

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST



Four

Franklin

Volume 208, Number 1

JULY 6, 1935

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THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

Founded A^D 1728 by Benj. Franklin

Volume 208

5c. THE COPY

PHILADELPHIA, PA., JULY 6, 1935

\$2.00 By Subscription
(52 issues)

Number 1

INSIDE THOSE ROPES

TEN FIGHTS TO THE TOP

By JAMES J. JEFFRIES

With EDDY ORCUTT

SOME of the stories are true. When I crawled through the ring ropes at Reno, twenty-five years ago this Fourth of July, I guess I was tagged with the biggest collection of stories that had ever been told or printed about a fighter. If it hadn't been for the stories, maybe I wouldn't have been in the ring against Jack Johnson that day. I was the undefeated champion of the old-line heavyweights—the line of Corbett, Fitzsimmons, Choynski, Ruhlin and Tom Sharkey. Building me up to the first big-money fighter of the modern days, they dug up all the old-time yarns about me and invented a lot of others.

They peddled plenty of stories before I ever got in that ring at Reno, and before nightfall, that Fourth of July, a lot more stories had started going the rounds.

People still ask me: "Is it true they slipped you the peter just before the Johnson fight? Were you doped?" They still ask: "Is it true that back in your fighting days you dared Johnson to battle it out in a saloon basement, and Johnson wouldn't?" They ask if it's true that I knocked out Jim Corbett when I was his sparring partner at Carson City. They want to know if it's true that I bet against myself, the first time I fought Fitzsimmons, and if it's true that I claim I knocked him out with a push in the face.

"Is it true?" people ask.

Well, some of the stories are true—that's the only answer that covers them all. My angle on them would have to be my own, though—the fighter's angle. I'd have to tell things the way I saw them, and I saw them from inside those ropes.

Now it Can be Told

I'M NOT the only man that knows what it feels like to be champion of the world. But I'm the only guy who knows exactly what old Bob Fitzsimmons looked like to young Jim Jeffries, in the ring at Coney Island. And I'm the only guy that knows what it was like to be James J. Jeffries, hope of the white race, when they rang the bell at Reno on July 4, 1910.

After the Reno thing, there was a long time when I didn't want to talk; there wasn't much I could have said, anyway, without sounding like a bum sport. But that's all over with now—twenty-five years gone by—and if there's anybody I'm sore at, I don't know who it is. Reno don't hurt me, now, any more than the last sock old Fitz hit me with. If anybody gets a kick out of punching



ROBERT A. MILLER, LOS ANGELES

1935

the bag about those old times, I'll throw in with him and give it all a good going-over.

When I retired, back in 1904, a lot of the experts claimed I was unbeatable—that I was just naturally so big and fast and tough and strong that there was no use expecting any other fighter to beat me. I never did agree with that.

I was not a "natural." I was a "made" fighter.

The night I fought Fitzsimmons for the title, I was twenty-four years old, weighed better than two hundred pounds, could run the hundred in under eleven seconds, and could do the standing high jump to the height of my shoulders. I fought from a crouch that made it hard to hit me where it hurt; Fitz was the greatest body puncher there was, but he wrecked his hands on me that night. I fought with my left hand extended, and I had a knockout in it that never traveled more than a few inches. But how much of that could you call natural?

What the Record Books Don't Show

IT WAS no more natural for me to run the hundred, barefoot, in eleven seconds, than it was for any other two-hundred-pounder. I'd worked for years to build up that speed. The crouch and that left hand weren't natural; I'd spent hundreds of hours of drilling, trying out this idea and that, sweating my head off and taking plenty of punches, before I had them readied up for a man like Fitzsimmons. I trained like a horse. When I didn't train—well, I went in untrained against Jim Corbett once, and he boxed the ears off me for twenty-three rounds, before I finally got to him. It wasn't just natural for me to lick the other boy.

If I'd been a natural-born fighter, I might have been a killer in the ring—I had the strength for it. But I thank God I didn't have that temperament. I only once went in the ring angry, wanting to hurt the other fellow. I only once tried to hit the other boy as hard as I could—and that time I missed. I worked out in training with the roughest fighters I could hire, but I never in my life knocked out a sparring partner, and never tried to.

I fought only one prelim in my career, and I got to the top in ten starts after that. The record book makes it look quick and easy—like I was some kind of a ring wonder. But the work I did doesn't show in the book. I fought my first pro fight when I was sixteen years old, and I put in eight years of the

toughest kind of plugging before I got my shot at the title. The plugging don't show in the record book, but I did it.

At sixteen I was a boilermaker—sounds tough and grown-up, but I was only a kid. I'd worked in the mines in Temecula, and done a lot of rough-and-tumble wrestling down there—the miners were mostly Cornishmen. I'd worked in the Santa Fe shops. I'd taken a whirl at every kind of athletics there was. I always liked that kind of thing, and worked hard at it. I'd run foot races for money. There was a lot of professional foot racing in those days, and it was always easy to get a bet against me, because I looked slow and heavy—I was always big. The boys around the shop had fixed up a gym, down in East Los Angeles, and I'd boxed there every chance I got, with anybody who wanted to put on the gloves with me.

Charley Murray, a gambler, owned the gymnasium building. He was a good scout and a good friend of mine—he'd backed me in several foot races—and he had the idea that I could fight. He got me my first professional bout. That first fight don't show in the record book, either, but it was one of the wickedest I ever had.

"Sure," I said, when Murray asked me if I'd box Hank Griffin—I thought he just wanted us to spar in the gym some night. When he had me sign an agreement—twenty rounds of fighting, Queensberry rules, 75 per cent of the purse to the winner—I like to have got stage fright.

I trained ten days, and I worked in the shops every day, including the day of the fight. I still had stage fright when I crawled through those ropes on fight night—that was my first ringside crowd, and I thought everybody in Los Angeles was there. It was in the old Manitou Club. The mob jammed three sides of the ring, in the middle of a long narrow hall, but the ropes on the fourth side were only about a foot from the wall of the building. Between looking at the crowd and wondering how it would feel to get bounced off that wall, I was good and nervous when the bell rang.

Hank Griffin was a rangy Negro, plenty smart and plenty rough, but he very soon proved that he couldn't knock me out. He proved it by hitting me with everything he had, as often as he pleased and any place he wanted. I took it.

A Breakfast-Table Knockout

IT SOUNDS funny to say it, but I took it and liked it. That way of looking at things had a lot to do with my finally getting to the top in the fight game. I liked it because I was learning plenty. After the nervousness wore off that first night, I got to enjoying the smart way Griffin worked. I must have looked terrible, and I took a pasting. But I kept trying to figure things out, watching what he did, learning stuff while I went along. And I began trying to use it. That was the way I worked.

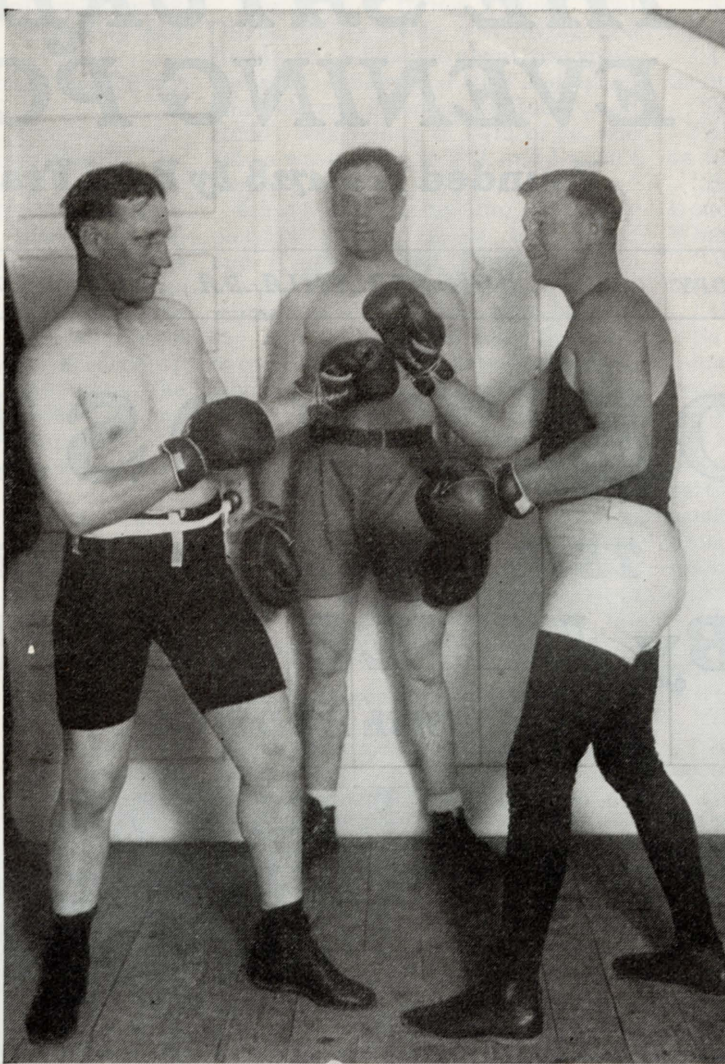
Along about the tenth round, I'd learned enough to hand some of it back to the black boy. In the fourteenth, I timed the way he bobbed his head when he came in, and I caught him, coming in, with a left-hand smash to the mouth. Griffin hit the ropes on the wall side of the ring. He hit the wall and bounced off, and he was out in mid-air, like a dead duck. I popped him on the fly with a right to the chin, and he was all through when he hit the floor.

They paid me my first million for that fight. It looked like a million to me then—five hundred dollars, cash money. But my professional career stopped short at breakfast time the next morning.

Mother looked up from the morning paper. "Young man," she said, "you're not of age yet." Mother looked at me very straight. She was a gentle, quiet woman, and it must have looked funny to see her bossing her two-hundred-pound boy. "Until you're of age, you're under my care, Jim," she told me, "and I want no more of this."

I said: "All right, mother."

In our family a promise to mother was final. I went back to work in the shops. A sixteen-year-old kid with a K. O. over Hank Griffin was worth money around Los Angeles then, but I had to tell the promoters: "Wait till I'm twenty-one."



COURTESY BILLY COE, LOS ANGELES

The Great Tommy Ryan in Later Years (Left) Posed With Billy Pappe. Looking On is Kid (the Real) McCoy

I still think that mother, laying down the law at breakfast that morning, helped make me champion of the world.

I spent the next four and a half years learning everything I could about how to handle myself in the ring. Billy Gallagher, the old-time welter, was coach at the Los Angeles Athletic Club, and I worked out with him there three or four nights a week. De Witt Van Court came in when Gallagher left the club, and it was De Witt that really started me out as a boxer; he was smart, knew fighters, and was absolutely on the level. I boxed at smokers for the club. I worked out with anybody that wanted me. I worked in the shops all day, I hunted or fished or tramped the hills on my days off, but after work and in the evenings

"Hold it, Jim!" Brink said, all of a sudden. "You're getting mad!"

I didn't know what the score was. Brink stepped back and hauled off the gloves. I found I could stand up and take a breath; I thought the punch had busted something inside me. And then I found out that when I was doubled up, shoving my left hand at Brink and fighting him off me, I'd been hitting hard—so hard that Brink thought I was mad and trying to hurt him.

Well, I never did tell Brink he'd hurt me—I never told anybody. But that punch of his taught me I had one place where I couldn't take it, and his throwing the gloves down taught me that I could cover that one spot and still hit hard. Finding out

I was pretty apt to be plugging around the L. A. A. C. gym, learning how to fight.

That gym is where I began developing the Jeffries crouch—and I wish I had a dime a word for all the hooley that's been printed about it.

The Jeffries crouch was not my natural style of fighting. It was not invented for me by De Witt Van Court, or Tommy Ryan, or Billy Delaney, or anybody else. It was not a secret that I doped out in my head and practiced behind closed doors. I got my crouch from a left hook to the liver—and a hard left to the liver will give anybody a crouch.

I was boxing a friendly bout with John Brink one night—Brink was coast amateur champion then, and he had refereed my fight with Griffin. In a fast mixup, he landed the toughest single blow I ever took.

What a Left Taught Me

WHEN Brink landed that left to the liver, I doubled up, half paralyzed. The pain cramped me, and everything went green in front of my eyes. For maybe thirty seconds I boxed in a daze. I covered by bending over and holding my right elbow over the cramp in my side. I held Brink off by driving my left hand at him.



Corbett and Sullivan Watching the Young Jim Jeffries Trying On Fitzsimmons' Crown at Allenhurst, New Jersey, in the Spring of '99

those two things is what gave me the first idea of the crouch. But later on, when everybody said Jim Jeffries was so big and tough nobody could hurt him, the funny thing is that I was using a fighting style that I'd learned from getting hurt. Nobody ever found it out.

A hook to the liver will give anybody the Jeffries crouch; he'll cover just by instinct. But my weakness there was so bad that I had to keep the spot covered, and I had to learn how to fight while I kept it covered. I developed that hard left—fast, with my weight or the swing of my shoulders behind it. Before I was through, I got so I could whip out the right hand harder from the crouch than from the stand-up position. And while training or fighting in the ring, I never quit figuring out ways to use that style. People got to thinking the crouch was natural to me. Well, in a way, of course, it finally was. But I was the guy that made it natural.

When I turned twenty-one at last—the way kids do—my sisters had a lot to say to mother about Jim's wanting to be a prize fighter. It was a rough racket, and I've never said it wasn't. Mother told them, though, that in this world everybody had to decide his work for himself.

When I went to mother, she just said: "Keep clean, Jim; I guess it'll be all right."

Five weeks later I was stranded in San Francisco, flat broke, hungry, doing my sleeping in pool-hall chairs and living off the free lunches in the barrooms. I'd gone there with Billy Gallagher to train him for a fight, but after the fight he pulled out and forgot me. I hung around. Anybody in San Francisco would have bought me a drink, I guess, but nobody offered me a square meal. I went hungry for four days.

Danny Long was the answer. Danny is police captain in Hollywood now, and in those days he rated as a good heavyweight around San Francisco. He walked into Groom & Ulrich's just as I was hitting Groom for a bout, and Groom signed us; he offered a thousand dollars, split 75-25, and billed us for a twenty-round prelim to the Mysterious Billy Smith-Billy Gallagher fight.

Fighting on One Foot

GROOM gave me a card to show that I was matched for the fight, and I took the card out to Old Man Blanken's place on the ocean front—I'd worked there with Gallagher—and I ate two orders of steak and potatoes in thirty minutes.

"Good Lord," Old Man Blanken said, "why didn't you tell me you were hungry? You didn't need that card!" That's the way the old man was, but I'd been raised not to ask for anything I wasn't sure I could pay for.



COURTESY GENE VAN COURT

A Big Fellow All Dressed Up. Jeffries Before Leaving for Corbett's Carson City Training Camp in 1897

A week before the fight, I busted a bone in my right foot. I was so ignorant that I wouldn't quit work for anything; I was doing fifteen miles on the road every day, and ten to fifteen rounds of boxing. I cut the shoe open and went on working my head off. When I went in the ring on the night of July 2, 1896, that foot of mine was like a boil.

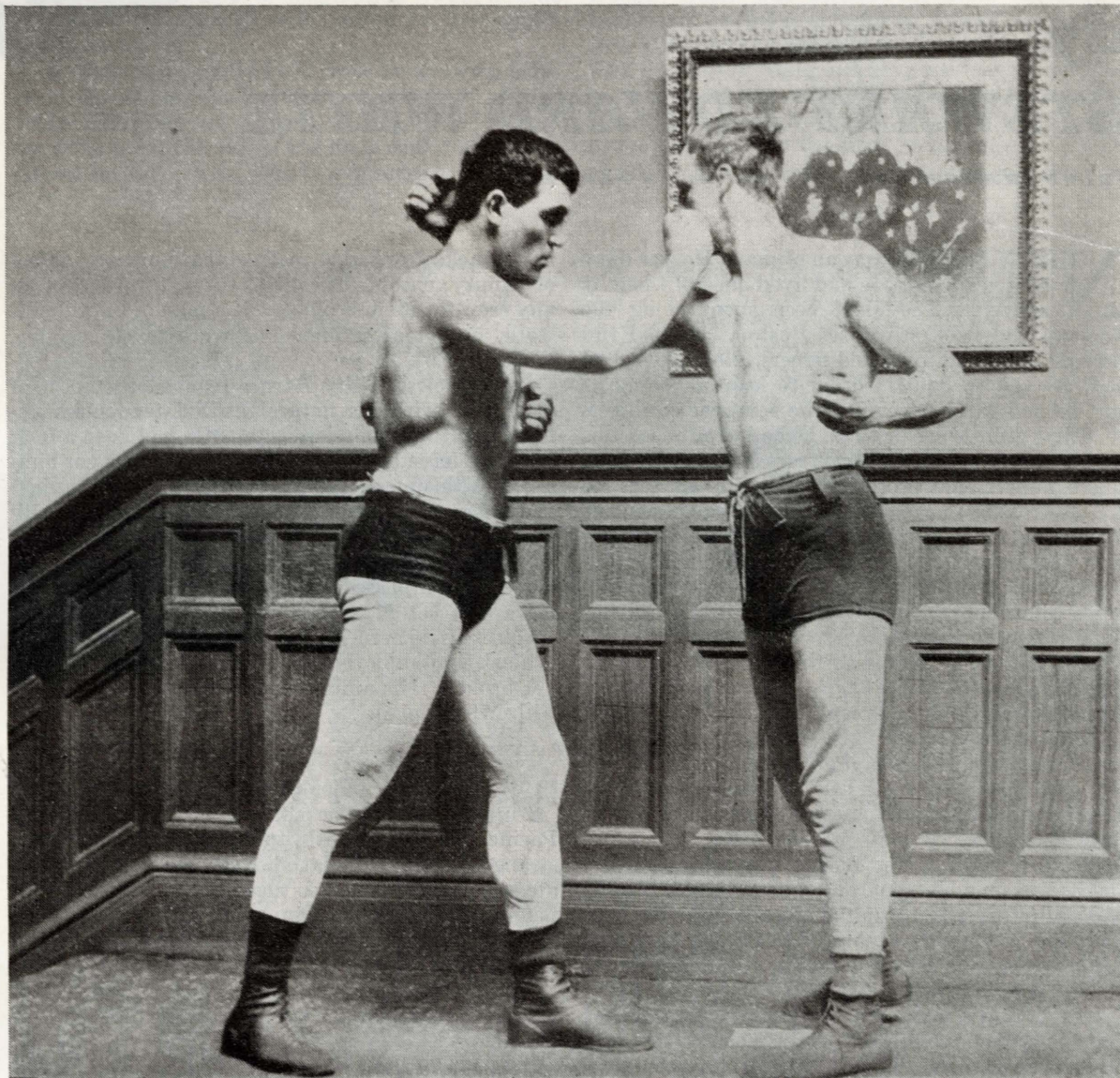
"The longer this goes, the worse my foot is going to hurt."

At the bell, I limped out as fast as I could and pumped a straight left hand at Danny Long's nose. It landed and he went down. He grabbed when he got up, and stalled out the round, but he was hurt. At the first of the second, I feinted him open and let him have it again with the straight left. He went down and out.

