



Welcome to first edition of the Boxing Biographies Newsletter

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Each week we will feature one of the fighters from our new and fast growing web site which, unlike any other site, provides fistic fans with the actual fight reports as published in the press from 1850 to present day. Whenever possible they will be reproduced along with the photographs used in the original article so readers get a real taste of some of the rich history of the Nobel Science across the years.

In addition we also provide wide range of articles written especially for the site by our small team of in house staff.

Please visit our site you will not be disappointed and we look forward to your comments and suggestions on how we may make improvements to the site.

Many thanks

Rob Snell & Grim.X

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John L Sullivan's Barnstorming Tour

A GROUP of sporting1 men sat around a table in a Broadway cafe talking of fighters who are now classed as has-beens and of those who now loom high on the pugilistic horizon. One of the group was Frank Moran, who was at one time John L. Sullivan's manager. Some one remarked that John L. was still up and doing, for, although he is old and fat, he is said to have knocked out a heavy weight in a Western city a few weeks ago.

The mention of the ex-champion's name brought forth many reminiscences of the fighter, and it was Moran who told the best ones. "Soon after Sullivan whipped Paddy Ryan," said Moran, "Al Smith conceived the idea of having him make a tour of this country. That was in 1883, when the big fellow was in tiptop shape.

"Smith got a troupe together. There were nine persons in the party—Sullivan, Pete McCoy, Steve Taylor, Mike Gillespie, Herbert Slade, Mike Donovan, all boxers; Al Smith, Jake Munzinger, the treasurer of the troupe, and myself.

"Smith went ahead with the show smoothing the way, while I stayed behind and stuck to the big fellow and kept things going smoothly. It was an eight months' trip, and we made \$110,000 outside of our expenses, which were \$44,000. "It was purely a boxing troupe, and Steve Taylor was Sullivan's sparring partner. Sullivan was so good then that we went all over this country offering \$1000 in cash to any man who would stay before him for four rounds.

"Many men tried to coo that money, but none succeeded. During that tour Sullivan knocked out thirty-nine men, some of them were husky citizens, too, for Richard K. Fox was sore on Sullivan and left no stone unturned to find a man who could whip him. That he didn't succeed only proves that Sullivan was the greatest fighter this country or any other ever produced.

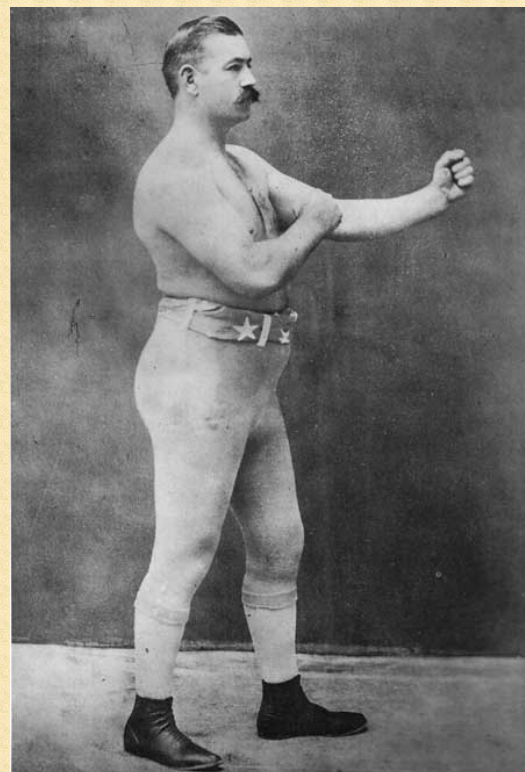
"Although we made a lot of money on that tour we certainly had some worrying- to keep us from getting it too easy. Sullivan caused the worrying. "He was then engaged in a catch-as-catch-can fight with that celebrated champion, John Barleycorn. Mix the last named John -with the first named, and you have a combination that would keep a dozen angels busy trying to avoid trouble. "When we struck Butte, Mont., the miners turned out in force to welcome Sullivan. The first night we played they were hanging to the rafters.

"We struck town early in the day and as usual Sullivan spent his leisure time in examining- the interior woodwork of the city barrooms. When it came time for the show he was well soused. "Nevertheless, we had advertised that there was \$1,000 in cash for any man who would stay four rounds with Sullivan. We had to make good, even if Sullivan was a little shaky on his feet.

"Well, a big strapping- miner thought he would like that money, and he let it be known to his friends. They egged him on, and when we got to the hall -where the show was to be held I found that the aspirant after the thousand was a pretty ferocious looking citizen.

"I was a little worried, for I knew; the shape Sullivan was in. I didn't care about losing the money, but I knew if the big fellow was knocked out by some unknown his reputation would be dinged. "I told Sullivan that I thought he was up against it, but he only growled at me. I had a couple of the boys work on him to get him in as good shape as possible. Then I went to the unknown's dressing room and handed him the gloves he was to wear.

"They were two and a half ounce gloves, and you know what a wallop with one of them means. The miner wore heavy cowhide boots and told me he would box in them. He looked so big that I went back to Sullivan's room to try and throw a scare into the big fellow. " 'He's a big buck with a red shirt and red beard, and he looks as hard as nails, I said to him. " Got a red beard, has he?' " said Sullivan.



"That'll stop the blood when I get at him. " He's as big as you are, John" said I. " So much the better," roared the champion. "The bigger he is the harder the fall."

Well, they went on. Both men got a great reception. Sullivan wobbled a bit, and the miner hit him a clip on the Side of the jaw. That woke the champion up. He went at the unknown and in a minute that red-shirted, red-whiskered miner was covered with gore. Before the round was over Sullivan put him out.

