



Name: Jimmy Britt
Career Record: [click](#)
Birth Name: James Edward Britt
Nationality: US American
Birthplace: San Francisco, CA
Hometown: San Francisco, CA
Born: 1879-10-05
Died: 1940-01-21
Age at Death: 60
Height: 5' 6"
Reach: 65 1/2 inc
Manager: [Willus Britt](#)

According to the March 15, 1909 Tacoma Daily News (Tacoma, WA, USA), Britt became the very first boxer admitted into the prestigious National Sporting Club (NSC) of London. After his boxing career ended, Britt went into vaudeville, where he was a popular star.

The March 7, 1922 Tacoma News Tribune reported that Britt currently was the boxing coach at Stanford College. He also developed a fondness for Australia. When World War I broke out, he moved to Australia and joined a regiment to fight in the war. He reportedly was sent to Gallipoli.

Per the Nov. 26, 1924 Daily News Searchlight newspaper of Bremerton, WA, USA, he had become a prosperous owner of real estate and apartment houses in California. He died in his San Franciscan home of a heart attack, aged 60, but was not found until a couple of days later.

The Oakland Tribune 22 July 1905

Who Will Fight Him Next By Ed. Smith

Jimmy Britt has once more shown that he is entitled to all the credit given him as a champion pugilist. Last night, as predicted In THE TRIBUNE a week ago today, he won from Kid Sullivan by continually Jabbing him and getting away before the Kid could land his sleep producing punch.

Sullivan tried hard all through the contest to land a knockout blow on Britt, but was not fast enough with It. In fact, the Kid telegraphs the punch long before letting it go, and the only time he could land it on the ever nimble Britt was in the mix-ups, In which Sullivan was particularly strong. Sullivan's footwork is bad. He stands too flat on his feet, and spreads his legs apart to

such an extent that Britt could jab and get away before the Baltimore boy could get started into his counter.

Sullivan won the admiration of the crowd by his clean boxing and fairness. In the fifteenth round he slipped ;to his knees and his gloves were covered with resin. When he got to his feet, the Kid stepped back and wiped them off on his trunks, which was a very fair and gentlemanly act. In-years gone by George Dawson, the Australian, made a practice of falling and covering his gloves with resin, that he might cut his opponent up, but that is not Sullivan's tactics.

When the men entered the ring and stripped for action, one could not help noticing the condition of the pair. Britt was tanned; in fact, he looked better to me last night than ever before.

When Sullivan entered, wrapped in a colored bath robe, he reminded one of the one-time demon, Joe Walcott. He is squatty and broad and walked around the ring trying the floor just as the dark-skinned fighter used to do. During the time that the borers posed for their photos It was noticeable that Sullivan eyed Britt from head to foot, while Jimmy glanced restlessly around at the crowd. When the smoke from the flashlight had cleared away, the gong rang and the men started.

In the first round they sparred around, sizing each other up. Britt did most of the leading and seemed very confident.

In the second round Britt started to peg away with his left at the Kid's head and body. Sullivan surprised the crowd by his clever blocking, and in the first real mix-up of the contest, near the end of the second round, showed he was not to be trifled with and that at that kind of milling would have as good a chance as Britt. Just at the close of the round Jimmy landed several straight lefts to the face, and the Kid went to his corner with his nose bleeding.

The third round Sullivan misled from his corner and chased Britt around the ring until he cornered him; then Jimmy turned and fought his way into a clinch. Britt steadied down and used his left to good advantage, leading and getting away from the Kid before the latter had time to steady himself.

Fourth round . Sullivan showed a little disposition to lead and kept poking at Britt most of the round. Near the end of the period Britt shoved the Kid against the ropes and they mixed It . The Kid landed his right in Jimmy's mid-section and the local boy winced and twisted his face, showing the force that the blow had.

Round five opened with Britt pegging away with his left and getting away or going into a clinch.

Sullivan tried hard in the clinches to use the right hand kidney punch, and, although Britt used great judgment in the way he held Sullivan, the Kid landed several In every round during the contest. Just at the close of the round Britt registered a left swing that shook Sullivan up considerably.

The sixth round found Britt still doing the leading, which seemed to be his instructions from his corner, in order that Sullivan could not get a chance to rush. Sullivan, on account of poor footwork, misses many good openings. In the seventh round Britt showed more aggressiveness and wanted to mix up from the tap of the bell. He used his straight left to the head and left hook to stomach with good effect.

