

PUNCHING WITH PEMBERTON

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WHEN BILLY BOWLED THEM OVER

By J. EARLE PEMBERTON

William George (Billy) Parsons, former lightweight and welter-weight boxing champion of the Maritime Provinces, was born on September 8, 1880, in beautiful Cadroy Valley, Newfoundland. He was the son of the late John Parsons and Mrs. Benjamin Gallop (his mother marrying again after the death of his father). He first came to North Sydney with his parents when nine years old.

Billy Parsons started his boxing career in 1903 in the State of Maine. Entering an amateur tournament, he had to fight twice in the same night, winning both by knockouts. In 1908 Billy entered the Maritime Amateur Tournament which was staged in the old King's Theatre at Glace Bay, N. S. In this tournament to decide the championships of the Maritimes, Billy was tossed in no less than four times in the same night, and emerged victor in all four along with the Amateur Lightweight Championship. He then turned professional and won the Light and Welterweight Championships of the Maritimes. During his long career which stretched over a period of 43 years, Billy engaged in 138 ring battles. He won 128, lost 8, drew one. He decisioned 10 and won the amazing number of 118 via the knockout route. One of his first bouts in Cape Breton was held at the old Strathcona Rink, North Sydney in 1909, when he took on Dan Bowie, Lightweight Champion of South Africa. It was slated for ten rounds but Billy handed Bowie such a terrific pasting he was forced to quit in the seventh. Big Joe MacInnis, former Glace Bay Police Chief, lost on a foul to Ed Campbell of Little Bras D'Or on the same card.

Fine Hockey Player

Billy didn't confine his activities to the prize ring. He was also a very fine hockey player. He started with the old North Sydney Victorias in 1902, 1903, 1904 and 1905. He then shifted over to Glace Bay and played with the old C. M. B. A. team in the Colliery League. Some of his team-mates comprised the following wellknown hockey players of that period: Joe Debison, Billy Wilkie, Murdock MacKinnon, Reggie Brehaut, Dr. "Big Dan" MacNeil, Jack MacLeod, Ed Sharp, Frank "Tanker" MacMinium, Toby MacDonald, Billy Hay and others. It was Billy who selected the team and acted as captain. This was the year the C. M. B. A. team won the Cruise Trophy and the championship for 1906. Billy

continued to play on the C. M. B. A. team in 1907, 1908 and 1909. In 1913 Billy was a spare player and trainer with the Sydney Millionaires team that journeyed to Quebec to playoff with the Quebec Bulldogs for the famous Stanley Cup and although they lost both games the Sydney team made a very good showing. In 1912, the year previous, the Stanley Cup was given to the pros when the champions of the

National and Pacific Coast Leagues met in a playoff and induced the trustees to present it to the victorious Quebec Bulldogs.

Thrilling Battles

Old-timers well remember the thrilling battles Billy had with Charlie Lucca at the old Roslyn Rink in Sydney. Lucca was a crack Ohio Lightweight and was trained by Billy Papke, World Middleweight Champion. In his first meeting with Lucca, Billy won a ten-round decision. In their second go Billy ko'd Lucca in four rounds. Billy lost on a foul in the 7th round to Eddie Shevlin of Boston, former New England Welterweight Champion. In 1914 Billy took on Johnny Boyle of Boston, New England Lightweight Champion. Billy described this bout as the toughest of his career. "I took quite a lacing for five rounds," said Billy. "But in the sixth the pace began to tell on Boyle and I knocked him out in the seventh." Billy also fought Marty O'Brien of New York at the old King's Theatre in 1914. O'Brien came to Cape Breton to fight Mickey MacIntyre and Billy went on as a sub. He knocked O'Brien out in the 7th round, breaking his jaw.

After considerable correspondence we have it on good authority that this same Marty O'Brien is none other than Frank Sinatra, sr., father of Frankie "Boy" Sinatra, famous crooner and movie actor. Another interesting fact is that Sinatra Sr., was a member of the Hoboken, N. J. Fire Department for years, having retired on pension some time ago.

McGraw Was Tough

In 1914 at Kentville, N. S., Billy took on Kid McGraw, a soldier stationed at Aldershot, with the 77th Division of the American Army.