Next morning, Benny Benjamin, sports editor of the San Francisco Chronicle, told the town that James J. Jeffries was going to be heavyweight champion of the world. I went home with what was left of seven hundred and fifty dollars, a busted foot,

Bill Delaney took me up to Shaw Springs, near Carson City, Nevada, where Corbett was training for the title fight with Bob Fitzsimmons. Delaney was one of the best fight trainers the game ever had—middle-aged, bald as a baseball, a quiet fellow most of the time, but a hell of a talker when he opened up. He knew fighters. At Corbett's camp, Delaney was in a tough spot, because Corbett had two chief trainers—him and Charley White. William A. Brady, Corbett's manager, was there, too, and the whole camp was at sixes and sevens. But Delaney knew his stuff.

My first workout against Corbett was private. The training party had taken over the hotel at Shaw Springs—a one-and-a-half-story frame building, with a bar in it, dining room, kitchen, and a lot of single rooms. Snow was on the ground, and it was cold and kind of desolate. They had put up a handball court, walled on four sides, and Corbett did his boxing there. The first day I boxed with him, he let only White and Delaney in with us. Partly, he didn't



The Jeffries of 1898, Posed at the Old Reliance Club, Oakland, a Few Months Before He Went East to Meet Fitzsimmons, at Coney Island

and as much of a swelled head as I ever had in my life before or since.

Well, that was the beginning—that fight's in the record book. The next in the book is the start against Theodore Van Buskirk, Olympic Club champion, in April of 1897. But before that Van Buskirk fight, I put in six weeks as sparring partner for James J. Corbett, champion of the world, and you could fill a book with yarns from that Carson City camp.

I wanted to work there; I'd seen Corbett fight Tom Sharkey in San Francisco, and I knew what a boxer he was. That was the fight where Tom got sore, picked up Corbett and the referee in his two hands and piled them on the ropes. If the police hadn't interfered, Tom might have licked Corbett—Corbett was not in shape—but I'd seen how Corbett could box, and I wanted to work with him.

want to show me up; he'd heard of me as a good, rugged worker, and he didn't want to show me up in front of a crowd and run me out of camp. Partly, he didn't want to take any chances on my pulling something on him in front of a crowd. That first workout was a pip. I learned a lot—I learned that I had a lot to learn.

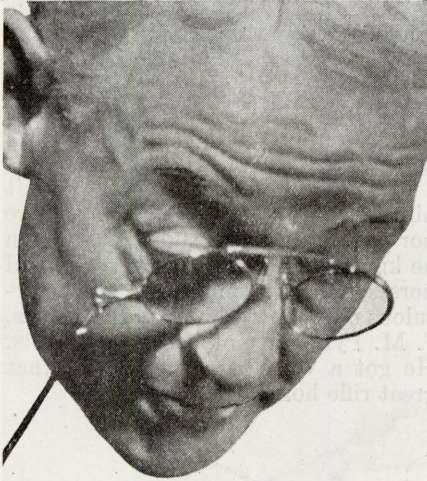
"You'll do," Corbett said, when it was over. "I need a big fellow around here that can take a punch."

He wasn't kidding. That let me out, as far as he could see—a big fellow that could take a punch. But I got a lot out of those six weeks with Jim Corbett. I got my board and two hundred and fifty dollars cash money, but I got a lot more than that. I found out that even if Corbett could outspeed me in the ring, I could outsprint him on the road any time. That bothered him—Corbett

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INSIDE THOSE ROPES

(Continued from Page 7)



"Say, young man, I see this sign everywhere I go. What is MARFAK anyhow?"



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was high-strung, and he didn't like anybody to beat him at anything. And I found out that James J. Corbett, champion of the world, couldn't knock me out.

I never did knock him out in training; I never tried to, and don't know that I could have. I was there to help him, not to fight him. But I did find out that he couldn't knock me out.

Charley White wanted to find out how hard Corbett could really hit, and he figured I was the guy to take it.

Charley came around trying to get me to lead a right hand to the body, next time I boxed Corbett. That's a sucker punch, you know—nobody would try it against a fast man. I told White I wouldn't do it. When he told me that Fitz used that punch, I laughed at him.

"Nit," I said, "and the hell with you!"

But White kept coming around, asking me to do it; I was hired to do what the trainers wanted, and finally I said I would. I knew what would happen, though.

Maybe three weeks before the date with Fitz, we had another secret workout in the handball court; Corbett had four other sparring partners, but he'd got so he did most of his boxing with me. I agreed to lead that right to the body, and I did. I got what I expected—only a lot more so. The second that I led my right, Corbett countered with a right-hand smash to my mouth. He smashed me too. They say Corbett couldn't hit, but he put everything he had on that one. And it burned me up.

I grabbed Corbett and slung him into a corner of the handball court, and when he bounced out, I threw him right back again. I went hog-wild. Charley White yelled: "Time!" Delaney grabbed hold of me, and Charley kept yelling: "Time!" We'd gone maybe a minute and a half.

How a Legend Started

Corbett said: "That's enough for today." But afterward, in the rubbing room, he said: "I'm afraid I hurt you with that right hand."

Well, the punch had set me back on my heels, and it had cut the inside of my lips against my teeth, but it hadn't shaken me very bad and I wouldn't say it had hurt.

Charley White butted in. "Sure it hurt, kid; tell him so," he said.

"I won't!" I said. I was just a kid, full of the old jinnegar, and I was sore that they'd used me for a punching bag. "And if you can't hit any harder than that," I told Corbett, "you won't hurt Fitzsimmons, either!"

Corbett hit the ceiling, and I guess I pretty near got fired.

That was how they started the story that, when I was just a green kid, I'd knocked Jim Corbett out. The newspapermen hanging around outside the court had heard the crash when Corbett hit the wall, and they'd heard White and Delaney yelling at me. But there was nothing to the story. I didn't knock Corbett out. That smash in the handball court was when I found he couldn't knock Jim Jeffries out.

Things got bad in that camp, though, before fight time came. Corbett got to worrying, and he worked his head off. Delaney even wanted to burn down the

handball court, so Jim wouldn't work so hard, but he didn't have the nerve to do it himself. I didn't volunteer, but I'd have done it if Delaney had told me to.

Except for Bob Edgren—he's the most famous sports cartoonist in the world now, I guess—I didn't make any special friends in that camp. I was a newcomer and a kid. But I worked out a lot with Corbett, and I was alone with him a lot on the road. I was alone with him the day he met Fitz and came next thing to having a private fight with him.

Jogging along out toward the state-penitentiary buildings, we met Fitz and his trainer, Dan Hickey. We slowed down. I shook hands with Hickey and Fitz, but when Fitz stuck out his hand to Corbett, Jim snarled at him. Corbett said: "I'll shake hands with you over there when we get in the ring on the seventeenth of March!"

A Championship Changes Hands

I can still see Jim snarling at Fitz, pointing a finger over toward the arena. From where we were, you could just see the arena, over beyond the state buildings.

Fitz got an ugly look in his eye—and he could look plenty hard. "All right," he said. That was that.

I knew how Corbett felt; he was on edge, not himself at all, and he felt mean about the way he'd acted. We trailed back to the Springs at a dog-trot, neither of us saying anything.

Fight time came finally—St. Patrick's Day, 1897.

Corbett was more like his old self when the grind was over, and when he was right, James J. Corbett was a great man. He was lightning-fast in the ring; he had a smooth way of going. He hit with a punch that flickered like a snake's tongue. He was dead serious when he was working, and a good showman when he was fighting. I wish I could give a picture of him the way he was before the training got him down too fine—easy, friendly, a swell guy to work with in the training ring.

Jim invited me to be in his corner, but he had four men lined up already, and I thought four was too many. I excused myself. I helped in the dressing room, but when the call came, I went out.

I went out and got myself a bleacher seat alongside my old Los Angeles friend and backer, Charley Murray. Charley had bet on Corbett.

I saw Jim Corbett knocked out in the fourteenth round that day by exactly the punch that had started me developing the Jeffries crouch—a left hook to the liver.

As early as the sixth, I persuaded Charley to go down into the crowd and hedge his Corbett money. Corbett was "off." He dropped Fitz to his knees in that sixth, waited for him, but when Fitz got up, Corbett's right uppercut missed him by a foot. When Jim Corbett swung and missed like that, something was wrong.

In that fourteenth, Fitz half turned his body, backed away, and Corbett came in with his right hand cocked. Fitz pivoted and hooked his left to the liver. That sock hurt me, sitting on the bleachers—I knew how it felt. Corbett went down. He twisted a little on the canvas. His face was death-white, and

his mouth worked as if he wanted to scream. They counted him out.

Afterward, the newspapers talked about a solar-plexus punch—trying to make some kind of a mystery of it—but it was a left hook to the liver. I knew something about that punch. I knew it when I saw it. And I saw it as plain as I can see my own hand now.

They took the first moving pictures of a championship fight, that St. Patrick's Day, 1897. The day was clear and sunny until maybe ten minutes after the knockout. Then the sky turned black and it began to snow.

Billy Delaney and I had a gloomy train ride, going back to Oakland that night; we'd worked and played for six weeks with Jim Corbett, and it hurt to see him licked. He'd been a ring hero of mine. Even later on, when we were fighting each other in the ring, we were friends; I always liked and admired him. So the ride home after Carson City was not much fun.

It was that night, though, that Billy Delaney took on the management of young Jim Jeffries, and Jim Jeffries spoke his little piece about wanting to be champion.

Riding down in the gloom, Delaney finally asked me who I expected to fight next. I told him Van Buskirk, the O. C. champ. Delaney said: "He's too tough for you." We rode on for quite a while. Right after my first fight in San Francisco, I'd been matched to fight Van Buskirk. I had pneumonia then, and after I got through a siege that almost killed me, Van Buskirk had come around and made a crack about my running out on him.

"If I can't lick Van Buskirk," I told Delaney, "I'll go back to boiler-making." Delaney said nothing for maybe an hour. Then suddenly he popped out: "How about me handling you?"

"Would you want to?" I asked him. He nodded. And that was all the contract he and I ever had.

On the Trail of Fitzsimmons

Along late that night I told Delaney, all of a sudden, that I wanted to fight Bob Fitzsimmons. I said: "I don't think Fitz can lick me, and I bet I can hit as hard as he can." Billy gave me the once-over, slow, with a funny look in his eye. "I don't mean right now," I told him. "Maybe a couple years from now." He went back to looking out the window, without making me any answer. He never did answer me. All the rest of the ride he had nothing to say, and he didn't even say good-by when we hit Oakland.

He got me Van Buskirk, though—I knocked him out in two rounds—and Delaney got me nearly three thousand dollars for my end of the purse. Up in the hotel room afterward, with the cash laid out on the table between us, I asked Delaney what I owed him. He was very quiet about it. "Whatever you think is right," he said.

I baited him. I said: "Suppose we cut it in two."

Delaney jumped up, sore as a goat. "You'll never have a manager that's worth half," he yelled, "and don't ever let any so-and-so tell you he is!" He said: "You split me five hundred; I'll be satisfied."

And that was our money arrangement from then on. After every fight,

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2. Each week from June 17th until July 22nd the 10 persons who submit the best names received up to noon Saturday of the preceding week will receive a \$125.50 RCA Victor All-Wave 1935 "Magic Brain" Radio including RCA Antenna System.
3. In addition, 40 people submitting the next best names each week will receive a Gillette \$4.00 Aristocrat One Piece Razor. At the conclusion of the contest a grand prize of \$1,000.00 in cash will be awarded for the name judged to be the most appropriate submitted during the entire contest.
4. Names will be judged for originality, uniqueness and aptness. Judges' decisions are final. No entries returned. Duplicate prizes awarded in case of tie. Everyone is eligible to enter except employees of the Gillette Safety Razor Company and

their families, or employees of Gillette's advertising agency and their families.

5. Send in as many names as you wish provided each is accompanied by an empty Gillette "Blue Blade" package and the name and address of the dealer from whom you purchased the blades. If you use Probak blades (another Gillette product), you may accompany your name suggestion with an empty Probak package. All other rules apply.

6. Winners will be announced every Monday night on Gillette's Max Baer "Lucky Smith" broadcast over WEAF and associated N.B.C. stations coast-to-coast.

7. Hurry! Mail your entry now. Submit as many names as you please but be sure to enclose an empty Gillette "Blue Blade" (or Probak) package with each name. Mail your entry to Gillette Safety Razor Company, Dept. S.E.P., Box 20, Boston, Mass.

GILLETTE BLUE BLADES



LISTEN IN! Max Baer, heavyweight fighter, stars every Monday night in Gillette radio drama "Lucky Smith". WEAF and associated N. B. C. stations.

(Continued from Page 82)

till the day I retired, I'd hand Billy Delaney what looked like a fair cut of the purse, and we never had any argument about money or a line of writing.

My next start was in the old Mechanics Pavilion, against a rough, tough boy from Chicago; he called himself Slaughterhouse Hank Baker, and he claimed he got his nickname knocking down beeves with his bare fist in the Chicago stockyards. Maybe so. I stopped him in nine rounds.

The newspapers were calling me the coming champion, but my head didn't swell as easy as it had after the Danny Long fight. Even in the two rounds against Van Buskirk—he was a good boxer, and fast for a big man—I'd got my feet tangled up a couple of times. By then, I knew quite well what boys like Fitzsimmons or Corbett would have done to a guy that couldn't un-track himself any better than that. I had plenty to learn, and I went to work at it. I trained at the old Reliance Club in Oakland—De Witt Van Court had come up to take charge there. His brother Gene gave me a lot of help. Gene was a little fellow, but he held all the Coast wrestling titles from feather to middleweight, and he knew plenty about conditioning. And Billy Delaney began giving me more of his time—teaching me how to train, talking to me about right living, trying to tell me what it was all about.

He threw me in with a couple tough ones in my next two starts—Gus Ruhlin, then Joe Choynski.

Gus Ruhlin was a championship contender, and a better man than the record book gives him credit for. He never quite reached the top, but he was rugged—they called him the Akron Giant—and he was fast and rough. It was Ruhl that taught me to keep my hands up as long as I was inside the other boy's range.

The Hardest Punch I Ever Took

We had a mob that packed Woodward's Pavilion; the Reliance Club turned out in a body, and Ruhl had plenty of backers. He gave me a fight.

I had him down three or four times in the first ten rounds, but he wouldn't stay down. I hit him one welt that raised a lump the size of an egg alongside his jaw—if anybody tells you Gus wasn't game, remember that he got up from that one. I still hadn't learned much about training, and I began to tire. At the end of the twelfth, I dropped my hands when the gong rang and turned to my corner. Gus hauled his right hand all the way up from the canvas and belted me on the ear with everything he had. I thought a rafter had lit on me.

Delaney yelled: "Foul!" He hopped into the ring, but while the referee was hesitating, I got my wits back. "Let it go, Bill," I said. "He didn't hurt me!"

That was propaganda; Ruhlin spent the rest of the fight keeping away from this guy that couldn't be hurt. They called it a draw, and the crowd booted for twenty minutes. But I kept my mouth shut—I figured it served me right for not having got into better shape.

Joe Choynski—I fought him in November, 1897—hit me the hardest punch I ever took square. He was light for a heavyweight—spidery, almost frail. He was lightning fast, and a smart boxer, and he had a right hand that would crack your skull. He hit me with it square in the mouth.

It was a funny fight. Sunny Jim Coffroth was promoting it, and I think

the law was trying to make him some trouble. Anyhow, after I knocked Choynski down, along about the third or fourth, a dozen cops crowded up to the ring. Delaney tipped me to ease off. And from then on, Joe ducked, side-stepped, clinched, and sometimes just plain turned his back and ran. He was running in the tenth round—had his back to me—and I ran after him. He ran straight into the ropes, bounced back and spun in the air. With him coming off in a spin, and me rushing in, he caught me with his right hand in the mouth. I never took the likes of that wallop before or since. It wrenched my head back, broke my nose and wedged my lips into my teeth. It stopped me in my tracks—it stopped Joe, too; he hit me so hard. I don't know why it didn't break his hand. Between rounds, from then on, Billy Delaney had to saw my upper lip off my teeth, and as soon as Billy got it loose, Joe would jab it back again.

The referee—it was Eddie Graney that night—called it a draw, and the crowd agreed with him. I didn't deserve any better—running in like a sucker against as wicked a fighter as Joe Choynski. I'd learned something.

Battling an Iron Man

I licked Joe Goddard in February, the next year, down in Los Angeles—showing the home folks what Mrs. Jeffries' big boy could do. I licked Goddard quite easy, because when I fought him I had a couple of bad hands. That sounds funny, but that's the way it was. I'd trained hard, wanting to make a good showing, but both hands were sore when I went in the ring. I knocked Goddard down four times in the first—the first time with a straight left between the eyes—but he came back fighting every time. It was a wow of a round for the customers, but my hands were badly hurt when I got back to the corner.

"Yeh," Delaney said, "and if you keep on hitting him on the head, your hands are going to hurt a lot worse before you're through!"

From then on, I punched to the body, but I think Joe Goddard went down at least six times before he called it a day. They called Goddard the Australian Iron Man. He was big and tough, and I want to say right here that he was plenty game. When a fighter can knock a man his size down with a punch to the body, he's hitting, and the man that takes it there and gets up for more, is game. Goddard didn't quit in that fourth round at L. A. He was badly hurt.

A month after that, I scored my three-round knockout of Peter Jackson, supposed to be the greatest Negro fighter there ever was. I want to tell about that.

Sometimes you hear arguments about whose championship career was the greatest—well, the great Peter Jackson's name doesn't rightly belong in my record. I only licked the shell of Peter Jackson. I didn't know it when I signed—I thought I was up against the big test of my career—but he was washed up. I knew it from the first punch I landed. From then on, I hated to hit the old boy. I ended it in the third; it would have been no kindness to let him stay and take a beating.

This was the way Peter Jackson ended; maybe you'll want to remember it when you read about Reno, later on. In the third round I clipped him with a short left and put him to sleep; but he fell into the ropes and hung there with his feet touching the

canvas. I stepped back. The referee said: "He ain't on the floor!" I couldn't hit old Peter Jackson then—he was helpless—and the ref wouldn't count. I went to the ropes, grabbed the old boy off them and laid him out. That's the way the great Peter Jackson took his last knockout in the ring. Small credit to me.

Mexican Pete Everett comes next—and the biggest laugh of my ring career. If I was to name the toughest-looking mug I ever went up against, I'd give you Mexican Pete, straight, place and show. If you asked me which was the most harmless, I'd also give you Mexican Pete.

They didn't let Pete even see me until just before time to ring the gong—Frank Carr, Pete's manager, was afraid he'd run out. My brother Jack signed the articles in my place, and on fight night he went in the ring and sat in my corner until just before the gong. Then I jumped in. The minute the fight started, Mexican Pete Everett began running. He made no bones about it—he just turned and ran around the ring as fast as he could. I got plenty of exercise, and the mob got a three-round laugh. I knocked Pete out in the third with a right swing to the middle of his back.

Two weeks later, on the night of May 6, 1898, they handed me quite a different proposition, and we packed the old Mechanics Pavilion with the biggest mob that had ever attended a bout in the U. S. A. And it was a mob too.

Tom Sharkey —

Listen, that first night I fought Sailor Tom Sharkey was a brawl from start to finish. Tom and I had to fight our way into the ring, we battled twenty rounds inside the old ropes, and we had to fight our way out again.

Toe to Toe With Tom Sharkey

Jim Coffroth promoted more business on that fight than the Pavilion was built to handle, and he'd rigged up a lot of temporary bleachers and seats. One section crashed while Tom and I were waiting in the dressing rooms. Just by a miracle, nobody was killed, but the mob stampeded out of the wreck and down into the reserved sections. It took Tom and me fifteen minutes to buck through to the ring. Alex Greggains, the referee, hustled us out almost before we got the gloves on; he jabbered the instructions at us and gave the office for the gong.

