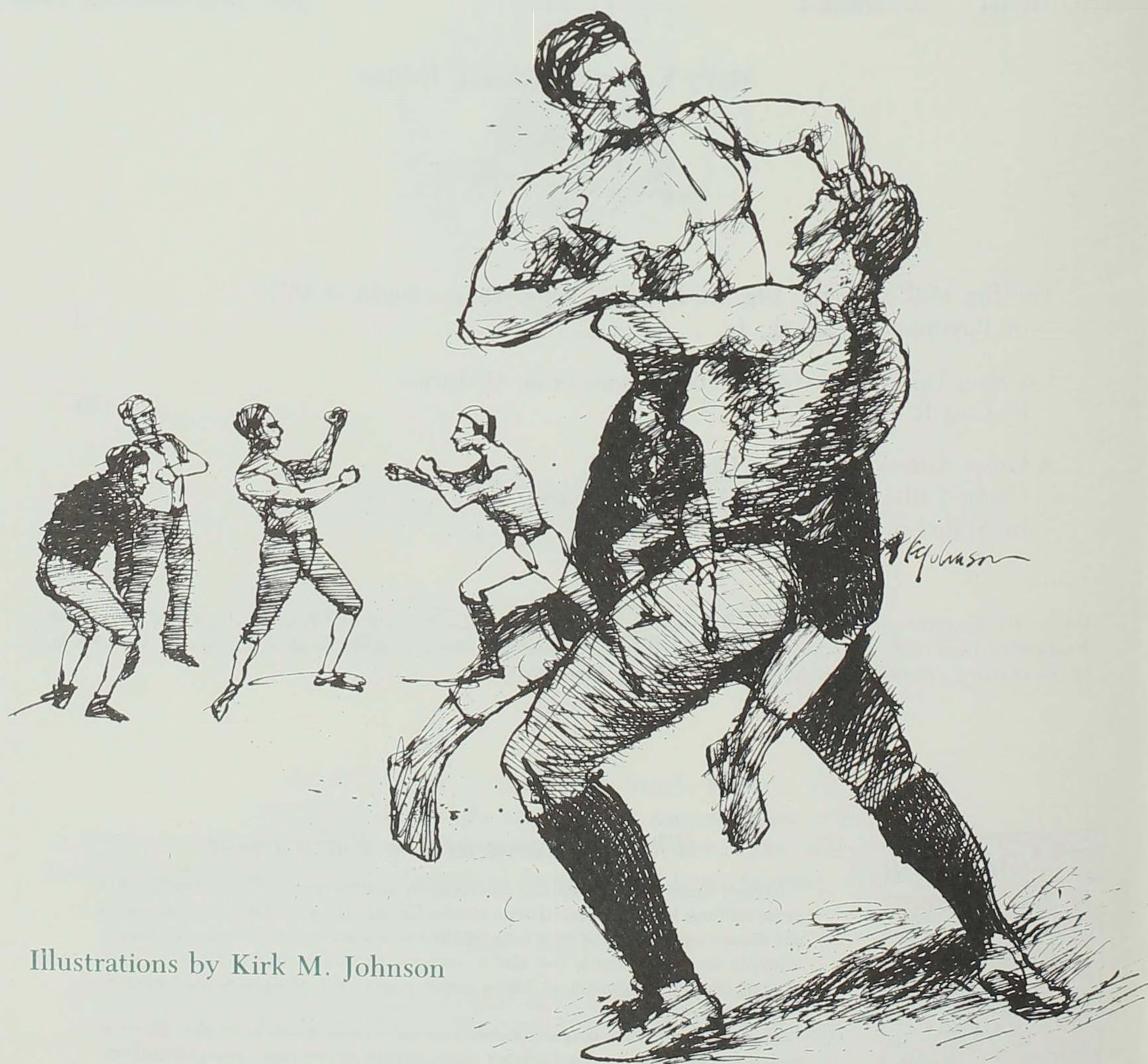


The Big Mill Near the Big Muddy: The Allen-Hogan Fight of 1873

by Raymond A. Smith, Jr.



Illustrations by Kirk M. Johnson

Knock him down, throw him down, put him down in one fashion or another.

On 18 November 1873 there occurred, near Pacific Junction, Iowa, a very well publicized prizefight. It pitted Tom Allen, a man who claimed to be the champion of America, against Ben Hogan, one of the most colorful figures to ever step into the prize ring. No fight took place in Iowa in the nineteenth century, or perhaps even in the twentieth century, which was quite so notorious as the one between Allen and Hogan. It was billed as a championship fight and members of the sporting fraternity came from as far away as New York City to witness the attempt of the feisty Hogan to defeat the conqueror of Mike McCool, and thereby to claim the championship of America.