"This McGraw was a tough one," said Billy, "In the 9th round I hit him high on the head with a hard right, he went down and took a 9-count. I broke my hand, the pain was almost unbearable. I managed to hold him off with one hand 'till the 11th, then I knocked him out with my left hand. It was the first time that he had ever been ko'd. While his seconds were bringing him around, the doctor was setting the broken bone in my hand. McGraw told me later that he didn't think I had power enough in my left hand to knock him out." "I didn't even see it coming," said McGraw. "He fought under the name of McGraw, but I don't think that was his right name," said Billy.

Cecil Sutherland of North Sydney refereed the bout.

KO'S BURNS AND SUTTON

In 1915 at Halifax, Billy challenged any two leading lightweights in the Maritimes to meet him on the same card.

Police Sergeant White of the Halifax Police Force, who was looking after Billy, wouldn't allow him to fight twice in the same night. Two separate bouts were arranged. One with Ernest Sutton of Toronto, the other with Kid Burns of Glace (continued on page 4)

Five \$10 Draws

No. 88



Dominion Coal Co. Boiler Shop Bowling Team, Glace Bay, N. S. Cape Breton Champions of 1925. All competition was for the Noblett Shield. Living: Johnnie MacKay, Victor Taylor, Frank Lewis, Neil MacDonald. Deceased: Stuart McCawley, J. W. MacKenzie, D. H. "Doug" MacFarlane, Billy Preston, Harry Roper, Ronald Currie, Billy Parsons.

"Scrum Up, Caledonia!"

HIGHLIGHTS IN THE HISTORY OF THE FAMOUS
CALEDONIA ATHLETIC CLUB

By J. EARLE PEMBERTON

Caledonia Captures 19th Straight Crown

On October 28, 1939, senior rugby ended in Cape Breton for the season in a driving rain storm and Caledonia annexed the Cape Breton title for the 19th consecutive season by shutting out a willing, game but outclassed Sydney team, 20-0. Rain which started early in the morning literally poured for two hours before the game and all during the time the teams were battling in the mud. When referee Roy MacDonald started the match, the Sydney Street field was practically covered with water and after the first minute of play the ball was greasy and accounted for many fumbles.

Costly Fumbles

Sydney was weak at fullback, "Slug" White's inability to clear promptly, costing at least three tries against his team, as smart Caledonian's pounced in on him while he fumbled or failed to kick the ball out of danger. Outstanding for the Sydney team was stocky Abe Khattar, whose tackling was one of the features of a hard fought match. The Sydney team used poor judgment at times in their kicking, a fact that the Caledonian's never failed to take advantage of. The Caledonia backfield worked smoothly and frequently staged really fine ground-gaining passing plays with five and six players handling the slippery ball. Murrant, Morris, Adshade, Anderson, MacIntyre and MacInnis making a number of fine runs. The playing of young Adshade, who was the 1939 football find in the Cape Breton League, was really fine, and reminiscent of the late lamented "Sandy" MacMullin, whose place back of the scrum he filled in a manner that left nothing to be desired. The Caledonia front line proved better "mud horses" than their rivals and at no stage of the game were they threatened.

George Nicholson

Although taken out of his army uniform to fill in at fullback, George Nicholson rarely had a chance to handle the ball. Caledonia continued to put on an effective blockade at the fifteen minute mark. Don MacInnis got his hands on a loose ball and dived into a puddle for the third try. George Nicholson essayed the goal kick which was a bit wide. Shortly after Nicholson came close to clicking on a penalty kick. Shortly after the second half got underway, "Mutt" Morris got a pass and was away on a great run but was tackled hard near the Sydney line, requiring first aid. For the remainder of the game it was noticeable that he "favored" his right arm and shoulder. From a scrummage on the low side of the field, the ball was fed to "Fess" Anderson who ran 35 yards to score another try for Caledonia. MacIntyre failed to kick the goal. Shortly afterwards, the Caledonia backs got the ball at Sydney's ten yard line and Bob Murrant took the seventh pass to race over the Sydney line and place the ball between the

posts, from which position Ewen Wilton kicked the only goal of the game.

