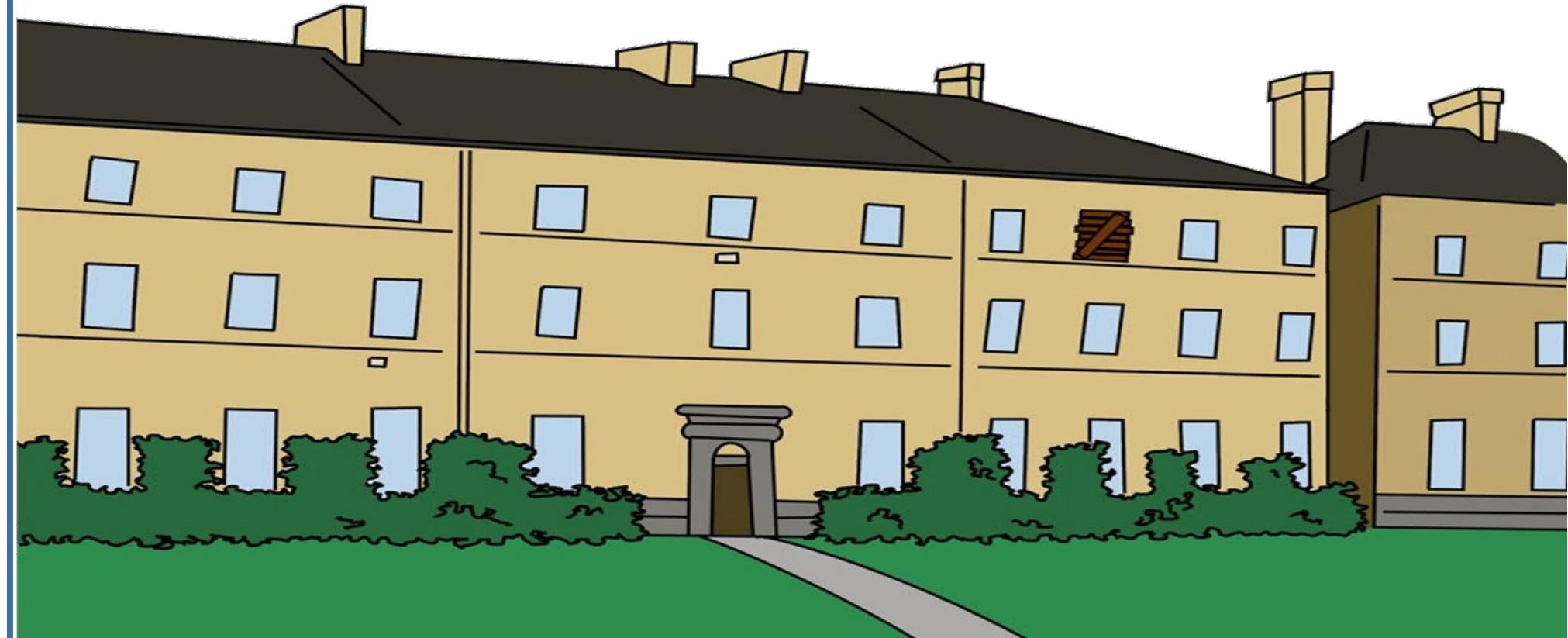


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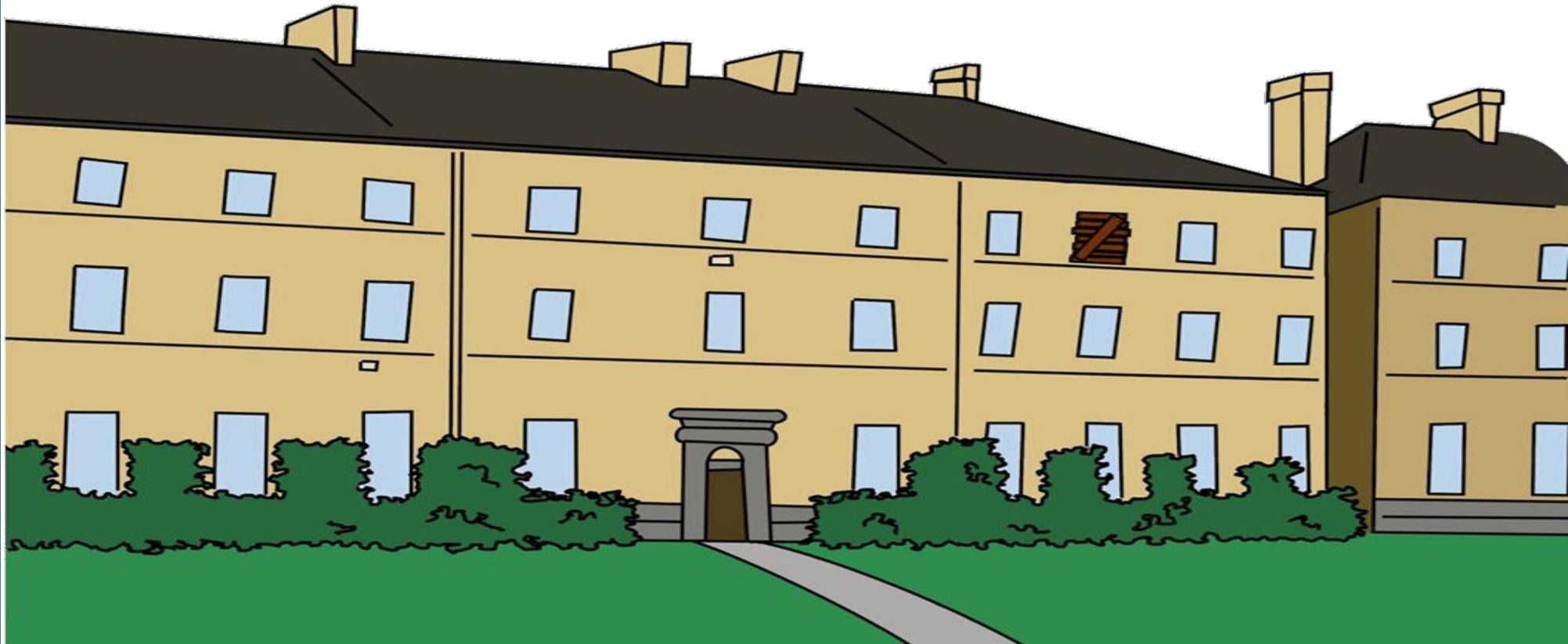
Presents

"The Life and Times in Victorian London"