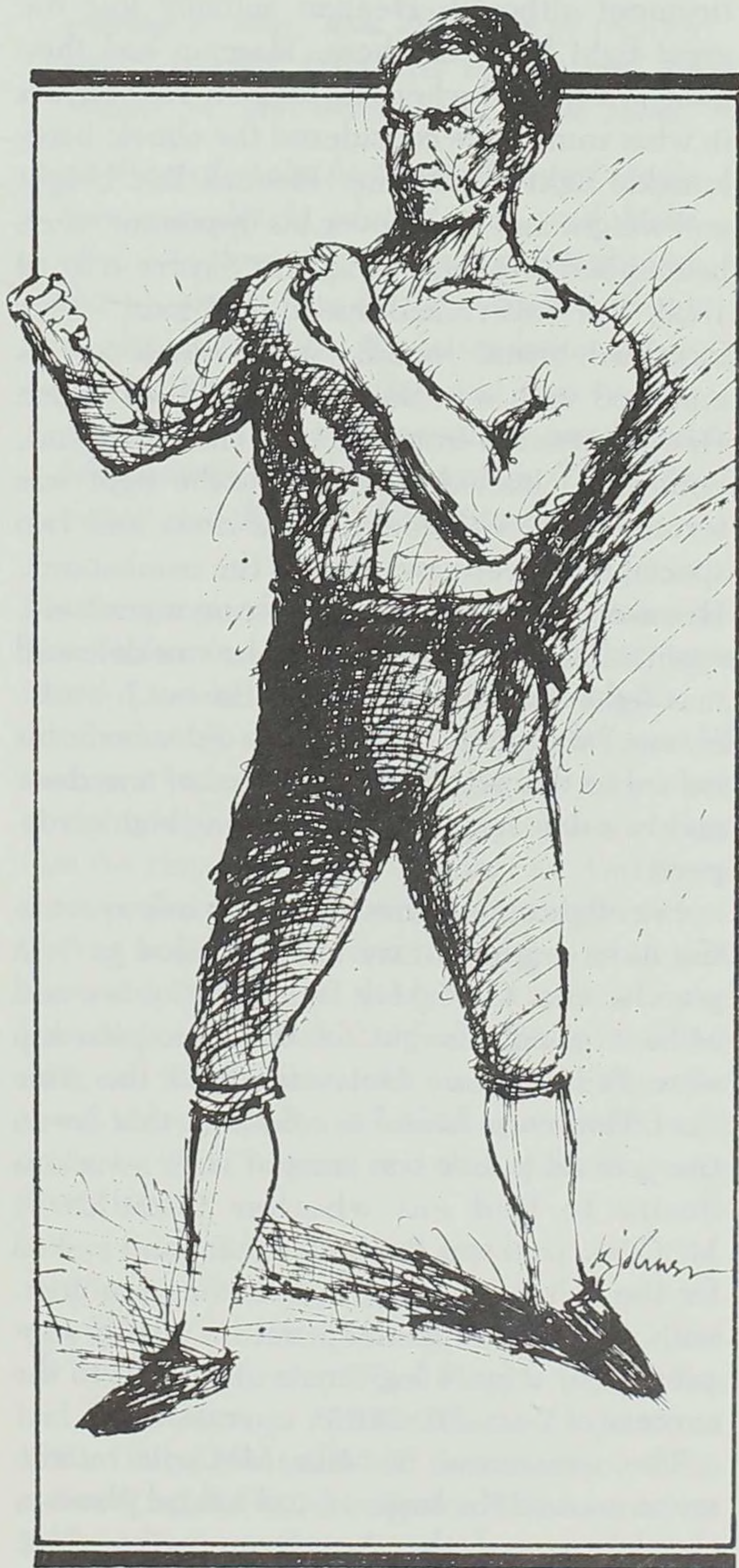
What the spectators at the fight witnessed was a typical prizefight of the period. It was ugly, it was probably crooked, it ended in mayhem, and no one came away satisfied. It would have set back the cause of prizefighting were it not for the fact that prizefighting in America in the early 1870s was at its nadir. It simply could not be set back.

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The history of prizefighting in this country is not a particularly edifying one. The sport had gone through several phases in the early years of the nineteenth century. The first prizefighters of note were American blacks who found their way to the prize rings of England as early as the first decade of the century. The greatest of them was probably Tom Molineaux who fought two very famous battles with the great English champion, Tom Cribb, in 1810 and 1811. In addition to Molineaux, Bill Richmond, Black Sam Robinson, and Young Molineaux from New York, as well as Henry Sutton from Baltimore, Jem Johnson from Norfolk, Virginia, and Joseph Stephenson from Havre de Grace, Maryland (all Blacks), fought in England in the first years of the

century.

The pugilistic tradition in America was to be forged by a number of English and Irish toughs who began to fight with some degree of seriousness in New York in the 1840s and 1850s. A series of champions emerged of whom the most



The classic stance of the bareknuckle fighter.

important were Tom Hyer, Country McClusky, Yankee Sullivan, John Morrissey, and John C. Heenan. They battered each other into various states of retirement and ultimately John C. Heenan emerged as the American Champion by virtue of having forced Morrissey into retirement although Heenan actually lost the great fight between them. Heenan had then gone to England where he took on Tom Sayers in what some have considered the classic bare-knuckle fight of all time. Heenan had height and weight and reach over his opponent when he climbed into the ring against Sayers in April 1860, but Sayers had speed and sand. After forty-two brutal rounds, from which Sayers emerged with a broken arm and after which Heenan was led from the ring virtually blind, both men claimed victory, but the fight was termed what we would call a draw and two special belts were awarded to the combatants. Heenan entered the ring only one more time, against Tom King in 1863, and he was defeated in a fight that some claim he threw. John C. Heenan was a champion of the old school: his record in the prize ring consisted of one draw and two defeats (one of which was highly suspect).

Prizefighting was not a gentlemanly sport in the nineteenth century but it tended to be a popular one. On 5 May 1863 Joe Coburn and Mike McCoole fought for the championship near Wilmington, Delaware, and the *New York Times* was forced to comment that "even the general public was tainted with a curious desire to find out whether COBURN or MCCOOL [*sic*] was the better man, and looked for the solution of that momentous problem, with a concern that could not be wholly suppressed by a more legitimate anxiety as to the success of Gen. HOOKER's operations."

The appearance of Mike McCoole on the scene marked the beginning of a third phase in the history of the American prize ring. McCoole was the rough-and-tumble champion of virtually the entire Mississippi River valley,

and though Coburn defeated him in 1863, Mike was ultimately to claim the championship and take it to St. Louis, where he was joined by a great collection of rowdies and toughs and sporting types. They fought one another on the Mississippi, they fought up and down on the Ohio, and finally they took their pugilism to the upper reaches of the Missouri in the environs of Council Bluffs and Omaha. There were Bill Davis, Handy Duffy, Con Reardon, Patsey Sheppherd, Mike McCoole, Aaron Jones, Tom McCann, Butt Riley, Dublin Tricks, Dick Hollywood, Tom McAlpine, Tom Allen, Charles Gallagher, and many, many others. In the main, they were of English or Irish descent, for prizefighting in the nineteenth century was largely an Anglo-Saxon-Celtic sport. The reference to these people as "rowdies" is mild enough. Their prizefights in the late 1860s and early 1870s were exercises in violence on the part of fighters, cornermen, and spectators. Fights could end fatally, fights could end feloniously with the stakeholder absconding with the stakes, or fights could end farcically with the ring ropes torn down, the spectators invading the ring, and a riot ensuing. Whenever one fought, one always took a lot of friends and hoped that one's friends outnumbered one's opponent's friends. Pugilism was at best an inexact and unpredictable science at this time.

* * *

In general, prizefighting was illegal in America. When prizefights took place they did so under rules of the London Prize Ring which provided for rounds of indefinite length, terminated only when one or both of the fighters were either knocked or thrown down. There were supposedly thirty seconds between rounds during which time seconds could administer to the needs of their fighters. Fights lasted until one fighter was knocked out and could not return to the scratch after thirty seconds or when a second threw in the towel or the sponge or otherwise indicated that his lad

had had it. Fighters fought for purses put up by themselves and their backers and the purses were deposited with a stakeholder whom both sides thought they could trust with the money. Referees were usually decided upon when all parties were in the ring and the choice of a referee could be extremely difficult because the referee had the power to disqualify either fighter by acknowledging a claim of foul lodged by a fighter or his seconds. That meant that the referee had the ability to deliver the fight to one or the other of the fighters if he so chose.

