

# FACTS STRANGER THAN FICTION

IN 1926, after winning the Lightweight Championship of the World from Rocky Kansas, Sammy Mandell went on a barnstorming tour that had him fighting sometimes twice a month in such towns as Oklahoma City, Toledo, Rockford, Illinois, and Louisville.

To get the 1927 season off to a good start, he fought tough Jimmy Lanning, the Scammon, Kansas "Scorpion", to a 10-round decision. On the 14th of January he fought Eddie Dwyer in Wichita. After two more fights, he took on Jackie Fields in Los Angeles, and fought a 12 round no-decision.

When the month of May rolled around, Mandell looked to Kansas City for a possible sight for a match.

It wasn't easy for a promoter to bring in an outstanding fighter, let alone a champion. The other problem was who would be a suitable opponent?

A journeyman boxer by the name of Steve Adams seemed like a good opponent for Mandell, and the date was set for June 1st.

In the semi wind-up "Tiny" Roebuck, massive Indian, and former Haskell Institute football star, knocked out veteran "Buck" Brady in the first round. The main event was about to begin.

A crowd of two thousand spectators watched as both fighters were given the referee's instructions, and round one got underway.

Mandell, known as one of the lightest hitters ever to hold a Championship, completely showered his opponent with punches, none of which was hard. Adams was the assault when the bell rang, ending the first round.

The second round, like the first, saw Mandell continuing to hit his opponent from all angles.

Two minutes of the second round had passed, when suddenly the boys got together in a flurry of blows. Mandell landed a short left somewhere in the region of Adams' stomach. It wasn't a particularly damaging blow, but just a matter of seconds after the clinch that followed, Adams staggered away from

## DEATH ST THE RING THE NIGHT SAMM COULDN'T FORGE

Born Stephen Adamozykie, Adams had crowded 110 professional fights into a period of five years. He had recently knocked out "Shuffle" Callahan, a tough puncher, but had a set-back when he received a bad beating from Harry Kahn in February. Adams, despite being just 24 years old, was a seasoned veteran.

On the morning of the 1st both fighters were examined, with the tests showing them to be in top condition.

	MANDELL	ADAMS
Pulse .. ..	74	74
Blood Pressure	70-140	80-120
Heart .. ..	O.K.	O.K.
Temperature ..	98	98
Weight .. ..	138	136

Mandell. His knees seemed to sag, but he straightened up, and almost catapulted several feet backward into the ropes, and crumbled to the canvas covering of the ring.

"That's the end," gasped the spectators, who went to the hall expecting to see Mandell win, but only on points.

Adams was stretched full length on the canvas, legs and body quivering. Walter Bates, the referee, commenced the mandatory count. At the count of ten the fallen fighter seemed to make a final effort to respond. A foot kicked up, and fell — that was all.

Spectators at ringside, and in the balconies stood on tip-toe to catch a view of the prostrate fighter.

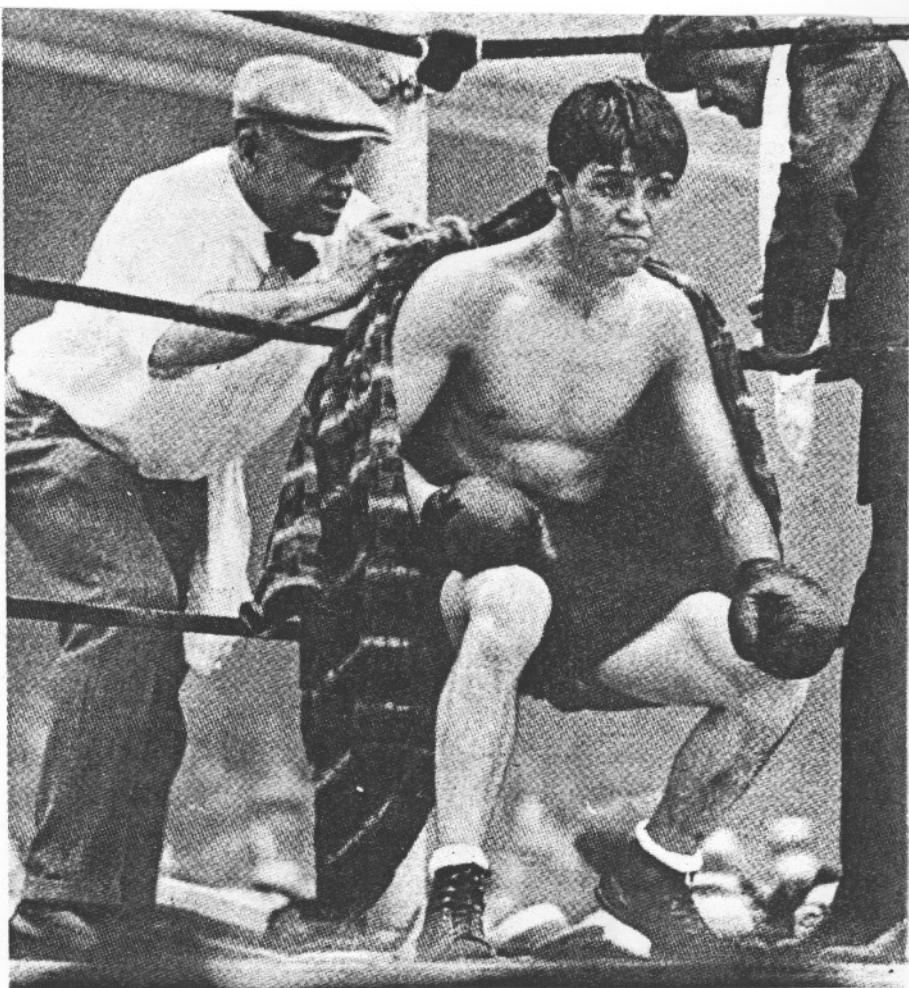
Mandell was dumbfounded. When Adams staggered back, and into the ropes, Mandell retired to his own corner. The look on his face indicating there might be a fix involved.

