laughed when he said anything. They had to.

"Yes, I can fight," was the way I came back at him. "And more'n that, I'll bet money on it." I was kind of cut up over being shown up and I dug my little bankroll of \$6 up and offered to bet it. About that time Johnny Hertz, manager of a fight club, dropped in and he began to listen to my talk. He seemed to take a liking to me right away and came over and bought me a soda .water. "Kid," he said, "do you really want to fight?" I told him that I sure did. "Well, I'll tell you, I've got a fellow over here named Mike Walsh, and he was to go on to-night, but the other man has failed to show up. If you want to fight you can have the chance. He is a much bigger fellow than you, however. He is a middleweight. If you can make any kind of a showing I will give you \$75."

That made my eyes open and I jumped at it. "I don't care how big he is," I said, and with the crowd following me I went over to the American Athletic Club at Thirty-first street and Wabash avenue. ,

WALSH SNEERED AT HIM.

When Walsh saw me he sneered and told the manager that he had better get a man. "I'm not here to lick kids," he said, as he looked me over. After some talk we finally got into our fighting togs and into the ring we went. The first crack out of the box I shot one into his bread basket that doubled him up in a knot. It had him going, but he was so big that he quickly got over it. He was six feet tall and I was only five feet six then. Though he outweighed me by pounds, was taller, more experienced and tougher, I lambasted his slats for fair. In the sixth round I stung Mike in the stomach again and he appeared to get very angry.

"Why, you fresh little runt," he snapped at me, "I'll take you up and swallow you whole." The crowd laughed at this, but I was just as fresh as he was, and I came right back at him. "Well," I replied, "if you do you'll have more fighting sense in your belly than you've got in your head." This brought a big laugh from the fellows who hear it, and Walsh was so surprised that he dropped his hands to his side to glare at me. Just as he did I let one fly from my hip that caught him squarely on the jaw and he hit the mat with a jolt. He was out for fair. When he fell his neck hit the ropes, he was so tall. I got my \$75, and that night was hero at the poolroom where the fellow had tried to make fun of me. Nobody around that place ever took me for a mark after that.