Such fights could be terribly brutal. The bare fists of the antagonists opened massive cuts and closed eyes and raised lumps and occasionally broke bones. There were sometimes sells, and shams, and even farces, but the graphic newspaper accounts of some prize-fights indicate the seriousness with which the brawlers could come together. And those graphic accounts give some indication of the language of the ring which had been first put to literary use by Pierce Egan, that most masterful of all fight reporters in London in the first half of the century. The Egan style was copied by all who were caught up in the spirit of prize-fighting. The following portions of an account of a 12 January 1869 fight between Tom Allen and Bill Davis appeared in the *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer*:

Fifth Round — This round opened with some slight exchanges, and Davis managed to get in a sockdologer somewhere above Tom's breadbasket. Tom returned the compliment, and visited the nasal organ of his antagonist in a very unwelcome fashion.

Ninth Round — Davis' face continued to grow more disfigured and ruddy; Allen dealt him another terrific blow square on the potato trap. Davis was rapidly losing ground, and betting on him had nearly ceased.

Thirteenth Round — Davis walked up to

his man and managed to get in a right smart blow on the cheek, and in return took one on the left side of his knowledge-box, and he went down, Tom smiling at him very pleasantly all the while.

Twenty-ninth Round — Davis was slow in coming to time, and all hopes of victory had vanished from his vision; still he fought on, and determined to die game.

At the end of the forty-third round Davis was completely played out, and Mike McCoolle threw up the sponge in token of defeat. Davis was badly punished about the head and face, the latter being cut in dozens of places. Allen had one or two cuts on the face; his nose was skinned, and his lower lip was badly swollen. The fight lasted exactly forty-four minutes.

The language of the prize ring was a rich one. One didn't have a fight; one had a mill or a set-to. One didn't have stamina or endurance; one had sand or grit or bottom. A follower of the sport wasn't simply a fan; he was a member of the fancy. One didn't simply toss one's hat into the ring; one flung his castor in. And there were undercuts as well as uppercuts, there was fibbing and nobbing, and the targets of all that were the optics and the potato trap and the knowledge box and the frontispiece and the mug and the smeller. And blood didn't flow for it was claret that flowed. When someone went down he went to grass and that often in a very literal sense.

* * *

The world of the prizefighter was the world of Tom Allen and Ben Hogan. Tom Allen had been born in Birmingham, England, in 1840. He had first entered the prize ring in his native England but he came to this country in 1867 and achieved a certain amount of notoriety by seconding Tommy Kelly in a fight with Billy Parkinson at Acquia Creek, Virginia. It

seems that in the course of the fight Allen pulled a revolver and ordered the referee to award the fight to Kelly on a foul. Afterwards he joined Kelly in St. Louis where a large community of pugilists had gathered by the late 1860s.

As indicated above, the easiest description of men like Mike McCooole, Charley Gallagher, Bill Davis, Sherman Thurston, Dublin Tricks, Jack Looney, Butt Riley, and Val McKinney would be that of ruffians, rowdies, and ne'er-do-wells. They were typical midwestern representatives of the sporting element and their records (police and otherwise) were unsavory. They welcomed Tom Allen into their midst in 1869, however, with a series of the most unsatisfying and unfortunate prizefights in the annals of the ring. It all began on 12 January when Allen won his only fight of 1869 by defeating Bill Davis in forty-three rounds. The fight was the last bit of pugilistic good fortune

that Tom Allen was to have for three or four years. He fought three more times in 1869, and, in each case, the results were disastrous for him. In February 1869 he fought Charley Gallagher, a strapping lad with two fights under his belt. The fight was staged on a Mississippi River island and lasted but two rounds. Allen managed to close the first round by knocking Gallagher down but Gallagher ended the second round by putting Allen to sleep for something like twenty minutes.

Having won one fight by a knockout and lost another in similar fashion, Allen then stepped up in class and took on Mike McCooole. It was thought that the knockout of Allen by Gallagher had been a fluke, and fight fans came from New York, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and other eastern points to take in the event. Laws passed at a recent session of the Missouri legislature forced the fighters back onto the river. They boarded the good ship *Louisville* with a full complement of fans, all of whom had purchased tickets which carried the words:

MCCOOLE AND ALLEN'S
Strawberry Festival.