Near the close of the round Sullivan caught Britt a clip on the chin, which staggered the local boy. The Kid was on top of him in a second, swinging right and left.

The only knockdown of the contest was in the eighth, when Britt brought Sullivan to the mat with a left and right to the Jaw. The Kid took the count of nine and stalled for a short time after getting up. But at the end of the round he was forcing Jimmy around the ring. From this round to the sixteenth It was this: Sullivan would walk after Britt, while Jimmy would use his left on the head and body and dance away before Sullivan could get set.

The crowd hooted Jimmy several times, calling to him to stand up and fight, but Britt paid no attention to them, and fought a very brainy fight. Herford sent his man in to take a chance in the sixteenth, and, although the game and willing Sullivan tried hard, Britt seemed to have his fighting form down by this time, and it was another case of brains and cleverness winning over brute strength.

From this time to the end of the contest, both men tried for a knockout, Sullivan, on account of his poor footwork, lost many good openings. Britt landed on jaw often, but did not seem to hurt the Washington lad much. When, at the end of the twentieth round, Referee Welch gave the decision to Britt the crowd went wild. Britt certainly earned the decision, and, In my estimation, put up one of the greatest contests of his career. Sullivan was a tough opponent, and those who said he was a "bum" and that Britt was picking easy game must be feeling rather crest fallen.

BY JIMMY BRITT

Sullivan proved a rough customer and a game fellow. He possess a good wallop In either hand, and when he landed I felt his punches. He fought a clean fight and was always willing to mix things. I think I accommodated him somewhat, but I refrained from doing too much mixing, as I figured I have a contract with Nelson on my Hands and I wanted to win and I could not take any chances. There was no time in. the fight that I was in danger. My confidence of ultimately winning never left me, and, although I could not knock him out, I wore him down and won the decision. He was hard to reach with my left body punch and I switched to straight lefts for his sore nose and used my right with more frequency than I ever did before. Sullivan proved his gameness, because I punished him throughout the battle. Nelson next, and-I will win as before. Sullivan is a more dangerous man than the Swede, in my opinion.

BY KID SULLIVAN

If I had. not injured my left hand in the tenth round, I would have beaten Britt I landed a heavy one on his elbow and my hand hurt me. Although I used the left after that, I did not dare to use It with any great force. Britt Is a good fighter. He is a cleverer man than Nelson, but does not hit as hard as the Swede. I can beat Britt in a finish fight and I would like to take him on again. I had a very good chance of winning up to the time I Injured my hand. I am sorry the decision went against me, but I tried hard to bring home the money. Britt was faster than I, I guess. He is one of the best men I ever fought and he will make all the lightweights step lively. My condition was perfect, and I received fair treatment. I like this town and would like to stay here a while and get another fight when me when my hand gets well.

**The Post Standard
1 November 1904**

Gans v Britt

Gans Wins On Foul by Britt

Fight Ends In Fifth Round

Great Crown Sees Battle in San Francisco For The lightweight Championship of The World

Oct 31, 1904

Jimmy Britt of California lost the lightweight championship of the world to-night, when he fouled Joe Gans of Baltimore in the fifth round, He had sent Gans to his knees in he fifth round and then, losing his head, gave him a vicious punch and Referee Graney promptly awarded the decision to Gans on a foul.

The same thing happened in the fourth round, Gans had dropped to his knees to escape a blow that did not land. Britt struck at him, but Graney would not allow the foul. In the next round, however, Graney very promptly recognized the foul fighting.

It looked almost from the start as If It were Britt's fight. He actually outboxed Gans and landed blow after blow. In the fourth round it was apparent that Gans was scared and, barring a foul, the fight was Britt's to a certainty.

Decision Shocks Big Crowd.

While no excuse can be made for Britt losing his head, it certainly seemed that Gans invited a foul. The decision was a great shock to the biggest crowd that ever filled the Pavilion, but fair minded men aged that Graney's judgment was just. Britt showed marvelous strength and quickness. He went at Gans like a bull .terrier, landing body blows, alternating them with

swings on the Jaw.

During the first three rounds Gans appeared cool and confident, and fairly strong. He appeared to be feeling Britt out, but at the end of the third and the beginning of the fourth, when Britt commenced to fight more viciously, Gans weakened perceptibly. He landed a few times on Britt, but the little white boy paid no attention to his light taps, and every time he was hit bored In more viciously than ever.

There is no doubt In the minds of the majority of those present that In another contest at the same weights Britt would defeat Gans easily.

Graney Overlooked One Foul.