CALEDONIA: Fullback, George Nicholson; Three-quart., Bob Murrant, Addie MacIntyre, "Mutt" Morris and Charlie Phillips; Halves, "Syd" Adshade, "Fess" Anderson and Don MacInnis; Forwards, Ewen Wilton, Mac Cameron, Bob Wadman, Art Nalepka, "Soggy" Boutillier, Fox Travis and Charlie "Jut" Wadman. **SYDNEY:** Fullback, "Slug" White; Three-quarters, MacDonald, Ray Powell, McAdam and MacMaster; Halves, Abe Khattar, Lake and Thompson; Forwards, J. W. Mombourquette, Morrison, Kellar, Maholic, MacEachern, Dan Mombourquette and Steele.

A Tribute To Sandy MacMullin

"This is the last rugby match I'll play," said the late Sandy MacMullin, star scrum half for Caledonia, just before the team went on the field to win the McCurdy Cup from Halifax Wanderers, at South St. Grounds, Saturday, November 17th, 1934, "I may kick a ball again but I'm through with rugby", the ace of Maritime rugby players said to coach Broph MacDonald.

Yes, Sandy played his last game. When he made that remark to coach Broph MacDonald, Broph smiled and shrugged his shoulders. He had heard Sandy in a similar vein before but when the rugby season rolled around Sandy was always the first player out for practice.

He had given his best years to the game, and never missed a match in nine years—an unequalled record in Eastern Canadian rugby. Less than three days after playing that last game "Sandy" was electrocuted while repairing a light fixture in the basement of his home in Glace Bay, N. S.

The late Dr. Dan MacNeil, lifelong friend of "Sandy" MacMullin, paid the following tribute to the memory of his friend:

"I have known 'Sandy' MacMullin since he was six years of age, meeting him for the first time when I treated him professionally. He, at that young age, took his castor oil without a frown. As years passed and he grew to manhood, I met him at his home, I met him on the street, and he was always the same, smiling. I refereed many games of football in which 'Sandy' took part. I did not watch him because I knew he would not break a rule. He lived an exemplary life. He lived the life I would advise all young men to follow."

SOME EARLY FOOTBALL HISTORY

The football idea appears to have originated in England in the 11th Century, with the Danish Skull as the first target of the booter. The long-accepted idea has the football known to the ancient Greeks and Romans. But nowhere can be found definite evidence that the game was played anywhere on earth before its beginning in England. It was in 1175, that England first recognized the limb-strengthening qualities of football, when many Sir Lord's and Noble's "rushed" and "scrimmaged" and "kicked" through the "scrum", as common mortals.

Grew in Favor

The game grew in favor, reaching a front page climax in 1365, when the boys began to "rough it up", then King Edward III had it prohibited. King Richard II, endorsed Edward's decree and no professional football was allowed. If these royal gentlemen could see a game of football or hockey—1962 brand they would send troops to "draw and quarter" the whole "blooming" team. King James I (of Scotland and England) many years later forbade football, but lots of "bootleg" games were played in quiet parks, when the eagle eye of the law looked on from behind hedges, and enjoyed the fun.

The great Shrove Tuesday Festival was inaugurated in James time and disappeared about 1830. Then about a hundred and twenty years ago the English colleges and public schools kept the game alive. The Great School at Rugby had an annual football game in 1822 with hundreds on each side. There were no rules, no off-sides, interference was tolerated, clothes torn, shins kicked, heads punched. Everything went, the only object was to get the ball across the field into opponents "goal gate".

Introduced in Maritimes

In the Maritimes the game was introduced by the Imperial Army and Navy, and great teams developed in Charlottetown (the Abegweits) in 1884, the Wanderers in Halifax in 1882, a New Glasgow team of great renown in 1884, Dalhousie College played first in an organized league about 1888, Acadia joined in 1889. The first game "Dal" played was against the Wanderers and the score was a tie. In a return match "Dal" won and the Wanderers received their first defeat in eight years. The score was eight safety touches to nothing. In those days if you touched for safety you lost a point.