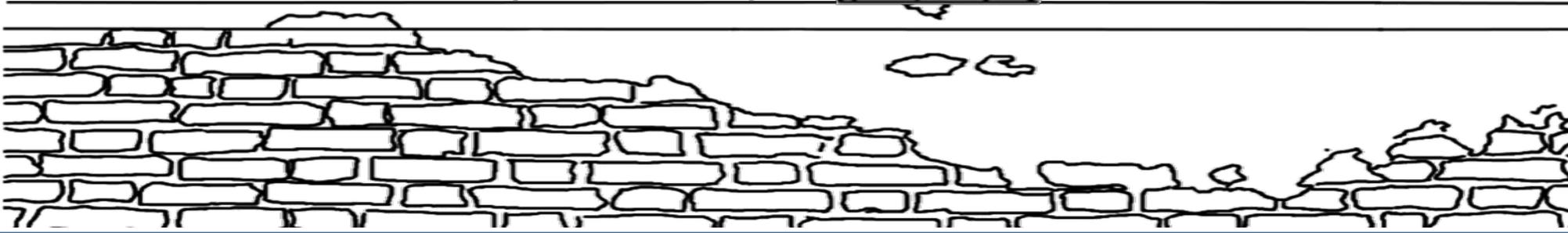


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The Life and Times in Victorian London
026 -- Put Up Your Dukes -- January, 2022



Welcome to topic # 026... Today Master Doyle and I will be looking at the Gentleman's Sport, boxing, during the Victorian period.

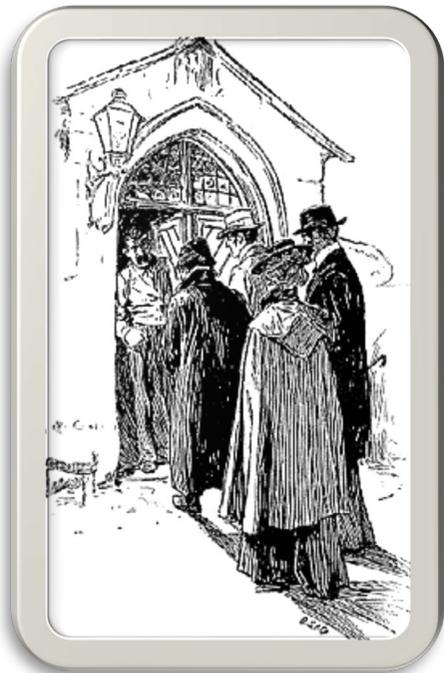


Sherlock Holmes—his limits

1. Knowledge of Literature.—Nil.
2. " " Philosophy.—Nil.
3. " " Astronomy.—Nil.
4. " " Politics.—Feeble.
5. " " Botany.—Variable.
6. Knowledge of Geology.—Practical, but limited.
7. Knowledge of Chemistry.—Profound.
8. " " Anatomy.—Accurate, but unsystematic.
9. " " Sensational Literature.—Immense.
10. Plays the violin well.
11. ***Is an expert singlestick player, boxer, and swordsman.***
12. Has a good practical knowledge of British law.

When Dr. Watson first lists my traits in A Study in Scarlet, he will note I am an expert boxer, among other athletic aptitudes.

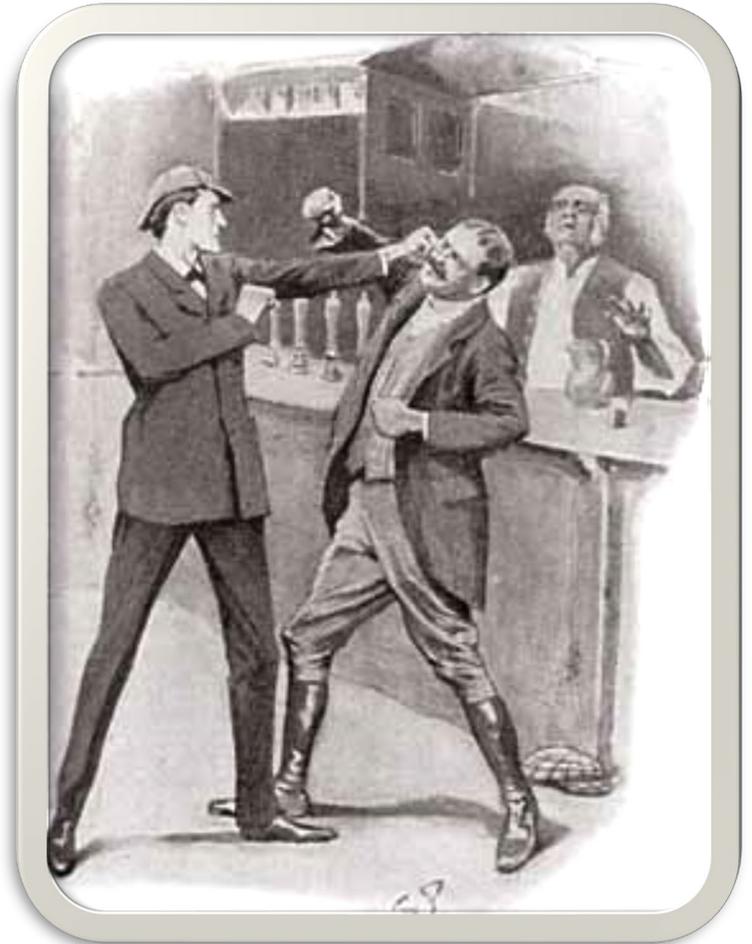




The first reference to an actual demonstration of this skill appears in The Sign of the Four when I mention my three rounds with the prizefighter McMurdo at a charity event.

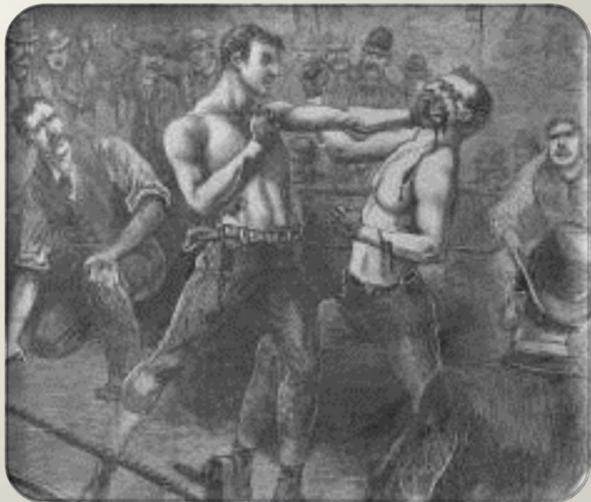


My expertise was not to be taken lightly. In "The Solitary Cyclist," I send Mr. Woodley, an opponent in a bar-room brawl, home in a cart.



