

BENNY CHAVEZ: THE ALMOST CHAMP

By ROBERT CARSON

The small shabby figure stood quietly on the street corner. A chill wind whipped the bottom of his gray overcoat and his thoughts raced back to a time that had long gone by.

He pulled his knarled, brown hands out of his coat pocket and looked at the misshapen knuckles. "Man, they came from miles around to see me fight," he mused to himself.

Little Benny Chavez was known as the Trinidad Terror, and was a character, both in, and out of the ring. In 1910 Benny was little more than a crude, back alley fighter, and proved master in his element in rough and tumble living on Denver's Market and Larimer Streets.

During one fracas another fighter spotted the tenacious Chavez and convinced him to enter one of Denver Athletic Club's amateur tournaments. Benny trained hard for months, with the expectation of winning honors in the tournament, but had to call it quits when his mother passed away in Trinidad, Colorado.

The sporting world forgot about the promising Mexican youth until a year later stories started appearing about the fighting abilities of Benny Chavez around Southern Colorado rings.

A five round knockout of tough Tommy Cody led to a fight with Patsy Brannigan, then a contender for the world's bantamweight title. The bout took place on Christmas day 1911, and Brannigan received a severe beating, but rallied to knock Benny out in the sixth round. Since Chavez was still 'green;' with only a dozen fights to his record, a rematch was arranged. Benny won the ten round decision after giving the Irishman a good shellacking.

After the Brannigan victory he met and beat Frankie Burns, and Frankie Conley. Conley was a real test since Frankie had kayoed Monte Attell in the 42th round in one of the last 45 round fights.

Chavez was matched against Eddie Campi for the disputed bantamweight title in Los Angeles, November 4, 1913. Benny didn't fight a fight, and lost a 20 round decision.

By this time Benny had changed managers, and under the new leadership



secured a bout with featherweight champ Johnny Kilbane. In a sort of unwritten agreement between both parties, it was agreed the fight should go the scheduled 15 rounds. On June 20th, 1914, at the old Stockyards Stadium in Denver, a huge crowd jammed the arena to see their hometown favorite give the champ a good trouncing. Fired with enthusiasm, Benny charged out at the opening bell throwing punches in wild abandon. Kilbane believing it was going to be an easy fight was taken completely by surprise, and at the end of the first round trudged back to his corner, a badly beaten fighter. During the minutes rest period Kilbane knew he had been crossed, and at the sound of the bell rushed out in a murderous fury. Benny gave no ground, and the two stood in the middle of the ring hitting the other with everything but the water bucket. Kilbane was a ring wise veteran, and before long saw an opening in Benny's defense. A short right flush on the

little Mexican's jaw put Benny down for the count.

Benny Chavez being the personality he was, shrugged the defeat off to bad judgement, and was back in ring action soon after.

The year 1914 saw him beat durable Gene Delmont twice, and get a 20 round draw with Richie Mitchell. It was a good year for Benny.

When 1915 rolled around, Benny, and top featherweight, Matty Smith engaged in seven bouts; four were 20 rounders, and three going to 15 rounds. Every fight was a 'knock-down-drag-out,' with both men being badly punished.

Benny switched his base of operation to Kansas City, Missouri, where boxing was enjoying much success. He fought and won over Tommy Buck, and beat highly regarded Harvey Thorpe. Midwestern fans took Benny to their hearts, and in time the 'Trinidad Terror' met, and married a beautiful, Kansas City, girl.

With his record piling victory after victory, Benny made the grave error of taking on British Empire Champion, Benny McNeil. The stage was set in St. Louis, and Benny Chavez fans came by the droves to watch their hero make mincemeat of the English champ. The fight lasted only six rounds with Benny Chavez being knocked cold.

This was the fight that finally put the Mexican belter on the shelf, as far as being a top notch fighter. His career wasn't that long, but during the six years, or so, he fought, it was against tough, and brutal competition. Benny never professed any science in his boxing, his style was taking two to give one.

In 1917 and 1918, Benny tried to rekindle the old spark, and fought a few bouts against mediocre opponents. The crowds didn't clammer to see him now, and there wasn't much press coverage.

After the First World War Benny sort of faded into the woodwork. He would be seen wondering the streets in Trinidad, Colorado, each time a little more shabby, a little more distant. As the years passed his name was all but forgotten.

On a cold, windy, day, in the spring of 1932, Benny stood on an icy street corner. His health was completely broken, penniless and just bone weary with living. The battle-scared, little pug watched as the cars, and

trucks sped past him, his eyes following from left to right. It seemed everyone had somewhere to go, and someone to go to. Benny looked down at his scuffed, and splitting shoes, with the toes curling up, and the heels gone, and gave a silent chuckle.

Without warning Benny Chavez flung himself in front of a fast moving transcontinental bus. The driver had no time to swerve and the huge vehicle left the one time contender a horribly mangled corpse.

