

# THE LIFE & CONTESTS OF BATTLING NELSON

CHAMPION,  
LIGHT-WEIGHT FIGHTER  
OF THE WORLD

Graphic Accounts  
of  
His Great Fights  
with  
Special Details

FULLY ILLUSTRATED



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BATTLING NELSON**

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# BATTLING NELSON

Champion Light-Weight Fighter of the World.

*Oscar Battling Mathew Nelson, of Hegewisch, Ill., U.S.A.*

It's a good name to look at in print and belongs to a good man who, in the opinion of a large number of people who know him, is fully worthy of it.

When the Battler had arrived into the little Danish household and the time had come for his parents to fix him with a name, they must have had—all unknown to themselves—a great attack of the prophetic spirit on them.

“Battling Nelson”, what a name for a born fighter—for one who by stress and toil and right hard battling was destined to prove that he was the absolute Champion of the World at his weight.

The Battler was born in Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark, on June 5th, 1882. His parents soon after emigrated to America and the future Champion of the World was less than a year old when he began to qualify for American citizenship.

He began earning his living as a teamster in the ice industry, which is an important one at Hegewisch. The work, hard and trying no doubt, did wonders for him physically, especially as it was all carried on in the open air.

Some idea of his fighting qualities must have got about amongst “the boys,” for on a circus visiting the town one of whose attractions was “A Great Unknown” who took on all comers and presented a dollar to any who were standing at the end of three rounds, they at once pushed young Oscar Mathew forward to earn that dollar. And he did, but while he succeeded in wiping the floor with “the great unknown,” in fact, while he was doing it some circus loafers stole his clothes, which made the job a rather unprofitable one seeing there was more than five dollars in his pockets. By-the-bye, as a detail, it may be mentioned the fight lasted only one round.

Having once tasted the delights of the game, Nelson, although he went steadily back to his work, felt a continual hankering to sip its sweets once more. So slipping the job he was then at (cowboy) he went over to Sioux Falls, South Dakota, where there was a club promoting fights, and persuaded the manager to give him a chance to show his quality.

The manager consented and said if he did well he would match him again the next day (Sunday) to fight Soldier Williams.

Saturday evening saw young Nelson ready and willing to face up with his first opponent, whose name, by-the-bye, was Freddie Green.

Freddie was admitted to be “the goods,” in fact, was the Champion of the Dakotas. He was shifty and strong and an old general in ring craft so that the gentle youth from Hegewisch was up against a strong proposition. The Battler was slow and awkward, but young and strong—how strong he hardly knew himself—and it was certainly never dreamt of by his opponent until towards the end. Green, in the fourth round, drew first blood. This raised Nelson’s dander; he weaved in and nearly put Freddie out. It was only nearly, however, and the Champion of the Dakotas pulling himself together slapped and slipped the unhappy Battler until he began to think he had got up against an eel. This sort of thing set the Battler thinking and he thought he would try a bit of artfulness on his own, so instead of rushing and trying to get his man all at once he “faked” being tired and hung back. Some of Green’s admirers urged him to go in and finish Nelson, and he went—not to finish, but to be finished, for Oscar Mathew so pasted his ribs and jaw that he had poor Green hanging on the ropes and in the next round put him down for “Nature’s sweet restorer—balmy sleep.”

This may be called the Battler’s real debut as a professional fighter, for though he had had one or two shakes up previously for small sums they were not strictly business arrangements. This time the business part was well to the front, the manager presenting him with \$7.50 (30s.) as his end of the purse and carried out his promise to let him fight “Soldier Williams” the next afternoon.

Half the purse (15s.) was sent home to mother at once. Not a bad sort of laddie this doughty Dane.

Soldier Williams went the same way as Freddie Green, adding one more to Oscar Mathew Battling Nelson’s scalps.

Following his victory over the Soldier, Nelson tried his prentice band on a few of the local champions, with his usual “I came, I saw, I conquered” result. Taking a trip home to Hegewisch, he obliged Eddie Herman, a fellow townsman who was very anxious to have a trial of skill with the aspiring Battler. The result was, according to the referee, a draw; a decision from which the battling one dissented.

Up to now, 1899, Nelson had mixed other work with his ring doings. Now he made up his mind to retire from all else and devote himself exclusively to fighting for a living. With this object in view he located himself in Chicago, a sure place for a boxer seeking work finding it.



**BATTLING NELSON**  
**THE MAN**

He first joined issue with one Eddie Penny to Penny's discomfiture. This produced a wild desire on the part of Bull Winters, Penny's particular chum, to avenge his defeated pal, and he at once went after Nelson and never rested until he had fixed up a match with him. He got fixed up, he got his fight, and, as the Irishman says, he got a "bating."

### **A Funny Fight with a Nigger.**

Feathers Vernon was a coloured brother of Dalton, Ill. Nelson was asked to meet him at a picnic held at that place. They met on Independence Day, 1900. It was a lively mill, not in the sense that there was much "milling" done, hut as an example of feats of trotting round and general agility it was calculated to take a high position. "The Nigger" never let the Battler get near enough to "get there," he got a tremendous slamming all round the ring, but at the end no decision was given. It was after the fight, however, that the real sport began.

The purse of ten dollars was being handed to Battler Nelson, when a fight was started, the money was knocked from his hand and scrambled for by the crowd. Nelson fought like a fiend for his "greenbacks," but it was no good. A solitary dollar, so torn that it was impassable, was his only trophy.

About this time the Battler's measurements were as follows:

Height	5 ft. 7 1/2 in.
Weight (when trained)	130 lb. to 135 lb.
(Out of training, 10 lb. heavier.)	
Reach	67 1/2 in.
Neck	15 in.
Chest (normal)	34 in.
Chest (expanded)	39 1/2 in.
Waist	27 in.
Biceps	10 1/2 in.
Biceps (contracted)	12 in.
Wrist	6 3/4 in.
Forearm	10 in.
Length of Arm	26 in.
Thigh	19 in.
Calf	14 in.

## **His First Big Fight.**

It was a proud moment for Nelson when the manager of the Star Theatre Club, Chicago, made him Overtures to appear there and box Charles Dougherty. He had every reason to feel gratified; Dougherty was a good man. The “fight” fans of the Club were a very critical lot and the crowd to view would be sure to run into thousands.

The fight itself was a short one. Feeling how much he had at stake, and recognising how much it meant for him to win, he let himself go from the first tap of the gong. To get the knock out on his man was his game and he meant to get it and get it quick. His luck was in and within one minute ten seconds of the first round he had Dougherty on the floor taking the count.