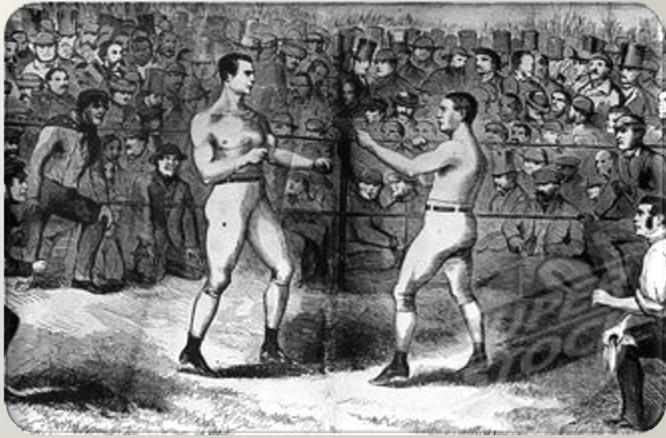
By the time I am solving cases, however, boxing's popularity in Britain was already waning.





The first recorded boxing match in England occurred in 1681, and by 1698, bouts were regularly scheduled at the Royal Theater of London.

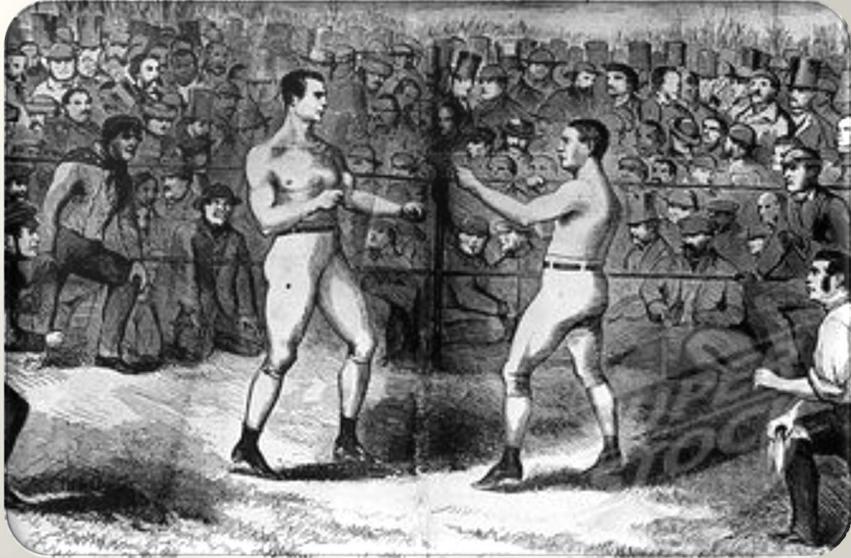




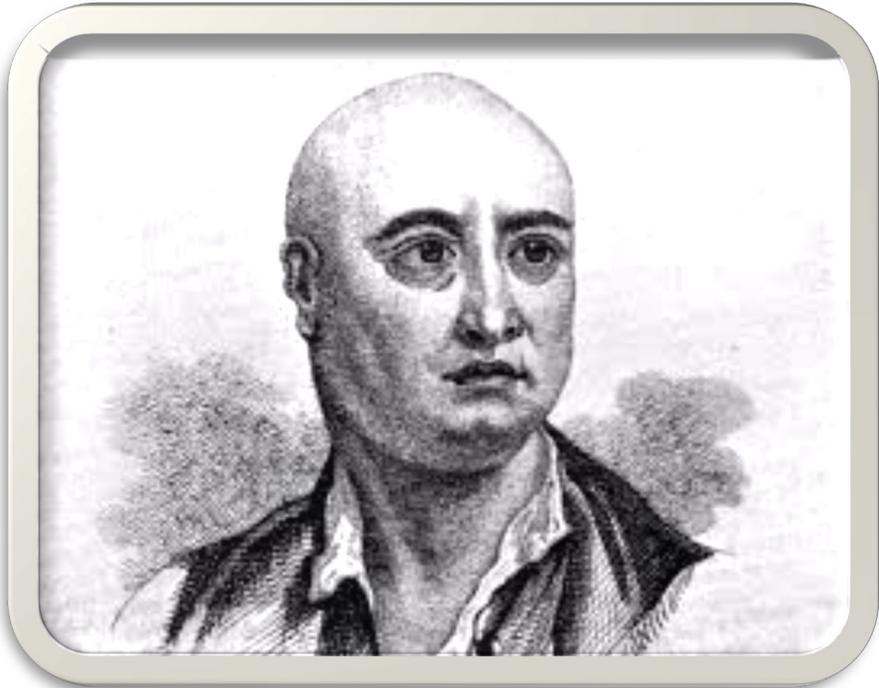
*These early matches
involved no gloves and
few, if any, rules.*



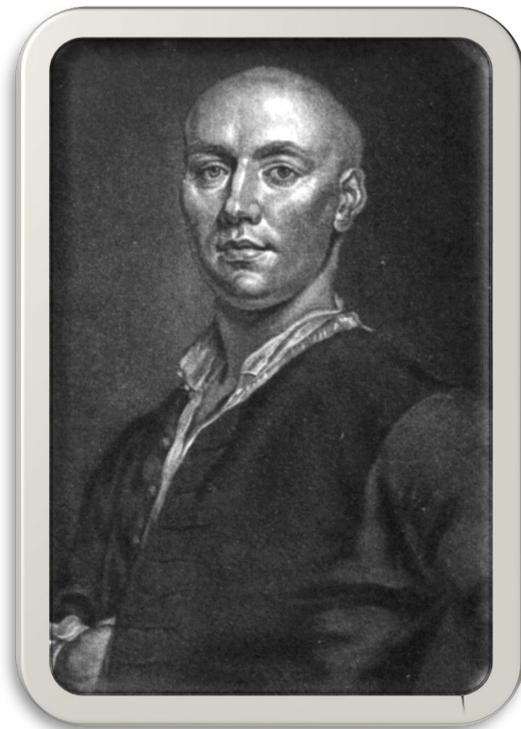
Opponents were allowed to wrestle the other to the ground and hit him when he was down.