Referee Graney said after the fight: "I really should have given Gans the decision in the fourth round, when Britt fouled him, but as Gans was not hurt I overlooked It, though Britt himself admitted that, I could have called a foul at that time. The second offense In the fifth round was so palpable, however, that I was forced to give Gans the decision.

Britt was frantic with rage when he realized that he had lost the fight and rushed at Graney, striking wildly. Graney, who is something of a boxer him self, fought back, but the police interfered separated the belligerents Britt declared as he left the ring:

"I know that I can beat Gans and want to fight him again."

The fight demonstrated that Britt Is wonder in his class. He Is a clever boxer quick as a cat and a hard hitter. With the addition of having a bulldog grit that makes him fight all the harder when he is being punished, Gans and his followers were highly delighted at the decision

Britt Apologizes.

After the fight when Britt had recovered his temper he apologized to Graney Said "What could I do when a man fell every time unnecessarily? I am sorry I hit him while on his knees, but I could not help it."

The fifth round lasted but thirty eight seconds when the foul was declared. Great Interest has been displayed In California over the result of to-night's contest. Britt and Gans are admitted to be exceedingly clever and finished boxers Consequently an enormous throng fought its way into the pavilion to see the Pugilists fight. All afternoon huge crowds stood in line awaiting the opening of the general admission gates, and it required the constant vigilance of mounted police to keep the people In line. At 8 o'clock the gallery was crowded almost to suffocation and at 8~30 the holders of reserved seats occupied every chair on the lower floor.

Delegations from all Pacific Coast were conspicuous at the ringside. Los Angeles sent several carloads of enthusiasts, while Portland, Ore., and the Puget Sound and the Rocky Mountain regions were well represented, "Young Corbett" and "Battling" Nelson, who are matched to fight in San Francisco on November 29, were among those present and each expressed a desire to

meet the winner of to-night's contest.

Two Years' Negotiations,

A meeting between Gans and Britt has been looked forward to for over two years, but the Question of weight and color line proved a stumbling block and prevented them meeting sooner. Britt waived the colour question and both men went into hard training. With Gans taking of every atom of surplus flesh and with Britt at a weight exactly suited to his splendid physique, It was agreed that no more even match could have been arranged.

Gans, however, found it no easy task to make the required weight and was compelled to undergo a strenuous system of reduction even up to the eleventh hour. In the meantime the general public has been timid in wagering on the result.

Colored Lad a Favorite.

It was not until late this afternoon, when definite assurance was given that Gans had tilted the scales at 132 ½ pounds, that speculation began. In earnest, The colored lad was at once made a warm favorite, despite the fact that Britt was a tremendous following. At 9 o'clock the quotations were 10 to 6 ½, with Gans on the long end. Although it was known that Britt was to the pink of-condition, there was no lack of Gans money.

Behind Gans were stationed Al Hertord, his manager; Frank McDonald and "Kid" Sullivan, while Britt was looked after by "Spider" Kelly, Frank Rafael, Sam Berger and "Smiling Motzger.

There were two four-round preliminaries. George Wilson and Billy Meehan went four rounds to a draw, and Eddie Chambers was given the- decision over Jack Burke in the third round.

"Young Corbett" jumped into the ring as soon as Gans appeared and challenged the winner of to-night's, fight.

Gans' appearance was none too inviting. His face looked pinched and drawn and his general appearance showed plainly the effects of, hard training. The scales were brought to the center of the stage and the men were weighed in full view of the public.

At 9:25 p. m. the scales were set at the 133 -pound mark. Gans Jumped on and failed to raise the beam. The exact figures were not taken.

At 9:30 p. m.' Britt entered the ring and immediately Jumped on the scales. Like Gans, he failed to raise the beam at the 133-pound mark.

Britt looked a trifle nervous, but physically no fault could be found. At the ringside bets were made at even money that Gans would win within fifteen rounds.

At 9.46 time was called. The story of the fight by rounds follows:

Round 1

Britt went at once into his favorite crouching position and they sparred for some time. Britt shot his left twice in quick succession to Gans body, but they were not forcible. After more sparring Britt hooked left to the body again and followed it with right to the head. Both then missed rights and lefts for the head. Britt shot his left to the body and missed a right for the head.

Gans apparently sized up Britt's reach. Gans missed a straight right for the head. Britt was short with left for the body and missed a left for the head as the bell rang. The work in the round was light, Britt having a slight advantage. Gans permitted Britt to do most of the work. Britt's blows were of a light nature and did no harm.