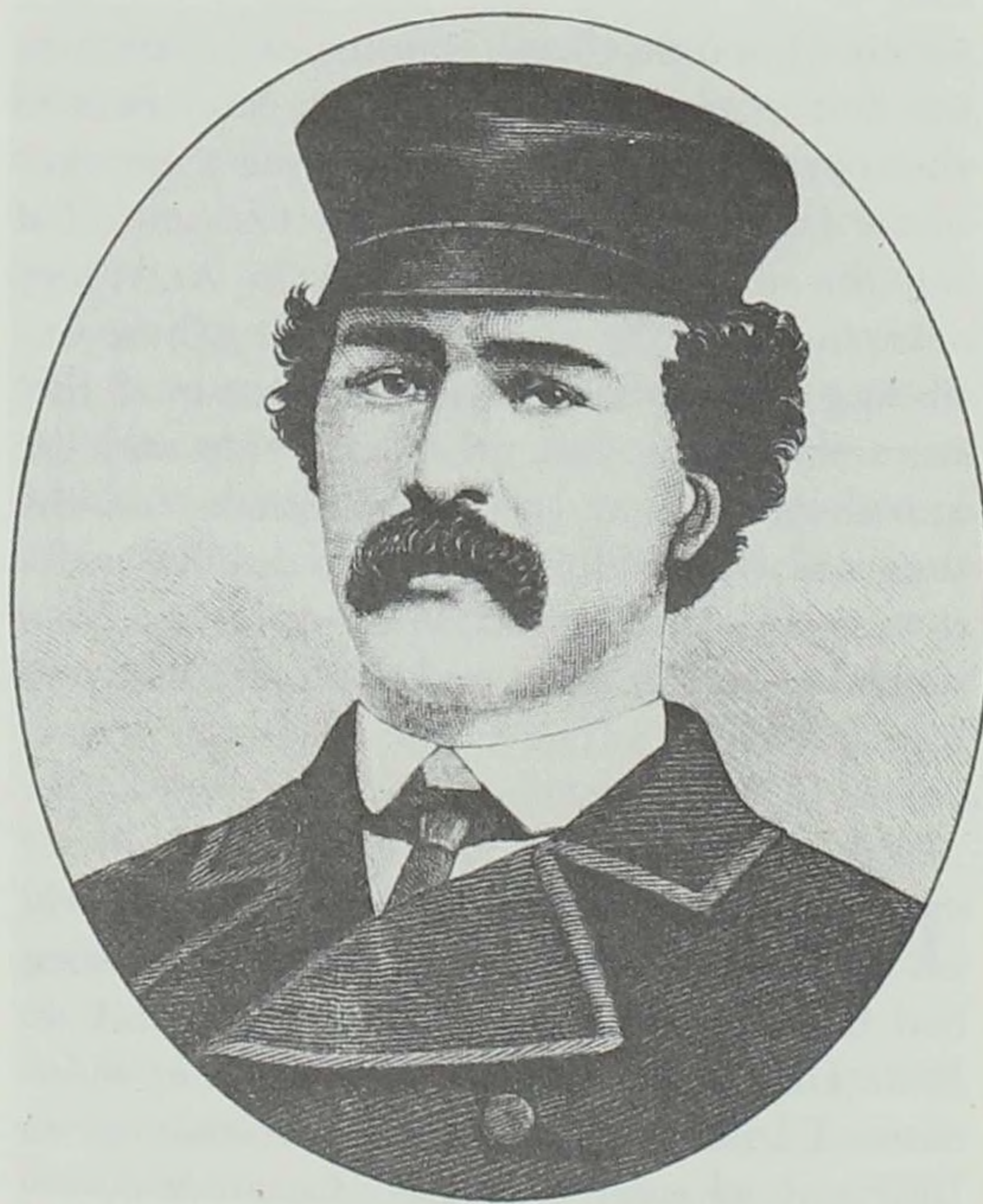
COMPLIMENTARY TICKET.

Good For Excursion on Stmr. Louisville.

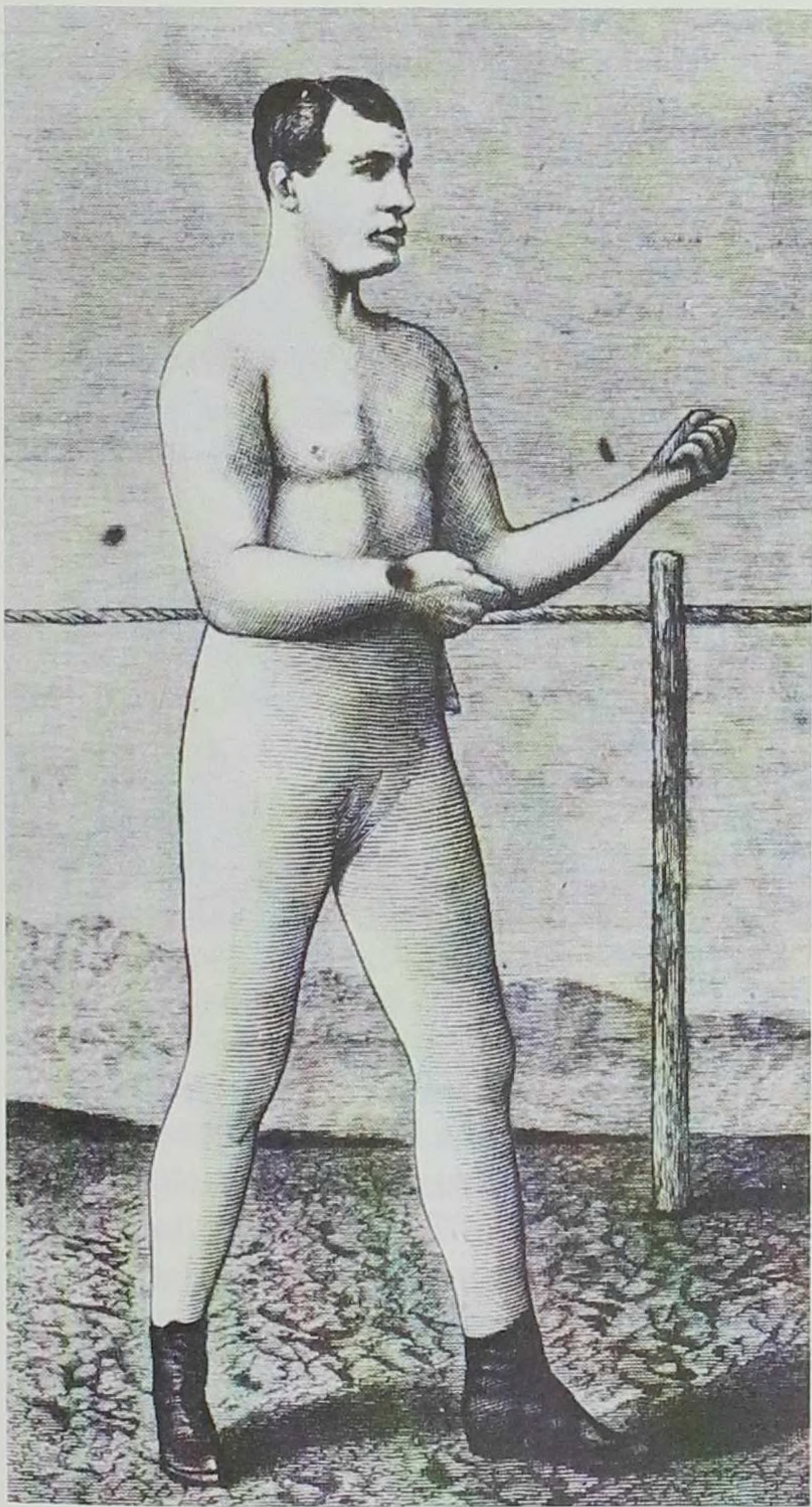
The fight was all Tom Allen's until somebody cut the ring ropes and a crowd rushed into the ring and the proceedings came to an abrupt halt. From McCooole's people came the cry of foul. The referee, being of a cautious nature, refused to make any decision until he was back in the safe precincts of St. Louis. There he made his decision, sending it to the papers on a card, and immediately departing for even safer precincts well away from St. Louis. The card read:

I, Valentine McKinney, will give my decision in the late fight between McCooole and Allen in favor of McCooole there being a foul committed by Allen on McCooole in the last round, by gouging his eye.