Outside the ring they quit rioting, then, because Tom and I put on a worse riot inside it. Tom Sharkey was on top of me from the second the gong rang, and he stayed there from then on. We stood head to head, toe to toe, for twenty rounds and slugged at each other with everything in the book. I drove him back, time and again, just by the weight of the punches I threw to his belly, but I never stopped him, never knocked him down, never seemed to hurt him. You know what Sharkey was like—there was only one of him—stocky, with a chest like a beer keg, not enough neck to hoist his chin out. He was quick as a cat. He was a punishing puncher. He swarmed in and threw gloves, and the only way you could get him off you was to knock him off.

He was good and rough too. Along in the seventh that night—with the mob jammed right up against the ring, yelling its head off—I grabbed Tom by both shoulders, shook him up and threw him into the ropes. The next time we got in close, I yelled at him: "If you want to play rough, I'll play

too!" I think it was the first time in his life Tom Sharkey had ever met a man as strong as he was. He quit roughing me for a little while.

In the tenth, another bleacher section went down. I heard the crash. I heard the yells and groans, and I knew the mob was rioting again. But I was down in the ring slugging the Sailor—and being slugged—and I didn't find out what had happened until the fight was over. Tom didn't give me time to find out.

Greggains held up my hand at the end of Round 20. I think it was right—I think I won it. Tom thought a draw was the worst he could have got, but he didn't yell. All he asked for was another chance. He told the world he'd wreck me next time he got me in the ring.

We battled our way out through the mob.

People say Tom hated my guts after that fight, but that wasn't true. He thought he could lick me; he wanted a chance to fight me again. He wanted another chance to paste hell out of me, but he didn't hate me. Tom Sharkey was a fighting man.

Coming to Grief in the East

Twenty-five years later I talked to Sharkey about that fight. "Tom," I asked him, "did you see the balcony crash that night?"

"I was too busy," he said. Then he gave me that stubborn Irish grin of his. "Did you?" he asked.

"I wouldn't have had time to see the whole building fall down," I told him.

After that Sharkey fight, Billy Delaney started out to get Bob Fitzsimmons for me. He figured I was ready. So did I. But it was a year and one month before we finally got the shot. There was not as much stalling about a championship promotion then as there is now, but there was plenty.

Delaney and I went East, the summer of 1898, aiming to line up the fight for ourselves. All we got out of it was a busted hand for me and a lot of grief for Delaney.

My first fight in the East was supposed to be a double-header—I was going to fight Bob Armstrong, the big Negro, and Steve O'Donnell on the same night, at Tom O'Rourke's Lenox Athletic Club. I'd come East to ask for a chance at Fitz, and I had to show the wise boys what I could do. I showed them. I cracked my left hand on Armstrong's hard black skull in Round 2; I licked him, but I didn't knock him out. Furthermore, the hand was in no shape for another fight the same night, and old Tom O'Rourke wouldn't let me go on. The next day the New York newspapers panned me.

The day I got the plaster cast off my hand, three weeks later, I went to work again in the old Reliance Club, back in Oakland. That afternoon I got a wire from William A. Brady, offering me a fight with Fitz.

Brady had been sore at Delaney ever since the Carson City training camp, and his wire offered me the title shot if I'd put myself under the management of William A. Brady for the next two years.

"How about it?" I asked Delaney, when I got the wire.

We had to play with Brady, or not play, but Brady's offer meant that Billy Delaney would be out. Delaney only said: "Well, you want Fitz, don't you?"

I took Delaney East with me, though; and Mr. Brady and I had a showdown. Brady was a good scout

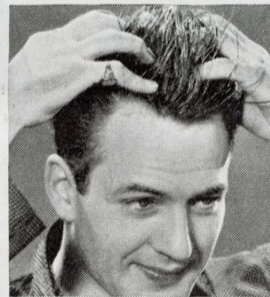
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about it, finally. I told Brady that I had to have Billy, and that he'd get his pay in a cut of the gross receipts. I told Brady that if he tried to ease Billy out, I'd have to go out with him. Brady saw how it was.

"All right, Jim." He gave me a shrug and a grin. "Go to it!"

The date with Fitz was June 9, 1899. Early in March, I hired me a big house and grounds at Allenhurst, New Jersey, near Asbury Park, and went to work.

Brady had given me five months' work in show business at the first big money I'd ever had—one thousand dollars a week and a percentage of the box office. I boxed on the stage with my brother Jack and Jack McCormick. It was pretty sweet. But I wanted to do my training right, and I quit the show in March—I wouldn't have waited any longer for ten thousand dollars a week. I wanted to be right.

Somehow, I'd like to give a picture of young Jim Jeffries, as he was then, going to work for his chance at the championship. He was dead in earnest. He was not a bad guy.

Ever since I was a kid, I'd been toughening myself with long hikes and hunting trips in the hills around Los Angeles. I'd lived in the open. I'd worked hard in the shops, earning a man's wages. I've told you how I worked in the gym, nights and holidays, learning all I could about boxing. And in my pro career I'd worked out with Jim Corbett, and I'd been under fire against Ruhlin, Joe Choynski, Tom Sharkey. I was twenty-four years old. I was hard as nails. I was as powerful, I think, as any fighter that ever went in the ring. And I'd studied fighting the way a doctor studies his profession.

I had a lot, but I had to ready it up, shape up the fine points and fit myself to go in the ring against Bob Fitzsimmons. Even today, I guess, people have some notion of what Bob Fitzsimmons was in those days. You know what his build was—heavyweight arms and shoulders, middleweight from the waist down. He was the trickiest man that ever fought in the heavy-weight division, and he could hit like hell. A guy could make just one mistake against old Fitz.

If I tangled my feet up just once in the course of twenty-five rounds in the ring with him—blooey! And my six years of plugging would go up the spout, then and there.

Battle Practice

I had my brother and Jack McCormick—I'd been boxing on the stage with them—and I got Jim Daly for another sparring partner. They were all three plenty tough, and hard hitters. Then I sent for Tommy Ryan, the middleweight; I think Ryan was the greatest boxer and fighter that ever fought in his division. Ryan had worked with me in San Francisco when I was training for Peter Jackson—that's how seriously I'd taken Jackson. Ryan had terrific speed, science, and a smart head. He knew all there was to know about ring fighting, and he knew how to make the other fellow see it. I sent for Tommy—he was looking for a place to train, anyway, for a battle with Mysterious Billy Smith—and I laid one thousand dollars on the line to get him.

Ten weeks before the date with Fitz, I leveled off for hard training. I called the boys together and told them to go to work on me.

"From now on," I told them, "no sparring! Come in fighting. If you

can knock my block off, it'll save me getting it done by Fitz!"

There was no monkey business. For those ten weeks I was up at six every morning, working the pulley weights in the gym and taking a couple of sprints on the road before breakfast. My roadwork was ten to fifteen miles a day—if a fighter nowadays does five miles, he thinks he's abused. I did my boxing in the afternoons; led up to it with several games of handball, fifteen hundred to twenty-five hundred turns at rope skipping, fifteen minutes of bag punching at top speed. I boxed anywhere from eight to sixteen rounds a day.

Tommy Ryan was a corker in the ring. There wasn't a second he wasn't trying to knock my ears down. Whenever he pulled something I didn't savvy, we'd have an extra session, after the regular work, and he'd take it to pieces and I'd work it over until I could do it automatically. Then the next day I'd try it out on my brother Jack.

"Jim," Jack would complain, "it's no fun being your brother!"

Jack was a big man, a crackajack boxer, and plenty of people thought he was a better man than I was. But mother had kept him out of the ring game until fairly late; he wasn't himself in the ring, but he was plenty tough in a training-camp battle.

How the Old-Timers Trained

Jack handled the business end of the camp too. Most of the time I had four or five sparring partners—they got one hundred dollars a week—and I kept my own chef, waiters, rubbers, trainer's helpers, and so forth. I had a staff of a dozen to fifteen people, and sometimes had almost as many guests staying over in the camp. It was quite an establishment.

I lived that way for ten weeks, prepping for the champion. Delaney and I laid out the work every day, and I went through it to the last drop of sweat. I wish I had space here to write down the training menus I lived on—I didn't live high. I went ten weeks, for instance, on no liquid except one glass of water, sipped slowly, at bedtime each night. Each day after a workout, I went over my face and neck—pickling my hands, too, incidentally—with beef brine and borax. I'd massage the brine into my skin, let the sun dry it, and then wash it off with warm water and borax; it left the skin soft and pliable, but tough, with the flesh underneath it partly pickled.

No matter how much trouble it was, I did everything I knew about to make sure I'd be in shape when I crawled inside those ropes against Bob Fitzsimmons.

That was the way a fighter trained, back in those days, for a big-time start. Maybe it explains why some of us old-timers, when we watch the boys fight in the ring today, have a hunch that we had more guts, endurance, power, speed—more of what it takes—than a carload of the boys that are up there now.

Or maybe old-timers just always feel that way.

The Sunday before the fight, I planned only a hard workout on the road to test my condition—no boxing. I did fourteen miles that day in two minutes under an hour and a half. If you know anything about distance running, you know what a pace that is for a two-hundred-and-twenty pounder on the road. I came in sweating nice. I saw that the clock was under an hour

BOYS!!

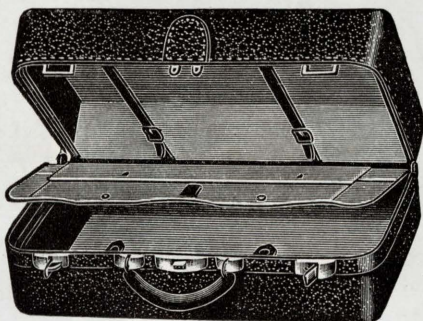
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and a half—I felt good. I said to De-laney: "Billy, I'm right!" And I was.

John L. Sullivan was there, next morning, for my last ring work.

The fight was to be Friday night, at the Seaside Athletic Club, Coney Island. On the Monday before, I went twelve rounds at top speed, working fast, but pulling my punches so as not to hurt anybody. John L. Sullivan watched.

Newspapermen had printed that I couldn't hit—they'd never seen me tip a sparring partner over—but John L. watched the way I went after boys like Jack Jeffries and Tommy Ryan. When I eased up at the end, the old boy threw his cap up in the air—remember, he used to wear a Prince Albert coat and a gray cap. He yelled: "The next champion of the world! The fastest big man I ever saw in the ring!" And his yell was a bellow you could hear over in Asbury Park.

I never let anybody print it before, but the way I first got the fight bug was from seeing John L. Sullivan when I was a kid. I didn't see him fight; I just saw him walking along the street in Los Angeles, looking straight ahead, with a high hat tilted down over one eye. I was maybe ten—just a wet-nosed kid tagging along after him. But he looked like a champion, and he made me want to be one. I got the fight bug from him.

You can guess how I felt when he shook hands with me that day and I ran into the training quarters for a shower and a rub. I was ready.

Friday morning—I did only light work up to then—we moved our traps out of the training quarters. I slung baggage with the rest of them. They couldn't make me rest or be quiet; I was full of zingo, and I had to do

everything there was to do. We moved down to Martin Dowling's roadhouse in Coney, a couple or three blocks from the club—got there in time for me to limber up with a sprint and put away a light lunch. I was ready then. The work was all done. I felt good; I wanted to get in that ring.

Late that afternoon, I did two things that started some stories to go. I bet five thousand dollars on Bob Fitzsimmons to lick me, and I went up to my room and fell sound asleep, waiting for time to fight him.

How could a guy sleep, if he thought he was in for a licking?

And if a guy thought he was going to win, why would he bet five thousand dollars on the other boy?

There was no mystery about it to me. I bet five thousand dollars on Fitz because I'd spent quite a lot of my own money on the training siege. If an accident happened or a referee robbed me, twenty-five hundred dollars cash money would help—the odds favored Fitz, 2-to-1. If I won, I'd take the long end of the purse, and five thousand dollars lost money wouldn't bother me. That's why I bet on Fitz. And I went to sleep because I was sleepy. I was a big healthy kid, in the best of condition, and my work was all done. June 9, 1899, was a hot, sultry day, even at the seashore. I wanted fight time to come; I wanted to get inside those ropes with Fitzsimmons. But it was a drowsy June afternoon, and I had nothing to do but wait. I just went to sleep.

I was sound asleep when the boys banged on the door finally and told me it was time to get ready for the ring.

Editor's Note—This is the first of a series of articles by Mr. Jeffries and Mr. Orcutt. The second will appear in two weeks.

THE MOST WONDERFUL DAY

(Continued from Page 15)

"Oh, Roddy's just got more vitality. He's just as excited about tomorrow as I am. He'll be married four weeks tomorrow."

"Must seem like twelve years to him."

Bill was still clutching me. "You know, Roddy thinks you're wonderful. If he had met a girl like you —"

"Let me go," I said, pushing him away. "I've got to start food negotiations."

The barometer fell in the kitchen when I told Corny and Venice about the night's work. I blamed it upon the "mistah," however, and after they had groaned and mumbled adequately, we planned a nice lunch. I telephoned the butcher, who sent me some nice chicken to fry, and strawberries, and things for sandwiches. Corny said, "I ain't gwine to do another thing about this picnic until I gits home tonight. Miss Venice, you can just git yourself up to git the breakfast tomorrow while I is fryin' dese chickens."

Early in the morning, the telephone rang. The telephone was on Bill's side of the bed, but he likes to sleep, so I set the instrument on his chest.

"Hello," I said sleepily. . . . "Oh, Roddy! . . . I guess it is a wonderful day." I took a look. "Yes, beautiful. . . . Oh, about 9:30. It will take more than an hour to get there." I braced myself. I heard; I quivered. . . . "Roddy, tell her not to give it a thought. We'll meet the 9:18." I put the telephone on Bill's forehead.

"What's the matter? Someone sick?" He opened his eyes.

"I'm sick. She can't get the car."

"What car?"

"Roddy's bride's sister's car in which we were to be driven to the Pocahontas Field and Stream Club for our anniversary fishing day."

Bill's brain is wonderful. "So she couldn't get the car?"

"Clever. Her sister thought the fishing trip was Sunday, so she changed a date she had to go see her grandmother in Atlantic City, from Sunday to Saturday, and now she can't change back because the grandmother is going to Philadelphia Sunday, and they feel simply terribly, so I guess I'd better take our car to the garage."

"What's the matter with our car?"

"The clutch slips."

"I don't mind a slipping clutch."

"You're not driving. Did Roddy know she had these relatives?"

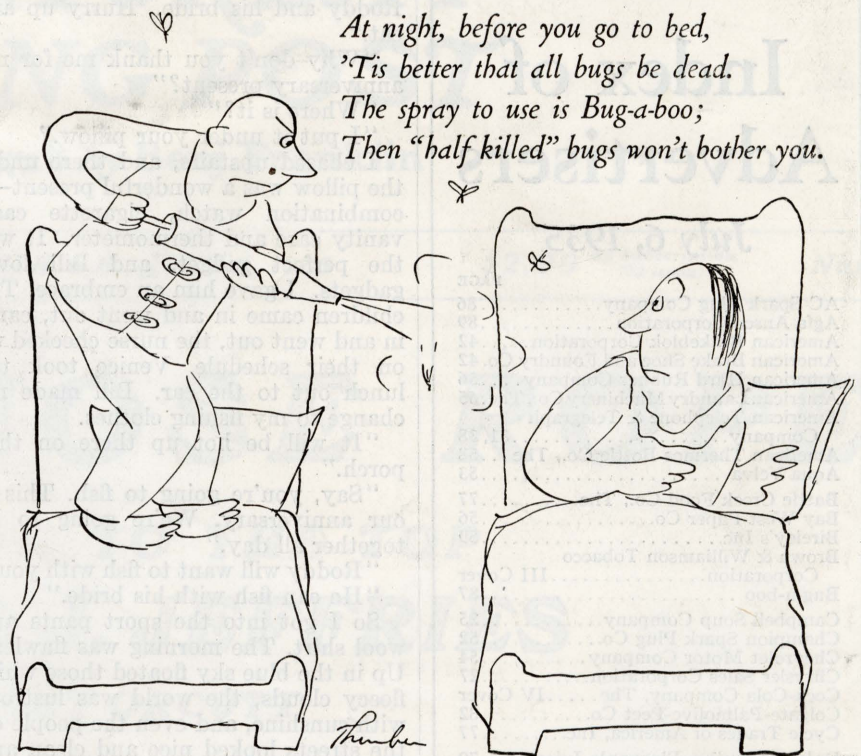
"They won't bother him. Not in Chicago." He went to sleep again, and I dressed and went to Kelly's garage, where I relaxed while several gentlemen fixed my car. Back home, I found Bill eating breakfast, looking very dour.

"That fool Atkinson sent me MacGregor Butterfly Triumphant instead of McDowdy Butterfly Tricolor."

"Don't be downhearted. We're twelve years married today."

"I wanted today to be perfect."

"It is perfect. The sun is shining, the car is fixed, the train from New York

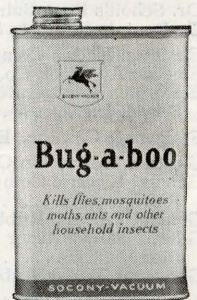


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INSIDE THOSE ROPES

II—UP IN THE LIGHTS

By **JAMES J. JEFFRIES**

With **EDDY ORCUTT**

ALONG about ten o'clock on the night of June 9, 1899, at the Seaside Sporting Club, Coney Island, I crawled inside those ropes against Bob Fitzsimmons to fight him for the title.

That was the great night of my life.

The fight mob packed the club, and it was still cheering Fitz when I got in. That was all right; no champion ever deserved a cheer more than he did. When I got to my corner, I found that the ring lamp reflectors were fixed to throw the light square in my eyes, but that was all right too. I was just the challenger—the betting was 2 to 1 that Fitz would beat me; and I had to expect that the ring would be rigged the way the champion wanted it. That was the way they did things in those days.

Over in Fitz's corner, friends had piled a floral horseshoe as tall as he was, and he was standing beside it. He was grinning, mitting the crowd. He had on a fancy dressing gown, and you could see the belt of American flags around his waist when the dressing gown brushed open.

I was wearing street clothes on over my tights—I never owned a dressing gown in my life. I was wearing a maroon sweater from the old Reliance Club, back in Oakland. Years afterward, the newspapermen all called it "Jeff's old red sweater," but it was maroon—the club's color. I wore a cap to shade my eyes against those lights.

In my old clothes and my red sweater and cap, maybe I looked like a tramp. But down in my heart, that night, I knew I was ready. I was right, see? And down in my heart, right today, I don't believe the fighter ever lived that could have licked me that night. If that sounds like boasting, I'm sorry.