His share of the purse was only three dollars, but the Kudos he got by his victory lifted him at once many steps up in the ranks of the fighting men and set managers and promoters after him with offers of engagements.

## **A Put Back.**

For fear his head should get too big and the hatting trade he worried to finding a fit for him, fortune just after this thought it was time to remind him that there were other good men in the world in addition to Oscar Mathew Battling Nelson.

Joe Headmark is a name that Battler Nelson says he is never likely to forget. Joe was a sort of combination in his ways and methods of Terry McGovern and Dal Hawkins. He was as fast as streak lightning, nifty, shifty and with a punch that would have done credit to a 16-stone man.

In the first round he kidded Nelson into making a lead. Oh! my word! he retained a full swing under the unhappy Battler’s chin that lifted him bang off his feet and dropped him on the floor. The round was an eyeopener; on points, perhaps, in favour of Nelson, despite the knock down. But the and, 3rd and 4th were Headmark’s .

In the fifth, anxious to even matters up a bit, Nelson did all he knew and tried to force the pace and get inside, but it was no good. Joe, with his long reach played the “devils tattoo” upon Battler’s ribs all the time with both right and left, and the ringing of the bell found Nelson very tired.

Headmark in the sixth round made all the play he knew to bring the knock out off. He did not succeed and the finish of the round saw them both in the centre of the ring upstanding and fighting like game cocks.

There was no question of who had won, for 17 times in the six rounds Nelson was knocked down, and the victory was deservedly Joe's, and it must be said he had had to work for it, for he himself was knocked clean off his "pins" no less than five times during the six rounds. Nelson's share of the purse was 15 dollars.

### **Defeats Cyclone Johnny Thompson and Wins 100 Dollars.**

In 1902, Cyclone Johnny Thompson, another young aspirant for fistic fame, was pushing his way up and evidently meant to get to the top if it was to be done. As was only to be expected, both he and Battler had marked each other out as rivals to be dealt with, and it was with considerable pleasure that the latter found himself matched to meet Cyclone Johnny Thompson on St. Patrick's Day in Chicago.

It was, as was only to be expected, a fast and furious fight, the end of which found Battler declared the winner with 100 dollars as his end of the purse.

This was not the first time he had secured a purse of 100 dollars. In the year previous he twice netted even a larger sum. For his fight with Mickey Riley, at Milwaukee, which, by the way, was one of the twelve defeats Battler has had to put up with during his career, he received \$109.33; while his second fight with Harry Fails just about a month later produced him 150 dollars.

It is strange to note in this connection that his fight the previous week with the same man only produced 15 dollars.

### **The Shortest Fight on Record.**

Soon after his defeat of Cyclone Johnny Thompson, Battler was challenged by a very smart youngster named William Rossler, of West Pulham, Chicago. It was on this occasion that Nelson had a side bet on. He took a 10 to 1 chance against himself that he would not stop Rossler in one round. Four dollars to forty.

This bet had two results; it not only gave us the shortest fight on record, but it evolved a most crafty bit of ring work.

Forty dollars, and to be won or lost in the first round. It wanted thinking out and Oscar Mathew Battling Nelson thought it out to some purpose. It is usual for the men before a fight to be called to the centre of the ring by the referee to be reminded of the conditions under which they box. This done they retire to their corners to wait the sounding of the gong. Instead of following the usual course the Battler took a step



**YOUNG CORBETT**

towards Rossler's corner and on the latter rising at the sounding of the gong and stepping forward he just brought himself within what was considered the right distance by that excellent judge in such matters, Battling Nelson. Bang came a terrific right swing planted full on the jaw. The surprised Rossler shook, tried to take a step and fell in the middle of the ring. Rossler struggled to rise but at the count of seven he dropped on his face and had to be carried to his dressing room by his seconds, where he lay for two hours before he regained consciousness.

It is said that all is fair in love and war. Even so there are some things a true sportsman would desire not to do, though called fair, and perhaps the surmise may not be far from the truth that Nelson looks back upon many incidents in his career with greater satisfaction than he does on this—at any rate, it is to be hoped so.

### **His First Two Thousand Dollar Fight.**

A fight does not always rank in a Man's mind according to the amount of money he gets from it; other considerations may make it memorable. But Battler's fight with Aurelio Herrera bulks big in his recollection, not only from the fact that it was the first time he had scooped so great a pool as £400 (2,000 dollars), but also from the fact that he found him one of the doughtiest adversaries he had ever met. In fact, Nelson, when it was all over, came to the conclusion that Herrera was the greatest "whirlwind" fighter that ever pulled off a shirt. Not only was he fast, he could hit—yes—like a steam hammer. Another point in his favour was he could take a punch on his jaw without it appearing to have the slightest effect, that would have "done in" 99 men out of a 100.

One lot of useful knowledge the Battler had; for some time he had been Herrera's sparring partner, and was therefore fairly familiar with both his style and his strength. The man himself must have been somewhat of a character. He was of a surly disposition, making few friends. He cared for none of the ordinary rules a man would follow to take care of himself either in or out of training (if he can be said to have at any time seriously trained). Smoke he would, ever and always, and as to whisky, he had at all times a bottle handy for a "swig" when he fancied it.

The fight was arranged to take place upon a specially erected stage on the flats of Butte on Labour Day, 1904. It was one of those affairs in which everybody concerned has the biggest possible share of worry doled out to them by the official powers that be. First they would not have the fight, then they would, and then they would not. Finally they

did, but not before promoters and fighters had been kept well on the tenterhooks and their life made a misery to them.

On the men entering the ring Herrera was the favourite with the crowd. He was the better known to them and from the number of times he had fought at Butte he had come to be considered by the fighting fans a local product. Battler got a certain amount of applause, but it was only just enough to prevent him feeling he had had none.

Facing each other the men fought cautiously and honours were pretty easy until the 4th round, then Battler got the surprise of his life. Backing away with his head down from a clinch, Herrera swung a short swing which got fairly home on the top of Nelson's head. It was like a blow from a sledge hammer and sent the unhappy Bat a complete somersault, his head being the first to reach the mat.

Aurelio thought he had his man done and stood ready to put the finishing touch to his work, but the Battler, taking a few seconds of the count, got to his feet. Herrera was after him hot foot, swinging again and again in his efforts to finish Battler and became himself almost dazed with astonishment on finding Nelson was getting over the punch.

The round wound up by the Battler getting home one or two kidney punches that made Herrera hang on.

Nelson did all he knew, but do as he would he could not put Aurelio down. Towards the end he scored and scored until when the verdict in his favour was given him, it was accepted as just, even by the biased mob by whom he was surrounded.