"Line-up of the Dead"

At a public reception tendered the famous Caledonia rugby team some years ago, the late Stewart McCawley recalled some of the great sports of the old brigade who planted the flag of Caledonia rugby and kept it flying. "A line-up of the dead", a Caledonia team in heaven:

Fullback—Captain Dr. Walter McLean, one of the outstanding surgeons of the First Great War.

Half—Wilsey MacLean, full of fight and pep.

Half—John Willie Wilson, "the little stick of dynamite", killed in France.

Half—Captain Norman Murray, of South Africa and Flanders fame. Half—Captain Jack Martin, a fast snappy sport who gave his life for Canada.

Quarter—Tanker MacMillan, one of the most popular all round athletes with a South African Honor and a Salonika M. C.

Quarter—Allan MacLean, of the No. 3 Tunnellers, and there were never any better.

For a forward line we had a bunch of giants;

Angus MacMillan, "Lady Angus", 250 lbs.

Lionel Frizzell, 250 lbs.

Big 'Tim MacIntyre, 260 lbs.

Jimmy MacEachern, killed in France.

Sam Wilson, Sergt. in 36th Battery, killed in France.

Jack Boutillier, of Little Bras D'Or.

Jack Nicholson, that loveable step dancer and good sport.

Big Norman MacIntyre, one of the great three brothers of football fame.

These were mighty men, all fighters, all thoroughbreds and winners. Can you name a line-up to beat them.

"Addie" MacIntyre

Adrian "Addie" MacIntyre who met an untimely death January 17, 1951, in Caledonia Colliery played fullback for Caledonia when the blue and whites dominated the Eastern Canadian English rugby scene. One of the best of Glace Bay's best known athletes. He was a member of the Main St. Hawks, a junior football team that won the Maritime Championship for Glace Bay in the mid-thirties.

"Addie" starred as fullback with the Caledonia rugby team for many years and was with the squad in some of its most gruelling contests against the best in Eastern Canada. He was a hockey player of no mean ability and through the years was a staunch supporter of all types of sport. His jovial and friendly nature made him popular with all his associates. In summing up we can truthfully say that "Addie" MacIntyre never had an enemy in his life".

Departed Stars

We could go on and on paying tribute to departed stars of the Caledonians. Maybe, some autumn day in the not too distant future we will pick up the Cape Breton Post and read this happy announcement "Rugby Football at South Street Field". Caledonia vs Wanderers, or Caledonia vs Dalhousie, or Mount Allison, or St. F. X., or U. N. B., or Montreal. The whistle will blow and once again we will hear that old familiar phrase "Scrum up Caledonia", and you can bet your bottom dollar that when the blue and white's take the field the ghosts of Charlie MacVicar, John McCarthy and Johnnie Burns will be watching from the sidelines.

One by one we watch them march on by,
From vanished years they move
Across the field
Great stars that knew their days
In fame's bright sun
I hear them tramping to oblivion.

TYRONE GARDINER

A Review of His Boxing Career

By J. EARLE PEMBERTON

Back in 1952, a wide-eyed, curly-headed kid on his way home from Ashby School in Sydney, Nova Scotia, made a habit of dropping in at the Steelworkers Union Hall gym on Prince Street, to watch the boxers work out. The kid started playing around with the heavy training bag and eventually sparring with some of the boys. In April, 1954, they closed the gym and the kid moved up to the Venetian Gardens, joining the stable of veteran trainer Johnny Nemis. And that's the story of how young Tyrone Gardiner embarked on a fistic career to battle his way to the Maritime lightweight championship and leading contender for the Canadian title.

Started as a Pro

In his first fight under Nemis in September, 1954, he won by a second round knockout wally "Boon Boom" Gillis. He fought 13 times under Nemis, from September 1954 to June 18, 1956. In November, 1958, Gardiner started fighting under the guiding star of John Cechetto. At this point I will turn you over to Tyrone himself and let him give you a few of the highlights in his ring career. Here's Tyrone, "When I started with Mr. Cechetto opponents were scarce and I had to fight men much heavier. After fighting Harold "Tobacco" Tonnelly in July, 1960, Mr. Cechetto told me to quit fighting or I was going to get hurt and that he wouldn't let me fight again unless I was going to train hard and show him that I was in top condition before each fight.