Getting a Break

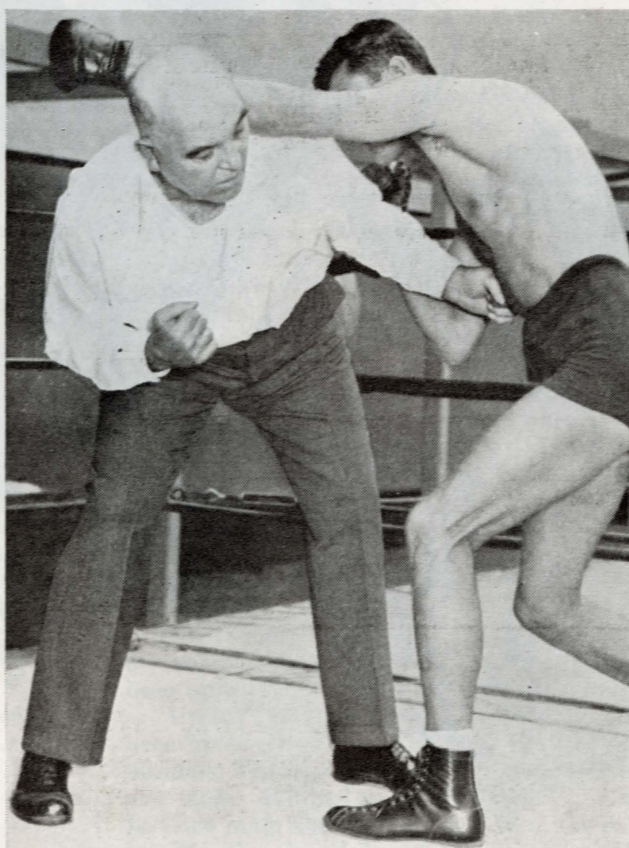
WAITING in my corner, I was on edge for the fight to begin, but I was not scared about how it was coming out. Fitz grinned across at me and gave me the eye. He was not scared either.

Once in a while, somebody says: "I understand you threw the fear of God into Fitz just before that fight. Is that true?"

It is not. Nobody ever threw a fear into Bob Fitzsimmons in a dressing room or any place else. Billy Delaney and I did fox him into agreeing to a

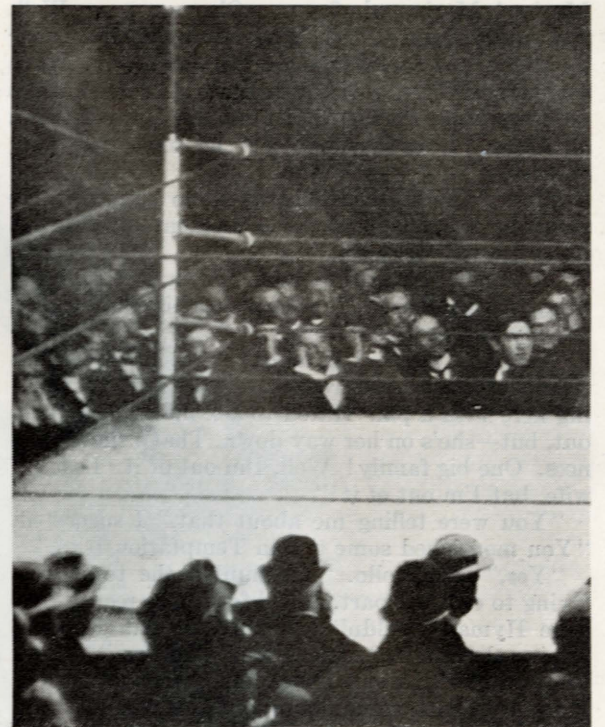


"Our Hair Never Grew In Again." Sharkey and Jeffries 27 Years After Being Scorched by the Movie Arc Lights at Coney Island



ROBERT A. MILLER, LOS ANGELES

A Left Hook to the Liver Will Give Anyone the Jeffries Crouch. He Illustrates



COURTESY NASIB, N. Y.

No Crouch Here; the Famous Sharkey Fight at

rule that we wanted, and we did it with a rough trick in my dressing room, but we did not scare him any, and we did not try to. I intended to fight Fitz in close, and I wanted to be able to hit on the break, instead of having to break clean and step back. Just before we went in the ring, George Siler, the referee, got us together in my dressing room and asked us how we wanted to fight.

Before Fitz could speak up for a clean break, I said to him: "Let's clinch and break right here; then we'll know just what Siler means by a clean break. All right?"

Fitz and I clinched; when Siler ordered us to break, I slammed Fitz away as hard as I could. I put plenty of power into it.

"Is that an all-right break?" I asked Siler.

He said: "Sure."

Fitz looked me over. I'd shaken his eyeteeth with that shove into the wall. "Gor'blimey," he said, "we'll protect ourselves at all times!"

Up in the ring, standing beside his horseshoe and grinning at me, Fitz had a wicked look in his eye. Don't think he was scared, or anything like it. Fitz was the guy that said: "The bigger they are, the 'arder they fall!"

Waiting for the bell, I told the boys in my corner what I wanted. It is hooey to say that a fighter plans his fight beforehand. How can he? How does he know what the other boy is going to do? I only knew I wanted to keep in close, so Fitz couldn't stand off and peck me to pieces. That's why I wanted to be able to hit on the break. And I knew what I wanted my corner to do.

"At the end of every round," I told Billy Delaney, "I want you to tell me how I'm going. I want to keep my nose out in front of this fellow."

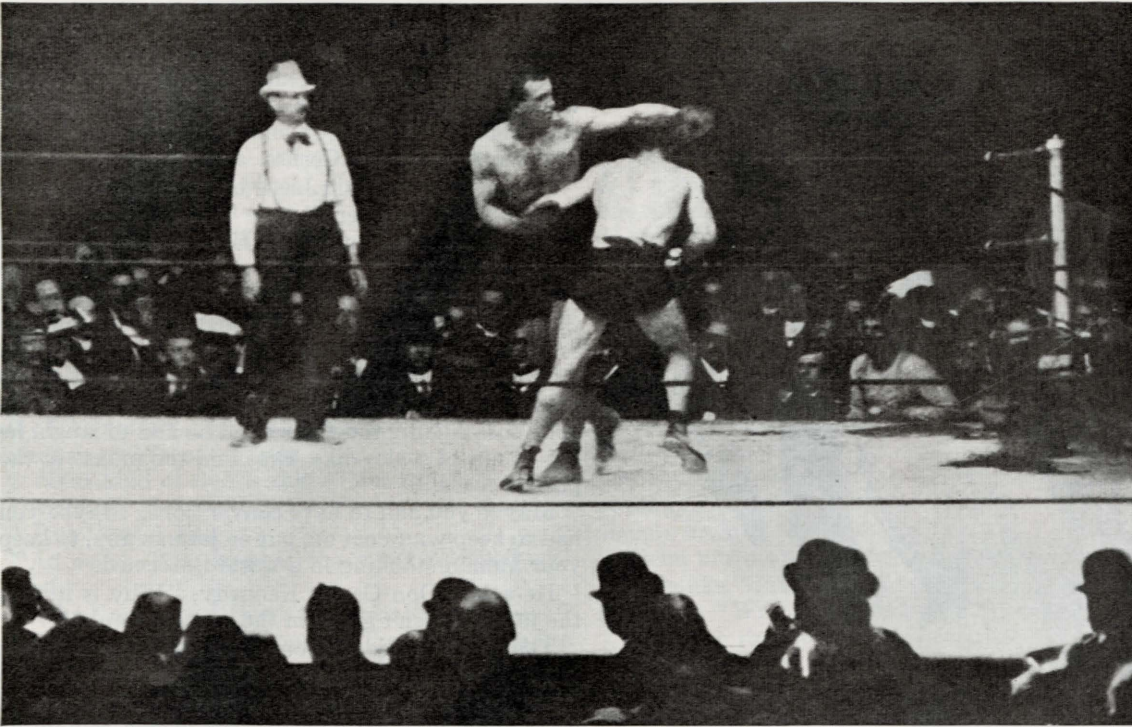
I said to my brother Jack: "I want you to do just one thing: At the beginning of every round, when I get off my stool, I want you to tell me: 'Be careful!'" I didn't want to take a chance with Fitz, the way Corbett had.

Silence in a Corner

DICK TONER—"the Rat"—was in my corner; he was the best rough-and-tumble fighter in New York, and he got his nickname from being a rat catcher. He carried a gun. "If anybody yells at me from this corner," I told the Rat, "I want you to pull that gun out and bend it over his head." He would have too.

Tommy Ryan was in my corner, and he was a great guy for yelling at a fight. I didn't want to be bothered, and I wasn't.

Siler called us out. The instructions took maybe a minute. Then I shook hands with lanky Bob Fitzsimmons and they gave us the bell.



Coney Island, November 3rd, 1899, Where Jeffries Defended His Championship for the First Time

Fitz hit me only two real punches, all that fight. I could have knocked him out in the second round. I finished him in the end with a push in the face.

All that is true, but it don't tell the truth about that fight. Fitz was always there—he was there every minute, till I finally got to him—and from the second round on, he raked me over with every punch he had. He landed only two bad ones, but there was dynamite in Bob's knuckles, every punch he threw.

The Blow That Beat Fitzsimmons

HE CAME out slashing me with his left in the second round—a fast, punishing left that stood the mob up, yelling. But he was hitting me on the forehead and the top of the head. I fought in my crouch, boring in. Toward the end of that round, I clipped him in the mouth with my left and knocked him down. He rolled over and got up. He was glassy-eyed when he stumbled in to clinch; I could have stepped back, slipped him the right and knocked him out. I didn't do it. They say a fighter don't have time to think when he's fighting, but I thought that one out.

After the round, Delaney said: "Good Lord, you let him get away!"

I didn't say anything, but I'd let Fitz get away on purpose. In the split second that I had him readied for a knockout, it just came to me that if I tipped him over then, I'd never get credit for it. People would have said: "Fitz must have been washed up, or Jeff wouldn't have got to him so quick." In the time it took to pull a punch, all that came to me—and I let Fitz clinch. I took a chance and let him stay.

Delaney told me I was in front through the third and fourth. Fitz went on throwing punches, but I stayed in my crouch, kept my left in his belly and made him miss quite a lot. He went wild with it; he wasn't used to shooting a punch at a big lummo, and then finding the lummo wasn't there. He showed everything he had in the fifth. He hit me with the first bad punch—a right to the eye that cut a gash deep through the eyebrow. Seems to me the cut went clear to the bone, but it didn't bleed much. Remember that beef-brine pickling I'd used? He got in the next bad punch in the sixth. He sank his left hand in my belly—when that one landed, I knew it. But he couldn't stop me. He was poison every minute, but from the eighth round to the end, I think old Fitz knew he was licked.

"Left to the body, right to the jaw." That's the way most of the experts called the knockout, but it was not correct.

Fitz was in bad shape, coming out for the eleventh. but I didn't give him any rush. Jack had given me the office to be careful, the way I'd told him to. No

matter how bad he looked, Bob Fitzsimmons was nobody to fool with. I tried him with a left to the chin—not a hard punch, just short and sudden. I saw him jerk. I saw his eyes get glassy. Fitz was gone. I "pulled" my right hand, right in the middle of a punch. I didn't hit him. But he was still on his feet and I had to lay him on the canvas. I cupped my right hand and pushed him over. He went down in a sprawl.

I've never said Bob Fitzsimmons was a push-over—he's one fighter I never underrated—but that was the way I stopped him. A push in the face. When George Siler finished counting, I was champion of the world.

I came out of the fight with plenty of bruises, that one bad cut and a black eye. One of Bob's punches—one that I didn't notice when I took it—hit some kind of a nerve over my right eye, and it blacked all that side of my face. Along sometime after midnight—don't think I didn't put on a party that night—I got to a Turkish bath and fixed it up. The

eye itself hardly swole at all, and the next morning the black and blue was all gone. But the punch left a funny kind of red line down my cheek, from under the eye to the point of my jaw, and the spot where he hit me was sore for a week.

The Jeffries crouch was famous in the papers next morning. There was a lot of whoop-to-do about it being a new style of fighting. Some of the experts talked wise about it—said it would never get me very far. Some said it was marvelous. But even the wise guys couldn't say I hadn't licked Fitz with it.

Fitz himself thought he hit me a lot more than he really did, that night. My body is short-coupled and my hips are high, so that a lot of the time when Fitz thought he was body-punching, he was really hitting me on the hips.

"Jim," he said afterward, "you got the 'ardest belly I ever 'it! I 'ammered your belly all night, an' all I did was 'urt me 'ands!"

Being Up in the Lights

HE MADE another famous crack about me, then, talking to the newspapermen. "You can 'it 'im," he said, "but y' cawn't 'urt 'im." If he'd known how I came to learn my crouch, he wouldn't have said I couldn't be hurt. I never did tell Fitz about him hitting my hips, though, because I'd as lief all other fighters felt the same way Fitz did about body-punching me.

Ten days later I signed to fight Tom Sharkey again, twenty-five rounds, five-ounce gloves, and the purse cut 75-25. But the fight was dated for the fall, five months away.

I began finding out what it was like to be up in the lights.

Brady had already printed posters billing "James J. Jeffries, Champion of the World," to show in his theaters, and we opened in the Music Hall, in Philadelphia, two days after I won the title. Brady kept me on the road for better than six weeks. Boxing on the stage, umpiring ball games, showing up at after-theater parties—I was on the go all the time. I'll never forget the home-coming celebrations in Los Angeles, and in that old Reliance Club. Little Gene Van Court, up in Oakland, had promised that if I licked Fitz, he would go out and get pie-eyed, but when I showed up there, he asked me, very serious, if I'd let him off. I sure did; I don't think Gene ever took a drink in his life.

Well, anyway, a lot of this was okay, but I don't think it was ever as good (Continued on Page 67)



COURTESY GENE VAN COURT

Jeffries and His Trainers at Allenhurst. Left to Right (Standing), Dick Toner, Tommy Ryan, the Champion, Billy Delaney and Martin Dowling. Jack Jeffries and Ernest Roerber, the Wrestler, are Seated

was plummeting straight for the center of the race track, with the white fabric flapping behind him like an awning in a gale of wind.

Down on the ground the spectators stood frozen in their tracks, with mouths wide ajar. And as Starr rapidly overhauled Ford, several hundred feet below him, the multitude of upturned faces looked like tapioca spilled on a plaid tablecloth.

However, Alvin [Twinkle] Starr was an old sideslipper. He would open immediately upon getting clear of the ship, then regulate his descent and direction by sideslipping. This is accomplished by pulling down on enough of the shroud lines to dump some of the air, and this, in turn, causes the parachute to fall faster and at the same time move in a desired direction. It is a maneuver that is widely used in spot landings.

When Starr caught up with Ford, he released his lines. The parachute instantly snapped back open and both boys settled on down to peaceful and happy landings.

For my part, after we limped in for a landing I crawled out of the cockpit and, burying my face in my arms

against the turtleback, I bawled and bawled and bawled.

Since that autumn afternoon, some thirteen years ago, I have flown many a parachute jump—all the way from Canada to Cuba and as far west as Wichita, Kansas. There have been day flights and night flights, high jumps and low jumps. Every condition I've ever heard of has been encountered at one time or another. Yet never once, in all that time, have I been able to beat down the horrible sense of anxiety that rides right with me until I see the chute safely open.

And of the hundred or more different jumpers, only one, the late Billy Bomar, ever paid me the slightest recognition before going overboard. Billy failed to jump the first time we arrived at the point of departure. You see, he had had a very bad scare; his foot slipped out of the stirrup and he darn near fell out. But on the second trip around he regained his composure, and after getting down into the stirrup, very gingerly he leaned back into the cabin, extended his good right hand and said:

"Well, so long. Thanks for the buggy ride." And he was gone.

INSIDE THOSE ROPES

(Continued from Page 17)

a time as I had on the way up. I got tired with all the traveling and showing. I got careless about condition. And if anybody was to ask what feeling I got mostly out of being up there in the lights—being champion—I guess I'd give it to him in one word. Embarrassment—that's what I got most of.

A ringside crowd never did bother me; that was part of the game, and I was used to it. But I'd been raised in the outdoors; I'd still rather talk hunting and fishing and ranching than talk fight. I'd worked in the mines and boiler shops. I knew gyms and training camps and dressing rooms. I was used to being a fighter, but I was not used to being champion. Being champion kept me surrounded by strangers and crowds, and living in places that I wasn't used to and didn't like very much. I didn't like swell hotels, for instance; the people were all right, I guess, but they weren't my kind. And I did not like being stared at and followed and glad-handed. I was embarrassed.

Being up in the lights would feel different to different people, of course, but that's the way it was for me.

Two days after our show closed, Brady sent me to England, and my next engagement was a bunch of fights that don't show in the record book. In London, meeting all comers at the Royal Aquarium, I knocked out probably twenty or thirty fighters in the course of three weeks. The offer was one hundred and fifty dollars to any British fighter that would stay four rounds with me. None of them gave me a workout.

European Tour

The Aquarium did a good business, though. It was a big place—I don't remember how many balconies there were—and the Britishers packed it every night on the chance of seeing the American heavyweight champion get in trouble. The box office did maybe three thousand dollars a night, split 60 to the management and 40 to me.

We did ten days in Paris. We'd promised to fight the champion of France—I forget his name—if his manager would put up a side bet of sixty thousand francs, and the manager said okay. The night before I was to fight the champ, though, I fought the guy that was supposed to be next to the champ—a big miner from somewhere up near Belgium. I'd been asked not to hurt him, so I mauled him around a little and pushed him through the ropes. He wouldn't get back in. I went on with the rest of my exhibition, and that was all there was to it.

Champion by Default

But the champion's manager showed up in my dressing room afterward. He'd come to get a line on me, and he'd watched me push this other guy out of the ring. The champ's manager did not have any sixty thousand francs with him, but he spoke perfectly good English—two words of it.

"We resign," he said.

That's all there is to the yarn that I won the championship of France. We took a swing around the country, then crossed back to England, Scotland and Ireland.

In Dundalk, on the Irish coast, I met Tom Sharkey's father. When our train stopped there, a guy came rushing up to me and told me the station agent wanted to see me.

"Who is he?"

"Little Jimmy Sharkey," the man said.

I hustled out. Little Jimmy Sharkey looked like Tom, only shorter and maybe even broader. He grinned and stuck out his fist.

"So you know my boy Tom," he said.

"I sure do," I told him. "He's a great boy, and I expect him to give me a tough battle."

Tom's dad said: "So do I. Furthermore, and not wishing you any hard luck," he said, "I hope to hell he licks you!" And he still chuckled and pumped my hand up and down.

WARNING TO BATHERS



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The world's most famous swimmer says:

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Little Jimmy Sharkey came damn near getting his wish.

When I got back to the U. S. A. and started working for the fight, I found out something more about being champion. I found that a guy that was up there couldn't work as well as a guy that was on his way. I worked hard for Sharkey. I put in seven weeks of the toughest kind of training. But I didn't eat it up the way I used to; it was just work. I guess the same thing happens to anybody that gets where he's going and has nothing to do but try and stay there. It gets to be just work.

Ten days before the fight, one of the boys threw the medicine ball at me and cracked a bone in my left elbow; I had my back turned, and he was just horsing. When we couldn't seem to work the pain out of the arm, we got a doctor in, and he told us the bone was chipped. He said I couldn't fight. Tommy Ryan said I'd be a fool to try to. But Brady wanted the bout to go on, on account of the money he had tied up in it, and Billy Delaney, for once, agreed with Brady.

"You can lick the Sailor with one hand, Jim," he said. He'd got that notion into his head about me being unbeatable.

"I can't lick anybody with one hand," I told him. "Least of all, Tom Sharkey." For several days, then, there was a lot of bickering, and finally it got my goat. A week before the fight, I told them I'd go through with it if I had to wear the arm in a cast. I asked them all to shut up.

I went in against Tom Sharkey with my left arm badly hurt, but I'll say that Tom would have given me a fight if I'd gone in with two good arms and a couple of other fellows to help me. November 3, 1899, is the date of the toughest championship fight in the heavyweight records. I'm saying that, and I know. I was in it.

I'll make a boast, if you want to call it that. I'll boast that I was the only champion that ever had to defend his title against Tom Sharkey when Tom was right—and Tom was right that night.