In addition to its financial advantages this fight put him in the straight track for the Championship, and it also brought him in contact with one of the very smartest of the fighting division then in the lime-light, Jimmy Britt.

Jimmy is a living embodiment of the old Highland phrase "a pretty man." The Scottish Highlanders use the expression to denote one who can keep his end up at any game he takes a hand in, and James was one of that sort. Hard grit right through and clever at the fighting game he was a very Lord Chesterfield in private life and dressed like a modern Beau Brummell.

It is to be feared that his Hildebrand Montrose style rather galled some of his contemporaries, and it would seem even the all conquering Battler had a slight spice of envy where Jimmy Britt was concerned, for he always spoke and wrote of him in a flowery way that suggested just a touch of the green-eyed monster, usually conferring on him the courtesy title of Sir James Edward Britt, etc.

Britt being now Champion, Battler made overtures for a match, but Jimmy suggested he considered it a necessary preliminary that Nelson should first beat Young Corbett, and eventually a match was fixed up

between them to take place in Woodward Pavilion, San Francisco, on November 29th.

The contest came off and is worth telling, if only for the rattling fire of chaff that Corbett let off while it was in progress. For the first four rounds Corbett made the points. At last the Battler got his eye right on his weak spot—his wind—and began to play on it for all he was worth. But Corbett's chaff riled Battler and a riled fighter is dangerous—to himself. "Whoever told you you could fight?" bantered Corbett. "Why you're a joke." After a smart punch the Battler got on his jaw, Corbett sneered, "I thought you were a hitter; you wouldn't put a dent to a Charlotte Russe."

Then later he stirred the Battler with a jeering enquiry as to the name of the town he came from. Bat got wild and nearly had a punch that was sent straight for his head, but dodging it he pulled himself together and got his temper in hand.

Although the fight was going against him Young Corbett continued to hand out his chaff, assuring Nelson he had an awful cheek to be trying fighting for a living, and advising him to try and get a job as a "hash slinger."

In the tenth round, however, he got a couple of severe blows in the wind that stopped his talk and the fight, his seconds having to carry him to his corner knocked out.

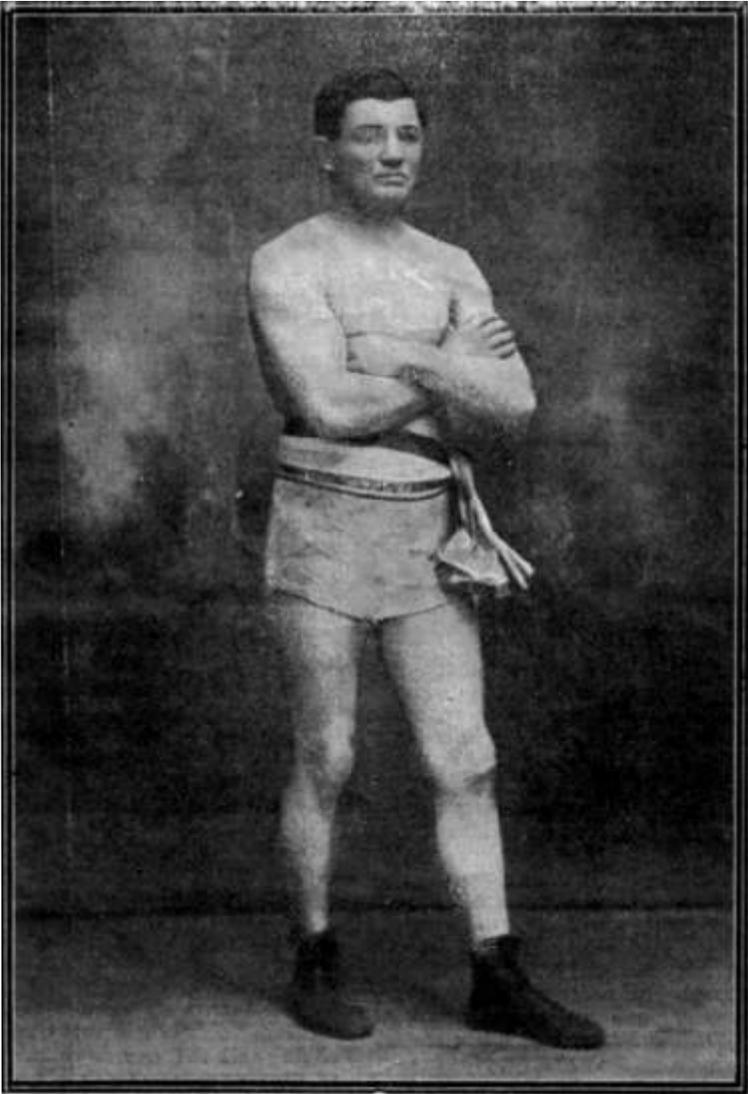
On the following February he met Corbett again in the same place. The result was the same, with this exception—it only went nine rounds. Though this other difference may also be noticed that in the fourth round Young Corbett broke one of the Battler's ribs.

### **He Fights Jimmy Britt for the Championship.**

"Aside of my natural ambition to win the lightweight Championship, one of the strongest reasons I had for my desire to lick Sir James Edward Britt was because he wore a high hat and a Prince Albert coat." So writes Oscar Mathew Battling Nelson himself. Shakespeare must have had a case like this in his eye when he wrote "Beware of Jealousy that green-eyed monster."

The Battler had got his will, and fixed up with Britt, but it was like a good many other things in this world where men find that the getting their own way does not give them the joy they had looked.

In the first place, as the result of the fight, the referee's decision was against Oscar Mathew. His disgust, however, at what he considered a disgraceful injustice was somewhat softened by seeing a cheque for 5,600 dollars handed over to his manager. The receipt of nearly twelve



**CYCLONE JOHNNY THOMPSON**

hundred pounds in good honest greenbacks is a thing to stop a considerable amount of grief and pain, and the Battler felt eased accordingly. But with the money came other sources of anxiety. His manager had always been a somewhat difficult man to get a settlement with, but on this occasion he was very prompt. Without the saddening formality of a lingering farewell, he departed for his home leaving behind for Bat, a matter of £20.

The Battler, however, was not disposed to settle the matter on these terms, viz., that he should have £20 and his manager some eleven hundred and fifty, so he dispatched a policeman to invite the manager back, and on his return they squared up and, need it be said, parted—to meet no more—at any rate, not on a business footing.

The broken rib he had got in his second fight with young Corbett necessitated the Battler laying up and taking medical attention. The doctor suggested he should go to the mountains and hunt for a month. The advice was taken, and on his return he fixed up with Britt for their second meeting.