The night I fought Sugar Ray Mascoli, at Venetian Gardens in 1960, he weighed 169, I weighed 135. When I fought Bobby MacNeill in February, 1961, he weighed 157, I came in at 136.

For the past two years I have let no one bandage my hands but Eric Cechetto and we have had no injuries. It seems that he does something in the way he bandages, that my hands are relaxed throughout the fight.

Best Fight

"I would say that my fight with Leroy "Rocco" Jones was my best. He used every trick he knew and he had plenty of them. He was the most experienced man I fought. It was the first full ten round bout I engaged in.

Toughest Fight

"My fight with Rejean Roberts was my toughest. I could hit him as hard and often as I pleased, but he would just keep coming at me. After you pound a guy like that for a few rounds you sure get worried. To make it all the harder it went the full ten rounds.

Roughest Fight

"My ten round bout with Rolly Thibault was the roughest I engaged in to date. He bullied and rushed me to the ropes at every opportunity. In one of the clinches he picked me up in a crotch hold (wrestling style) and slammed me to the floor. He could have been disqualified for his foul tactics, but I wanted to win fair and square.



TYRONE GARDINER

Lost to Sprague

"I dropped a six-round decision to Les Sprague, of Amherst, at the Halifax Forum last November. I am very anxious to meet Sprague in a return bout. My manager did everything possible to get Sprague instead of Thibault. We offered him his own price, but he refused on the grounds that he wanted a few tune-up bouts. Just recently, we have been offered a ten-round bout with Sprague, in Halifax. But why should we go to Halifax? We met him on his own stamping grounds the first time and feel that he should come to Cape Breton if he wants a shot at the Maritime Crown. We also feel that in justice to Cape Breton Boxing Fans, the bout should be staged locally.

In Superb Condition

"What are my plans for the future? At the present time I am in superb condition and intend to keep that way. I would like nothing better than a crack at the Canadian Lightweight Crown. I think I have proved, in my victories over Jones, Robert, Speight and Thibault, that I am a very worthy contender. I wish to take this opportunity to give a verbal pat on the back to my manager and promoter, Mr. John Cechetto, the man who through loss of time and money has made it all possible for the progress I have made in the boxing ring. To me he will always be "the grandest guy in boxing."

Tyrone Gardiner's Boxing Record

Tyrone Gardiner, Sydney, N. S., Lightweight Champion of the Maritime Provinces, Leading Contender for Canadian Lightweight Title. Was born April 2, 1939, in Sydney, Nova Scotia.

- 1954
September 6 — Wallie Gillis, Sydney, KO, 2
- 1955
January 1 — Kid Chiasson, Sydney, Draw, 4
January 21 — Leckie Mansfield, Sydney, Won, 4
March 11 — Leckie Mansfield, Sydney Mines, KO, 1
July 14 — Ernie Nearing, Sydney, Won, 4
September 4 — Nelson MacPhee, Sydney, Won, 4
December 3 — Ron Duff, Sydney, Won, 4
- 1956
January 2 — Chuck MacIntyre, New Waterford, Lost, 4
May 14 — Ron Duff, Stellarton, KO 2
May 21 — Jack MacPhee, Glace Bay, Lost, 4
June 4 — Jack Spangale, Stellarton, KO 1
June 18 — Mike MacNeil, Stellarton, Lost, 4
Sugar Ray Mascoli, Glace Bay, Won, 4
- 1958
November 27 — Harold Tonnelly, Sydney, Draw, 3
- 1959
January 1 — Keith Gabriel, Sydney, Won, 6
November 12 — Tony Perry, Sydney, KO by, 5
- 1960
January 1 — Kenny Dean, Sydney, Draw
April 2 — Tony Perry, Sydney, Lost, 6
May 23 — George Munroe, Sydney, Lost, 4
July 8 — Tobacco Tonnelly, Sydney, Lost, 4
October 28 — Kenny Dean, Sydney, KO, 3
November 24 — Sugar Ray Mascoli, Sydney, Won, 4
- 1961
January 2 — Nick Hashey, Sydney, KO, 1
February 16 — Bobby MacNeill, Sydney, KO 4
May 20 — George Munroe, Sydney, Won, 6
July 28 — Elroy Sparks, Sydney, KO, 1
- 1961
Sept. 8 — Leroy "Rocco" Jones, Sydney, Won, 10
Sept. 29 — Rejean Robert, Sydney, Won, 10