The final judgment was suicide, and Benny was buried without fanfare, or audience.



Benny Chavez never won a world's title, although he came very close a couple of times. The Proverbial 'brass ring' always just beyond reach. He never gave any excuses for his defeats, just glad he was able to give the crowd their money's worth.

How quickly they forgot.....


BENNY CHAVEZ
 Birthplace Trinidad, CO
 Weight: 118-126 lbs

Early Record Incomplete

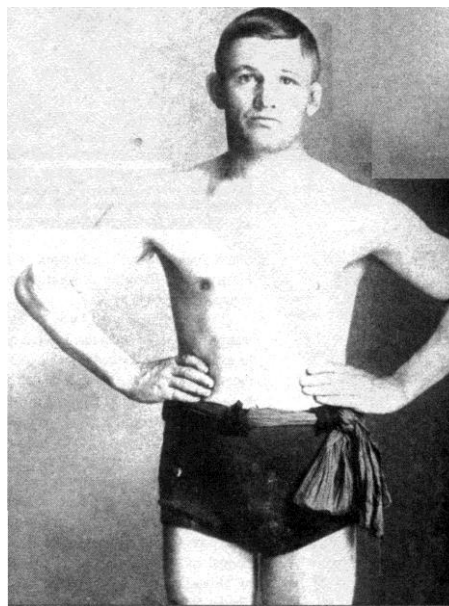
		1911			
--	Tommy Cody	Trinidad, CO	W KO	5	
Dec 25	Patsy Brannigan	Trinidad, CO	L KO	6	
		1912			
--	Patsy Brannigan	Trinidad, CO	W PTS	10	
Sep 2	Monte Attell	Trinidad, CO	W DQ	12	
		1913			
Aug 29	Frankie Burns	Denver, CO	D PTS	10	
Oct 7	Frankie Conley	Denver, CO	W PTS	10	
Nov 4	Eddie Campi	Los Angeles, CA	L PTS	20	
		1914			
May 29	Johnny Kilbane	Denver, CO	L KO	2	
--	Gene Delmont	Denver, CO	W PTS	10	
--	Gene Delmont	Denver, CO	W PTS	10	
Aug 18	Richie Mitchell	Denver, CO	D PTS	20	
Sep 28	Richie Mitchell	Milwaukee, WI	L KO	2	
		1915			
--	Matty Smith	Denver, CO	ND	20	
--	Matty Smith	Denver, CO	ND	20	
--	Matty Smith	Denver, CO	ND	20	
--	Matty Smith	Denver, CO	ND	20	
--	Matty Smith	Denver, CO	ND	15	
--	Matty Smith	Denver, CO	ND	15	
--	Matty Smith	Denver, CO	ND	15	
		1916			
Jan 3	Tommy Buck	Kansas City, MO	W PTS	10	
Jan 17	Tommy Buck	Kansas City, MO	W PTS	10	
Feb 14	Louisiana	Kansas City, MO	D	10	
Apr 10	Chick Hayes	Denver, CO	D	15	
May 22	Chick Hayes	Denver, CO	W PTS	20	
Jul 16	Chick Hayes	St. Joseph, MO	W PTS	15	
Nov 2	Freddy Alamarin	Kansas City, MO	W KO	10	
Nov 28	Benny McNeil	Trinidad, CO	L KO	7	
		1917			
Jan 29	Frankie Sanders	Trinidad, CO	Sch	15	
		1918			
Feb 26	Kid Davis	Salt Lake City	L PTS	10	
		1919			
May 24	Memphis Pal Moore	Racine, WI	ND	10	
Sep 9	Jack (Spike) Douglas	Douglas, AZ	L PTS	10	
Sep 23	Jack (Spike) Douglas	Albuquerque, NM	W PTS	15	
Oct 11	Ralph Lincoln	Tucson, AZ	L PTS	10	
Oct 28	Nick Gundy	Phoenix, AZ	W PTS	10	
Dec 25	Jack (Spike) Douglas	Clayton, NM	ND	12	
		1920			
--	Johnny Fiske	Col. Springs, CO	D	10	

THIS RECORD IS INCOMPLETE - ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS WELCOME!

BENNY CHAVEZ
 Featherweight Champion of Colorado, will meet
FRANKIE SANDERS
 the Fighting Wop of New York, for
15 ROUNDS AT 122 POUNDS RINGSIDE



National Athletic Club
 1445 Lawrence Street, Denver
MONDAY EVE, JAN. 29th
*Tickets at Burt Davis' Cigar Store, Sarconi's Billiard Hall
 and Mojestic Cigar Store*
4---GOOD PRELIMINARIES---4
 (OVER)



BLASTS FROM THE PAST

(Left photo)

CANZONERI - ROSS

(Right photo)

Cyclone Johnny Thompson