"What did I tell you? " said the champion, as he came back to the dressing room. "We went through part of British Columbia, and when we struck Victoria we were met by the mayor of the town, who asked us if it was true that we were offering \$1000 In real money to any man whom -Sullivan couldn't knock out In four rounds. The mayor was an Irishman and a little bit of a fellow. I told him I stood ready to make such an offer and he asked me to produce the money.

After I made sure who he was I turned over \$1.000 to show that we meant business. They had a Frenchman, in. that town whom the natives thought was a great fighter. He was a pretty good third rater, but, of course, we didn't know that until after he had gone up against the champion.

The night of our show I found this Frenchman in his dressing room, being rubbed from head to foot with fish oil. I asked what that was for, and his handlers told me that was being done so that Sullivan's blows would slip off his body. Another precaution they took against Sullivan's fists was to wrap about ten yards of red flannel around that Frenchman's stomach. When he lined up before John L. he was a funny looking sight, with his Oily body and his red flannel bandage. Sullivan was about in the same condition as when he met the red whiskered miner in Butte. When he once got his bearings he was all right and he knocked the Frenchman down, three times In the first round The last time the Frenchman stayed down, and In fact he was unconscious for twenty minutes.

When he came to, he asked Sullivan to speak to him. " I break wood and fences with my fist," he said to John, "but you break stone." "How's it feel to be knocked out?" asked Sullivan." The first punch I thought I saw one French soldier," was the reply. "The, last punch I thought I saw a whole regiment.'"Knocking out the local champion made John L. many new admirers, but he didn't keep them long-.

"Ned Hanlan, the oarsman, happened to be in. town the next day. He was on his way to Australia with George Lee. The people of the town got up a banquet In honor of Hanlan, and he invited the members of Sullivan's party. No one went to the banquet from our troupe but Sullivan and Gillespie.

"There was plenty to drink there and Sullivan didn't stint himself. At the end of the dinner the toastmaster rapped for order and called upon every one to rise and drink to the health of the Queen. Everybody got up but Sullivan. Gillespie arose and Sullivan tried to yank him. Back In his chair. The toastmaster noticed, that Sullivan didn't get up, and he couldn't help but remark It. " Who is the guest who refuses to rise and drink the health of the Queen?" demanded the toastmaster. " John L. Sullivan,' bellowed the only man sitting. To ***** with the Queen Come on, Gillesple.

"Sullivan was out of his seat In an Instant end making for the, door, dragging the other fighter after him. Of course there was a great hubbub over this, but we got out of town the next day and the incident never seemed to hurt our business once we got out of British territory.

We all felt badly over Sullivan's break with the exception of John, himself. We had been treated royally in Victoria, and had been made much of. We had even been Invited aboard a British man-of-war that was In the harbor, and It seemed a mighty ungrateful thing for even, a prize fighter to do. "However, no one could tell Sullivan that without danger of getting whipped. Sullivan wouldn't listen to advice In those days. 'If he had listened he would be a wealthy man to-day. '"

"In several cities John came near getting hurt, and In one Fort Worth, Tex, he had to be hurried out of town during the night. A party, of drunken cowboys got on his trail, and they certainly would have put an end to Sullivan If they had caught him.

Cockfighting was the principal sport In Fort Worth then, and a big main was pulled off for our especial benefit. It took place In the afternoon, and one of the men who handled some of the birds was an old chap who certainly was popular with the cowboys. I don't recall what the old man's name was, even if I ever knew. "If Sullivan, knew the old chap's name he forgot it. "While the birds "were at Sullivan bellowed that he would bet \$50 on the bird which the old man was handling and, not knowing his name, he called him a name that was tabooed In Fort Worth. Sullivan didn't mean anything by it, but the cowboys got fighting mad. "Nothing was said then, but after the main the cowboys got together and decided that one of their friends had been insulted by the champion pugilist. They talked over the Insult, and then began to liquor up. When they got a sufficient quantity of booze aboard they concluded that they would kill John L.

"It was night when they came to this determination and set out to search for Sullivan. John L.'s friends learned their intentions, and the champion was half carried, half dragged away and bundled Into a wagon and taken from the town. "At Dallas, Tex., we had another exciting adventure. In many towns in which we showed some big- gun would try to provoke Sullivan into a fight when he was drunk in some barroom. This was done so that the man who did the provoking could get In a few good punches at Sullivan and then go out among the townspeople and play the part of the hero.

"One of the city officials of Dallas decided that his fortune would be made If he could whip Sullivan, and he laid plans to do It. The only trouble was that he arranged to kill Sullivan If he should get the worst of the fight in which he intended to engage the champion. This fight was to take place in a barroom when Sullivan was about half loaded. "Well, this official laid his plans carefully, but I heard of his Intention In time to prevent a fight. The scrap was almost due when I appeared on the scene and took John away In a jiffy. I Then I went to this man who was going to get into a fight with him and told him what I had heard. He admitted that he wanted to whip Sullivan, and said that if he couldn't do it with his fists he was going to do It with a gun. He seemed aggrieved when deprived of the opportunity. The man rather surprised me, for he held an important city office, one which required him *to* preserve peace and order, instead of breaking It, as he firmly intended to do.

Those are only a few instances of the times we had on that tour. They were exciting times, but I wouldn't want to *go* through them again. We all got back safe and sound with the exception of the big Australian, Slade. He was the only deserter from our ranks. He quit In Utah and joined the Mormons. I guess he is a Mormon still."

Next weeks edition is the classic

Which One Will Hit End of Trail First?



SPOTS McLARNIN 10 POUNDS AT GARDEN, MAY 8