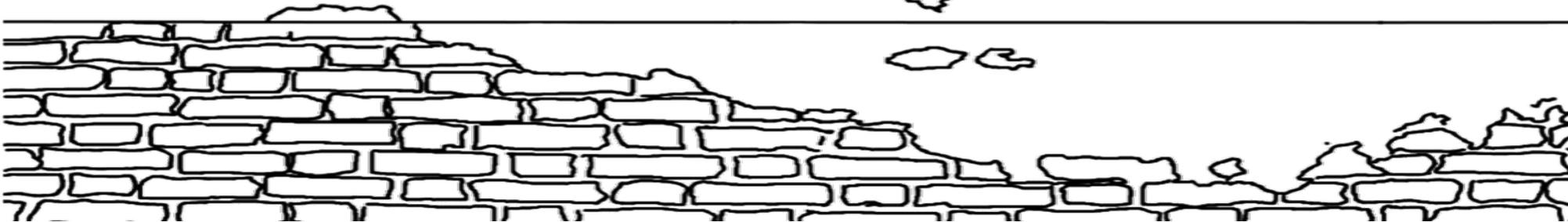
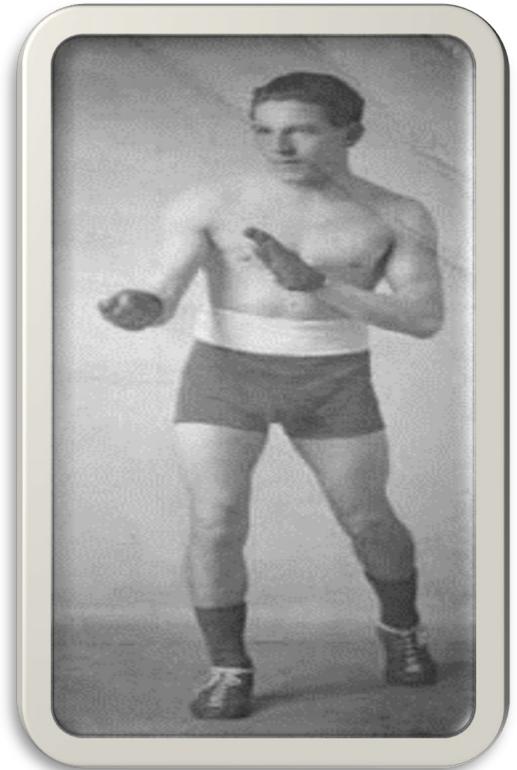
In 1719, the prizefighter James Figg captured the nation's interest and was named the world champion—a title he held for fifteen years.



One of his pupils, Jack Broughton, introduced the sport's first regulations, and for his contributions, is considered the father of boxing.



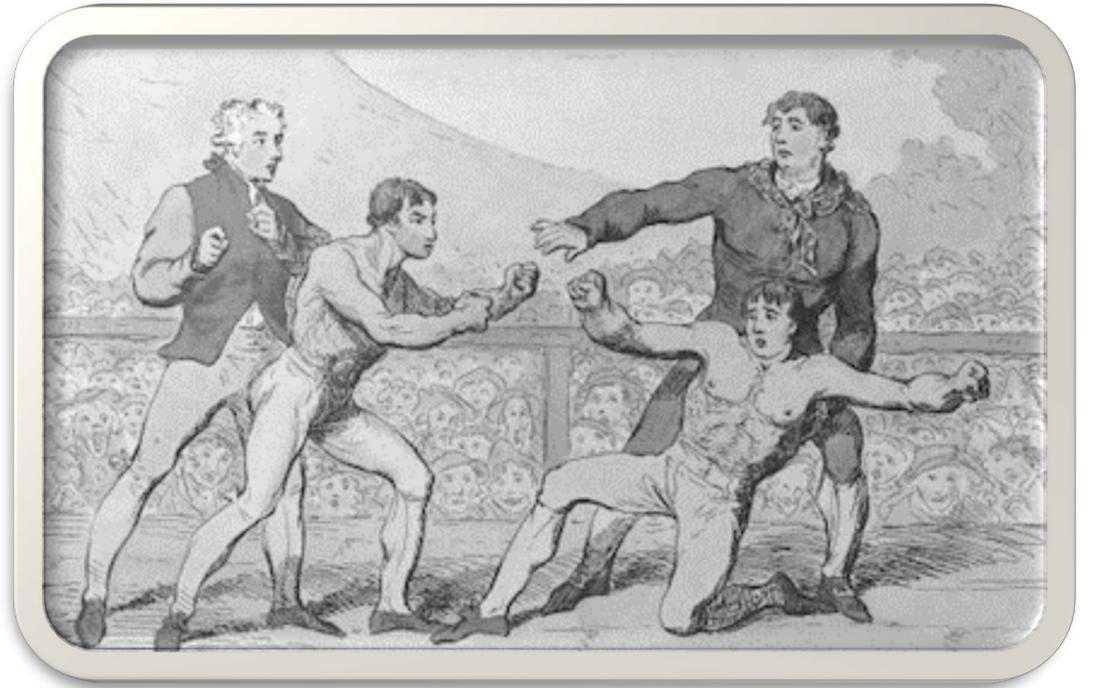
In addition to prohibiting most wrestling throws, he also introduced "mufflers," the forerunner of boxing gloves.



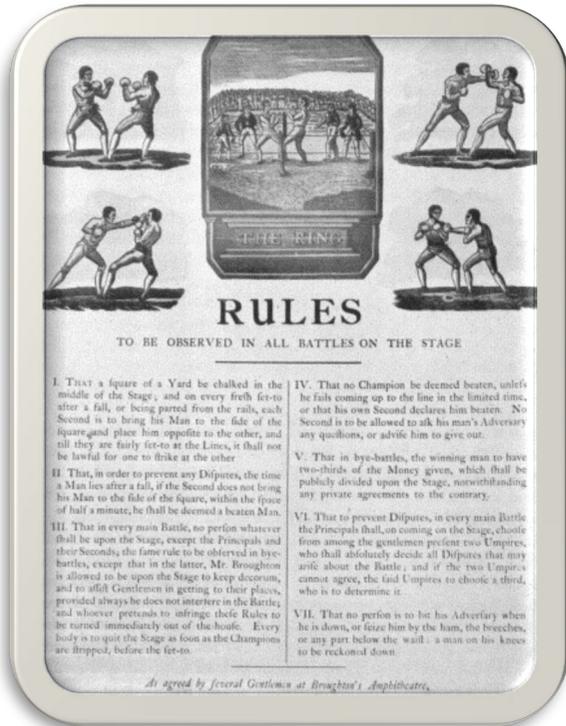
The sport attracted the aristocracy in the late 1700s when Gentleman John Jackson became the most renowned prizefighter after defeating Daniel Mendoza.