In the meantime a number of very tempting offers were made to him to go east, and finally he fixed up to meet Abe Attell in a six-round contest at Philadelphia. Philadelphia is one of the towns where decisions are barred—from being made public. The battle had the usual result, and Bat, received 1,500 dollars as his end of the purse.

### **A Sample of Ring Scum.**

If the secret history of any class of business was given to the world it would, it is to be feared, show tricks and meanness that would make decent people blush for their fellow creatures. The following contest shows that however free the great number of contests may be from any element that a good sportsman would despise, yet there are times when things are done that entitle those who do them to a visit from Judge Lynch.

Early in 1905 Nelson was matched for a six round contest with Kid Sullivan, the fight to take place at a Baltimore Club.

The arrangement was that the fight was to be considered a draw if both the fighters were on their feet at the end of the bout.

The end of the purse in any event to accrue to the Battler was 1,000 dollars, and like a good general he made sure of it before he entered the ring.

The first three rounds were all in Bat's favour, and it looked as if Kid Sullivan would get put out. This would not suit the game of the division running the Kid, so his seconds began their dirty work. They smeared some drug on his gloves hoping that it would get into the Battler's eyes and daze him.

During the fourth round Sullivan did a walking tour, keeping away so well that he was not touched nor did he touch, but in the next he managed to get his glove home on Bat's face with the result that the Battler was nearly blinded. Despite his condition, however, he managed to keep going, though in such a blinded state that he hit the referee thinking he was Sullivan.

An effort was made after the fight to get hold of the gloves, but it was unsuccessful and Nelson had to be content with the thought that he got his 1,000 dollars which he might not have done if he had left it until after the fight.

### **The Battler as a Stage Attraction.**

Soon after his last battle Nelson was invited to show himself at a Boston Theatre, then under the management of H. Farren, and for so doing the sum of 700 dollars was offered him for two days.

Bat was all mad to take it, but was somewhat held back by what has frightened many a better man—the fact that he would have to make a speech to the audience. He would have fought any individual member of the crowd, big or little, with the greatest of pleasure—but to talk to them collectively; ugh! it shook even his iron nerve. Nevertheless, it was not to be endured that 700 dollars were to be thrown away without an effort, so Bat signed on, duly appeared and did not speak. He made two terrific tries—failed to punch the words out—and dried up. It mattered not, however, the people were pleased to see him and flocked to do so in such numbers that the manager also was pleased and it is even to be supposed that the Battler was pleased, as he had set up a new record as the only American fighter that had not a word to say for himself.

Following this lucrative silence as the time was fast approaching for his return match with Britt, he started for California to concrete it.

This took some doing. Britt's people raised much trouble about terms; these, however, were eventually arranged, and on September 9th, 1905, his

## Second Fight with Britt

took place at Colma, California. Great had been the difficulties of getting things fixed up and matters even at the ring side, were anything but straightened out. It took two weary hours to finally decide who should be referee. Eventually Eddie Graney was chosen. The fight itself was a grand one, Bat top scorer most of the time, but Jimmy Britt showed himself a fighter of such gameness as even to wring a testimony from his by no means amicably disposed opponent.

The eighteenth, which was the last and decisive round was thus described by the Associated press:—

“Round 18. When the gong tapped Nelson sprang out of his corner like a tiger and beat Britt to the centre of the ring by seconds. He received Jimmy with a straight left which landed on Britts nose. The latter was staggered by the blow and immediately resumed his tactics of breaking ground in a wild endeavour to get away from the now infuriated Dane’s terrible rushes. Britt began to swing wildly with both bands, casting all science to the winds. With the Battler close upon him now, the “pride of the coast” closed in a clinch. He hung on in sheer desperation, working both arms furiously. Nelson, the king of all infighters, battered the Frisco lad with deadening body blows, and when Referee Eddie Graney parted them, Britt was hanging on the Dane’s shoulders all in. He would have fallen to the floor then but for his opponent’s kindness in holding him up. They had hardly been separated when Britt again rushed into a safety clinch. Again the terrific in-fighting went on with the Battler doing most of the punching.

“The 10,000 fight fans there assembled were on their feet cheering and howling for their “pride—Sir James” to knock his man out. Poor Jimmy, he was thanking his stars the rules of the game here permitted his running into “harbour” at every opportunity in order to save himself. Around the ring battled the two wonderful little athletes, punching and clinching, and it was slug, slug, slug! At times they stood head to head and huffed and banged each other to what seemed the very limit of human endurance. The pace set by the wonderful pair in this now historical round was, so all the experts who were gathered about the ring agreed, the hardest fought and most terrible one round ever fought in the history of the ring.

“There was the little youth from Hegewisch, thousands of miles from home, fighting before thousands of frantic fight fans, only a few of whom were friendly disposed towards him. Previously he had defeated Canole, Hanlon, Herrera, and Young Corbett—four of the most po-

pular and toughest fighters on the Coast. Besides, he had on December 20th, 1904, given this same Champion Britt a most beautiful twenty round beating, but was robbed of the decision by Billy Roach. No wonder the 'native sons' were frantic during this great round of fighting. The Battler did not want any hairline decisions. He went in to knock Britt out or get his own 'cotton top' badly singed.

"The round was hardly half over when Britt cut loose a wild swing which struck the Battler flush on the wind. It was a clean blow, that would have finished any ordinary fighter. Not so with the Battler. The blow served to incite him to a higher pitch and he let fly a right hook which caught the incoming Britt hard on the solar plexus.

"There was a sudden cessation of wild yelling from the mob. Britt was seen to straighten up momentarily, throw up both arms, then he toppled over prone upon his back cold and unconscious, in which condition he lay several minutes."

Though hammered into complete helplessness. Britt in his vain attempts to arise exhibited a spirit of gameness which won the admiration of every one there assembled.

Nelson in addition to the Championship won by this fight no less a sum than 18,841 dollars, or more than £3,700. The total gate receipts were 48,306 dollars, nearly £10,000.

Another financial aspect of the matter was that Nelson had to pay his manager 35 per cent, of his share.

Verily the land of the Stars and Stripes has other big things in it besides Niagara.

This great battle made him a personage in the public eye, consequently the Variety Hall managers promptly secured him as an attraction, and he made a successful tour from which he netted a further 21,000 dollars.

Following this came his match with Terry McGovern. Nelson had long wanted to meet him in trial by battle, for McGovern held the very highest reputation both for style and endurance. They met at the National Athletic Club and drew an enormous house something like 23,000 dollars. The articles were for a six round contest. The men to weigh at the ringside at 133lb. No better idea of the sportsmanlike (?) feeling that actuates the American ring can be conceived than a plain, unvarnished account of this battle.