V. MCKINNEY, REFEREE.



Tom Allen, one of the principals in the big mill near the Big Muddy.



Charley Gallagher, twice an opponent of Tom Allen in 1873.

Thus, by the middle of 1869, Allen had fought three times, and had nothing much to show for it. He still had the loss to Gallagher to set right and so, in August, he went off to an island in the Mississippi with Charley Gallagher and perhaps a thousand others, once again on the steamer *Louisville*. Provision was made to prevent a reoccurrence of the riotous outcome of his previous fight with McCoole by the appointment of twenty "ring-keepers" who were hired to keep order. It was a strange fight but

probably no stranger than some of his earlier ones. In the eleventh round, cries of "Foul!" came from Gallagher's corner, the claim being that Allen had struck their man while he was on his knees. The claim was not allowed, time was called for the twelfth round, and then a sponge came flying out from Gallagher's corner. Allen, thinking he had finally won a fight of some importance, crossed the ring, held out his hand, and was promptly socked on the smeller.

Poor Tom. He didn't win that fight either for, on the trip home, the referee decided to call it a draw. Later Allen tried to get a fight with McCoole, then was defeated by Jem Mace in New Orleans in 1870. He finally, however, got a fight with McCoole and he punched the Irishman out in twenty-nine rounds just two months before he stepped into the ring with Ben Hogan in November 1873.

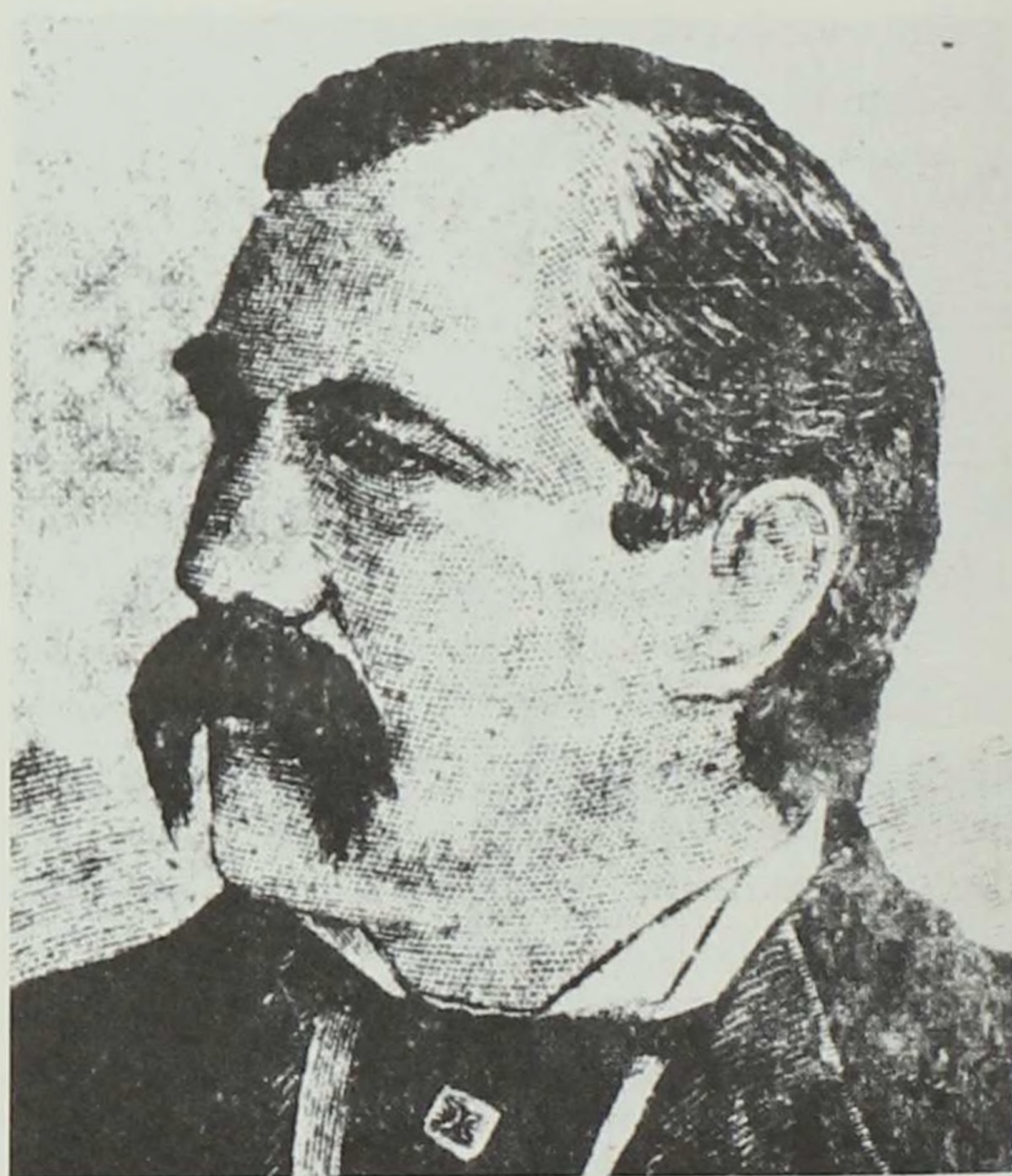
Ben Hogan's life, as it comes down to us, is a most improbable tissue of some of the most marvelous lies ever foisted off on a gullible sporting public. He claimed, in addition to being a pugilist, to have been a Civil War deserter many times over, a Northern spy in the Confederacy, a gambler in the oil regions of Pennsylvania, a saloon keeper, a reformed drunk, and, last, but certainly not least, an evangelical preacher. In the last-mentioned capacity, he traveled from one end of this country to the other. He preached hard, he told the story of his life many times over, and he tried to save souls.

In an interview with a reporter of the *Oil City Derrick*, Hogan once spun great yarns about his wayward youth and his even more wayward later life. He told of sailing as a pirate out of Charleston and later sailing back into Charleston after the outbreak of the Civil War with a load of whiskey and tobacco and other items for the army of General P.T.A. Beauregard. When he was about to be captured by U.S. naval vessels, Hogan and a couple of others slipped overboard with most of his pirate-cum-smuggling profits and headed for

Canada. Shortly thereafter he began his career as a spy out of Nashville, but spying didn't really keep him occupied, so he took up the business of enlisting young men in the Union army for their enlistment bonus. Ultimately, Hogan went in for bounty jumping, claiming later that he made almost \$16,000 in the process. His luck eventually ran out, he was tried, and he was sentenced to be shot. Hogan claimed that he received a presidential pardon while sitting on his coffin awaiting execution.

