

# Welcome to Fifth Edition of the Boxing Biographies Newsletter

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Each new edition 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 Noble 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, Manos & Grim.X

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The following has been adapted from a series of 6 extensive articles published in 1919. and Written, with illustrations, by Jack Monroe. 5 of the completed articles are currently available on the web site and extracts are presented here .

## **A history of Boxing**

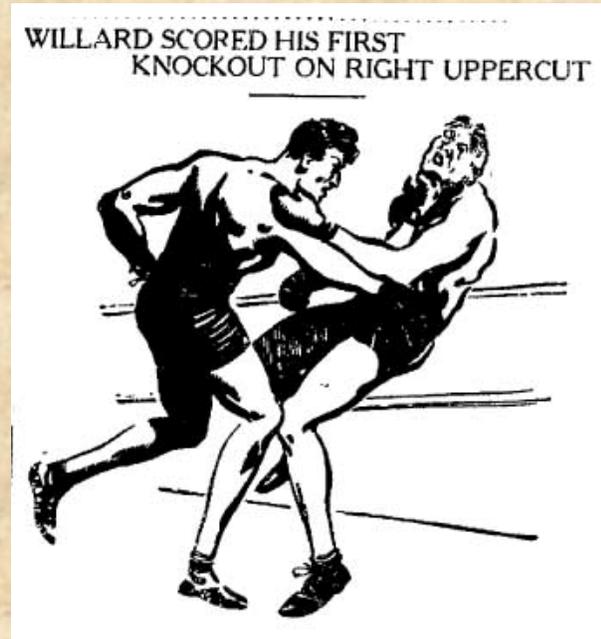
Has there ever been a championship fight between heavyweights In the American prize ring that didn't bear the label "The Ring Battle of the Century ?" If there has it's one me. And I've followed the game from both the boxer's and the spectator's standpoint for many years. The trite phrase has accompanied each ring conflict from the first battle for the title between Jake ( Jacob ) Hyer and Tom Beasley in 1816 down to the scheduled mill in Toledo on the Fourth of July as seemingly an important a Part of the mechanism of big fisticuffs as a main spring is to a watch. Oddly, enough, though, every championship encounter waged within the past century has contained some feature which seems to justify such a title. Ever stop to think of it.?

## **The Ring Battle of the Century.**

As a preface to the articles which follow it is Interesting to consider this point as well as the remarkable progress of boxing since its origin. ,The latter is chock full of tooth some "dope" for the fight fan and It has a material bearing on the coming contest, showing it in its true light of importance as a modern athletic event. The Jeffries-Johnson bout in 1910 appeared to quality in every department the supreme contest of its kind during the last century. Certainly there never was such a fight that aroused one quarter of the public enthusiasm manifested in big Jeff's bungling attempt to snatch the supremacy of

the ring for the white race from his cagey black antagonist. Along with the attraction of mixed colors and races was the towering fistic reputation of each; the question from a scientific standpoint of a marvelous athlete's ability to "comeback" after a lay off of seven years; and the hitherto unheard of "amount of the purse" offered by Tex Rickard who valued the contest at \$121,000.

## JESS AN UNSOPHISTICATED CONQUEROR



Jess showed what an unsophisticated ringster he was after the bout. Almost any other pug who had won a victory over the recognized best white heavyweight of the time would have made to the bar room to play the "Good Fellow" and drink in the flattery of a great fighter's parasites to the accompaniment of tinkling champagne glasses. Not so Jess. I had expected to find him in the little café adjoining the Madison Square Garden arena.

I shouldered my way in and looked around for the "good fellow" with the golden future. But Willard was no where along the rail, thought that probably he had not yet finished dressing so I strolled on out the

Madison avenue entrance, and who should I see but big Jess propping himself against one of the Garden pillars, surrounded by a gaping mob of ring fans and street urchins.

Jess was silently looking off toward the twinkling lights of Madison Square. He was clad in a remarkably loose fitting, unkempt suit of clothes and sported a good old sombrero of the Kansas plains. After Jess figured he had amply provided for the crowd's curiosity he suddenly threaded his way-through the press and made off down Broadway. I caught up with him and asked where he was going to celebrate the McCarty victory.

**"Guess I'll go to bed, Jack, there's nothing doing around town this hour if the night,"** Jess replied. It was then about a quarter to twelve—Just about the time I made up my mind that if Jess Willard ever became Champion he would never manufacture superficial popularity over the brass rail of a bar.

## Jess Cultivates The Knockout Habit

Jess now had a big name as a White Hope. He next tackled the rough and ready sailor White and upheld his reputation by flattening the seaman with a well directed right uppercut in the opening round. About this time an individual greatly resembling Tom

Sharkey to looks and action was creating a furor by the manner in which he was disposing of tough opponents. This gentleman was Soldier Kearns, who was army champ and who also keeled over One Round Davis and the "Hard Boiled" Andy Morris in a round each.

Jess and the Soldier were matched and the wise acres whispered that a certain cow puncher congesting Broadway, would soon be roping cattle again down Oklahoma way. Some of the reform element even tried to halt the match on the grounds that it was nothing short of a crime to pit an innocent , overgrown cowboy against a man eating type like Kearns. But the match came to pass.

