

# The GOLDEN BANTAMS

By TED CARROLL

FOR the first time in 13 years a bout between bantams caused a bit of a stir in New York City. Not since Cleveland's Georgie Pace and Brooklyn's Lou Salica tangled in a 118 lb. title bout in New York back in 1940 has the big town even noticed the existence of the little fellows.

On Aug. 17 in Brooklyn's Eastern Parkway little Henry "Pappy" Gault met California's Billy Peacock for the North American version of the title and Gault was relieved of the honor by the challenger Peacock in 12 fairly exciting rounds. A raft of tiny one time greats of the division sat in on the proceedings all of them no doubt longing for the good old days of yore when the bantamweight class was the most popular in the U. S.

This was during the so-called Golden Twenties when boxing rings from coast to coast were overrun with the little busy bees. Every hamlet had its bantamweight fighter and how the public loved them! The turnstiles clicked so merrily whenever they performed that they should have been called the Golden Bantams. Like the cocky birds from which they derived their names they waged unceasing warfare upon each other. They became standard bearers of the places they represented and local pride was as much at stake when they met each other as professional standing.

They were born too soon, the bantam battlers of the 1920-1929 era. That group would have been enough to take care of today's rapacious demands of TV for talent. Back in those days, there was so much action among these little guys that by themselves they kept boxing interest high throughout the country.

New York City, for instance, hasn't a single bantamweight boxer of main bout proportions. Contrast this famine with the situation during the Twenties when every part of town had its own local hero in this class.

Many of them were champions and near champions like Joe Lynch the spindly Irish kid from New York's west side, who held the title in 1920. Just a few blocks below Lynch's old rough and ready Hells Kitchen neighborhood, one of the most picturesque little fellows of them all, Little Jack Sharkey was the darling of Greenwich Village.



...TIMMY McLARNIN WAS A LITTLE SPEED MARVEL WHEN HE WAS A BANTAM.

What a man was Little Jack Sharkey! A cherubic handsome midget, he sported a cane, cloth top shoes, pearl gray vest, derby tilted over one eye, a carnation in his lapel, and loved the Broadway flash and dash so much he never won the title although he had the ability of a champion. Sharkey and



Lynch had been the principles in a great battle held in old Madison Sq. Garden right after the passing of the Walker Law which brought boxing back to New York. So stirring was this contest, a draw, the whole country became bantamweight conscious and the little guys were off on a pinwheel of prosperity that lasted almost a decade.

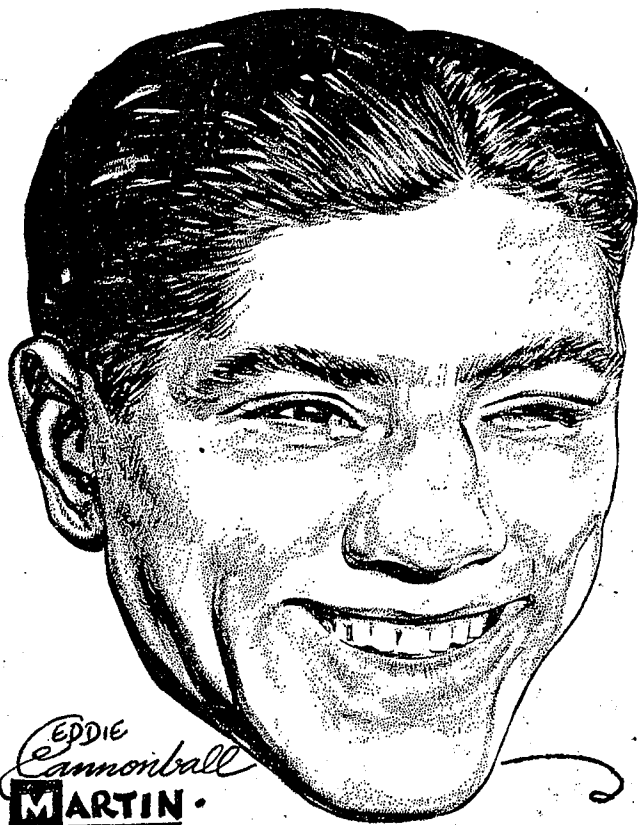
A few miles north of the stamping grounds of Lynch and Sharkey another great and colorful bantamweight, Midget Smith, was the little "bigshot" of his Harlem section. Most of the midget's battles were classics with never a letup for sustained thrills and action. The chesty Midget also served in both World Wars.

Across town on the east side, the canny and dangerous Abe Goldstein, was the ace. Abe was good enough to win the title back in 1924, from Lynch.

Close on the heels of these came Brooklyn's bow-legged little body puncher Eddie Cannonball Martin, who won the championship from Goldstein, and East Harlem's gamester Charley Phil Rosenberg, who took it from Martin.

Rosenberg, whose real name was Charles Green became Phil Rosenberg, when a fighter of that name failed to show up one evening, and he came out of the audience to fill in for the absentee and also adopt his monicker.

Along with these, keeping the boxing bee buzzing in other New York neighborhoods during the Golden Decade were stalwarts like Packy O'Gatty, flashy fellow from the lower east side, Georgie Daly who followed Lynch on the west side, Barry Hill, Harry Gordon, Vic Burrone from Greenwich Village. Frankie Jerome was the pride of the Bronx, Phil Franchini, Joe Ryder, a real tough nut, Archie Bell a cagy boxer, rugged boys Lilly Levine and Charley Goodman were all Brooklyn Favorites. Willie Spencer was the prize protege of Johnny Keyes, the Mayor of Chinatown. Clever Sammy Nable and tough little Sammy Cohen who now weighs 230 lbs. were east side products. Lower Harlem rallied behind lanky Dominick Petrone and Danny Lee



Eddie  
Cannonball  
**MARTIN**

...A COLORFUL BANTAM, OF  
THE "GOLDEN TWENTIES"...