Our party stayed at Martin Dowlings' again, and when fight time came we splashed over to the club through mud that came up over our shoes. There was a gale blowing, and Coney Island looked like it was washing back into the ocean. Inside the arena, the wind and rain on the roof made almost as much noise as the mob did, and they'd packed the Seaside Club with a forty-bank of bleachers that was jammed to the rafters.

Under the Bright Lights

They had the ring lighted for taking moving pictures of that fight—kinetoscopic pictures, they called them. And that sounds harmless enough, but listen —

When Tom and I got in the ring, we found a bank of four hundred arc lights hung just above our heads. I could reach up and touch them with my glove. The heat was like an open fire door in a locomotive. Before I could strip my street clothes off, the sweat was burning my eyes, running off my body, soaking my ring trunks. The picture people were taking their first crack at recording a championship fight indoors, and they had enough candlepower over that ring to light up a city of forty thousand.

Tom O'Rourke, Sharkey's manager, had been smart enough to put electric fans in back of Tom. The kinetoscope company had furnished oxygen tanks

for both corners. I didn't use mine, and I don't know whether Tom did.

Siler called us out in a hurry, rattled off instructions and let the gong go. The heat in the ring was blistering.

Tom Sharkey started in again where he'd left off in San Francisco, and he kept it up for twenty-five rounds. Tom came out of his corner on a dead run and plowed into me, swinging. He threw everything he had. He'd have killed me if he could; he didn't know anything but fight. You couldn't box a guy like that. I kept him off me by beating him off.

In the second round, I swung the hardest punch I ever let go of in the ring. Or any place else.

Tom came roaring in, and I punched him off. In the first mix-up, I got my opening and cracked him with a short left square on the point of the chin. It lifted him off his feet; he hit the canvas on the back of his head, with his feet in the air. But he got up.

And that punch cracked my elbow again.

Sharkey Heeds Advice

The first pain was hellish. The lamps were blistering me. I didn't see how the fight could go on much longer. Tom teetered when he got to his feet, and I saw my chance to end the battle. I shot my right hand—the hardest punch I ever threw in my life. It was too hard. It missed. The next second, Tom was windmilling into me like a wild man.

That battle went on. Inside of three rounds, Tom's eye was cut, he was bleeding at the nose, and his left ear was like a bloody sponge. I cuffed at his body with my left—it hurt me like hell—and put all my power into my right hand. I dug my right to the body, then switched to the head, but Tom had no neck, and he was keeping his chin down. All I could reach was that left ear of his. And I couldn't use my left to hook him open and get a clean shot at him.

At the end of a round, Tom would weave to his corner and fall onto his stool; he'd lie there, gasping. My seconds would say: "Look at him! You got him now!" But when the next bell came, Tom would take a big pull in his lungs and come out whaling at me as if it was only Round 1.

What can you do with a guy like that?

In the seventeenth, I opened up with a right hand to the body; it was taking a chance, but I had to do something. The heat was like a furnace. My right landed. I felt the impact of it clear down to my heels. Tom almost yelled in my face—I knew he was hurt. But the next second he was piling in on top of me again, trying to kill me.

That right hand smashed three of Tom's ribs, but it didn't stop him. The fight went on; there wasn't a minute when we weren't both hurt, half dead with the heat, crazy to end it, but it went on. Twice—at the end of the twenty-second, and again at the end of the twenty-fourth—I think the bell saved Tom. In the twenty-third, I think it was, my right glove came off when I jerked my arm out of a clinch. Siler stopped us and stepped in to get the glove on again, and Tom tore around him, swinging. I jerked away—and to tell the truth about it, I took a crack at Tom with my bare fist. It didn't bother him. Then the gong rang.

At the end of Round 25, Tom Sharkey was still on his feet, still coming in,

still throwing gloves. Siler waved him back when the last gong rang. Somebody back of my corner piled in with an American flag and slung it around my shoulders. Siler hoisted my right hand.

Tough Tom Sharkey stood looking at me. There was blood all over his face, and his face puckered. He cried like a baby.

I claim I licked a great fighting man, the night I beat Sharkey.

Part of that fight I fought from my crouch, and part from the stand-up position. In the early rounds, whenever I crouched, Tom's corner would yell at him: "Make him stand up, Tom! Straighten him up!"

Finally Tom tried it. Tom lifted an uppercut off the floor—and he had everything in the world on it. It didn't land. Most uppercuts don't. But I straightened up to let it go past, and then I piled into Tom while I had him out of position. I gave him quite a lacing.

Tom went back to his corner hopping mad.

"All right; I straightened him up," Tom said, "and look what he done to me! Next time," he said, "you fellas can straighten him up!"

They took Tom to a hospital after that fight, and the police ordered me not to leave town until Tom was all right. Two days later Tom was telling the papers that Siler had robbed him; that he'd lick me before breakfast if he could get me in the same ring with him. That was a sign that Tom had recovered his health. That Coney fight softened him, though; he never was as good after it.

Tom and I both got bald-headed from those movie lamps—that's how hot they were. Looking at the old-time ring pictures of either of us, you can tell whether they were taken before that Coney fight, or afterward. Within a week, Tom and I both began losing our hair, and it never grew in again. Tom and I looked like old men from then on. Sometimes we still do.

The Carnera of the Old Days

The next victim was James J. Corbett, on May 11, 1900—only it came within about two rounds of me being the victim.

I'd heard Jim had been training quietly for a year, under cover, aiming to get the title back, but I didn't believe it. I knew he couldn't hurt me—I'd learned that at Carson City. I knew I could stop him if I could hit him, and I thought I was good enough, by that time—fast enough, and boxer enough—to hit him. I trained at Allenhurst again, with the same gang I'd had before, but my training for Corbett was a joke.

Ed Dunkhorst, the Human Freight Car, was the fall guy for most of the horseplay around that camp—and mentioning Ed brings up a question that a lot of people have asked me.

"Weren't there any big fellows for you to fight?" they ask. "Wasn't there any oversize heavyweight in your day—some guy like Carnera?"

Ed Dunkhorst was the Carnera of my time, but when Tommy Ryan brought Ed to our camp at Allenhurst, we didn't even figure to use him for a sparring partner. He was a rubber. Two days after he showed up, they signed him to fight Bob Fitzsimmons, but everybody thought it was a joke—everybody but Ed. The papers put out all this kind of Carnera ballyhoo about what a giant of a man Ed was—he weighed 287 pounds when he went in

against Fitz, and he'd put twenty-seven of it on at Allenhurst. He'd eat a quart of ice cream for dessert. He was about all that the dreadnought division had to offer in my time, but I never took him seriously. Fitz knocked him cold in two rounds. "The bigger they are, the 'arder they fall."

Once, in camp, Tommy Ryan got sore at Ed and soaked him on the nose with a croquet mallet. I stopped the fuss—I think Ryan could have spotted Ed 100 pounds and licked him with his bare fists—but Ed somehow got sore at me. The next day, big old Ed tried to give me a pasting in the training ring. He got so mean finally that I clipped him on the chin with the training glove and sat him down pretty sudden.

Ryan bawled me out for hitting Ed so hard.

"You should talk," I said to Ryan. "You hit him with a mallet!"

Ryan said: "I know, but you might have hurt your hand!"

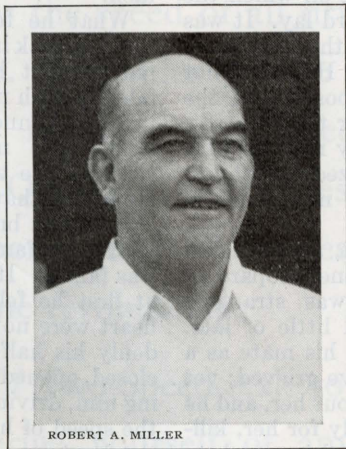
Sometimes people ask if I didn't ever have a sparring partner try to sneak a punch over and lay me cold. Well, I didn't set Ed down for trying to knock me out—just for being mean. Usually I sparred with first-rate men—guys that were too square and smart to try to grab off some publicity by knocking me out. And the other answer is that when I got in the ring with a partner, I asked for everything he had. If he had any trick, I wanted him to pull it. The only time I ever touched up one of the boys was when I figured he was loafing—when he wasn't trying.

If I couldn't protect myself against a sneak punch from a sparring partner, how would I be when I got in with a guy that stood to win maybe a million dollars by slipping me a knockout?

Well —

Waiting for a Chance, and Missing

The night I went in against Jim Corbett, I stepped out to get him quick. My friends were betting I'd stop him inside ten rounds. I had some of that money too. I thought I could do it. But I very soon found out different. I worked my head off for the first six rounds, and didn't land a solid punch. I got no place. Corbett boxed rings around me; he was in the best shape I ever saw him in, and he stood the crowd up with his jabbing and footwork. After the sixth, I tipped the friends back of my corner to rush out and hedge their ten-round money if they could. And Jim Corbett breezed through the tenth like nobody's business.



ROBERT A. MILLER

I was in a jam. I slowed after the tenth; I figured I had the one punch that might stop him, but I'd have to get him coming in. The mob began yelling at us. It boomed me for slowing. It didn't even give Corbett credit for the wonderful boxing exhibition he was putting up. It was a sultry kind of night; there was a rumbling in the air outside, and a stir of wind, and everybody knew a thunderstorm was going to break. It was sweltering hot in the fight pavilion, and the crowd got restless.

I kept boring in, but not chasing him too hard, and Corbett went on sidestepping, jabbing, cuffing at me. He was way out in front on points. I kept shoving my straight left at him, going in all the time. He slipped it easily. He got to thinking it was a joke. He began laughing at me, flicking his left at me and making cracks when my own left missed.

The thunderstorm broke in the twentieth round; just when it did, I remember, I got my first chance. I muffed it. The rain had a gale behind it, and the thunder seemed to hit the building when it cracked. The storm and the crowd's yell made a hell of a noise. Corbett was coming in faster, hitting harder, not trying so hard to get away. While the uproar was loudest, he all of a sudden gave me my chance. He didn't break back quite fast enough from my left. I slipped my left past his chin, turned it for a short, chopping swing at his jaw—and missed it. Jim didn't know how close I'd come. I slowed up still more.

The Punch That Got Corbett

In the next two rounds, Jim Corbett actually tried to knock me out. As far as points went, he had his title back again, but he wanted to stop me. I didn't know it until afterward. I'd slowed down to get him coming in, but he thought I'd shot my wad. He thought he could get me.

At the bell for the twenty-third, I came out slow, baiting him. Corbett slid in, jabbing me in the face, watching for a chance to park his right. The second he cocked it, pulling it back just a little, I shot my left hand and stepped in behind it. I hit him two punches in one—the straight left clipped him, then I turned my hand and swung my shoulders behind a left hook that traveled four inches with all my weight behind it. It landed.

Jim Corbett buckled and sprawled flat—he was out cold.

I remember that right now. You know what I'd thought of Corbett. The mob stood up, watching, but kind of queer and quiet. The storm banged on the roof. You could hear the rain and wind and thunder, and water was beginning to slosh down the aisles. I remember how it felt.

Jim's gone now, and I'll never fan it over with him again, but he always thought it was just a lucky punch that stopped him at Coney that night. My side of it is that I had a punch to stop him with. When I found I couldn't finish him quick, I spent the last thirteen rounds drawing him in, working for my chance. When I got the chance, I knew what to do with

it. And if you don't think I'd practiced that punch a thousand times in training, ask my brother Jack; he'll tell you.

Jim Corbett came the nearest that any ex-champion ever did, though, to winning the heavyweight title back again. In two more rounds, he'd have had a decision.

After that fight, I was out of the ring for more than a year.

Editor's Note—This is the second of a series of articles by Mr. Jeffries and Mr. Orcutt. The next will appear in an early issue.

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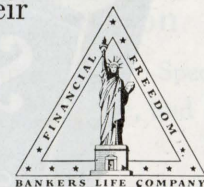
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AUGUST 3, 1935

10c. in Canada
(INCLUDING TAX)

Volume 208, Number 5



GARET GARRETT

WALTER D. EDMONDS

ALICE-LEONE MOATS

BEGINNING
IN THIS ISSUE

ANCHOR MAN—By FANNY HEASLIP LEA

INSIDE THOSE ROPES

I COULDN'T SAY "NO"

By JAMES J. JEFFRIES

With EDDY ORCUTT

I GOT away from the crowds for a little while; I took a six weeks' trip down into the Colorado River delta country, south of Yuma, and cut down into the wilds around the Gulf of California. It was an exciting trip, tough in spots. I learned queer things about the Indians and the renegade white men, down there south of the line. Some of the outlaws were glad to meet me, because I was champion of the world, and we fixed up a truce with the Indians. But we were watched, somehow, all the time; twice I think I came near to getting bumped off.

Back in the States again, though, I hit the old routine. There was nobody to give me a fight. I went in training to meet Gus Ruhlin again, in Akron, Ohio—I wanted to wipe out that draw he held against me—but the governor of the state called it off. Brady put me in a show, *The Man from the West*.

"You know what a great fighter Jim Jeffries is?" our advance man would ask, when he hit some newspaper editor for a press-agent story. "Well," he would say, "Jeffries is as great an actor as he is a fighter!"

Then he would lay his head on the editor's desk and sob. "God forgive me!" he would say. "I'm taking money for telling you stuff like that!"

Anyway, that's what they used to tell me he did.

It was not a bad time, but it wasn't good; I wanted to do my stuff, and my stuff was fighting in the ring. I had great friends, and a lot of them. I had fun, parties, chasing around. I was making

money, and I figured money was made to spend. I still think so; I don't regret the money I blew, having a good time, or handing a century now and again to some guy that needed it. I laid enough of it away. I had nothing to worry about. But I was not doing my stuff.

The minute Brady's contract ran out, I put Delaney in charge again—he and Brady were still on the outs—and told Billy to get me a fight. "Never mind the money end this time," I told him, "but just get me a fight."

He got me Gus Ruhlin.

The Second Ruhlin Fight

THE fight was billed for San Francisco, November 15, 1901, but I was so anxious to get back in the ring, and so worried about the shape I was in, that I began training sometime along in August. Delaney fixed up quarters at Harbin Springs, up in Lake County. I got my brother Jack to work with me. Joe [Kid] Eagan joined me then. He'd been Brady's representative on the road, and he threw in with me when I broke with Brady. Joe is a mite of a man—a great little guy with a big heart, and smart as a whip. I put him in charge of my personal affairs, and he's been with me ever since. The first thing Joe did was book me a couple of tune-up fights before the Ruhlin battle. I started working so hard in the summer heat that Delaney was afraid I'd go stale. Joe got me a bout in Los Angeles with Hank Griffin, and another at the Reliance Club against a lad named Joe Kennedy, just to get me out of camp.

Griffin was the colored boy I'd knocked out in my first pro start—you remember my telling you that he taught me plenty in my first fight. Well, in that tune-up fight in Los Angeles, he taught me plenty too. He taught me I was in no shape to defend my title. He ducked, clinched, fell and ran through the four-round exhibition—I couldn't get to him. The long layoff had raised hell with me.

Against Joe Kennedy, a week later, I was r'arin' to go—and Joe really fought. He came to me from the minute the gong rang. Not a damn bit scared. I got him in the second with the same punch I'd stopped Corbett with—that combination straight and hook with the left. But I respected the kid, and I took him back to the Springs to train with me. He was a good guy to work with, and we got to be friends.

There was plenty of hell-raising and horseplay in that camp, and I did my share of it.



KEystone VIEW
The Old Rivals, Jeffries and Sharkey, on June 10, 1935, at the California Amateur Championships



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Jack Johnson at Auckland in 1907. Johnson Won the Title From Tommy Burns on Christmas Day of 1908, at Sydney

Sunny Jim Coffroth, Eddie Graney, the referee, and others came up from San Francisco, and we had some great times, but I still worked hard on the road, and when I went down to the city to fight Ruhlin, I was in good shape.

In a way I don't like to say it, but I think I never wrecked a fighter as badly as I wrecked Gus Ruhlin in that second fight.

We fought in the old Mechanics Pavilion, and the house was jammed. I don't know why that fight drew the way it did, but one of the great old-time sport crowds turned out to see it. All the big shots in town were at the ringside that night, at twenty-five dollars a throw. There'd been a special train up from Los Angeles. There was \$40,000 in the box office.

Harry Corbett, Jim's brother, was the referee. The cops were still trying to clear some of the mob out of the galleries when the first gong rang.

The mob was in an uproar most of the time from then on.

Ruhl was big and rangy, with long arms, and he swung hard. I got inside right away, and went after his body. From the first time I hit him there, I knew that was the way to get him. Gus made his fight in the second round, but from then on he was gone. I bored in, belted him to the belly. I found I was hitting cleaner and timing better than I had in training camp. I had no notion how much damage I was really doing.

"Make him quit follerin' me!" Ruhl kept yelling at Harry. Some of the ringsiders thought he said: "Make him quit fouling me!" I don't think Ruhl ever made any such charge. But he had the mob riding him from the first of the third, and he only lasted five rounds all told. I think I knocked him off his feet at least five times with smashes to the body. The bell saved him at the end of the fourth, and again at the end of the fifth. He failed to come out for the sixth round.

The mob yelled at him, but the mob was wrong—Ruhl was not yellow. He was badly hurt. If he'd been yellow, he could have stayed on the floor after any one of those body punches that knocked him down. Nobody would have booed him for that.



COURTESY JACK KIPPER

"I Was a Retired Business Man, Weight 285 Pounds." Jeffries Chatting With Corbett in 1907, Two Years After Giving Up the Title, Three Years Before Reno

Well—

There's one more real fight in the record, then the boxing match with Corbett, then the Jack Munroe thing. And I'll wind up this chapter with what looks to me like one for the end book—my first visit to Reno, Nevada.

My last real fight was fought in a circus tent at 14th Street and Valencia, San Francisco, on the night of July 25, 1902. The boy in the other corner was old Bob Fitzsimmons, and I took a slaughtering that you'll still read about. It was classic, no fooling.

I bore down hard, training for Fitz. Delaney thought he would be easy, but I didn't. It was hot as hell, up there at Harbin Springs that summer; there were days when I had to call off roadwork until after sunset. I worked hard, though, because I had a hunch old Bob was loaded for me—and he was.

Ten thousand fans mobbed in under the canvas to see the fight; they'd been shoving in since six o'clock in the evening. There was a high wind blowing. The tent canvas was ripped and flapping in places, and the dust blew through in clouds. I understand that they had 250 cops in the crowd, and they couldn't keep the aisles clear. I still remember the sight of that mob and the shoving and hauling and the smell of the dust.

Fitz Throws Away His Gloves

FITZ was already in the ring when I got there, and the arcs were on. Fitz got a great hand from the crowd, but so did I, this time. San Francisco was kind of my home town. I felt good—ready to go.

And then, up in the lights and waiting for the gong, Billy Delaney and I nearly had a fight of our own. I stomped the ring floor, testing it, and I found out that the ring had been slung together like a chicken coop. The floor gave a couple of inches every time I took a step; it was built for me to flounder on, and for Fitz, twenty pounds lighter, to dance around on like a lightweight. Delaney had overlooked a bet. There was nothing to do about it then, but I got sore, and I let Delaney know it. There was a bouquet in my corner, and I was so sore I gave it a kick and booted it out into the crowd—a fool thing to do, and I knew it.

Then I got the tip that Fitz had taped his hands with plaster bandages. I went up in the air. The articles called for the wraps to be put on in the ring, subject to the referee's inspection. I never tied my hands; the only time I ever wore bandages under the

gloves was the time I busted my hand on Bob Armstrong's head, back in New York. But Fitz did load his gloves sometimes, and the articles were fixed to prevent any funny business that night.