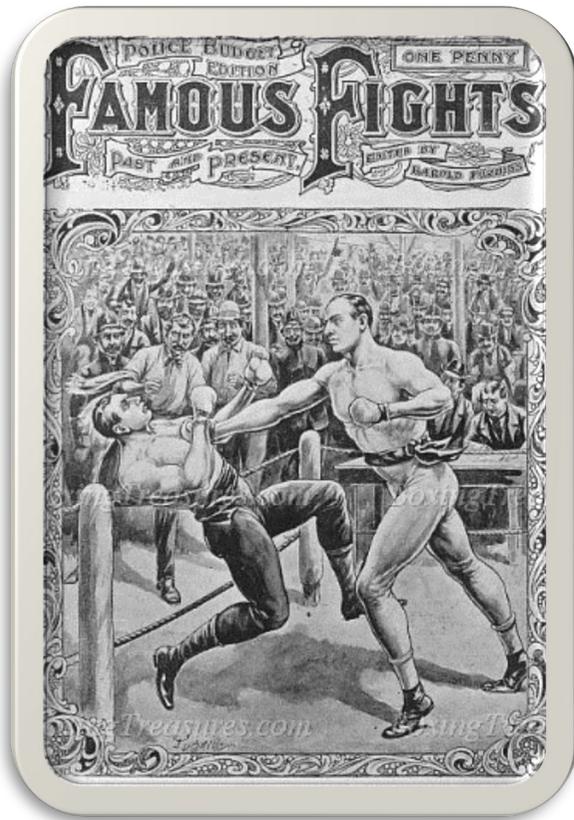


*Once involved, those in the upper classes
financed various fighters and arranged
and ran the matches—preferring the
bare-knuckle style to the “muffled” one.*



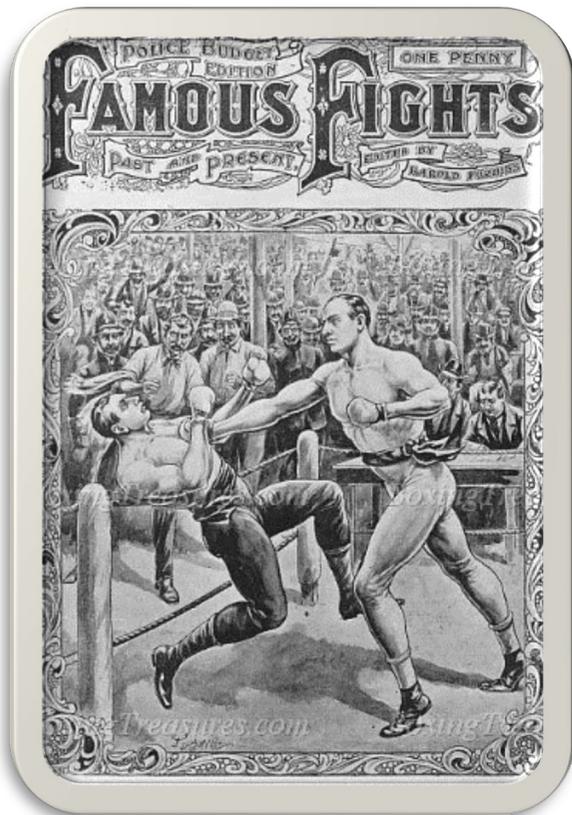
New rules were introduced in 1838, designating the size and shape of the ring, setting out the length of the rounds, and outlawing practices like eye-gouging.





Betting on the outcome had been and continued to be a major draw for fans, with the fighters' prize money...

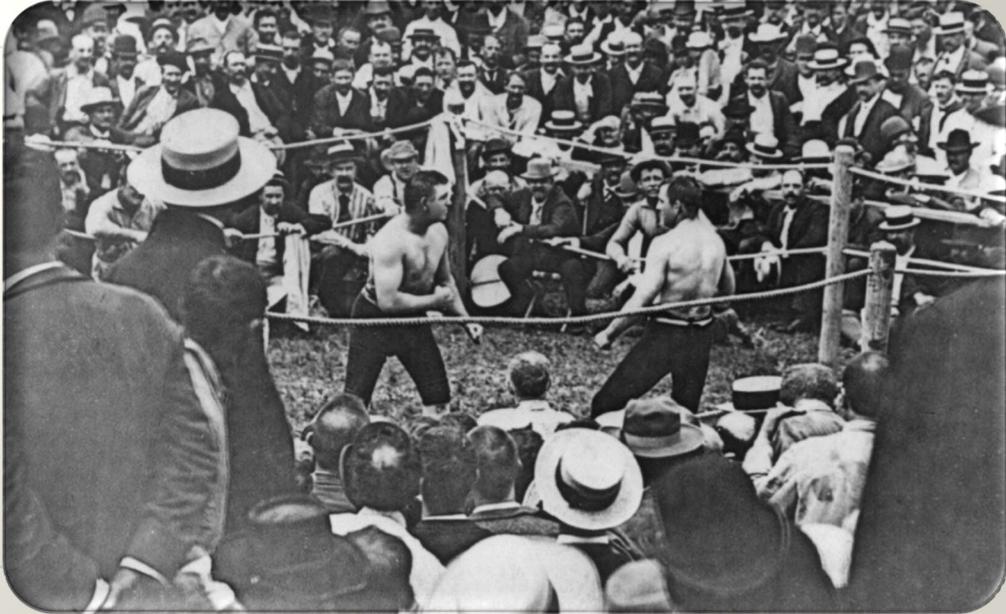


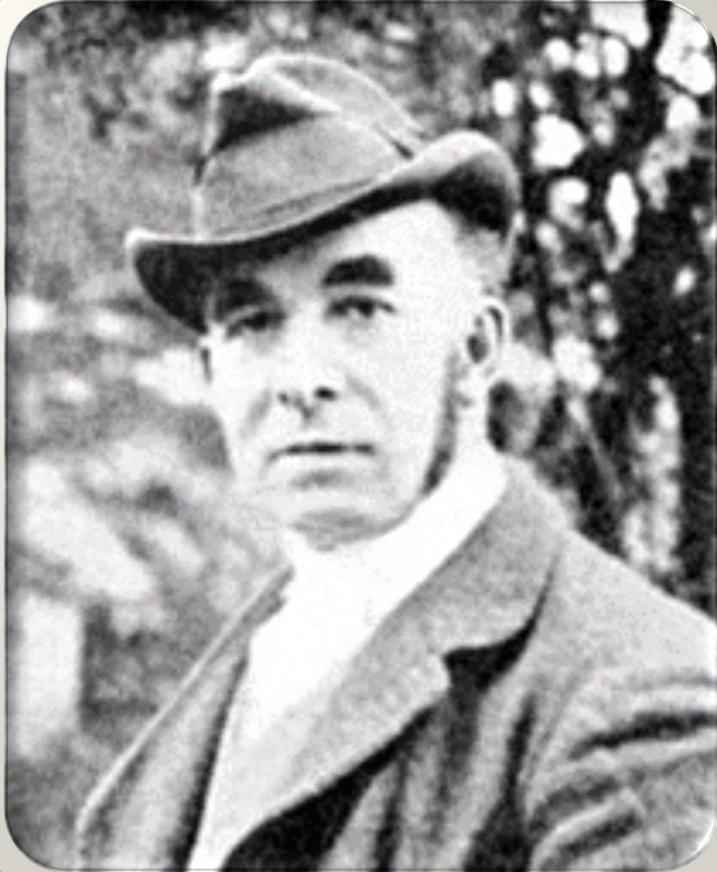


...hung from one of the stakes forming the ring (hence, the term "stake" to designate one's winnings).