### **WHAT HAPPENED TO ONE SOLDIER KEARNS**

For the first few rounds Jess was very cautious. Kearns tore into the big fellow and made quite a showing despite Jess' big advantage in size. It was about an even thing when the two squared off for the eighth round. Jess was content to lean far back out of range, while avoiding the burly dough-boy's haymakers and didn't make a great attempt to inflict damage on his foe. He smiled a lot and now and then poked Kearns a stiff jab or rapier-like uppercut by way of diversion. It looked as if it would go to the limit unless Jess ran into one of the soldier's wild swings which were frequently swishing through the air.

The eighth was about half over when Kearns drove a terrific left to Willard's Stomach. Jess beaming good nature was changed to a boiling fury with the wallop. The cow boy drew a long breath and shot a straight right to Kearns's jaw. It was one of the hardest raps I've ever seen delivered in or out of the ring Kearns's heels went high in the air and he landed in almost vertical position, with his head where his feet should be, on the other side of the ring. It was a clean knockout. This bout proved conclusively that Willard was a genuine fighter when he felt like Unlimbering his ring artillery and pounding the enemy.

### **WILLARD ENCOUNTERS ADVERSITY**

Jess was now enjoying some degree of fame as a promising candidate for Jack Johnson's honors. But he was soon to run afoul of the New York State Boxing Commission. Early in 1913 he Journeyed to his old stamping ground in Ft. Wayne, Indiana, and polished off Fred Bauer and Jack Leon in five and four rounds respectively. Previously he had been matched with One Round Davis for a set to at Buffalo, but Willard injured his hand on Leon and was unable to entertain the One Round artist. Jess didn't even bother about notifying! the Buffalo Club that he couldn't go on. For this he drew a suspension from the New York authorities.

### **FORMS PARTNERSHIP WITH TOM JONES**

However, about this time Jess ran across the astute Tom Jones. Tom explained to the crest fallen rancher that New York wasn't the only place a pug could make a rep. He

suggested a trip to the Pacific coast and Jess pulled stakes for the land of sunshine under the management of the man who was to pilot him to a world's championship. However misfortune was not yet through with big Jess. He tackled the formidable Gunboat Smith who had been dumping heavyweight aspirants right and left with his terrible "**Occipital**" swing as his manager described it.

The Gunner had a knack of connecting his crusher early and Jess had been warned by Jones to watch for it. Willard was getting along famously bending back out of the patch of Smith's comet like lift and inflicting some damage of his own. But in the fifth Smith connected with his swing. Willard said afterward that it was the hardest smack he had ever bumped into. It was almost a knockout although Jess didn't go to the floor.

### **WHIPPED BY GUNBOAT SMITH**

At that it really won the fight for the Gunner. Willard became so wary of a similar swipe that he lost all the thought of fight and was content to stick twenty rounds with Smith. Gunboat received a well earned decision. Willard greatly discouraged told Jones he was going to quit fighting. For almost a month he lay idle and moped. Then Jones aroused him to action again, picking an easier match in Charlie Miller the big motorman. Jess and Miller went four rounds to a draw.

A couple of months later Willard encountered another mishap. At Vernon, California, he knocked out Bill Young in the eleventh round, the bout ending in the latter's death. Jess was put under arrest, but eventually was exonerated of blame for the unfortunate ending of the mill. The realization that an opponent had died from the effect of one of his blows increased Willard's natural cautiousness inside the ropes. It was nearly three months after Young's death before Jess donned the gloves again. He then just managed to win over George Rodel. Later something of the old fighting spirit returned and he dropped Jack Reed in two rounds and One Round Davis in the same number, and polished off Boer Rodel in nine.

But interspersing these feats were a sloppy ten round burlesque with Carl Morris and the worst showing of Jess' ring career—his twelve round defeat by Middle weight Tom McMahon. Willard, however, restored himself to public favor by scoring knockouts over the giant Dan Daily and George Rodel. Daily who had but a few weeks previous put Al Palzer away in two rounds went out in 9 sessions. It took Jess but six to eliminate Boer Rodel

### **WHEN THE TITLE CAME BACK TO THE WHITE RACE**

The public was now convinced that Willard was the logical opponent for Johnson. The latter, ostracized from his native country by reason of shameful Misconduct, and badly in need of cash received the suggestion of a battle with Willard with open arms. Jess by this time had acquired a real gladiators spirit. He felt confident he could beat the black were they to meet in the ring. That fight is history now and everyone is familiar with the



## JESS A REAL CHAMPION THEN

Jess was the champion of the world and a genuine one. In the condition he was in that day it is doubtful if Dempsey at his best could have even disturbed Jess -with a punch. But can he attain that same wonderful form after a three years lay? That is the question which makes the Dempsey battle interesting. Those who have seen him, say he has and perhaps it is so. But didn't they say the same of Jeffries when he prepared for the Reno disaster?

Willard's battle with Moran in New York is hardly worth mentioning Frank had no business in the same ring with Jess. But it can be said for Moran that he was a tough one Jess broke his right hand on Moran's jaw trying to put the blond Pittsburger out. Some Jaw! But think **what a wallop it must have been.**

Next weeks edition

Jack Johnson