"You go on over there and make Fitz show his bandages," I told Delaney.

"Hell," Delaney said, "if he can lick you with them on, he can lick you with them off!" He was goaty too.

The next minute, Eddie Graney called us out.

Thirty seconds after the first gong, Fitz had me bleeding. He chopped, sidestepped, chopped some more; and every time he hit me on the head or face, he drew blood. That mob in the dust yelled its head off. For eight rounds, old Bob cut and slashed and battered me—he had the champion of the world looking like a stuck pig.

In the seventh, he landed his first really hard punch. It caught me over the left eye, and the spurt of blood covered both of us. Before the round ended, my right glove was soaked wringing wet from wiping that cut. The blood blinded me. I had to do something.

I came out for the eighth and bulled into him without trying to box. I backed him into a corner. He slashed me maybe half a dozen times with his left. I fainted with my hands down, but the second he started his right across, I hooked my left to his liver. It landed.

Fitz went down.

He rolled over on the canvas. His mouth was open. He rolled and tried to get up. His mouth was open as if he wanted to yell, but he didn't make any noise. Graney counted him out.

He went out from the same punch that sank Corbett at Carson City—a left hook to the liver. It was the same punch that gave me the Jeffries crouch.

While his seconds hauled at him, Fitz began chewing his teeth into the lacing of his gloves. He chewed the lacing loose and pulled off his gloves and slung them to the crowd. He swore he'd never fight again.

I washed my face in the count-up room, after the fight, and Percy Williams was there looking after the money end for Fitz. I said to him: "Well, that so-and-so sure had his hands tied tonight!" Williams went on counting the dough, but he gave me a grin. "The old boy had 'em tied plenty!" he said.

I think Fitz had soaked his bandages in collodion. They dried out and hardened about as quick as he

got them on, and instead of fists in his gloves, he had a couple of rocks. Every time he hit, he cut—and he hit me plenty.

But it was all in the game. A couple months after that, Fitz and I were doing a meeting-all-comers act on the road, with a boxing show. Fitz was a good showman and a comical guy to bat around with, and he was my friend till the day he died. Fitz was all right, rocks or no rocks.

Compromising on Graney

THE second fight with Corbett—Fitz helped train me for that—was mostly a boxing match but it had a couple of funny angles.

Corbett always knew who he wanted for the referee, but he always wanted to make the other guy name him. He wanted it to look like the ref was the other boy's choice. Before this second fight I had to leave the Springs three times to go down and argue with Corbett about the referee. He wanted Eddie Graney, and so did I, but I wanted to beat Corbett at this little game of his.



"Fitz Was One Man I Never Underrated." Jeffries Training at Harbin Springs in July, 1902, for Their Second Meeting

The third time I went down to the city, Harry Corbett was sitting in the room with us. Jim and I argued for a while. Finally I said: "All right, I'll name the referee; it'll be Harry!"

"That would look like hell," Jim said. "We can't do that."

"Harry has refereed for me before," I told him. "I know he'll shoot square, even if I'm fighting his brother. I'll take Harry!"

They were flabbergasted. I stood up. "Hell, Jim," I said, "you don't want to fight me. If you won't fight with your own brother for the referee, you don't want to fight. I'm through!" I started out.

"Wait a minute," Jim said, "how would Eddie Graney be?"

When I laughed, the look on Jim's face was funny. "Graney will be fine," I said.

We fought in Mechanics Pavilion, August 14, 1903, and I outboxed and (Continued on Page 61)

(Continued from Page 58)

They were still packed together in the bottom of the pack. It seemed to him that getting that first forty dollars' worth was twice as much of a job as all the rest for him to have done.

The snow was a little slushy here and there, but it held up well in the big woods and he made pretty good time. Nights, he set himself up a lean-to of cedar and balsam branches, and sitting before his small fire, he would think ahead a few years. He could see himself some day, pretty near like the Judge. He even figured on teaching himself to read and write—write his own name, anyway. No matter how you looked at it, you couldn't make a cross seem like "John Haskell" wrote out in full, with big and little letters in it.

Mornings, he started with the first gray light, when the mist was like a twilight on the water and the deer moused along the runways and eyed him, curious as chipmunks. He walked south down the slopes of the hills across the shadows of the sunrise, when the snow became full of color and the hills ahead wore a bloody purple shadow on their northern faces.

Now and then he heard the first stirring of a small brook under the snow in a sunny place, and he found breath holes under falls wide open.

He had grown taller during the winter, and he seemed even lankier, but his eyes were still the brown, boy's eyes of a year ago.

He crossed the Moose River on the ice about where McKeever now is, just at dusk. He had not made as good time that day. The snow had been a good deal softer and his legs ached and the pack weighed down a bit harder than usual. But though the ice had been treacherous close to shore, he had found a place easily enough.

That night, however, as he lay in his lean-to, he heard the river ice begin to work. It went out in the morning with a grinding roar, and built a jam half a mile below his camp.

He saw it with a gay heart as he set out after breakfast. It seemed to him as if it were the most providential thing he ever had heard of. If he had waited another day before starting, he would have found the river open and he would have had to go back to Seth's cabin and wait till the Indian was ready to come out. But as it was, now, he would have only brooks to cross.

There were a good many of them, and most of them were opening. But he found places to cross them, and he had no trouble till afternoon, when he found

some running full. They were high with black snow water, some of them so high that he had to go upstream almost a mile to find a place where he could fell a bridge across.

Each time he dropped two logs and went over easily enough. But each time the delay chafed him a little more. By late afternoon, when he was only five miles from High Falls and began to recognize his landmarks, he came to what he knew was the last creek.

It was a strong stream, with a great force of water, and it was boiling full. Where John happened on it, it began a slide down the steep bank for the river, with one bend and then a straight chute. But it was narrow there, and beside where he stood grew a straight hemlock long enough to reach across.

Hardly stopping to unload his pack, John set to work with his ax. The tree fell nicely, just above the water. There was no other tree close by, but John thought about that only for a moment. It was the last creek, he was almost home, and his heart was set on getting there that night. Besides, he had had no trouble on the other crossings. He was sure-footed, and in every case he had run across one log.

He gave the tree a kick, but it lay steady, and suddenly he made up his mind to forget what Seth had said. He could get over easy enough and see the Judge that evening.

With his furs on his back, his ax in one hand and his gun in the other, he stepped out on the log. It felt solid as stone under his feet and he went along at a steady pace. The race of water just under the bark meant nothing to John. His head was quite clear and his eyes were on the other side already, and he thought, in his time, he had crossed a lot of logs more rickety than this one.

It was just when he was halfway over that the log rolled without any warning and pitched John into the creek.

The water took hold of him and lugged him straight down and rolled him over and over like a dead pig. He had no chance even to yell. He dropped his gun and ax at the first roll and instinctively tugged at the traps which weighted him so. As he struggled to the top, he felt the fur pack slip off. He made a desperate grab at them, but they went away. When he finally washed up on the bend and crawled out on the snow, he hadn't a thing left but his life.

That seemed worthless to him, lying on the snow. He could not even cry about it.

He lay there for, perhaps, half an hour while the dusk came in on the river.

Finally he got to his feet and searched downstream, poking with a stick along the bottom. But he was hopeless. The creek ran like a millrace down the slope for the river and the chances were a hundred to one that the traps as well as the furs had been taken by the strength of water and the slide all the way down to the river.

But he continued his search till nearly dark before he gave up.

By the time he reached High Falls, he had managed to get back just enough of his courage to go straight to the Judge. It was very late, but the office light was still burning, and John knocked and went in. He stood on the hearth, shivering and dripping, but fairly erect, and told the Judge exactly what had happened, even to Seth's parting admonition, in a flat, low voice.

The Judge said never a word till the boy was done. He merely sat studying him from under his bushy white brows. Then he got up and fetched him a glass of whisky.

Though the drink seemed to bring back a little life, it only made John more miserable. He waited like a wavering ghost for the Judge to have his say.

But the Judge only said in his heavy voice, "You'd better go on home. I understand you've got a new sister. You'd better start hunting work tomorrow." His voice became gruffer: "Everybody has to learn things. It's been bad luck for us both that you had to learn it like this."

John went home. All he could remember was that the Judge had said it was bad luck for them both. It seemed to him that that was a very kind thing for the Judge to say.

John did not see anything of the Judge that summer. He worked hard, planting corn and potatoes and the garden, and later he managed to find work. He seemed to get work more easily that summer. But his family seemed to need more money. People had been impressed by Mrs. Haskell's having the doctor and Mrs. Legrand for her lying-in; and now and then they visited a little, and that meant extra money for food and tea. By working hard, though, John found himself in the fall about where he had been on the preceding year.

He had put in a bid with the tannery for winter work and had had the job promised to him. Two days before he would have started, however, the Judge sent word for him to come to the big house.

The Judge made him sit down.

"John," he said, "you've kept your courage up when it must have been damned hard. I've been thinking about you and me. I think the best thing for us both, the best way I can get my money back, is to give you another stake, if you're willing to go."

John felt that he was much nearer crying than he had been when he lost his furs. He hardly found the voice to say that he would go.

Seth, for no good reason, had decided to move west in the state, so John had to go into the woods alone. But he had good luck that winter, better even than he had had the year before. He stayed right through to the end of the season, and his pack was so heavy he had to leave his traps behind.

The river was open when he reached it, so he had to ferry himself over on a raft. It took a day to build. And from that point on he took plenty of time, when he came to the creeks, and dropped two logs over them, and made a trial trip over and back without his fur pack. It took him three extra days coming out, but he brought his furs with him.

The Judge saw to it that he got good prices; and when the dealer was done with the buying, John was able to pay the Judge for both stakes, and for the forty dollars as well. The year after that he made a clear profit.

John did well in the world. He found time to learn to read and write and handle figures. From time to time he visited the Judge, and he found that the Judge was not a person anyone needed to be afraid of. When the Judge died in John's thirtieth year, John was owner of Freely's tannery and one of the leading men of High Falls.

It is a simple story, this of John Haskell's, but it is not quite done. When the Judge died and the will was read, it was found that he had left to John Haskell the big house and a share of his money. There was also a sealed letter for John.

That night in his house, John opened the letter. It was dated the same day as the one on which John had received the money for his first pack of furs. It was just a few lines long and it contained forty dollars in bills.

Dear John: Here is the forty dollars, and I am making you a confession with it. I liked your looks when you came to me that first time. I thought you had stuff in you. It was a dirty thing to do, in a way, but I wanted to make sure of you. I never liked your father and I would never lend him a cent. I invented that debt. Good luck, John.

INSIDE THOSE ROPES

(Continued from Page 21)

outfooted my old teacher for ten rounds. Old Fitz wanted me to step in and finish him quick; he still hated Corbett. But I wanted to prove that I could outbox him. I did. Corbett was not the man he had been, and I outboxed him for ten rounds.

Early in the second, though, I sank a left to the body that was harder than I intended, and Jim went down. Sitting on the floor, he looked up at me and said: "You ——!" He was a great guy for talking at the other fellow, but it was just talk; he didn't mean anything by it. I said: "Get up. You ain't going to quit cold, are you? You ain't yellow, are you?"

Jim got up and lasted out the round. I knocked him out in the tenth.

Next day we met in Harry's place, and Jim said to me: "Listen; what did you mean, talking about me being yellow last night? I didn't like that."

"Well," I said, "I didn't like being called names either!"

We had a laugh, and that was that. The second Corbett fight was just a boxing match. It didn't satisfy Fitz, in my corner—he wanted a massacre—but it satisfied me. I'd just as soon my career ended with it.

As for the Munroe thing —
Up in Butte, Montana, sometime in December of 1903, Bob Fitzsimmons

and I were putting on our meeting-all-comers act at a boxing program. The hall was packed with miners, and they'd paid two, three and five dollars to see the show. The main event that night, billed for twenty rounds, ended in about forty seconds. When Fitz came on to meet the local favorite—we guaranteed to pay \$100 to any man who could stay four rounds with either of us—Fitz put on a one-punch knockout. Well, a five-dollar top is a lot for a miner to pay for seeing less than a minute of action; it was up to me to give them a show.

The sucker they fed me that night was a lad named Jack Munroe, a

fine-looking lad, and the crowd liked him. I let him stay three rounds, to give the crowd a run for its money; I boxed and clowning, intending to knock him out in the fourth, but Munroe fooled me. He ran and fell, all through Round 4. He dropped for a count whenever I caught up with him. Once, chasing him, I slipped and fell. As I remember it, Munroe was ten feet away at the time, with his back turned. Anyway, Munroe lasted out the fourth. Then the referee—he was Duncan MacDonald, an old-timer who had fought John L. Sullivan—raised Munroe's hand. All he meant was that Munroe had won the forfeit money.

We didn't make any fuss; Fitz kidded my pants off for taking a chance, but I paid Munroe his \$100 and forgot about it.

Next day, playing Helena, we read in the papers that Jack Munroe had knocked James J. Jeffries off his feet and won a four-round decision. It wasn't true. If it had been, Munroe would have been champion. But I knew the story had gone out on the wires, and it burned me; nobody had ever knocked me down, and it burned me to have anybody claim he had.

Fitz and his brother-in-law, Clark Ball, rushed back to Butte. Ball was on the business end of our show, and he figured he could get some kind of true statement out of the Butte people to offset the lie. Next I knew, matters were worse, instead of better, for Ball got the local boys sore. Then Fitz, fit to be tied, took a crack at Ball with a little jolt on the jaw that knocked him clean across the lobby in a Butte hotel. It was a sweet how-do-you-do. Clark Ball went out and signed Munroe to a contract, and started ballyhooing him as the guy that had knocked James J. Jeffries off his feet.

Little Joe Eagan went down and offered Munroe \$1000 cash to get in the ring with me the next Friday night, but Munroe wouldn't.

The long and short of it is that when I finally got a crack at Jack Munroe—it was August 26, 1904—I fought the only fight that I'm ashamed of. Jim Coffroth promoted the thing, in Mechanics Pavilion, at San Francisco.

I'm glad I didn't hit Munroe with my first punch, that night. I swung hard enough to have killed him if I'd landed; he was white and half paralyzed when he came in the ring. I missed. The punch swung me off balance and I fell on my face.

I got up. I'd made a fool of myself. I cooled off. Munroe poked a feeble right hand at me, and I countered with a left to the jaw. He took "Nine" and wobbled into a clinch.

"Let me make a showing, Jim," he said.

You can figure how that sounded, coming from him. "The hell I will," I told him. I gave him a beating.

Eddie Graney stopped it in the second. "Cut it, Jim," he said. "I don't want to see anybody killed in here."

Retired at the Ripe Old Age of 29

Because Munroe had stood for this lie about me, and was scared to fight me afterward, I figured he was yellow, and I went in to punish him and hurt him and show him up. I was wrong; Munroe wasn't yellow, and proved he wasn't when the World War came along. Any man can look yellow when he's in where he don't belong and hasn't got a chance. But he was the only fighter I deliberately punished in the ring, and the second Munroe fight is the only one I wish I hadn't fought.

I retired from the ring, undefeated, in January of 1905.

Look back in the record book for that year and tell me who there was that classed with Corbett or Sharkey or Fitzsimmons or Gus Ruhlin. Since I knocked out Fitz in San Francisco, I'd had no opposition. I was through; I was only twenty-nine years old, but my ring career was ended. I stepped down out of the lights, and was glad to do it. I went back to my ranch here in Burbank, California. I opened a café in Los Angeles—Jack Kipper was my partner, and my brother Jack took charge of my end. I went hunting when I pleased. I went fishing when I

pleased. I ran the ranch and settled down to the life of Riley.

Then in July, 1905, I made a little trip to Reno, Nevada.

Joe Eagan, on his own since I had retired, had hustled in to help Reno put on a big fight for its Fourth of July carnival, and he'd figured out a smart play. He'd got the two best heavies in sight, Marvin Hart and Jack Root, and he asked me if I'd referee the fight for him and pass my title on to the winner. Handing over the title was a laugh—just build-up for the fight—but I was perfectly willing to do Joe a favor. I said, "Sure." Joe was able to bill his country-town carnival fight, "For the heavyweight championship of the world." It was hokum, but it drew at the box office, and that was all Joe wanted.

Picked as the White Hope

Joe, by the way, could have got either Jack Johnson or Sam Langford for less than he paid Root or Marvin Hart. He didn't use either of the black boys, and his reasons for not using them were the same as my reasons for not fighting them when I was in my prime. Neither was good enough; Hart had licked Jack Johnson the year before, and Johnson held a fluke win over Langford.

Anyway, I went to Reno, refereed Joe's fight; Hart handed Root quite a cuffing, and Root folded in the twelfth round. I raised Hart's hand. Then I joined Joe Eagan and the boys in a round of drinks at the Golden Hotel.

But that Reno carnival fight made heavyweight history, and it led to another championship fight at Reno, five years later. Hart called himself champion. Tommy Burns licked Hart, and Jack Johnson licked Tommy Burns. When that black man won the title that I'd handed Marvin Hart, the white race got up on its hind legs and howled for a white man to win it back again.

I was the last of the Sullivan-Corbett-Fitzsimmons line of champions. Marvin Hart was the first of the Hart-Burns-Johnson line.

Maybe there's no such thing as luck. But when I crawled inside those ropes to referee Joe's carnival fight at Reno, I stood on the exact site of the ring that Tex Rickard built five years later for Jack Johnson, champion, to fight James J. Jeffries, hope of the white race.

On July 3, 1905, at Reno, I started the chain that led me back to Reno on July 4, 1910. Tie that one.

"They never come back."

I'm the fighter that's supposed to have proved that, for all time to come. My comeback was the first of the modern championship promotions—the Big Fight. Twenty-five years ago last Fourth of July, it was Page 1 news all over the world. You could fill a book with what people said about why I tried it, and why I got what I did, but I can give you my angle in a lot less than a book.

I came out of retirement to fight Jack Johnson for just one reason—because I didn't have guts enough to say "No."

Think it was ambition?

Ambition to do what? Ambition to get where? I was champion of the world. I'd fought and licked every important heavyweight of my time. I'd kayoed Corbett and Fitzsimmons twice each; I'd beaten Tom Sharkey twice; I'd knocked over Joe Choynski, Peter Jackson, Joe Goddard, Gus Ruhlin—I'd fought myself out of opposition. I'd satisfied my ambition.

When the promoters couldn't dig up a fighter that looked like even a 100-to-1 shot against me, I retired.

And it wasn't money.

Tex Rickard's Reno purse was the biggest ever put up for a ring fight—\$101,000 cash, with movie rights and a lot of et ceteras thrown in. But in the time I took to train for Johnson, I could have made a lot more money than Rickard ever showed me.

There wasn't a year of my championship when I didn't make more money outside the ring than I did in it. The night I walked out on the old American Theater stage in New York and announced that I'd fight Jack Johnson, I was earning money at the rate of \$2500 a week in show business alone. I gave up that kind of money to spend months of time, at my own expense, trying to whip the old body back into shape for a ring fight. It wasn't money I was after.

The honor of the white race?

I'm not handing out that kind of hokum now. The races of mankind don't have to defend their honor by throwing a couple of fighters into the ring, and there never was a time when I thought they did. In fact, if the races of mankind cared so much about their honor, there'd be a lot more kindness and square-dealing in the world than there is.