The night was cold. McGovern is a highly strung man and somewhat easily riled, consequently any unnecessary messing about before beginning would be sure to try his nerves, and generally upset and han-

dicap him.

Bat put on his bandages with the most exasperating deliberation. Having worked this until he had Terry in a mad fidget he then had an accident to his shoe lace (duly prepared for) which took up further time and added to McGovern's nervous strain. McGovern put his coat on and walked over to the Battler's corner to enquire as to the delay, but, of course, only met with a jeering response. Then his seconds asked questions, but the result was the same and they had to go back to their corner and try to smooth the ruffled feathers of their man. Those who remember the Burns-Moir fight at the National Sporting Club, London, will remember Burns played the same game that night, a game that went a long way towards spoiling any chance of winning Moir may ever have had.

At length the "boys" began to think the fooling had gone far enough and began shouting "Fight; fight."

The worrying told its tale. Terry, a big bundle of nerves, when the gong sounded was utterly unable to do justice to himself, and although he put up a fine fight and was on his feet battling for all he was worth when the bell sounded the end of the sixth round it was not the true fighting form of McGovern that had been displayed.

It is not much use moralising on such tactics, but it may be perhaps permissible to remark that while a chivalrous treatment of an opponent does much to elevate the ring, sharp practice lowers and injures it in the opinion of true sportsmen.

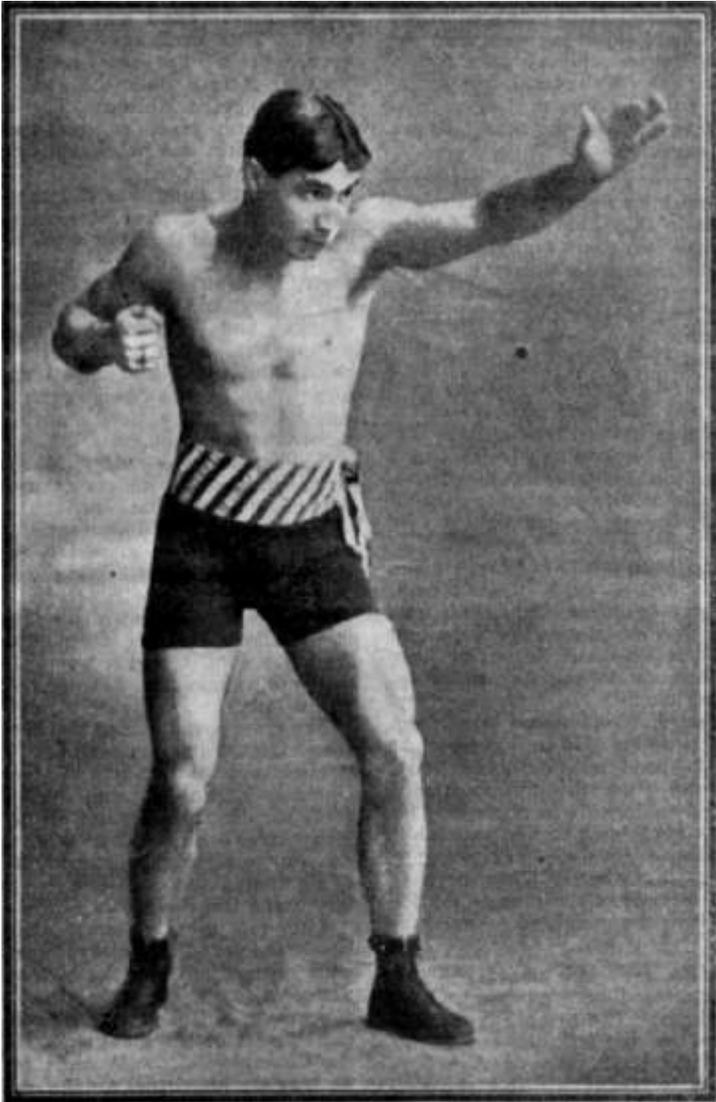
For some time Joe Gans, the admitted coloured light weight champion, had been anxious to fix up with the Battler, but the latter, for good and sufficient reasons that had nothing to do with Gans's skill as a fighter, had ignored Joe and declined to be associated with him in any way.

At length the sporting press took the matter up and insisted that it was up against Nelson to fight Gans.

This newspaper pressure was so much to the purpose that Bat felt there was nothing for him to do but to fall in with its suggestion and match himself with the black wonder, and it may be surmised that the decision was one which he rejoiced to have forced upon him.

Immediately he had decided to make a match with Gans came the opportunity to do so, the Tex Rickard Goldfield Athletic Club, of Goldfield, Nevada, offering to put up the sum of 30,000 dollars (£6,000) to secure the test.

Few fights have created a greater interest than this did, not only in America, but throughout the sporting world. The hugeness of the sum



**AURELIO HERRERA**

paid to the men no doubt had something to do with this, but the fact that it was white against black had more. And not ordinary white and black either, but the very cream of each colour at the sport, each with a reputation in himself to make any contest in which he was engaged an object of the greatest interest.

The articles under which they fought were as follows:—

This agreement, made and entered into this 11th day of August, A.D. 1906, by and between the Goldfield Athletic Club, party of the first part, and Joseph Gans and Battling Nelson, the parties of the second part, witnesseth:

That for and in consideration of the sum of One Dollar (\$1) to each of the parties in hand paid by the other parties, the receipt of which is hereby mutually and severally acknowledged, the parties hereto agree as follows:

The first party agrees to give to the second party a purse of Thirty Thousand Dollars (\$30,000), for a glove contest to a finish to be held in the town of Goldfield, County of Esmeralda, State of Nevada, September 3, 1906, at the hour of three (3) o'clock p.m., said purse to be divided between the second parties upon the basis of Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000) to the said Battling Nelson and Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000) to the said Joseph Gans, win or lose, said Athletic Club, at its own expense, further agrees to provide a suitable arena, advertising matter, etc., for the proper and efficient handling of the patrons of said contest.

Said second parties agree to accept the division of the purse as above, and to enter into said contest with the club, and to do all things required of them by the State of Nevada, in regard to "Glove Contests" upon the following terms and conditions:

First.—Marquis of Queensbury rules to govern the contest; five (5) ounce gloves.