*Some matches
attracted as many as
twenty-thousand
spectators.*





*Despite the prohibition of
some practices, many still
considered the sport too
brutal, and in 1867...*

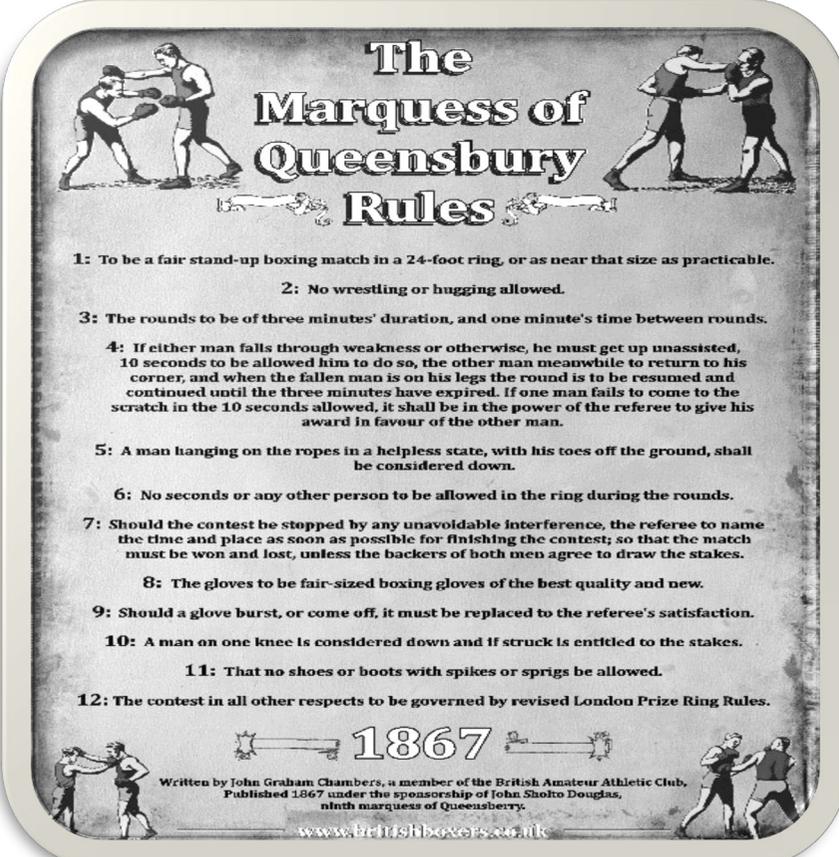




*...new rules were introduced,
supported by John Sholto
Douglas, the ninth Marquess
of Queensberry.*



These regulations specified a new length for the rounds with resting periods in between, the use of gloves, prohibited all wrestling...



The Marquess of Queensbury Rules

- 1: To be a fair stand-up boxing match in a 24-foot ring, or as near that size as practicable.
- 2: No wrestling or hugging allowed.
- 3: The rounds to be of three minutes' duration, and one minute's time between rounds.
- 4: If either man falls through weakness or otherwise, he must get up unassisted, 10 seconds to be allowed him to do so, the other man meanwhile to return to his corner, and when the fallen man is on his legs the round is to be resumed and continued until the three minutes have expired. If one man fails to come to the scratch in the 10 seconds allowed, it shall be in the power of the referee to give his award in favour of the other man.
- 5: A man hanging on the ropes in a helpless state, with his toes off the ground, shall be considered down.
- 6: No seconds or any other person to be allowed in the ring during the rounds.
- 7: Should the contest be stopped by any unavoidable interference, the referee to name the time and place as soon as possible for finishing the contest; so that the match must be won and lost, unless the backers of both men agree to draw the stakes.
- 8: The gloves to be fair-sized boxing gloves of the best quality and new.
- 9: Should a glove burst, or come off, it must be replaced to the referee's satisfaction.
- 10: A man on one knee is considered down and if struck is entitled to the stakes.
- 11: That no shoes or boots with spikes or sprigs be allowed.
- 12: The contest in all other respects to be governed by revised London Prize Ring Rules.

1867

Written by John Graham Chambers, a member of the British Amateur Athletic Club, Published 1867 under the sponsorship of John Sholto Douglas, ninth marquess of Queensberry.

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...and required a fighter knocked down to stand up again within ten seconds or else the match went to his opponent.



The Marquess of Queensbury Rules

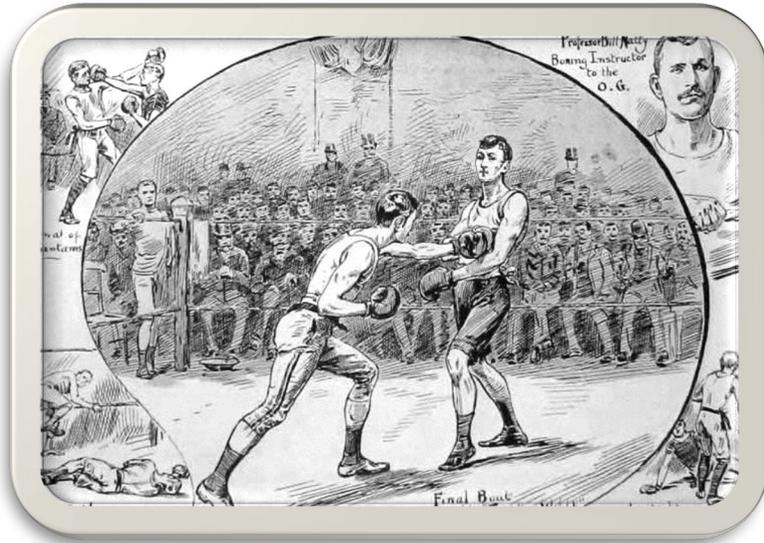
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1867