I'd rather see a white man hold the title than a black man, for the same reason I'd rather have an American hold it than see it go to an Englishman or a German or an Italian. I'd rather have a boy from my home town win it than have it won by a boy from your home town. But that doesn't mean that I despise your home town, and it doesn't mean that I despise Italians or Germans or Englishmen. And I don't despise a Negro.

Right now, if a black fighter wins the title fair and square, I'm for him, and I hope he behaves himself and keeps his nose clean while he's up there. And I hope the same for any white fighter that gets up in the lights where I used to be.

Just a Yes Man

It wasn't ambition and it wasn't money and it wasn't the honor of the white race that pulled me out of retirement. When people wanted some white man to lick Jack Johnson, they turned to James J. Jeffries—the old stories about me got to circulating again. I was the guy that had knocked out Jim Corbett when I was a kid, sparring in training camp. I was the guy that had knocked out Bob Fitzsimmons with a push in the face. I was the guy that had smashed three of Tom Sharkey's ribs with one sock, that had busted two ribs on Corbett, that had ruined Gus Ruhlin in five rounds of body-punching. I was this and I was that. I was the guy with the Jeffries crouch. I was the fighter that couldn't be hurt. Even six years out of the ring, they still called me champion of the world. I'd never been knocked off my feet, I'd never been beaten, and they still called me unbeatable. They thought James J. Jeffries was the one white man to lick Jack Johnson.

The newspapers and the public and my friends turned the heat on; I think no fighter ever took anything like it, before or since.

The Reno thing was on me—I'm not giving an alibi. I'm the guy that said "Yes" because he didn't have the guts to say "No." I can see why they put the heat on me, and I quit feeling sore about it a long time ago. I just want to

tell how things were; I guess I'm the only man that really knows.

They put the leverage on me everywhere, every day. I heard it on the street, in hotels, bars, theaters. Every town I went to, the first thing the newspapermen asked me was: "How about Johnson?" I even read where a preacher or two had given sermons about my duty to the white race. They forgot that I was a prize fighter and that I owned a saloon business and that I took a drink when I wanted one and gambled when I felt like it. Some of this heat was ugly. People didn't stop to realize that I hadn't had a real fight since the second start against Fitzsimmons, back in 1902—that was seven years before all this hurrah began. They'd say I was afraid to fight Johnson. I didn't mind the preachers. I didn't even mind the strangers; though I kind of hated to be called yellow by a lot of suckers that would have run crying to a cop if I'd spanked them with the flat of my hand. But some of my friends got to giving me a funny look when I said I wouldn't fight Johnson. That hurt.

No Part of a Fighter's Business

I'd never seen the man I thought could lick me when I was right, and I'd never been scared of any man in the ring. That's not boasting; that's the way it was. I guess the simplest way to say it is that being afraid of another fighter was no part of my business, just like being afraid of high places is no part of a parachute jumper's business.

You can see how all this burned me; they kept it up day and night. They wouldn't let me alone. You can see how it burned me when it seemed as if even some of my best friends thought I was afraid of Jack Johnson.

It would have taken a lot of guts to keep on saying "No," and the long and short of it is that I didn't have that much.

People still ask: "Why didn't you fight Johnson long before, when you were in your prime?" Well, why didn't I yank Jack Dempsey out of grammar school and lick him too? At the time I retired, Johnson was not up where I was—that's all.

My last fight—not much of a fight—was the Munroe knockout, August 26, 1904. I'd already halfway retired. There was no opposition that would draw any kind of a gate with me. Where was Jack Johnson in 1904?

Up to that time, the only top-notch he'd fought had been Joe Choynski. Down in Galveston, in 1901, Joe had spotted Johnson forty-eight pounds and knocked him out in three rounds. Hank Griffin—the colored boy I'd knocked out in my first pro start, when I was sixteen years old—had fought Johnson two twenty-round draws and had licked him once in twenty rounds.

Up to the time of my retirement, Johnson had done nothing that rated him a shot at the title. No promoter would have considered it. It wouldn't have drawn a gate.

In 1902, in Los Angeles, Johnson had stopped my brother Jack in five rounds. I've explained why my brother could never seem to do his stuff in an actual fight. At that time one of the Johnson crowd had made a crack about what the Negro could do to me too. One of my best friends, Joe Eagan, had heard it. Joe had handled my business for years.

Joe said: "Any time you think your smoke can lick Jim Jeffries, I'll get Jeff to sign, winner take all. Want it?"

(Continued on Page 64)

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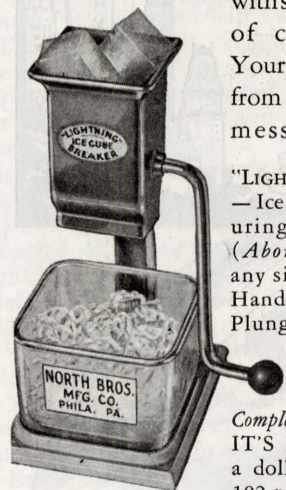
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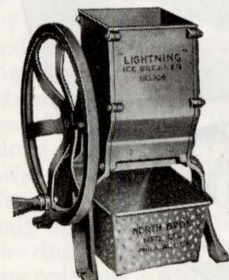
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—With flywheel. For restaurants, clubs, homes, using chipped ice in larger amounts. Hopper, 3 3/4 x 4 1/2 inches, for cubes and larger pieces of ice. Price, \$9.75, delivered.

(Continued from Page 62)

They didn't want it. If they'd taken Joe up, I'd have had to go through with it. On a winner-take-all basis, it might have drawn a crowd. I don't know. But with Johnson just fighting for the loser's end of a Jeffries purse, my best friends wouldn't have paid money to see it.

It is true that I once dared Jack Johnson to fight it out with me in a saloon cellar—I'm not proud of the story, but it's true.

One August night in San Francisco—it was a few days after I'd tipped over Jack Munroe—Johnson walked into Harry Corbett's bar on Ellis Street and asked me to give him a fight. Harry Corbett was standing at the bar with me, and I think Jim Corbett was there too.

Harry said: "We got a cellar in this place, Jeff."

"All right," I said to Johnson, "I'll fight you. You and I'll go down cellar and lock the door on the inside. The guy that comes out with the keys will be champion of the world! How about it?"

Johnson went away.

The minute I said that, I was sorry for it. I didn't even have the excuse that Jim Corbett had had, making that crack at Fitz before the Carson City fight. I wasn't on edge. I wasn't due to fight anybody. What I said to Johnson sounded swell-headed, and I realized that I'd got a laugh by kidding a fighter that wasn't up where I was. When Johnson walked into Harry Corbett's asking for a fight, he was the underdog and I had no business to kid him. I was sorry for it, but that's what happened.

When you come right down to it, though, what I said was another way of telling Johnson that I thought I could lick him any day in the week, and that he just hadn't fought his way up to the place where he had any business demanding a ring fight with the champion. I had no business to hurt his feelings, but what I told him was true.

Let's Look at the Record

I will say, though, that if Johnson had taken my dare, I had no doubt then—and I have no doubt now—who would have come up with the keys. That's true too.

It might be smarter for me to say that Jack Johnson was the greatest fighter that ever lived. I might get more credit for going in there at Reno, thirty-five years old and six years out of the ring, and staying fifteen rounds with him. But I'm calling them the way I see them now. And the truth is that even when the heat began to burn me—along early in 1909—I had no great respect for Johnson as a fighter. Even that far along, the one first-rate name in his record was the name of Bob Fitzsimmons; but when Johnson knocked him out, along in 1907, Fitz was forty-five years old and probably fifty pounds lighter than the Negro. Marvin Hart held a twenty-round win over Johnson. Johnson, by 1909, held a knockout over Fireman Jim Flynn and a decision over Sam Langford. I didn't see the Langford fight, but the talk was that Langford kicked the ears off him and got robbed by the referee. I know Johnson fought another colored fighter, Joe Jeanette, seven or eight times, but he never went in again with Sam Langford.

By the record book—and anybody can look it up for himself—Johnson was in no position to demand a fight

with a guy who had licked Sharkey, Corbett and Fitzsimmons in their prime. I have a right to my own pride in my championship career, but I'm not talking about that now. I'm talking by the record. I say that there never was a time when Jack Johnson was entitled to a fight with James J. Jeffries.

He got it, though—and maybe this is another reason why you could call me the first of the modern champions. My big fight—unless you're an old-timer, it's the Reno fight that you remember—was promoted by build-up and ballyhoo, not on the merits of the fighters. Johnson was a second-rater, at the best. And at the time the Johnson fight was booked, Jim Jeffries wasn't a fighter at all. He was a retired business man, thirty-four years old, weight 285 pounds.

Well, anyway — The first hint that I might try a comeback was a press-agent story—and it was 100 per cent hokum.

Too Much Johnson

Early in 1909—February, I think—Billy Morris, the New York booking agent, signed me for a twenty-weeks' tour, doing a boxing stunt on the stage. The guaranty was \$50,000. Being maybe sixty-five pounds overweight—and for five years or so I'd hardly seen a boxing glove, except on some other guy's fist—I started working out to get in some kind of shape. And the minute I began that, the newspapermen began asking if I was figuring on a comeback.

That was like asking Billy Morris: "Do you want all the Page-1 publicity you can get for your show?"

Guess the answer. I still tried to play it safe. I told them I'd never fight unless I found I could get into condition. All the yelling about me was beginning to wear me down, but I still tried to hold off. Nothing I said made much difference though. People didn't want any talk out of me; they wanted me in the ring with Jack Johnson. I didn't know it then, but I was already on my way to Reno.

In New York, when our show got there, Tex Rickard shoved me along a little further. He got me to sign the first agreement for a Johnson fight. Tex was an A-1 talker, and I had perfect confidence in him. All he wanted was an agreement that if I did get in shape, I'd take the fight—and the papers that I signed were full of "outs."

But I started doing a little road-work—figure that one. I wanted to get in better shape for my boxing act, but I kind of guess I also wanted to find out what Jim Jeffries had. Maybe I had the sneaking hunch I was going to have to fight. Anyhow, I started hitting the road in Central Park, early every morning.

A week later, I stepped out on the stage of the American Theater and stopped the show.

I admitted that I was training. I admitted I was trying to get in shape again. And I promised that if I could get in condition for the ring, I'd go in against Jack Johnson—"to win the title back for the white race." On the stage you use hokum. That hokum stopped the show.

It stopped some of that talk, too, about my being scared of Johnson, but from then on, the back-slapping and staring and hurrah that I got were almost as bad as all the insinuations and arguments I'd had before.

People never did realize, see, that getting back in shape to go in the ring was a serious proposition. They thought I was some kind of unbeatable hero, and all I had to do to lick Johnson was grit my teeth and stick out my chest and swing on him. I knew different. I knew all the grind of conditioning. I'd been through with it all for going on six years, and I dreaded going back to it. I was not sure it would work. And I was ten years past that twenty-four-year-old grizzly that had gone in against Bob Fitzsimmons at Coney. I knew that too. The hurrah was almost as tough as the heat had been.

I finished my vaudeville contract in June of 1909, and my wife and I caught the first boat for Germany. My wife was a German girl, and I wanted to meet her family. I wanted my wife to spend some time in Karlsbad, too; her health wasn't good, and she believed the treatments might help. I wanted to get away from the everlasting hurrah, also; but the minute I mentioned Karlsbad, the newspapers printed that I was going to take the baths to start getting in shape for Jack Johnson.

We had a good trip, even if the talk did follow us wherever we went. Just the same as in America, everybody took it for granted that I was going to fight the Negro. Nobody paid any attention to all my "ifs," "ands" and "buts" about condition.

One thing happened that I get a boot out of remembering.

I was walking along the street in Karlsbad one day with Nathan Straus and Sy Myriek—Myriek was the California promoter and sportsman; a humdinger with any kind of money transaction. In front of one of the shops, a man said: "How do you do, Mr. Jeffries?"

Behind the Smoked Glasses

I said hello to him—people were always talking to me on the street—but this man stopped me.

He was a short, stockily built man, wearing a long coat and a cap. He had a Vandyke beard, and he was wearing smoked glasses.

He said: "Would you mind stepping into this shop, Mr. Jeffries, and helping me pick out a couple of furs?"

"What makes you think I know anything about furs?" I asked.

"I'm afraid you don't remember me," he said.

When he turned to go into the store, I got a look at his back and knew who it was. The Vandyke and smoked glasses were new to me since I'd met him in England, on my first trip, at the National Sporting Club. I followed him into the shop feeling kind of sheepish. He took his glasses off and laughed at me.

"Now do you know who I am?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," I said. "The King of England!"

King Edward chatted very pleasantly with me and Sy Myriek and Mr. Straus; he talked some about boxing, asked about my condition, and seemed to take it for granted that I was getting ready to fight Johnson. Same as everybody else. And I helped him pick out the furs. He bought a couple of silver foxes—he wanted a present for a very special friend of his, he said—and they cost him something like \$5000.

Editor's Note—This is the third of a series of articles by Mr. Jeffries and Mr. Orcutt. The fourth will appear in a fortnight.

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

Published Weekly
Founded by Benj. Franklin

5c. the Copy

August 17, 1935

10c. in Canada
(INCLUDING TAX)

Volume 208, Number 7



FRANK H. SIMONDS ♦ ELEANOR MERCEIN ♦ RICHARD MACAULAY

INSIDE THOSE ROPES

IV—THEY NEVER COME BACK

By

JAMES J. JEFFRIES

WITH EDDY ORCUTT

I GOT back to New York in October. On October 29, 1909, in the old Albany Hotel, I signed articles to fight Jack Johnson.

"... forty-five or more rounds to a finish, not later than July 5, 1910, before the club offering the best financial inducement, for a side bet of \$10,000 and 75 per cent of the purse."

There I was.

Bob Murphy, a good friend of mine, ran the Albany, and they'd fixed up quite a ceremony for the signing. I didn't like it; I'd had my belly full long ago. The room was jammed with newspapermen, sporting men, photographers—you'd have thought we were picking the next President of the United States. Sam Berger and I signed for our side, and Johnson and his manager, George Little, put their names to it.

They took a lot of flashlight pictures just before we signed, and the room got thick with blue vapor from the flashes. When it came to the real signing, somebody said: "Let's wait till the damn smoke clears out."

"Lordy," Jack Johnson said, "do I have to clear out before I sign?"

The wisecrack got a laugh out of the crowd, but not from me. That was a tough place for me, and I hated it. I was glad when I got away.

The Background of Battle

TEX RICKARD took me aside, after the signing, and told me he was going to hand me \$10,000, after the fight, as a bonus. I said: "I don't ask anything like that. What's the idea?"

He said: "That's all right, Jim. You got it coming to you."

Well, that was that; I was on my way, and I knew it then. I was going to have to fight Jack Johnson. Bids for the fight came in from everywhere, but it wasn't till a couple of months later that the site for the big fight was finally fixed. There was a bid from London. Hugh McIntosh, the Australian promoter, offered \$55,000 for the bout in Paris. Galveston, Texas, Johnson's home town, offered \$70,000. Tom McCarey, down in Los Angeles, had rigged up a scheme to get 200 local sports to underwrite the promotion at \$100 apiece. Coalinga, California, bid an even \$100,000. Battling Nelson—he'd just lost the lightweight title in forty bloody rounds—had an arena in Virginia City, Nevada, and he offered \$85,000 to hold it there. Some of the bids were phony, some were good. It was hard to tell which was which.

Anyhow, Tex Rickard got the fight; he topped the field with \$101,000, and he billed the fight for San Francisco. As long as I had to fight, San Francisco suited me—it was like my home town. I believed in Rickard too; I was glad he'd got the call. On the money end of the fight, I think George Wingfield, of Reno—Nevada's cowboy banker—was backing him. Rickard had made money on the famous Gans-Nelson fight at Goldfield, but this \$101,000

bid for the big fight was his first step to the place he finally reached—the king-pin boxing promoter of all time.

I did one smart thing before I started training for Johnson—I organized an athletic show that I guess was the best in the history of show business. Some of you old-timers will remember the Jeffries-Gotch Athletic Show.

I signed Frank Gotch for the big attraction—I still claim he was the greatest in the game, bar none. I wanted to pay Gotch \$1000 a week, but Sam Berger objected. Sam was going to be my sparring partner in the show, and he was a good business man. He said \$750 was enough.

Talking to Gotch, I asked him how much he wanted. He said he wanted a thousand. "Listen," I said, "I'll give you \$750." He grinned.

He said: "I can throw one man every performance, or I can throw five—whichever I want. At \$1000 a week, I'd be satisfied."

He had me. "I thought strangleholds was barred," I said, "but you can have your thousand." At \$1000 a week, Frank Gotch was a good investment.

Along with Gotch, I signed up two other fine wrestlers, Doctor Roller and Farmer Burns, and I booked up several acrobatic acts and a couple of comedy turns. Then, when I tried to get backing, both Billy Morris and Abe Erlanger, of Klaw & Erlanger, turned it down; they thought the pay roll was too heavy for the business we'd do. I got Harry Frazee from Chicago to manage it, and carried the show myself.

I wish I had space for some stories about that show; Gotch was not only the greatest wrestler in the game but the best showman. We offered \$150 to any man Gotch couldn't throw in fifteen minutes, and we never lost any money that way. Gotch would lay them on the floor, pin them to the footlights, or hang them on a back drop; you'd call the shot, and Gotch would make it. We played cities of 50,000 to 150,000—only two big cities in the tour. We ran thirteen weeks. At the end of the run, operating a show that two of the best men in show business had turned down, I found I had cleared more than \$87,000. Tie that.

We closed the show sometime in February, 1910.

I took a month in the woods, hiking and hunting; then I headed out to California and began the training grind for the Johnson fight. I gave myself three



"Leave Me Alone. I'm All Right. Leave Me Alone." The Morning of July 4, 1910, at Moana Springs. Farmer Burns With the Towel

months to get into shape. We took a place at Rowardennan Park, a resort near Ben Lomond in the Santa Cruz hills. It was a place I'd always liked, about the same in climate as San Francisco.

What I Was Up Against

MY WIFE was with me, though she wasn't well, and we had a nice cottage of our own near the resort hotel. Sam Berger took charge of business arrangements, and we hired accommodations for about fifteen people. We put up a handball court and fixed up a rubdown room and showers in one of the cottages. Besides Berger, I had my brother Jack, Joe Choynski and Big Bob Armstrong for sparring partners—Armstrong was the colored boy I'd broke my hand on in New York, just before I got my chance at Fitz. Farmer Burns came along to work out at wrestling and rough-and-tumble. Jim Corbett volunteered to take charge of the training staff, but he came along later.

The day of my first workout, I found out what I was up against. I guess I'd suspicioned it before then. But after that first workout, I knew.

I've told you how I worked in training. I did work enough to kill a horse. But always before, after I'd worked and showered and had my rub, I got off the table feeling like I wanted to begin all over again. They used to laugh at me; Delaney used to have to get hard with me, to keep me from going on back to the training ring and trying out a couple more things with one of the boys. I liked to work. I ate it up.

But at Rowardennan, the first time I got off the rubbing table, I was an old man. I was tired. The old juice was gone. I was tired when I went to bed that night, and I was tired when I got up the next morning. And I knew, down in my insides somewhere, what had happened to me.

At first I tried to cure myself by working harder. Then and always after that I was criticized for not training enough for Johnson. Listen, I'd have done better if I hadn't trained a day. I'd have done better if I'd waited until the day of the fight, then stripped and put on my tights and gone into the ring to give him what I had and stand up as long as I could.

The White Man's Burden

THEY said I was always ducking away to go fishing. They said I loafed when crowds came up to Rowardennan to see me train. I got the reputation of being a grouch because once or twice I told volunteer advisers where to head in at. I told them it was me that was going to fight Johnson, not them, and that I'd do my training my own way.