After the war Hogan was off for the oil regions where he followed the twin professions of pugilist and gambler. The oil regions were without doubt one of the toughest areas in the United States at that time, and Hogan fit right in. He was a gambler, a fighter, a shooter, an intimidator, and an all-round tough. Ben Hogan's fights seemed invariably to end badly with guns and knives being pulled, and crowds of toughs milling and threatening, and referees wondering why they had ever agreed to step into the ring and officiate at such events. If he had not fought as often as Tom Allen, he had fought in the same kind of milieu and in the same kind of fashion.

Ben Hogan was in St. Louis in 1873 and was fresh from the oil fields. He had hopes that through a match with Tom Allen he would make a name for himself and perhaps cash in on the name in a series of exhibitions and benefits throughout the eastern portion of the United States. But first Tom Allen had a match with Mike McCoolle and he had to beat McCoolle because Ben Hogan wanted no part of Mike McCoolle who, he admitted, "was too big for him." So Ben Hogan challenged Tom Allen and the preliminaries were worked out in a series of meetings between Allen and Hogan in Jack Looney's saloon in St. Louis in mid-September 1873. Each of the fighters put up \$500 and Hogan went immediately into training while Allen finished off his preparations for his upcoming fight with Mike McCoolle.



Ben Hogan, perhaps a Prussian, possibly a pugilist, but certainly a preacher at the conclusion of his career.

The McCoolle-Allen fight was not to be held in Missouri for the two principals were arrested on 21 September 1873 and forced to put up bonds of \$1,000 each to insure that they would not disturb the peace of the state of Missouri for some ninety days. That only meant that they took to the river on the steamboat *Continental*, headed for Chauteau Island, and held their fight outside the jurisdiction of the Missouri authorities. The fight was a great and overdue victory for Tom Allen who triumphed over McCoolle in eight rounds and twenty minutes on 23 September 1873. The career of Mike McCoolle was over and the way was paved for a fight between Tom Allen and Ben Hogan.

On 25 September 1873 articles of agreement were drawn up between Hogan and Allen. They provided for a fight which would take place on 28 October 1873 for \$1,000 a side with the site to be picked by the two men. Hogan was already busily training while Allen was enjoying the fruits of his victory over McCoolle.

Everyone was confident of victory. In the ensuing days Ben Hogan was tendered a benefit at Deagle's Theater in St. Louis and Bret Harte delivered a lecture in Omaha and generally people looked forward to a fight which would take place somewhere in the environs of St. Louis in late October. But it was not to be. On 28 October 1873 the usual events preceding a prizefight began to happen in St. Louis. Jack Looney and Mike Gauley ambled down to the steamer *Continental* and were soon joined by a rough group of individuals intent on going on some sort of excursion. Ultimately the *Continental* steamed upstream a ways, then turned and steamed downstream, but the boat drifted to the Illinois shore where a bevy of East St. Louis policemen took Looney and others into custody and the fight was definitely not on for that day. Hogan and Allen later showed up in St. Louis and announced that the fight had been postponed for at least two weeks.

On 29 October 1873 Allen and Hogan and the backers and seconds met again at Jack Looney's and decided to hold the fight somewhere other than Illinois. They thought perhaps the fight could be held in Canada, somewhere in the vicinity of Detroit, and W.E. Harding of the *National Police Gazette* was commissioned to see if an excursion boat could be found in Detroit. But on the following day it was clear that the way to Detroit lay through Illinois and no one wanted to test the patience of Governor Beveridge of that state. It was decided to hold the fight in Nebraska or the vicinity thereof, which was much safer than crossing Illinois to get to Canada.

By 5 November 1873 it was clear that the laws of Nebraska would probably preclude any prizefight taking place in that state but that the laws of Iowa were much milder and covered prizefighting only with general injunctions against assault and battery, which carried a penalty of \$100. It was fairly clear that the fighters would head for Omaha, probably train there, avail themselves of the relatively greater

population of the area to make a few dollars through benefits and exhibitions, and then depart for the safer areas of rural Iowa where a prizefight could be held without overly much fear of interference from the authorities.

The next few days were filled with activity. Allen and his retinue headed up the Missouri for the Council Bluffs-Omaha area, stopping at Kansas City for a little sparring exhibition. Hogan and his crew moved up also, stopping at St. Joe. While the principals moved north, various individuals were scouting the islands of the Missouri River in hopes of finding a spot out of the jurisdiction of all officials of the law. Allen arrived in Omaha on 10 November and Hogan arrived the following day. The newspapers got into the spirit of the affair and the *Omaha Republican*, the *Omaha Daily Herald*, and the *Council Bluffs Nonpareil* all had pithy comments to make on the upcoming fight and the people who were to engage in it. Typical of such editorial comments were those of the *Herald* which were really typical of an editor who wanted to cover news which he knew he should assail in his columns. On 12 November 1873 the editor of the *Herald* wrote:

The HERALD, like all other first-class newspapers, will contain complete accounts of the coming battle, and all that precedes in the preparations for it. Its responsible Editor is now engaged in ascertaining whether he can nerve himself up to witnessing the combat. So soon as this preliminary question is decided, that of the morality of the proceeding will be considered from that high religious standpoint which this paper never fails to occupy.