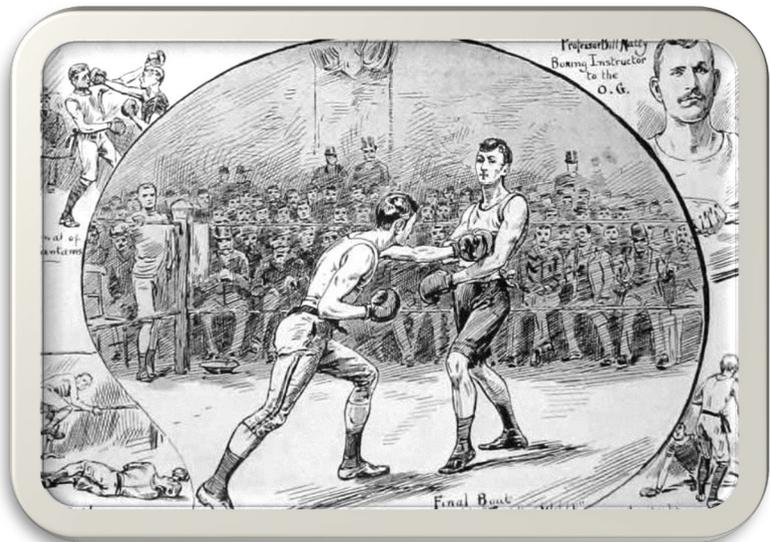
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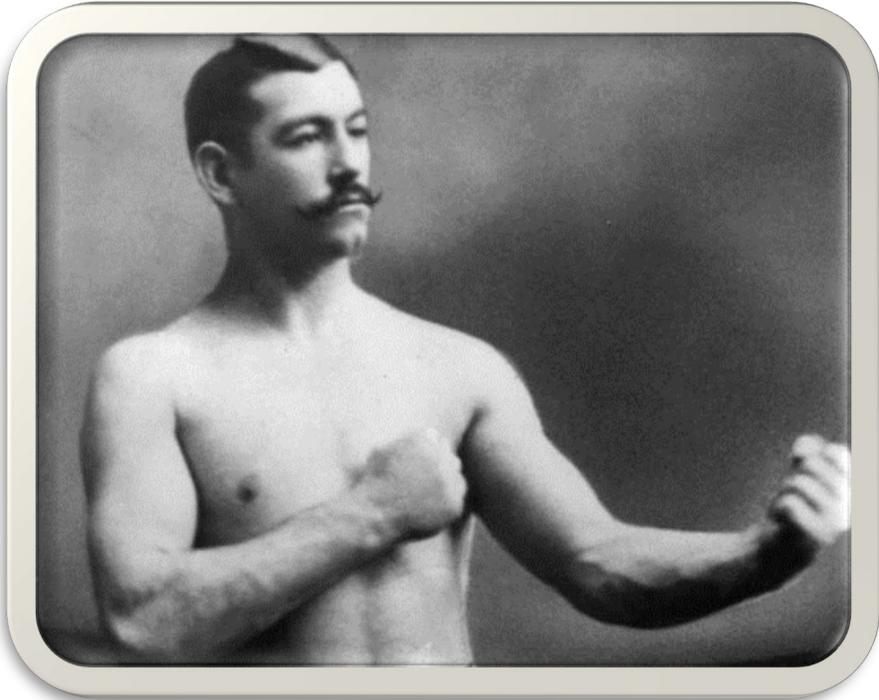
*Shifts in mainstream culture,
particularly the evangelical
movement and the rise of
the middle class...*



...as well as a shift to American boxers dominating the sport, led to a decline in British interest.



John L. Sullivan, an Irish-American, claimed the world championship in heavyweight bare-knuckle boxing in 1882 and 1889, and a third time under the Marquess of Queensbury rules in 1892.



*Following these victories,
many states in the US
reconsidered the sport's
legality.*

news & reviews

NEUROLOGY (Cleveland) 1984;34:1485-6

Ban Boxing

Nelson G. Richards, MD

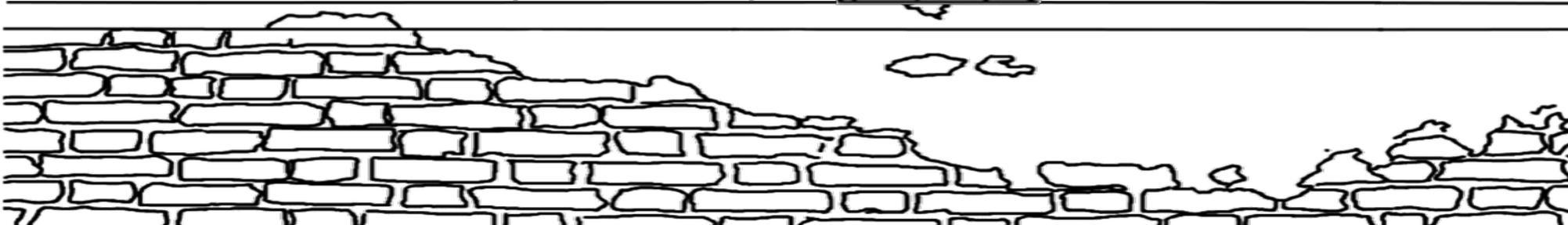
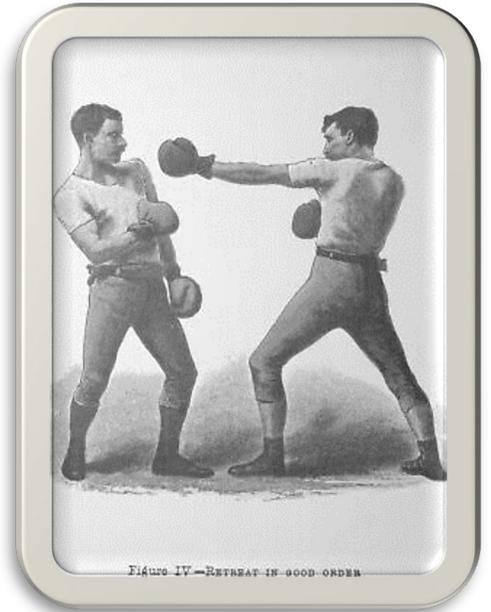
Boxing is defined as "a sport in which two fighters battle each other with their fists. . . . The boxers throw powerful punches as each tries to win the bouts on points, render his opponent unconscious, or force him to give up the fight."¹ The ultimate result of a boxing match is a knockout, which, by definition, is a concussion or more severe brain injury. Lesser degrees of winning may be achieved by an unfair matchup—a "technical knockout" or the accumulation of enough blows to cause overt confusion without loss of consciousness (and posture). The acute mechanisms of brain damage include subdural hematoma, intracerebral hemorrhage, diffuse axonal injury, linear acceleration with focal ischemia, impact deceleration, cerebral edema, ischemia, and herniation. The carotid artery, vertebrae, or eyes

abnormalities on examination; he and one other had had episodes of inappropriate behavior. Computed tomography, however, revealed signs of brain injury in four of six professionals and one of eight amateur boxers. Two professionals and four amateurs had EEG abnormalities that could have been caused by brain injury. Twelve had psychological test results that implied brain injury.⁵