As referee Bates finished the count Adams' manager, Leo Farnaciaria, leaped beside him, realising Adams was seriously injured, as was shown by his actions as he lay on the canvas. Smelling salts were held under his nose, and then Dr. D. M. Nigro rushed into the ring to administer first aid.

Mandell was piloted out of the ring by his seconds. He seemed to go rather reluctantly. Half way to the exit the Champion paused, and turned back as though to return to the ring, but his seconds hustled him away.

Back in the ring a pulmotor from fire headquarters, three blocks away was used in vain. Stephen Adamozykie, better known as Steve Adams, was dead.

Father James O'Brien was summoned from St. Thomas' Catholic Church to administer the last sacraments.



**SAMMY MANDELL, in his corner before going out against Rocky Kansas to win the world featherweight title — Mandell didn't know then what was waiting for him in the Adams fight.**

Adams died of a broken neck.

"The second and third cervical vertebrae were dislocated," Dr. Hayward declared.

"He probably suffered the injury when he fell on the ropes. There was evidence of heart dilation," the coroner said, but that in his opinion, would not have proved fatal.

"I can't explain it," said Sammy Mandell, "I hit him in the stomach with a left jab, and he first fell against the ropes, then crumpled to the floor. I was as much surprised as anyone when he failed to return to his feet; the blow was well placed, yet not exceptionally hard."

Walter Bates, veteran official, who refereed the fatal bout, commented, "I would swear that Adams wasn't hit when he staggered away from Mandell. There had been some blows a few seconds before, but then Adams suddenly broke away, and staggered into the ropes as though he had been forcibly rocked with a wallop. I would swear that he hadn't been hit since a few body blows of several seconds before, but I knew Adams was hurt. His jaw quivered, something like a fighter

who has been dazed by a blow, and shakes his head by way of clearing his upset senses. I knew Adams had not been hit by a blow of that kind, but I also knew that something was mighty wrong. It seemed like a convulsion."

Adams' distraught manager, Leo Farnaciaria, related how the fighter's wife of two years went to the station and bade farewell and good luck. She was so excited about Steve's opportunity to fight the Lightweight Champion. The Adams' were in bad financial straits, and were living temporarily at the home of a brother in South Chicago. Adams was considered a "comer", but never reached ring prominence, even in his home city.

There was no inquest into the death of Steve Adams, and the incident was soon forgotten.

Sammy Mandell recovered from the shock, and went on to box for a few more years, losing his tittlet to Al Singer in July 1930.

However, for Stephen Adamozykie, a product of the "bush" in Chicago, his fistic career ended on a spring evening in Kansas City, Kansas, for 10 percent of the purse. A rather cheap price for a life. □

# ALKS

by ROBERT CARSON

# MANDELL

A crowd of about 200 was milling around City Hall as an agitated Sammy Mandell was taken to police headquarters.

While the inquisition at police headquarters was being conducted, scores of fight fans, friends of both men, waited in hallways, and corridors. Among them were members of the "Knights of Columbus", an order of which both Mandell and Adams were members.

Mandell was released on \$5 000 bond signed by J. H. Brady, a Kansas City, Kansas, lawyer. An inquest, and postmortem would be conducted the following day.

Following an autopsy at the undertaker's, Dr. J. W. Hayward, Wyandotte County Coroner, said