Sure, I loafed, but it was because I was too tired to work. I went fishing because I couldn't stand it to stick around and shake people's hands and have them ask why I wasn't working. I had fun at times, there at Rowardennan—I'm not trying to kid anybody. I had good friends there. Eddie Leonard, the minstrel, was there with his wife, Mabel. Walter C. Kelly—the Virginia Judge, you know, and great company—was there. Bob Edgren went on a lot of fishing trips with me. There was good trout fishing back in the hills, and every once in a while a party of us would go down to Monterey Bay for some trolling. But there is supposed to be some fun around a fighter's camp; if there wasn't, he'd go nuts long before he was ready for the ring.

In secret, when the visitors weren't around, I worked. Old Jim Corbett could have told you about

that; so could Choynski, or Armstrong, or Sam Berger. But the work didn't go. It took too much out of me.

I couldn't talk to anybody about it then. Suppose I'd told Corbett, or Berger, or Choynski, or Farmer Burns that I wasn't right. He'd have gone around worrying. Pretty soon somebody else would have guessed. It wouldn't have taken the gamblers long to get wise. Stories would have gone out, and betting odds would have acted up. Pretty soon everybody in camp would have got to suspecting the other fellow; it would have been a hell of a how-do-you-do.

Maybe even now, twenty-five years after Reno, this sounds like an alibi. Maybe I shouldn't say it. But that was how it was.

And then they kicked the big fight out of the state of California.

The law in California was about like it is anywhere, any time. The law prohibited prize fights, but it permitted boxing contests. The reformers got to Governor Gillett—they told him fights were always fights. They told him about the Moran-McCarthy "boxing exhibition"—McCarthy died of his beating. They told him about all the teeth spitting and blood in Ad Wolgast's forty-round win over Bat Nelson at Point Richmond. They had plenty to tell him about, and on June 15, 1910, the governor kicked the Jeffries-Johnson fight out of the state.

Maybe the reformers were right, but you can figure how that hit me.

In spite of everything, I had got into pretty fair condition by June fifteenth. I wasn't one-two to the fighter I'd been ten years before—or five years before—and I knew it. But I was in condition. I was doing ten miles on the road without too much trouble. I was sparring and bag punching for maybe fifteen rounds a day without a let-up, and I skipped rope 1500 or 2000

turns at a session. Show me a thirty-five-year-old retired business man, six years past active competition, who can get out and do that, and I'll show you a man who has worked pretty hard to get in that kind of shape. I wasn't the Jim Jeffries I had been, but I think I'm speaking by the book when I say I was in as good shape as my best work and my best judgment could get me into.

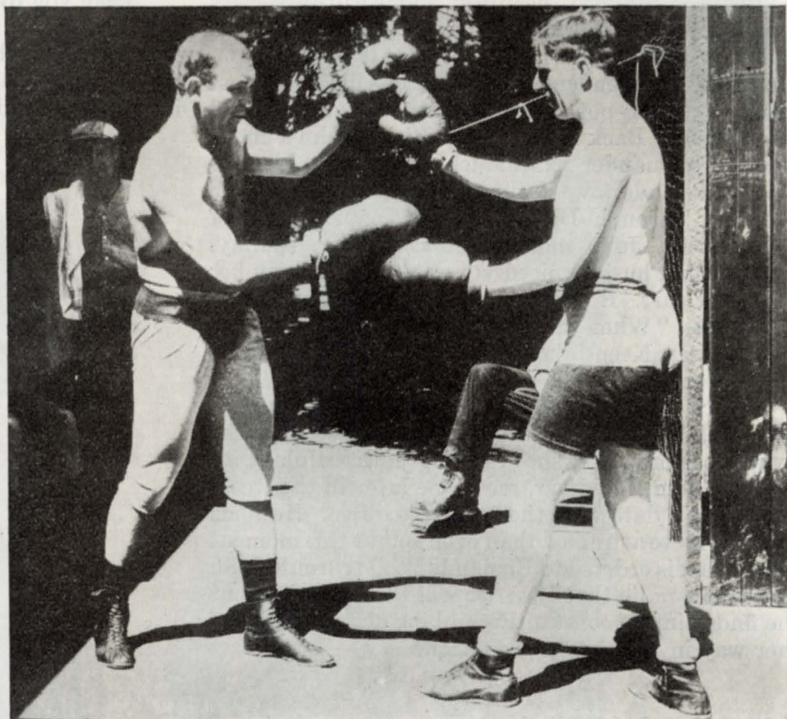
Then they kicked the fight out of California. Tex Rickard had to move his promotion to Reno.

There's no use going into what happened between Tex Rickard and me then; I'd signed to fight in San Francisco, but if I'd stuck to the letter of the contract, Tex would have been sunk. I moved to Reno.

Reno —

Well, Sam Berger got us good accommodations at Moana Springs, a couple miles south of the town, and we hit camp eleven days before the fight. Those eleven days were as bad as any I've ever had.

This is no alibi. I'd have lost to Jack Johnson on July 4, 1910, I think, whether the fight had been held in San Francisco or Melbourne or Paris. The change



Corbett Prepping Jeffries at Rowardennan for the Johnson Fight, Reversing the Roles of 13 Years Earlier



COURTESY OF BILLY MCMAHON

"I Have a Hazy Recollection of Standing Up in My Corner." Billy Jordan Introducing Jeffries at Reno; Physically Fit Again, But Mentally Groggy. Joe Choynski and Abe Attell at Right

to Reno was just the last straw—one of the last. You understand that a fighter in training is a touchy kind of an animal, anyway—the finer he trains down, the touchier he gets. I was thirty-five years old. I'd trained down in three months from 285 to 220 pounds. With the whole world watching that fight, I'd been for a year and a half under as tough a mental strain as a fighter ever took. Then, at the last minute—just when it was time to level off and point myself up to go in the ring—they shifted me from the California hills to the Reno desert.

Ringside at Reno

EVEN the altitude got me—feature that, for a guy that had spent half his life in high country, hunting and fishing. Two days before the fight, I came down with something like dysentery. I was good and sick. And on the day before the fight, I went haywire entirely.

I'll tell you about the fight. I'll tell you what I think about it; you can figure your own explanation when I'm through.

On July 4, 1910, my brother John wanted to call off the fight; he broke down and cried just like a baby when he saw that he couldn't.

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INSIDE THOSE ROPES

(Continued from Page 19)

"You go on over and call it off," they told John on that morning. "You go in there and call it off and see what happens."

It was too late, then; looking back on everything now, I guess it always had been too late. My number had been up, you might say, since the night I knocked out old Bob Fitzsimmons at Coney. That made me champion. That started the stories going. That put me up in the lights. From then on I was due to be challenged sometime by a man the public wanted me to fight. I was due to have to go inside those ropes with him, whether I wanted to or not, whether I was ready or not.

I said I went against Johnson because I didn't have the guts to say no. I still stick to that. I just mean now that from the minute a man gets to be champion, he's due for a day when saying "No" will take more guts than any fight ever took. I didn't have that much.

I quit hard work in Reno five days before the fight; I boxed maybe six rounds that day with Berger, my brother Jack and Joe Choynski. Then I waited. There was nothing more to do.

I've told you the shape I was in when we packed out of Rowardennan. In Reno I didn't do one good day's work—because I couldn't. I couldn't snap into my work. I couldn't get up a sweat. I was not right. I ought to have been putting on an edge then, see—getting pointed up to go in the ring and put up a fight. I couldn't. I went through all the motions. Then I had to wait.

The day before the fight, I cracked wide open.

They still ask: "Is it true you were doped before you fought Johnson?"

July 3, 1910, is a blank on my calendar. I guess I knew something was wrong, but I believe I thought nobody else knew it. All I remember definitely is going to bed early, and being glad to get to bed, I didn't have to kid anybody along any more; I didn't have to bother about anybody. I woke up in the night and stayed awake for quite a while. How long, I wouldn't know. When I got to sleep again, it was more like going unconscious.

Morning of the Fight

July 4, 1910.

Some of the boys got worried and went to my room, along about 9:30, and waked me up. I remember getting out of bed and starting to dress. Next thing I knew, the boys were back again; they'd heard nothing from me for a while, had gone back and found me half in bed and half out of it. I was lying in a sprawl, snoring. That Fourth of July morning was hot in Reno, and my room was hot, but I was ice-cold. I remember Roger Cornell and Farmer Burns and a couple of rubbers going to work on me; they rubbed me down, gave me hot drinks, and finally got the old circulation to going again.

Late that morning—I guess I had breakfast meanwhile—I tried to limber up with some light roadwork in the hills. I gave it up because I kept stumbling.

"Leave me alone. I'm all right. Leave me alone."

That's what they say I kept telling them.

Going to the arena, when the waiting was all over, I just remember being with people, taking a long ride in a good deal of dust. I don't remember who was driving or what car we used. I remember seeing the big plank bowl, and the crowd around it. There was a lot of yelling; I suppose there was a mob waiting to watch me go in, but I didn't know what the yelling was all about. I was in a fog. I did what I was told, didn't make any trouble, but I had very little notion of what was going on.

The dressing room was made of pine boards, under the bleachers, and it had the smell of new lumber. The boys put on my ring costume, and a suit of old clothes on over it. I didn't bandage my hands.

I had another cold spell, and they laid me out on the rubbing table again and worked me over. I remember I wanted to get out and get in the ring. I guess I thought everything would be all right once I got in the ring.

A Crowded Corner

There were 20,000 people in Rickard's arena that Fourth of July. Some of them had come from Australia or France or England. There'd been special trains from New York and Chicago. San Francisco had sent up seventeen special trains between midnight, July second, and nine o'clock at night, July third. By fight time, some of those people had waited on plank seats, in the hot sun, for six hours or more. And that was what they meant when they told my brother to go on up in the ring and try to call the fight off. There never was a chance.

We waited maybe half an hour. All the great boxers in the country, pretty near, were there, right from John L. Sullivan on up, and all the big shots in sporting circles. Maybe you remember. Old Billy Jordan introduced them from the ring. After while we could hear the mob yelling for him to cut it out and let the fight start.

Then they gave us the call.

The boys told me it was time to get off the table and go out. It seemed to be all right with me, as nearly as I can remember, but I didn't know what to do about it. They finally had to ease me off the table and get me started walking.

That was the way I started down the runway toward the ring to meet Jack Johnson for the championship of the world.

I did one thing that's good for a laugh now.

When I finally got into the ring—they tell me little Abe Attell had to boost me up—the boys tried to find out who I wanted in my corner. That ought to have been settled before, of course, but it hadn't been, and whoever came to me about it, I told him that he was the guy I wanted. I told that to Jim Corbett and my brother Jack. I insisted on Sam Berger staying in with me. I had Bob Armstrong, too, and Roger Cornell, Farmer Burns and Joe Choynski. De Witt Van Court was there, and I got him. I told Attell to stay in my corner. Altogether, I had ten men in my corner before Tex Rickard called us out.

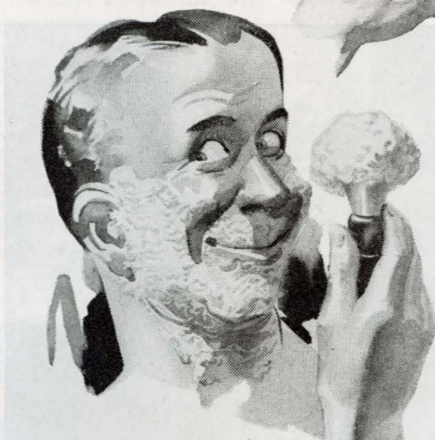
Billy Delaney was in Johnson's corner; newspaper stories claimed that

(Continued on Page 49)

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TUBE OR JAR

INGRAM'S SHAVING CREAM

(Continued from Page 47)

seeing Delaney over there, working against me, got my goat. As far as I can remember, I didn't see him to recognize him. Even the crowd was just a blur to me, and all the noises and talk seemed to come from a long ways off. Delaney didn't bother me. King Edward VII could have been in Johnson's corner, and it wouldn't have bothered me then.

I have a hazy recollection of standing up in my corner, hearing a lot of noise from a distance.

Then I was fighting my fight with Johnson.

Except for a short spot of one round—people tell me it must have been the sixth—I have no memory of the actual battling. In that spot, I felt the hurt of some punch, and the shock of it turned the lights on for a second. I saw the big black man; I tore into him, trying to fight. The yell around the ringside seemed encouraging. I thought I was doing all right. Then my arms and legs were heavy, and I couldn't see the "Big Dingo" very well. That was all there was.

I understand I swung only four hard punches at Johnson during the whole fight, and that I really hit him only twice. My friend Joe Eagan tells me that once, along in the tenth sometime, Johnson took my left arm in his hand and held it up over my head. Why, Primo Carnera couldn't do that to me today, on a bet, and I'm sixty years old. I was like a baby that afternoon.

By the record, Johnson landed his right to my eye in the fourth, and in the ninth round he pretty near closed my right eye with his left hand. Most of the fight, I had no use of my left eye. From the ninth round on, I was practically blind. I guess none of that made much difference, though; my eyes weren't doing me any good, anyway.

I felt hardly any pain. I remember that one spot when the hurt of a punch jarred me out of my trance. I don't remember any others. From outside those ropes, the beating looked terrible—I saw the motion pictures, a long while afterward—but none of it actually hurt me very much.

It was over after a while.

The End of Unbeatable Jim

In the fifteenth round, Jack Johnson finally knocked me off my feet. I fell half through the ropes, over on the east side of the ring. I took nine counts and got up.

I'd like to say that I knew then how Corbett had felt, and old Fitz, and Gus Ruhlin, and Tom Sharkey with his ribs caved in. It wouldn't be true. I'd like to say that I thought of old Peter Jackson; he was a great black man, and white Jim Jeffries had caught him at the end of the trail, just the way black Jack Johnson had caught me. That would be a good thing to say, but it wouldn't be true either.

That was the first time any fighter had knocked me off my feet, but I didn't have any feeling about it. I don't know now what it felt like. I don't remember it. I got up at "Nine," but I don't know why I did that either.

Johnson worked me around the ring, when I got up. He worked me into position. He waltzed me twice on the jaw. I went down to my knees. When Rickard got to "Nine," I got up again.

Johnson hit me three more punches, knocked me over and hung me into the ropes again. The crowd had been yelling to stop it. At the count of "Seven," my seconds jumped into the ring, and the fight was over. It was a technical

knockout; Jim Jeffries was out, through, washed up, and Jack Johnson had the old title. No argument.

There it was; that was how it ended.

That was the end of all the talk about Jim Jeffries being unbeaten and unbeatable. When people said, "James J. Jeffries," after that, it didn't mean the same that it had before. That was what I'd had coming to me, I guess, since the night I pushed Bob Fitzsimmons over at Coney Island. Well, I got it—there it was.

My first clear spot after the fight came to me in the yard behind the training cottage. I was sitting in a chair, and my brother Jack was working over me.

"How did it go? What happened?" I remember talking, but the place and the people were still foggy.

An Unanswered Question

Tex Rickard came out late that afternoon with some of the money due me from the fight. He handed it over to Mrs. Jeffries. He added an extra \$10,000 in currency. Remember, he'd promised me that when I signed, but he hadn't said a word about it since then. He just handed it over that afternoon.

"There's that extra cut I promised," he said.

And it didn't seem strange to anybody that Tex Rickard's word was worth \$10,000 any time, without a line of writing.

My wife had planned a dinner. She had planned that if I won, the dinner would be at the hotel across the road from our quarters, and that if I lost, we'd have the dinner in the cottage. She went ahead with the dinner, even after the way things had gone with me in the ring. She set the table that night for twenty-five. There were fifteen vacant chairs.

Riding down from Reno the next day, my wife carried the satchel with our money in it; I remember her holding it in her lap and looking out the window with the tears running down her cheeks. There was \$177,000 in that satchel, mostly cash. You could say there was a piece of history in that satchel, too—a cut of the biggest purse that had ever been offered for a ring fight—the first of the modern big-time prizes. But the guy that owned the satchel was pretty sick.

Back in Los Angeles, there wasn't much of a crowd at the depot when I got home. I didn't want a crowd. I didn't want to talk. I wanted to get out to the ranch and shut myself up and get over being sick.

People still ask: "Is it true you were doped?"

Here is my answer: "I don't know, and I probably never will know."

I've told the way things happened. I've told why and how I happened to go back into the ring to fight Jack Johnson. I've told you the kind of shape I was in when I started training at Rowardennan. I've told you what happened, as I saw it, when the fight was moved to Reno. And I think I've told the straight story of what happened inside those ropes on July 4, 1910. I was in there fifteen rounds, and never landed but two solid punches. I was handled like a baby. I was knocked off my feet for the first time in my life. I was knocked out.

I think I was licked from the time I promised to try a comeback. I've said plainly that I think Jack Johnson would have licked me on July 4, 1910, no matter where the fight was held. I have no alibi.

I was thirty-five years old, six years out of the ring, and I'd worked off sixty-odd pounds of weight in three months of training—maybe that explains my pitiful showing against Johnson. I had been worried and pestered for eighteen months, and I came up to the fight with a hunch that I was licked, and knowing that hundreds of thousands of dollars had been bet on me to win. Maybe some kind of shell-shock explains my drawing a blank the day before the fight. It is true, though, that once in a while in those days a fighter got "slipped the peter"—they used hasheesh, East Indian hemp—and that that could have happened to me. It is true that before and after the fight—for weeks after the fight—I did have symptoms that looked like I'd been slipped something.

And gamblers' money did funny things, the night before the fight. On July third, I was a 10-7 favorite in most of the books. At nine o'clock that night, the big operators began taking all the Jeffries money they could get. Eight years ago, touring with old Tom Sharkey, I saw the wire one midwest gambling syndicate got on the night of July 3, 1910: "Cover all Jeffries bets. Johnson is in."

The mystery about that—all this talk about dope—was caused by the way Jack Johnson handled me in the ring, when he finally found out the shape I was in. I have no alibi. I don't know of a dime's worth of proof that anybody slipped me anything. Down in my heart, though, I don't believe—and I never will believe—that anything but a "shot" would explain my blank and my fog and my fighting as bad a fight as I fought at Reno.

Now I've said my say. That's what I believe. But I still have to admit that I don't know—that, probably, I never will know.

One-Time Losers

Once in a while some fellow says to me: "I was pretty sore after that Johnson fight. You lost me some money."

"How much?" I ask them sometimes.

"Ten berries!"

Generally the answer is about that important. And when it comes, I say: "But you bet on me in a lot of fights before that, didn't you? And you always won?"

"Yes, oh, sure."

"Well," I ask, "why didn't you ever come around and tell me about those bets?"

We might as well leave it there.

I'll never know for sure just what happened at Reno, but the long and short of it is just that I lost a fight once, and who doesn't? Up to Reno, I never fought a losing fight. Up to and including Reno, I never fought a dirty fight or a crooked fight. I made my bid when men like Fitz and Corbett and Tom Sharkey were fighting inside those ropes. I was champion of the world for eleven years.

Most of it has been good.

If I had my life to live over again, I think I'd have my career about the way it was. Some things I'd change, but not many. And when I got to be sixty years old, the way I am now, I'd like to be just about here where I am—out in my own home, friends here and all over the world, and my wife liable to come in the room any minute and tell me it's getting late for an old gent like me.

Editor's Note—This is the fourth and last of a series of articles by Mr. Jeffries and Mr. Orcutt.

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