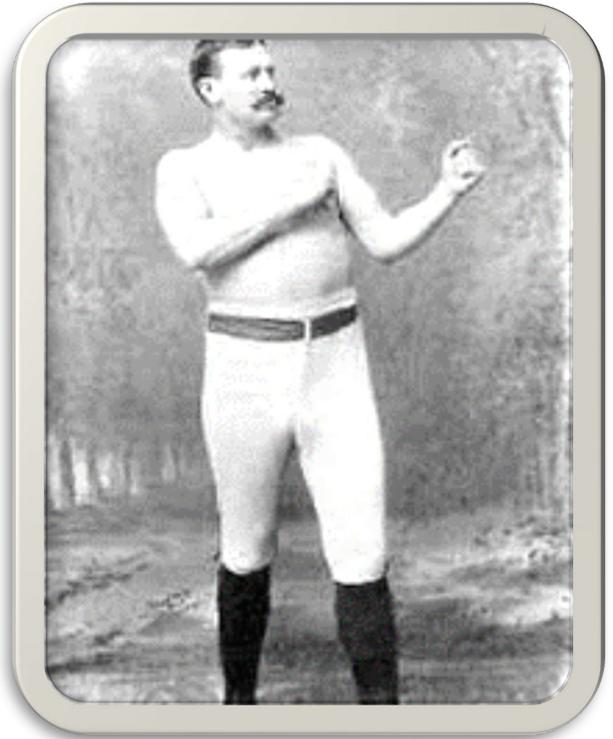
Casson et al⁶ examined 18 former and current boxers with neurologic examination, EEG, CT, and neuropsychological tests. Eighty-seven percent of the professional boxers had "definite evidence of brain injury." All boxers had abnormal results on at least one of the neuropsychological tests. They concluded that brain damage is a frequent result of a career in professional boxing.⁶



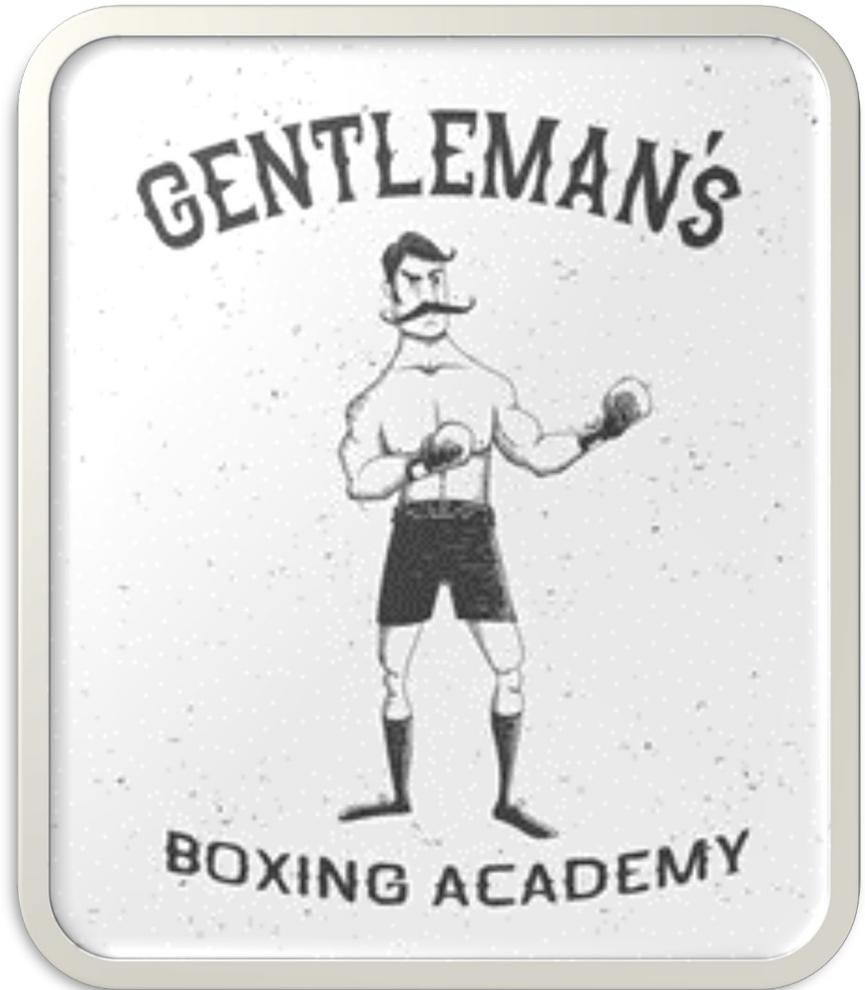
Over the years, various states had outlawed the practice because of its perceived violence.



The economic appeal as well as national pride, however, led the former colonies to relax such restrictions.



In England, boxing had been illegal since the 1700s, but the laws had simply not been enforced due to the sport's popularity.



Despite opinions concerning boxing's unrefined elements, Victorians still considered it, under appropriate circumstances, a good means of building skill, courage, and character.

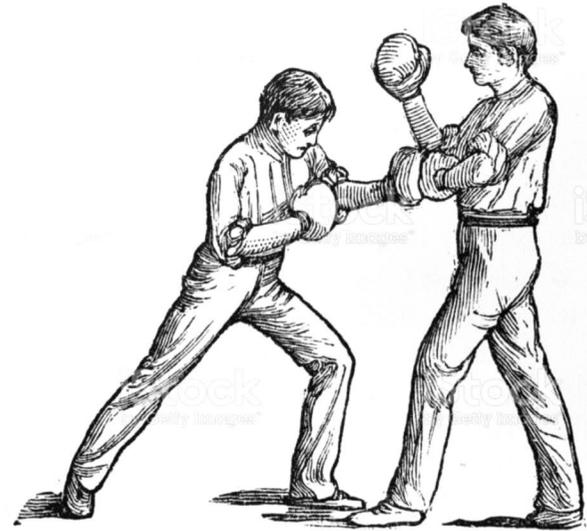


Fig. 4.—HITTING WITH THE LEFT AT THE BODY.

*Thus, your own ability in this arena
reflects an upper-class
temperament toward the
gentlemanly display...*



...of fisticuffs whether in a ring with a professional fighter or a bar with a suspected criminal.



*So we have completed
topic # 026 in our
series...*

*... yes, but we'll be
back with another
topic soon...*



References for this topic:

- 1) Doyle, Arthur Conan; Ryan, Robert. *The Complete Sherlock Holmes*
- 2) <https://www.britannica.com/sports/boxing/The-bare-knuckle-era>
- 3) Kristine Hughes, *The Writer's Guide to Everyday Life in Regency and Victorian England*. (Cincinnati, OH: Writers Digest Books, 1998).



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"The Life and Times in Victorian London"

IS CREATED THROUGH THE INGENUITY & HARD WORK OF:

JOE FAY

LIESE SHERWOOD-FABRE

RUSTY MASON

&

STEVE MASON