Second.—Second parties are to weigh one hundred, thirty-three (133) pounds, both parties to "weigh in" at 12 noon 1.30 and 3 o'clock p.m. on the day of the fight, and to weigh not more than one hundred, thirty-three (133) pounds at any of the times above stated; the last "weighing in" to be at the arena; first two "weighings in" to be at Convenient places designated by the club.

Third.—Soft bandages allowed; referee to decide as to sufficiency.

Fourth.—Orders by referee to break to be given by word of mouth only.

Fifth.—After a fighter has knocked down his opponent he may retire to his corner.



**TERRY McGOVERN**

Sixth.—Each contestant has a right at any time during the contest to have a representative inspect the gloves or other apparatus used by his opponent, such inspection to be had only during the intervals of the call of “time” and in no wise to interfere with the proper handling of each contestant by his seconds.

Seventh.—The referee shall be furnished by the club.

Eighth.—The San Francisco Call to be official stakeholder.

The first party and each of the second parties hereto agree for the faithful performance of the covenants and conditions of this agreement to deposit in the John S. Cook and Co. bank, in Goldfield, Nevada, the sum of Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000) each in case the first party causes a forfeiture, said sum of Five Thousand Dollars (5, 000) is to be divided between the second parties; in case either of the second parties causes a forfeiture of this contract, his deposit of Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000) is to be divided equally between the first party and the other second party.

In witness whereof, the said first party has caused these presents to be executed by its President and attested by its Secretary, and the second parties have hereunto set their hands and seals the day and year in this agreement first above written.

Goldfield Athletic Club.

By G. K. Rickard, its President.

Battling Nelson (Seal).

Joe Gans (Seal).

By W. S. Elliott, its Secretary.

Signed, Sealed and Delivered in presence of Milton M. Detch.

### **The Fight.**

The contest was held in a specially prepared arena which had been erected at a cost of some £3,000 (15,000 dollars).

It began at 3.20 in the afternoon. Gans was favourite at the commencement. At the end of the third round when Nelson went to his corner he told his seconds he thought he had Gans settled and could knock him out whenever he wanted to.

He was mistaken, however. Gans took it easy and fiddled Bat about until he had got over a severe liver punch Nelson had got home in the third round, took the lead from the sixth round and was leading at the eighteenth.

From this Nelson again did better and at the twentieth round so improved was his position that he became the favourite in the betting, to being laid on him to win.

From the 20th to the 42nd round Gans fought a losing battle and it was only by his ring craft and gameness that he managed to keep his end up at all. The light was now failing and it began to be doubtful if many more rounds could be fought. Gans was getting very had, vomiting every time he went to his corner.

Bat directly the round began dashed in to try for the knock-out blow, and at last he drove a left hand punch hard on the liver. Down went Gans. The referee commenced to count when up jumped Joe's seconds shouting "Foul! Foul! The referee stopped counting, made a long pause, then gave the victory to Gans on a foul.

It is to be hoped the 23,000 dollars Bat, received consoled him, for it must be confessed that hard measure was meted out to him in this fight.

The unsatisfactory nature of the finish with Joe Gans naturally made the Battler anxious for another meeting; this, however, for the present, was unattainable. Gans, to put it graphically, "wasn't having any." But what Joseph would not have Jimmy was anxious for, so another trial of strength and skill was arranged between Nelson and Jimmy Britt.

They signed articles for a twenty round contest at the Auditorium Pavilion, San Francisco. Their weight to be 133 lbs. at 6 p.m. on the day of the fight.

The fight went the whole twenty rounds, Britt being declared the victor at the finish, although at one time the betting had been on Nelson to the extent that Britt would not last ten rounds.

Nelson declares that his defeat was solely owing to a hit of injudicious gormandizing he had been guilty of just before he entered the ring.

Immediately after the weighing at 6 o'clock he accompanied some friends to have the square meal usual after weighing and before fighting. The waiter miscalculating the number of steaks required for the party brought one over. Bat could not bear to see a good thing wasted, so he found room in his kitchen for the greater part of the extra steak, with disastrous results for himself. Britt in his first round found his way to that overloaded "kitchen" with one of the upper cut punches that are his speciality. It gruelled the Battler so terribly that nothing but his grit enabled him to keep going and there is little doubt that had "Gentleman James" been a little mote enterprising he would have succeeded in putting Bat out. As, however, he succeeded in getting the verdict at the finish he no doubt feels there is nothing to grumble at.

Terrible a blow as this defeat was, it proved a blessing in disguise, for tempted by the seeming falling off in the Battlers quality, Joe Gans began to listen to the overtures that were made him for another match, although it was not fated to come off just then, in fact, before it did concrete in a twitch the Battler went and defeated Jack Clifford, also Rudolph Unholz, about which fighting there was considerable discussion as to whether it ought to be entered as a boxing contest or a “go as you please” series of sprint races.

Then came a ten round go with Jimmy Britt which ended in a draw, the craft of the genteel Jimmy frustrating all the efforts of the Battler to get home one of his well-known rest producers. This was followed by a fifteen round go with Abe Attel of the “no decision” kind.

### **The Second Gans Fight.**

At the sound of the gong the men sprang to the centre of the ring. Gans got home at once on Bat’s nose with his left. He repeated this once or twice. Gans’s blows seemed at this point to lack steam, as they by no means seemed to trouble the Battler, who kept forcing matters and making Joe travel some. Gans managed to get home a smart upper cut with the right to which Nelson replied with a couple of smart drives to the head. He wound up the round by just missing a right and getting a left to the head. Gans’s mouth was bleeding.

In the second round Gans got home some punishing rights and lefts to the head, while Bat jabbed his left home at the head four times running, getting a straight right bang on the nose and another on the jaw as a reward. Gans was inclined to play the saving game by hanging on.

The third round found Nelson sharply on the aggressive. Gans tried to stop him with hard punches to the head and a severe punch over the heart, and followed this up with a hard right and left. Nelson was now bleeding at the mouth, but nothing could stop Bat, though just at this time he slipped to his knees and caught a hot one directly he got to his feet. The crowd seemed to think it was a foul, but the referee ordered the fight to continue. Towards the end of the round Gans slacked up and Nelson bucking in had him on the ropes receiving severe punishment.

The fourth round found Gans fresh and full of fight. He let out his right first to the head and then to the body. The referee about this time cautioned Bat for pressing his head down. He landed a hard hook to the body while Gans slipped in three heavy rights, one after the other. They

were so busy at the end of the round that Joe did not hear the gong and propped the Battler after it had rung.

The fifth and sixth rounds call for no comment. The men fought hard for the body. The seventh round was certainly the Battler's, he cut Gans's eye and the public showed their idea of things by rising up and cheering for Bat at the end of the round.