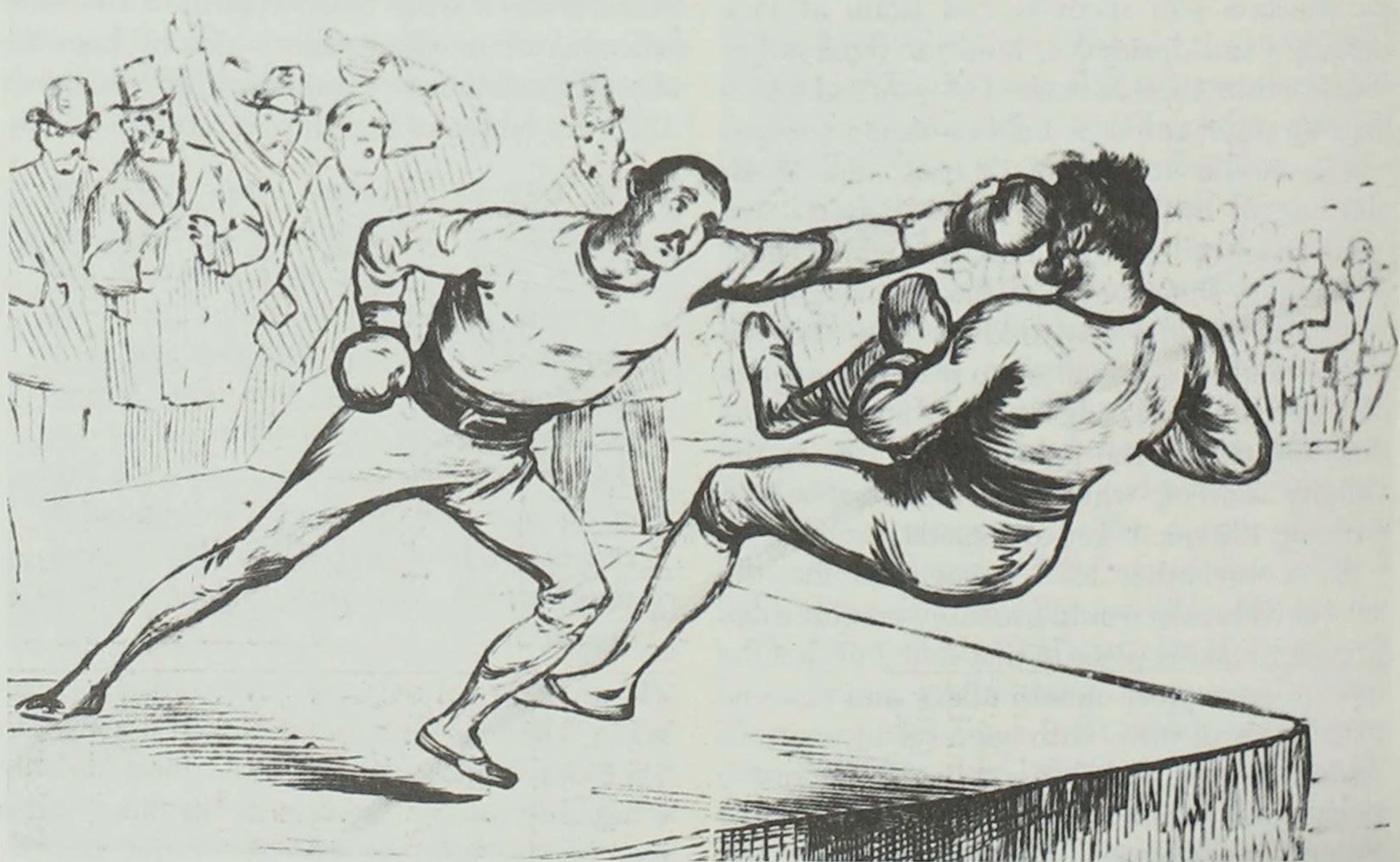
There were all sorts of preparations to be made. The selection of a site was turned over to Sherman Thurston, one of the most notable rough-and-tumble fighters of the time and a man whose honesty was never questioned. There were tickets to be printed up. There

were benefits and exhibitions to be held and there were interviews with the fighters. Excitement ran high in Omaha (and Council Bluffs) in mid-November 1873. It was ultimately decided that the fight would be held on the Iowa side of the river somewhere south of Council Bluffs on the Kansas City, St. Joseph, and Council Bluffs line. The tickets were priced at \$5.00 and read simply "From Omaha to ____ and return."

And the exhibitions played to full houses. On 14 November Tom Allen packed the Belle Union theatre and sparred with his trainer, Tom Madden, while on the 15th Ben Hogan pulled a crowd to the Academy of Music where he put on an exhibition with his former trainer, a man named Sweeny. Apparently Allen demonstrated all the science as did Hogan but the question was really whether Hogan could stand up to Allen in the long run.

By the 16th and 17th large delegations of the

sporting fraternity were arriving in Omaha and Council Bluffs from places like St. Louis, St. Joseph, and Kansas City, and people were expected from as far away as Chicago and even New York. It was hard to deny that a very important prizefight was about to take place and the question that had to be asked was what the authorities in either Nebraska or Iowa intended to do about it. As long as the prizefighters and their supporters departed the state of Nebraska in peaceable fashion without engaging in any prizefighting or otherwise breaking the law, there was little interest that the Nebraska authorities would take in them. The Iowa authorities on all levels of government faced a real challenge, however, from the men who would stage a prizefight on Iowa territory. On 16 November a number of prominent citizens of Council Bluffs fired off a telegram to Governor Cyrus Clay Carpenter requesting that he use his power and military force to



A sparring exhibition as rendered by a Harper's Weekly illustrator.

prevent the fight from taking place. The Governor temporized momentarily and asked for a bit more information. The good citizens gave him a bit more information in the following terms:

Can't something be done to prevent the Allen-Hogan prizefight in Iowa tomorrow? Fifteen hundred roughs are in Omaha, and the local authorities are powerless. Can't you send military companies from Des Moines to prevent their coming into the State?

The Governor did indeed send a detachment of Olmstead Zouaves and another of Crocker Guards from Des Moines. They arrived in Council Bluffs at a late hour on Monday, 17 November. They were placed at the transfer depot in the hopes of preventing the prizefighters and their fellow toughs from either entering Iowa or from proceeding past the transfer depot to a spot in Iowa where they could put up their ring and have their prizefight.

On Tuesday, 18 November, the day set for the fight, the excursion set out at 9:00 a.m. They arrived in Council Bluffs and the crowd there was indeed a motley assortment of types. The *Nonpareil* described it as including "the well-to-do business men, the sleek-faced, stylish clerk, the bronzed laborer, the gambler of childlike and bland demeanor, and even the meek newspaper reporter." About 10:00 the train backed down from the St. Joseph depot to the transfer depot and there picked up the group of roughs, toughs, and ruffians from Omaha. At the transfer depot, the forces of law and order met the members of the sporting world and the result was a great stand off. Allen and Hogan were not on the train and thus could not be arrested and taken before a judge to post bonds to keep the peace in the state of Iowa. Without Allen and Hogan, Sheriff Doughty of Pottawattamie County was virtually powerless to detain the train, its pas-

sengers, or to make much use of the militia which had been sent from Des Moines to aid him in preventing the fight. He made an attempt to join the excursion with the militia but the promoters of the fight informed him that that would be impossible unless he was willing to come up with \$5.00 for himself and each member of the militia. The Sheriff opined that the state would be good for the fares but that was not good enough for those who were selling tickets and so the Sheriff stepped down from the train with the militia and allowed the train to continue southward on its way.