—TED GRAY—

and Harry London represented uptown New York neighborhoods.

IN THE late Twenties Pete Sanstol came over from Norway and became one of the hottest local favorites the big town ever had. Pete, flashy, colorful and capable fought in the Ridgewood Grove Club in the Queens section of New York no less than 26 times in one year, packing the place every time.

Whenever they cared to venture out of town, there was plenty of opposition for the big town bantams or, if they preferred it that way, the outlanders invaded New York to tackle them. Chicago's Joe Burman was a frequent rival of Lynch, Sharkey, and Midget Smith. Memphis Pal Moore, a hard man to beat, bamboozled bantams from coast to coast with his tantalizing, scientific style of boxing. Out in Cleveland, the fans regarded Carl Tremaine as the best combination boxer and puncher in the class.

New Bedford, Mass., had a wonderful bantam boxer in Chick Suggs who once ran up a winning streak of more than 60 bouts. Providence, R. I., had a couple of topnotchers in clever Young Montreal and rough, tough Terry Martin. Andy Martin of Boston, was a tough problem for the best of them as was Abe Friedman, also a Boston boy.

Kid Williams, came out of the past in 1920 and raised plenty of Cain among the newer bantams around Baltimore for several years. In his prime the Kid was a slugger, he came back a boxer and did very well at it.

Pete Herman, is often called the best of the Golden Bantams. Down in New Orleans where the former champion hailed from, this is taken for granted. Jersey City had a champion in Johnny Buff, and Irish Johnny Curtin was just about as good. Mickey Russell from the same town gave all his foes plenty of trouble.

Wheeling, West Va., had a good bantam in unpublicized Bernie Hahn.

In Utica, N. Y., after all these years, dancing Bushey Graham is still a home town hero. Years past his prime the bouncing Graham tried it again as a lightweight and didn't do badly.

Bud Taylor made Terre Haute, Ind., famous as the Terre

Haute Terror. They were few better or more colorful fighters in any class than this talented bantamweight who won title recognition back in 1927.

Powerful Eddie Shea, Harold Smith and Earl Mastro kept things moving around Chicago opposing invading bantams. Sioux City Ia., had a good one in Earl McArthur and Earl Puryear of Denver had 300 fights against the ranking little men of his time and was never stopped. Philadelphia Patsy Wallace was a stubborn antagonist for anybody he fought and Cleveland's Jack Kid Wolfe rated among the best. A promising career was halted by the early passing of Amos Kid Carlin of New Orleans.

Popular, gentlemanly, little Danny Edwards of Seattle figured in the first mixed bout under the Walker Law facing Johnny Curtin. Emil Paluso came from Salt Lake City to New York to do very well, and McKeesport (Pa.) Tommy Ryan was a fine little fighter, as was Terry McHugh also from the Keystone state.

Fiery little Filipinos like the great Pancho Villa, a flyweight who did most of his battling in the bantam class, game Pete Sarmiento, and the unfortunate Clever Sencio, added more spice to the goings on among the bantams.

Clever Davey Abad, a "Papa Bob Levy" import from Panama, was a real boxing wizard. Panama Al Brown, a near six footer had too much height for his class. He gained his greatest popularity in Europe. His unusual build made him almost invincible among the bantams in the late Twenties.

Cowboy Eddie Anderson was a belting buckaroo from the badlands of Wyoming. Out on the coast Jimmy McLarnin was doing some great fighting as a bantam in the mid-twenties. No puncher then, the Vancouver boy was a boxing marvel. Coasters claim that at that weight he never had a superior. Many New Yorkers felt the same way about Tony Canzoneri. Canzoneri went on to gain great fame in the heavier divisions, but as a bantam he was terrific. His exhibition against Bushey Graham in the Garden back in 1926 was one of the best ever turned in by any boxer at that weight. He outsped and outboxed the upstate stylist at his own game.

The famous fighting Zivic family of Pittsburgh was well represented in the bantam lists by Pete, an able boxer and oldest of the boxing brothers.

Frankie Genaro, like Villa was only a flyweight but he was so good he did most of his boxing against bantams handling them with ease despite the fact he could make 110 lbs comfortably.

A bantamweight boxer fighting under his right name was an oddity in those days. Irish names were favored by most of the little scrappers. Sharkey, Graham, the Martins, Andy, Terry and Eddie, Joe Ryder, Willie Spencer, Shea, Harold Smith, O'Gatty, were all Italians. Archie Bell, Harry London, Danny Lee, Young Montreal were Jewish lads. All of these boys are still known by and use these names today years after boxing careers. Many members of their families also adopted the name of the fighter.

The Gault-Peacock battle was the first bantam title bout ever viewed by the TV audience. How different things were 30 years ago when the public thrilled to action among the little fellows almost every night in the week throughout the country. Those were the golden days of the golden bantams!

The recent announcement of the Carruthers-Gault title match to be held in Sidney, Australia on Nov. 13 accents the internationality of the bantamweight division despite its obscurity in the U. S. The title picture in the class has shifted from far off Johannesburg, South Africa, bailiwick of ex-titleholder Vic Toweel to remote Australia "down under" the globe. Carruthers appears to be too powerful a hitter for Gault, but the American should give a good account of himself.

Although Gault was called the loser in the Peacock battle many observers both, actual and TeeVee, took issue with the official decision. The little South Carolinian should be a worthy foe for the undefeated southpaw Carruthers, when they meet on November 13 at Sydney, Australia, and if successful in his try for the world title might bring about a resurgence of interest in the bantamweight class in the United States.