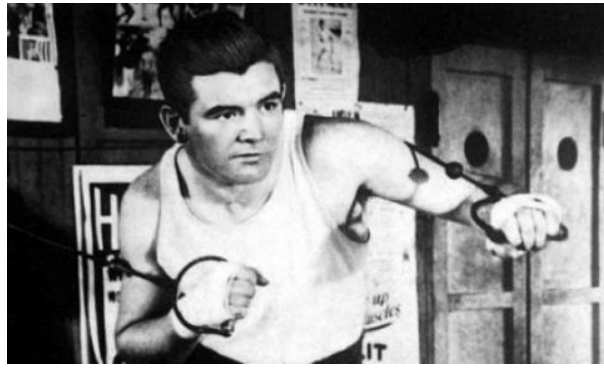




0. JOE GOULD and MAX BAER - Story Preface

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Joe Gould believed in his friend, Jim Braddock, and helped him to make one of the most-impressive comebacks in sports history. In this picture, we see Braddock at practice. Image online via [Boxing.com](#).

During World War I, Joe Gould served in the Navy. When he returned to civilian life, he began to promote boxers. He teamed up with Braddock in 1925 - after Jimmy defeated Gould's fighter during a workout in a West Hoboken gym.

The two men became close friends. According to Gould's obituary:

The combination was one of the closest in the history of boxing. Until Braddock reached the top, the two operated without a contract, a simple handshake binding their agreements.

Together, Braddock and Gould enjoyed a string of successes. But in 1929, when "Jersey Jim" had become a light-heavyweight, [he lost](#) to [Tommy Loughran](#). Since then, it was downhill for Braddock.

By 1933, his career as a boxer seemed finished. [Gould](#) had already lost more than his fighter's prior wins since the Great Depression had stripped him of his financial well-being:

He [Braddock] and Gould had trouble getting enough to eat, but if one had a plate of beans he split it with the other. (Gould's obituary.)

Without boxing opportunities, Braddock worked the docks in Hoboken - when he could. His efforts there helped to strengthen his left hand, always the weakest link in his boxing abilities.

Nine months after Jim's last effort at fighting, Gould had an idea. [Max Baer](#) (who once said of himself, "I got a million-dollar body and a ten-cent brain") was set to challenge [Primo Carnera](#) (the 6'7," 270-pounds champion) for the heavyweight championship. Maybe that would give Braddock (broke, desperate, and unable to give his children regular meals) a chance to come back - on the undercard.

Gould's begging of boxing promoters worked. Braddock would fight John "Corn" Griffin as a warmup to the big fight.

In those days, big boxing matches were fought [outside](#). Places like [Boyle's Thirty Acres](#) (in Jersey City, where the 1921 Dempsey-Carpentier bout was fought and [broadcast](#) live) and Madison Square [Garden Bowl](#) (in Long Island City) could hold tens of thousands of spectators. If Braddock won at such a forum, people would notice.

In fact, Jimmy took out Griffin in three rounds. It was an impressive win. Baer (clearly [mismatched](#) in size and weight) won, too - by knocking [Carnera](#) down eleven times in eleven rounds. At the end of both matches, people said:

Did you see Braddock? Maybe he's got something left.

Not if Max had anything to say about it.

A powerful fighter, Baer had most experts convinced that no one could escape hits from his right hand. His blows were so terrifying that one man - Frankie Campbell - died as a result. Baer was devastated by what happened, was arrested for manslaughter (the charges were later dropped) and gave the winnings of his next few fights to Campbell's family.

No one would have believed that Jimmy Braddock could even step into the ring with Baer for a major fight. But Braddock's victory over Corn Griffin gave him other opportunities.

In November of 1934, he defeated [John Henry Lewis](#) (pictured here, on the left, with Joe Louis) in ten rounds. He then won a fifteen-round [match against Art Lasky](#) (who had lost only once in his prior fifteen fights). Braddock shot up in the ratings. His next opponent? Max Baer.

Max Baer, world heavyweight champion, could not lose a fight where the underdog Braddock had [ten-to-one odds](#) against him. But then ... something happened.