The eighth round was full of lively exchanges, first Joe and then Bat, getting a bit the best of it. At the finish, however, Bat got home a swinging overhand right to Joe's head that made him wince.

The ninth round was not remarkable. The exchanges were fairly even, but in the tenth round Gans went at it in a do-or-die style, and fairly staggered Nelson. The effort, however, was made at great expense to his vitality and he slowed up after seemingly very tired.

The tenth round was Nelson's, and from this time onward he fought as if he knew he held the issue in the hollow of his hand. In one round (the twelfth) he fairly rushed to the centre of the ring, and after some smart exchanges had Joe down for the count with a hard body punch. He took nearly the limit, and no sooner was he up than he was down again. This was followed by a third knock down before the round ended.

The thirteenth round was all against Gans, though in the fourteenth he bucked up somewhat, but the round was the Battler's all the same. The fifteenth saw the coloured lad make a game struggle of it, trying ducking and the old tricks of which he was a master, but it was all in vain, his doom, like a coming event, cast its shadow before it, and it was palpable to the onlookers that, bar accident, he would lose.

The gong saved him in the sixteenth round from being counted out.

The seventeenth round was the last. Game as a pebble, Gans stuck to it. Once they were nearly out of the ring altogether, and finally, after being down twice for counts of eight, Joe was again floored and unable to rise before the fatal "Out" was said.

After the fight it appears that earlier in the round the coloured man had been counted out, but the fact was unnoticed owing to the row and shouting.

Battling Nelson had now achieved the summit of his ambition. He was the Champion of the World. Of him we may say his virtues are his own, his faults—if he has any—are those of the atmosphere 'midst which he lives.



**AD WOLGAST**

## The Record of Battling Nelson.

*Born June 5, 1882, Copenhagen, Denmark, height 5 ft 7 1/2 in.*

### 1896:

sep. 3. Wallace's Unknown KO-1 Hammond, IN

### 1897:

jun. 5. Ole Oleson W-3 Hegewisch, IL

### 1898:

may 10. Freddie Green KO-7 Sioux Falls, SD

may 11. Soldier Williams KO-3 Sioux Falls, SD

### 1899:

jan. 1. Eddie Herman D-6 Hegewisch, IL

apr. 6. Eddie Penny KO-1 Chicago, IL

may 3. Bull Winters KO-1 Chicago, IL

jun. 1. John Smith KO-2 Chicago, IL

### 1900:

jul. 4. Feathers Vernon ND-6 West Pullman, IL

aug. 30. Charles Dougherty KO-1 Chicago, IL

sep. 14. Joe Headmark L-6 Chicago, IL

sep. 21. Harry Griffin W-6 Chicago, IL

oct. 8. Young Bay W-6 Chicago, IL

nov. 2. Clarence Class D-6 Chicago, IL

nov. 12. Jack Readle EXH-3 Chicago, IL

nov. 12. Joe Curtain EXH-3 Chicago, IL

nov. 15. Black Griffo KO-3 Chicago, IL

nov. 22. Ed Burley KO-5 Chicago, IL

dec. 1. Pete Boyle LF-4 Chicago, IL

dec. 1. Danny McMahon D-4 Chicago, IL

dec. 7. Joe Percente WF-2 Chicago, IL

dec. 8. Jack Martin W-6 Chicago, IL

### 1901:

mar. 17. Black Griffo KO-3 Chicago, IL

apr. 19. Mickey Riley L-6 Milwaukee, WI

may 3. Charles Berry D-6 Milwaukee, WI

may 18. Harry Fails ND-6 Omro, WI

may 24. Harry Fails D-10 Rhinelander, WI

nov. 10. Billy Heck ND-4 West Pullman, IL

nov. 15. Joe Percente L-6 Milwaukee, WI

nov. 29. Eddie Santry L-6 Chicago, IL

dec. 2. Joe Percente D-6 Milwaukee, WI

dec. 16. Mike Walsh KO-5 Chicago, IL

dec. 17. Charles Berry L-6 Milwaukee, WI

**1902:**

jan. 13. Frank Colifer KO-5 West Pulman, IL  
jan. 21. Charles Berry L-8 Fond du Lac, WI  
mar. 13. Joe Percente W-8 Oshkosh, WI  
mar. 18. Kid Ryan KO-5 Chicago, IL  
mar. 21. Johnny Thompson W-6 Chicago, IL  
apr. 5. William Rossler KO-1 Harvey, IL  
apr. 12. Danny McMahon D-6 West Pullman, IL  
may 17. Pudden Burns W-6 Hegewisch, IL  
jun. 14. Billy Hurley D-6 Hammond, IN  
dec. 2. Elmer Mayfield W-10 Hot Springs, AR  
dec. 26. Christy Williams KO-17 Hot Springs, AR

**1903:**

jan. 3. George Brownfield ND-4 Hot Springs, AR  
jan. 6. Sammy Maxwell KO-10 Hot Springs, AR  
mar. 18. Adam Ryan D-20 Little Rock, AR  
apr. 5. Jack Robinson ND-6 Hot Springs, AR  
apr. 24. Johnny Thompson W-6 Milwaukee, WI  
may 22. Stocking Kelly KO-4 Milwaukee, WI  
jun. 16. Young Scotty W-8 Fond du Lac, WI  
jun. 19. Mickey Riley D-6 Milwaukee, WI  
jun. 20. Larry McDonald KO-4 Harvey, IL  
jun. 17. Clarence English D-15 Kansas City, MO  
jul. 15. Mickey Riley NC-11 Ashland, WI  
jul. 24. Mickey Riley D-15 Hurley, WI  
aug. 26. Eddie Sterns L-9 Michigan City, IN  
sep. 3. Dare Devil Tildon ND-2 Chicago, IL  
oct. 16. Charles Neary L-6 Milwaukee, WI  
nov. 10. George Memsic W-6 Milwaukee, WI  
dec. 28. Clarence English W-15 St. Joseph, MO

**1904:**

jan. 16. Art Simms KO-3 Milwaukee, WI  
feb. 5. Jack O'Neil W-6 Milwaukee, WI  
apr. 6. Joe Spider Welsh KO-16 Salt Lake City, UT  
apr. 12. Tommy Markham EXH-3 Eureka, UT  
may 20. Martin Canole KO-18 San Francisco, CA  
jul. 29. Eddie Hanlon KO-19 San Francisco, CA  
sep. 5. Aurelio Herrera W-20 Butte, MT  
nov. 29. Young Corbett KO-10 San Francisco, CA  
dec. 20. Jimmy Britt L-20 San Francisco, CA