- October 27 — Jimmy Calhoun, Sydney, KO, 4
November 27 — Les Sprague, Halifax, Lost, 6
- 1962
January 1 — Leo Steele, Sydney, KO, 1
April 18 — Bob Speight, Sydney, KO, 3
May 19 — Rolly Thibault, Sydney, Won, 10

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When Billy Bowled Them Over

(continued from page 1)

Bay. Billy met Sutton on a Friday night and knocked him out in three rounds. The following Friday he took Kid Burns and knocked him out in 14 seconds of the first round, breaking one of the Kid's collar bones. Mickey MacIntyre was in Burn's corner and Allie Lewis was Parsons' chief handler. When Billy had Sutton, he had two young bellhops from the Queen Hotel as seconds.

Space does not permit a full account of all the bouts Billy engaged in. He was in there seven times with Mickey MacIntyre, with honors about even. Five times he went to bat with the famous Bernard "Kid" O'Neill of Halifax, all were draws. He took on Roddie "Big Pay" MacDonald and won in 9 rounds. Billy's weight was 131½ pounds and Roddie came in at 158 pounds.

Retires at 47

In 1924, at the age of 44, after campaigning 21 years, Billy engaged in a headline bout with Johnnie Gillis, then Maritime Lightweight Champion, and although he lost he proved he could still go a route if necessary. "I was not in good condition," said Billy. To prove that he still had something on the ball, Billy kept in training and in September, 1927, at Moncton, N. B., he took on two Maritime Lightweight men in the short space of one week.

On a Tuesday night he fought Jerry Walsh and knocked him out in seven rounds. The following Tuesday he took on "Pop" Mason and put him away in three. These were Billy's last ring engagements. He hung them up for good.

Down through the years Billy Parsons devoted his time and talent to sport. He was a star bowler and was captain of several champion-ship bowling teams.

Started McKenna on Career

He started North Sydney's Jack McKenna on a fistie career which saw him rise to the Maritime Welterweight and Middleweight Championships. He trained and handled Jackie Campbell for his two thrilling Maritime Featherweight Championship bouts with Ernie MacLeod at the old Savoy Theatre in Glace Bay. In younger days Billy blew the whistle at hockey matches all over the island. He was the third man in the ring at most of Cape Breton's important boxing bouts. He was a valued member of the Cape Breton Boxing Commission and served as the Northside representative since its formation. Also, he had been a member of the North Sydney Fire Department for over 40 years, 15 as Chief until his retirement in 1958. Talking to Billy in 1955, the writer put this question, "What do you think of the training methods of present day boxers?" "Not so good," was his answer, "They don't concentrate on hitting, they don't step in and hit like the old-timers. They hit going away and maul too much on the inside." Billy added, "I only wish I was twenty-five again."

On Wednesday, January 31, 1962, William George "Billy" Parsons

died at St. Elizabeth Hospital in North Sydney.

The passing of Billy Parsons at 82 removed a colorful figure from the Maritime sport scene.

* * * *

There is so little anyone can write When one has left that leaves a void so great.
There is so little left to morning's light,
Or noonday sun or sunsets at the gate.
There should be something that can take the place
Of his firm handclasp and his winning smile.
There should be something in life's killing pace
To bring lost dreams to some dim afterwhile.

But there is now a fairer place ahead
Where those of us who knew him well shall meet
The one we've missed—beyond the last good-bye,
Waiting for us beneath a summer sky.

GRADUATE

What has become of that small boy,
Who cried at the oddest thing;
Just having a baby tooth pulled out,
Afraid of a bit of string?

And what became of that little girl,
Who always hid her head,
Fearful of ghosts in a darkened room,
At night when she went to bed?

Yet there they are, standing on the stage,
And they're graduating, too;
With heads held high, and brave young hearts,
And ideals that are Staunch and true.

—Ellen H. Bowers



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