Hogan and Allen had, of course, crossed over from Omaha in carriages earlier in the morning and were well on their way to the ground selected which was some distance south of Council Bluffs near Pacific Junction in Mills County. All the paraphernalia necessary for a prizefight — stakes and ropes — were there thrown out of the baggage car and a twenty-four foot square ring was rapidly put up. That was the so-called inner ring. A thirty-foot square ring was put up around that and the intervening space was given over to the press and individuals who had purchased, for two extra dollars, the privilege of seeing the fight at a little closer range.

A referee had to be selected and a timekeeper appointed as well. The choice of a referee caused a great deal of discussion but finally Tom Riley of Kansas City was found acceptable to everyone and when he agreed to act as timer as well that left little more to be done before the fighters met at the scratch. Allen came forward with his seconds, Arthur Chambers, the lightweight champion, and Jack Madden, and tossed his hat into the ring. Then Ben Hogan appeared and sat down in the opposite corner with his seconds, Sherman Thurston and John Sweeny. There was a momentary interruption as the Sheriff of Mills County made a token attempt to stop the fight by reading a warrant and then departing the scene. Hogan pitched his cap into the center of the

ring and all was ready.

It was a miserably cold and blustery day with a strong wind blowing from the northwest. The fight is best described in the account which appeared in the *St. Louis Democrat* of 19 November 1873:

THE FIRST ROUND.

Allen advanced, as usual; with his head thrown back and his arms well advanced. Hogan walked round him, keeping both fists constantly at work. Allen was evidently measuring his antagonist, when Ben let go his left and caught Allen in the nose without a return. This nettled the champion, and he forced the fighting, but Ben avoided it by dancing away. Tom then let go his left at the body, and was countered on the neck. Both men worked into Hogan's corner, and Allen was forced to the ropes. They then separated and as Hogan hit a body blow Allen slipped and fell. First blood and first knock-down claimed and allowed for Hogan, amid tremendous cheers.

SECOND ROUND.

Both men responded promptly to the call of time, and Allen at once went to work in earnest, but Ben's sparring was decidedly scientific and took his friends completely by surprise. Give and take was the order of the day, and both men were evidently terribly in earnest. Several times did the men come to close quarters, and finally Hogan was knocked down by a body blow, amid many cries of foul, but as Ben, who was evidently the favorite, was having the best of the battle, the claim was not insisted on.

THIRD ROUND.

When time was called both men came up fresh and smiling. Allen got his work in at once, and Hogan appreciating the fact sent out his left, but was short. They clinched and pounded each other in the

neck and ribs, finally broke, and sparring was indulged in. On coming to close quarters again Allen shot out his left, catching Hogan on the nose and knocking him down. It was here that Carroll and the Western mob got their work in, and Allen was treated in the same manner as in his first fight with McCoolle. At the conclusion of the round, which was decidedly in the champion's favor, the ropes were cut and pistols drawn.

An Omaha rough stepped up to Allen, calling him a s-- of a b----, and said he could not win under any circumstances. Tom responded that he did not deserve abuse, never having insulted the party in question. It was at once evident that the fight was at an end. Riley refused to either entertain the claim of foul or render a decision till Omaha was reached.

Later on the train trip back to Omaha, the referee rendered his decision which was that the fight had ended in a draw. The stakeholder, Jim Eagan, claimed the men would have to fight again for the money, but on his return to Omaha he was arrested on a charge of embezzlement at the suggestion of Hogan's entourage. The fight was a fiasco, or a sell, or a sham, or a farce, or all of the above. It had lasted exactly sixteen minutes; it had settled nothing; and, as was usually the case in the nineteenth century prize ring, very few people were satisfied with the result. Hogan's backers felt that he had been jobbed. Allen's backers were sure that he had been taken. The press was outraged. The Governor of Iowa was appalled at the actions of Sheriff Doughty and his inability to prevent the shameful event from taking place. Only the papers of Omaha, engaging as always in a competitive and endless war with their neighbors to the east found something to crow about in the affair. On 20 November the *Omaha Daily Herald* offered the following gleeful commentary upon the event:

The peace and dignity of Iowa may have been very much disturbed by Tom Allen and Ben Hogan at or near Pacific City, but all will agree that its civil authorities were disgraced by the ridiculous fiasco of the military overtures of Gov. Carpenter to stop the fight. The performance of the "milish" was farcical beyond even the HERALD'S power to describe.

The fighters and the toughs who had come from distant places finally departed from the area. Mr. Eagan was released from jail and departed for St. Louis. Tom Allen, on his arrival in St. Louis with Arthur Chambers on 21 November, was promptly arrested upon the request of Governor Beveridge of Illinois who was still pursuing the principals in the Allen-McCoole fight of two months before. Ben Hogan remained in Omaha long enough to give another exhibition at the Academy of Music on 26 November 1873 and then headed south to St. Louis to explain his side of the big mill near the Big Muddy. Shortly after his arrival he was arrested on a vagrancy charge.

There were some battles ahead for the Mississippi River rowdies in the squared circle but the frontier was no longer a tolerant frontier and increasingly they were harassed by au-

thorities as laws were enacted, tightened up, and enforced against them. Prizefighting remained at a nadir point throughout the remainder of the 1870s and into the early 1880s. It was only with the coming upon the scene of the legendary John L. Sullivan that an upturn was in evidence. On his great exhibition tours of 1884 and later, John L. took sparring and the manly art to cities and towns throughout America and began to make of boxing something more than prizefighting. He put gloves on his fists, put science into the sport, and put on a great show. That had not happened near Pacific Junction in November 1873 when Tom Allen met Ben Hogan in what was probably Iowa's most notorious prizefight. □

Note on Sources

There is no worthwhile comprehensive history available on prizefighting in the United States in the nineteenth century. By far the greatest amount of material for this article was found in contemporary newspapers which included the *St. Louis Democrat*, the *Omaha Daily Herald*, the *Omaha Republican*, the *Council Bluffs Daily Nonpareil*, and the *Iowa State Register*. Materials for the period prior to the appearance of John L. Sullivan on the scene are very scanty, and little has been written of the gamblers and toughs who made up the sporting scene in the third quarter of the century. W. E. Harding published a number of quasi-historical articles in the *National Police Gazette* in the 1880s which were colorful but of limited value. The sport, if such it is, awaits its historian.