**1905:**

feb. 28. Young Corbett KO-9 San Francisco, CA  
may 22. Abe Attell ND-6 Philadelphia, PA

jun. 2.	Kid Sullivan	D-6	Baltimore, MD
jun. 6.	Jack O'Neil	ND-6	Philadelphia, PA
sep. 9.	Jimmy Britt	KO-18	Colma, CA

**1906:**

mar. 14.	Terry McGovern	ND-6	Philadelphia, PA
aug. 13.	Willard Bean	EXH-3	Salt Lake City, UT
sep. 3.	Joe Gans	LF-42	Goldfield, NV

**1907:**

jul. 31.	Jimmy Britt	L-20	San Francisco, CA
oct. 19.	Tom Freebury	EXH-4	Red Lodge, MT
oct. 23.	Charles Berry	EXH-4	Billings, MT
oct. 26.	Mark Nelson	EXH-4	Minot, ND

**1908:**

jan. 13.	Jack Clifford	TKO-5	Ogden, UT
feb. 4.	Rudy Unholz	ND-10	Los Angeles, CA
mar. 3.	Jimmy Britt	ND-10	Los Angeles, CA
mar. 31.	Abe Attell	D-15	San Francisco, CA
may 28.	Jack Grace	EXH-3	Seattle, WA
jul. 4.	Joe Gans	KO-17	Colma, CA

## The Battler's Financial Record.

			Opponent.	Money received.	
<b>1896:</b>					
1	sep.	3.	Wallace's Unknown	1.00	(robbed)
<b>1897:</b>					
2	jun.	5.	Ole Oleson	3.00	
<b>1898:</b>					
3	may	10	Freddie Green	7.50	
4	may	11	Soldier Williams	10.00	
					\$21.50
<b>1899:</b>					
5	jan.	1.	Eddie Herman	10.00	
6	apr.	6.	Eddie Penny	10.00	
7	may	3.	Bull Winters	2.50	
8	jun.	1.	John Smith	2.50	
					\$25.00
<b>1900:</b>					
9	jul.	4.	Feathers Vernon	5.00	
10	aug.	30.	Charles Dougherty	15.00	
11	sep.	14.	Joe Headmark	15.00	
12	sep.	21.	Harry Griffin	35.00	
13	oct.	8.	Young Bay	10.00	
14	nov.	2.	Clarence Class	7.50	
15	nov.	12.	Jack Readle	benefit	
16	nov.	12.	Joe Curtain	benefit	
17	nov.	15.	Black Griffo	15.00	
18	nov.	22.	Ed Burley	10.00	
19	dec.	1.	Pete Boyle	25.00	
20	dec.	1.	Danny McMahon	5.00	
21	dec.	7.	Joe Percente	15.00	
22	dec.	8.	Jack Martin	25.00	
					\$182.50
<b>1901:</b>					
23	mar.	17.	Black Griffo	15.00	
24	apr.	19.	Mickey Riley	109.23	
25	may	3.	Charles Berry	50.00	
26	may	18.	Harry Fails	5.00	
27	may	24.	Harry Fails	150.00	

28	nov. 10.	Billy Heck	5.00
29	nov. 15.	Joe Percente	35.00
30	nov. 29.	Eddie Santry	50.00
31	dec. 2.	Joe Percente	62.50
32	dec. 16.	Mike Walsh	75.00
33	dec. 17.	Charles Berry	50.00

\$606.73

**1902:**

34	jan. 13.	Frank Colifer	50.00
35	jan. 21.	Charles Berry	75.00
36	mar. 13.	Joe Percente	125.00
37	mar. 18.	Kid Ryan	75.00
38	mar. 21.	Johnny Thompson	100.00
39	apr. 5.	William Rossler	50.00
40	apr. 12.	Danny McMahon	50.00
41	may 17.	Pudden Burns	75.00
42	jun. 14.	Billy Hurley	50.00
43	dec. 2.	Elmer Mayfield	35.00
44	dec. 26.	Christy Williams	39.50

\$724.50

**1903:**

45	jan. 3.	George Brownfield	5.00
46	jan. 6.	Sammy Maxwell	65.00
47	mar. 18.	Adam Ryan	350.00
48	apr. 5.	Jack Robinson	5.00
49	apr. 24.	Johnny Thompson	100.00
50	may 22.	Stockings Kelly	125.00
51	jun. 16.	Young Scotty	125.00
52	jun. 19.	Mickey Riley	75.00
53	jun. 20.	Larry McDonald	50.00
54	jun. 17.	Clarence English	250.00
55	jul. 15.	Mickey Riley	150.00
56	jul. 24.	Mickey Riley	150.00
57	aug. 26.	Eddie Sterns	50.00
58	sep. 3.	Dare Devil Tildon	7.50
59	oct. 16.	Charles Neary	100.00
60	nov. 10.	George Memsic	200.00
61	dec. 28.	Clarence English	500.00

\$2,307.50

**1904:**

62	jan. 16.	Art Simms	200.00
63	feb. 5.	Jack O'Neil	200.00
64	apr. 6.	Joe Spider Welsh	498.00
65	apr.12.	Tommy Markham	5.00
66	may 20.	Martin Canole	750.00

67	jul. 29.	Eddie Hanlon	1250.00	
68	sep. 5.	Aurelio Herrera	2100.00	
69	nov. 29.	Young Corbett	2700.00	
70	dec. 20.	Jimmy Britt	5600.00	
				\$13,303.00

**1905:**

71	feb. 28.	Young Corbett	3500.00	
72	may 22.	Abe Attell	1500.00	
73	jun. 2.	Kid Sullivan	1000.00	
74	jun. 6.	Jack O'Neil	750.00	
75	sep. 9.	Jimmy Britt	18841.00	
				\$25,591.00

**1906:**

76	mar. 14.	Terry McGovern	11771.50	
77	aug. 13.	Willard Bean	500.00	
78	sep. 3.	Joe Gans	23000.00	
				\$35,271.50

**1907:**

79	jul. 31.	Jimmy Britt	9400.00	
80	oct. 19.	Tom Freebury	450.00	
81	oct. 23.	Charles Berry	400.00	
82	oct. 26.	Mark Nelson	250.00	
				\$10,500.00

**1908:**

83	jan. 13.	Jack Clifford	2236.00	
84	feb. 4.	Rudy Unholz	3085.52	
85	mar. 3.	Jimmy Britt	2400.25	
86	mar. 31.	Abe Attell	2700.80	
87	may 28.	Jack Grace	showing	
88	jul. 4.	Joe Gans	10800.00	
				\$21,221.52