Round 2

Britt missed left and right for the body and they went to a clinch. Britt suddenly lunged his left to the head and then brought it to the body. Gans continued to force Britt about the ring and they came to a clinch without result. Britt missed a left hook for the body and then sent a straight left to Gans' nose, Gans retaliated with left to the body. Britt drove Gans back with a left swing to the body. Britt drove Gans back with a left swing to the body Britt bored in, scoring with left and right to the wind. In the mix-up both exchanged rights and lefts to the face. Britt missed a vicious left to the face. They came together again, Britt missing right for the body.

A rally in the center of the ring: followed. Britt landing right and left on the face as the bell rang. but not before he had received a straight left to the head. Britt had most of the leading in this round. The honors were about even, however.

Britt Fighting Wildly.

Round 3

They mixed it fiercely at close quarters, both doing some clever boxing. Gans got in a good right to the body, but Britt retaliated with straight left hard to the stomach. They mixed it again. Britt putting left and right to the body. An ineffectual-mix followed. Britt caught Gans with a terrific, right to the jaw, dazing the colored man. He followed the advantage with a right and left-swing to the head, forcing Gans to a clinch. Britt rushed in, fighting wildly. He bombarded Gans' face and body with right and left swings and put some punishing rights over the heart. Britt at close quarters distressed Gans with a fearful right on the body. Gans clung desperately to Britt to avoid punishment and the gong found them in this position. It was all Britt's round.

Round 4

Britt waded in fiercely, rushing Gans to the ropes with a heavy left over the heart. He then missed right and left swings for the body. Britt kept himself well covered and was a puzzle to Gans. Britt sent Gans back with a succession of rights and lefts to the face and a left to the body. Jimmy then shot a straight right to the body and followed it with a right swing to the body. At close quarters

Britt landed some heavy blows. Gans suddenly shot his left hand to Britt's jaw. but in return Britt put in body blows that sent Gans to his knees.

After a mix-up Britt sent Gans to the floor with a left to the Jaw. Gans rose but was again floored with right and lefts to the face. There was fearful confusion and the bell was not heard. In this round Britt hit Gans accidentally while Gans was down, but a claim of foul was disallowed. Gans was in distress and the gong saved him.

Round 5

They mixed fiercely. Britt went after Gans like a whirlwind. Britt sent Gans to the floor with a succession of rights and lefts to the jaw. As Gans was attempting to rise Britt met him with a desperate right to the jaw. Eddie Graney quickly disqualified Britt and awarded the decision to Gans. The excitement was terrific. Britt rushed at Graney like a madman and fought him to the ropes. A squad of police immediately jumped into the ring and it looked as if there would be a general fight. The house gave vent to its disapproval by tremendous hooting and wildly cheered Britt as he went to the center of the ring.

San Antonio Evening News

29 August 1919

VERY usual and oft-repeated question I am asked and daresay every other fighter of note is asked, is: "What was your toughest fight?" As all of my fights were with either champions or near-champions and as when I was fighting such men as Joe Gans, Frank Erne, Kid Lavigne, Terry McGovern, Young Corbett and Battling Nelson at their best, it is a rather difficult question. .

I can truthfully say that my twenty-round fight with Champion Young Corbett was the toughest of them all. Corbett at that time had beaten Terry McGovern, Kid Broad, Dave Sullivan and Eddie Hanlon all in a row and every one a knockout. So you see I was meeting him at the very zenith of his career. Corbett was, to my mind, the best and, most dangerous hitter of his time and could knock you dead with just one punch from either hand.

It was considered suicide to slug with him as all the best of them had tried it and came to grief. Like all the rest of the boxers and fight fans of that time, I was of the same opinion and figured that with my superior cleverness, footwork and quick thinking, I could outpoint him for twenty rounds. That I possessed cleverness, footwork and brains was conceded by all of the sport writers, so do not get the idea I am boosting myself.

We were fighting at 128 pounds and as most of my fights had been at anything from 133 to 136, it was considered a bad weight for me. However, I made the weight without much trouble, only weighing 126 pounds the day of the fight. While I was pretty fine, still I was in good shape. The night of the fight the betting was 2 to 1 on Young Corbett, and this in my own home

town, where I was usually 2 to 1 over the other fellow.