As if Braddock didn't have enough to fight for - to provide his family with a better life than he'd been able to give them for a long time - someone gave him even more motivation. At the time, the worst thing anyone could call a fighter was "a bum." Somebody called Braddock "a bum."

Jim, who (at that point) had never been knocked out in his entire career, was upset:

I may not be a great fighter, but I ain't a bum.

The fight with Baer was set. Jim Braddock, the down-on-his-luck underdog, had plenty of personal motivation to beat Baer.

He had more going for him than individual determination, however. Like Seabiscuit, three years later, he also had a whole country of down-on-their-luck people cheering for his victory.

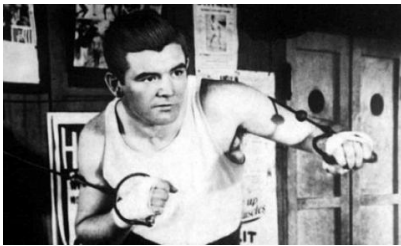
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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/JOE-GOULD-and-MAX-BAER-Cinderella-Man>

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Media Stream

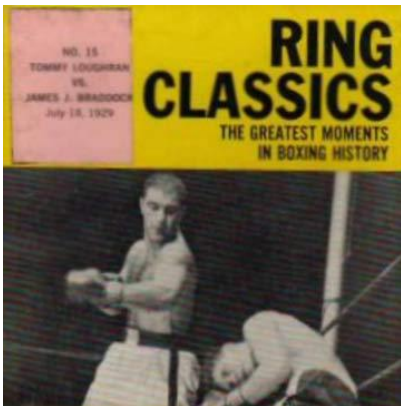


Jim Braddock - Cinderella Man

Boxing.com; Unnamed photographer

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Braddock Loss To Tommy Loughran

Image online, courtesy murphsplace.com website.

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Tommy Loughran

Image online, courtesy the [cyberboxingzone.com](http://www.cyberboxingzone.com) website.

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Max Baer

Image online, courtesy the [Boxing Scene](#) website.

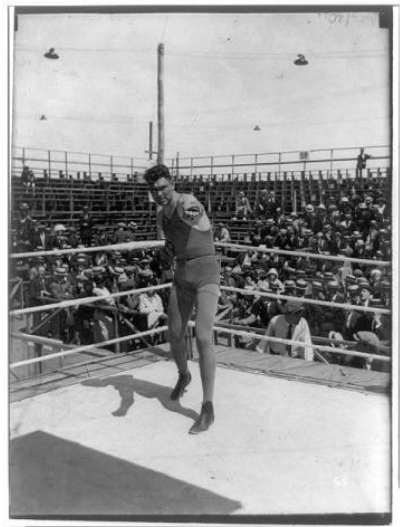
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Primo Carnera

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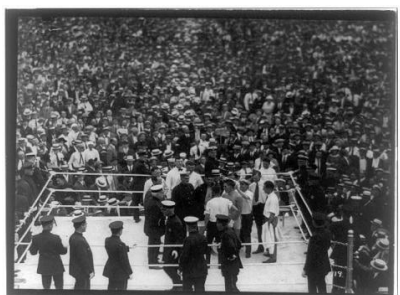


Outside Boxing Ring

Image online, courtesy the U.S. Library of Congress. Photo 3b35133r.

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Boyle's Thirty Acres

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Max Baer and Primo Carnera

Image online, courtesy the freewebs.com website.

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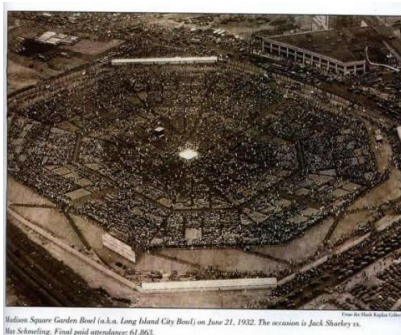


Jimmy Braddock and Art Lasky

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Madison Square Garden Bowl

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John Henry Lewis and Joe Lewis

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