Most of the big bettors in San Francisco were betting on Corbett and for the first time the habitual short end players had a chance to set two to one against Britt. It was the biggest house two little men ever drew up to that time, as we drew \$45,000. Corbett was then under the management of Harry Pollock who afterwards piloted Freddie Welsh, and had in his corner, aside from Pollock, Harry Tuttle. now trainer of the Boston American baseball team. I was seconded by that celebrated and best of all seconds Spider Kelly and of course one or two others.

During our training a lot of ill feeling was engendered by the things we said about each other in the newspapers and it extended to our trainers and seconds. Willis Britt, my brother, now dead, was my manager. He himself was a great fighter when a boy. He and Pollock offered to fight each other and we all felt sure that no matter how the big fight came out, we would, at least, have one victory to our credit if this fight came off. My chief sparring partner fought a draw with Corbett's partner and, altogether, when Corbett and I got into the ring it was just like a meeting of the famous Kilkenny Cats.

I forgot to mention that I would never allow my brother in the ring with me. Although we were inseparable, still I always felt that if it looked as though I was getting a bad beating he might throw up the sponge when I still had a chance to win and then besides Bill was liable to give me too many arguments. Well it has taken a long while to get to this fight but here we are at the ringside, so let her go.

At the sound of the gong Corbett came out of his corner, saying to his seconds:

"I'll knock this bird's head on to Hayes Street." (Hayes Street was only a block away). Now remember. Corbett had a sleep producer in each mitt; he was a two to one favorite; had won his last five battles by knockouts and also had a very poor opinion of my fighting ability.

According to my plan, I started jabbing with my left and stepping around the ring trying to make him miss with his left and right swings. Contrary to my plans, he was not missing very much that evening and was getting me alongside the head, now with the left and again with the right. Fortunately I was going away from the punches. Had they landed solidly they would have rung down the curtain on my pugilistic career for that night at least and perhaps forever.

This continued up to the fifth round so I figured that it was only a matter of time until he would nail me right. At the end of the fifth I came to my corner and did not sit down. I said: "Boys. I

am going to slug with this fellow. If I must take a licking, I'm going down trying to give him one." All of them pleaded with me not to do it, saying it would be only a matter of time when he would get tired. I knew better than that as I figured the only way to tire him was to keep fighting him all the time. If I weathered the storm and he did get tired, then I knew I could out-box him.

Just then Willie Britt got up out of his seat near the ringside and said: "What's the idea? Why don't you give that guy a fight?" I said: "That's what I'm going to do. Bill." Then the gong rang.

All this time Corbett and his seconds were shouting from their corner, "What's the matter, is the Dude going to quit?. Don't let him stop, Spider. I'll knock him cold in the next round."

I did not like Corbett any too well before, so you can imagine that this kind of talk did not make me any more fond of him.

Well, after that, we just stood toe to toe, in and out of clinches, stepping back now and then to let one go by, but constantly and continually went on the slug, slug, slug. I was a bit faster than Corbett so most of his swings went over my shoulders or around my neck, but what he did to me in those clinches was a shame. This went on until the eighth round, when as I was stepping out of clinch, Corbett swung his right hand, I had not time to step away so I blocked it with my right and had to do it so quickly that I could not block it close to my shoulder but caught it about six inches away from my chin. My right arm having nothing to support it snapped just above the elbow, not quite broken but badly fractured. Had it been my left arm I would have had to stop.

As it was dangerous to swap rights with Corbett and as I could hold it up as a protection, I was not as bad off as it sounds.

.The fight went on this way for 15 rounds and don't think I am exaggerating when I say that after that round a good strong woman could have beaten both of us in the same ring. Personally I am always glad that I did not slip or fall down as I think I would have had a tough time getting

up. After that I simply went along jabbing with my left with Corbett trying to put over a slow weak swing. He was thoroughly tired out and was no longer dangerous so then I started to box him. I won that fight in the last five rounds and always feel that if I had not changed my plans in the fifth round I would have lost the fight.

All in all with my arm fractured and utterly exhausted at the finish, I believe that despite my numerous fights with Nelson and all the punishing hitters of that day, this particular battle stands out as the toughest one of all.

The term [Kilkenny cat](#) refers to anyone who is a tenacious fighter. The origin of the term is now lost so there are many stories purporting to give the true meaning.

To "fight like a Kilkenny cat" refers to an old story about two cats who fought to the death and ate each other up such that only their tails were left. There is also a [limerick](#) (with optional added couplet) about the two cats:

*There once were two cats of Kilkenny
Each thought there was one cat too many
So they fought and they fit
And they scratched and they bit
'Til (excepting their nails
And the tips of their tails)
Instead of two cats there weren't any!*