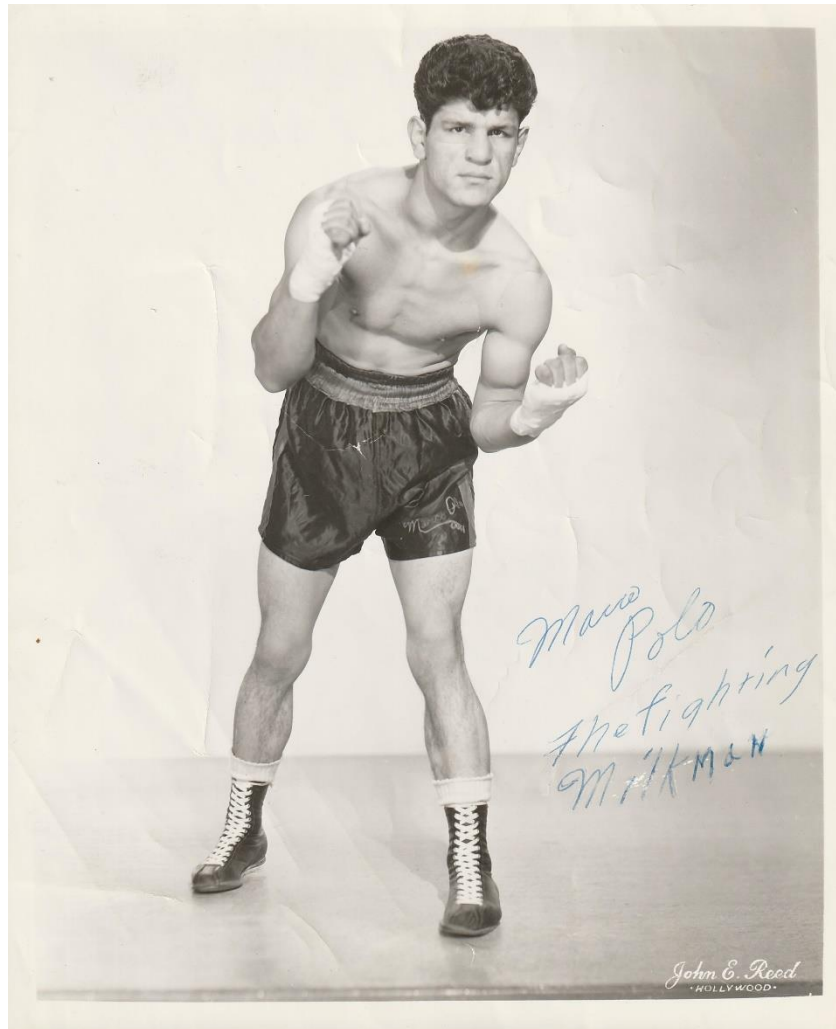


THE FIGHTING MILKMAN
Marco Polo: A Short Biography
By: Vincent T. Ciaramella



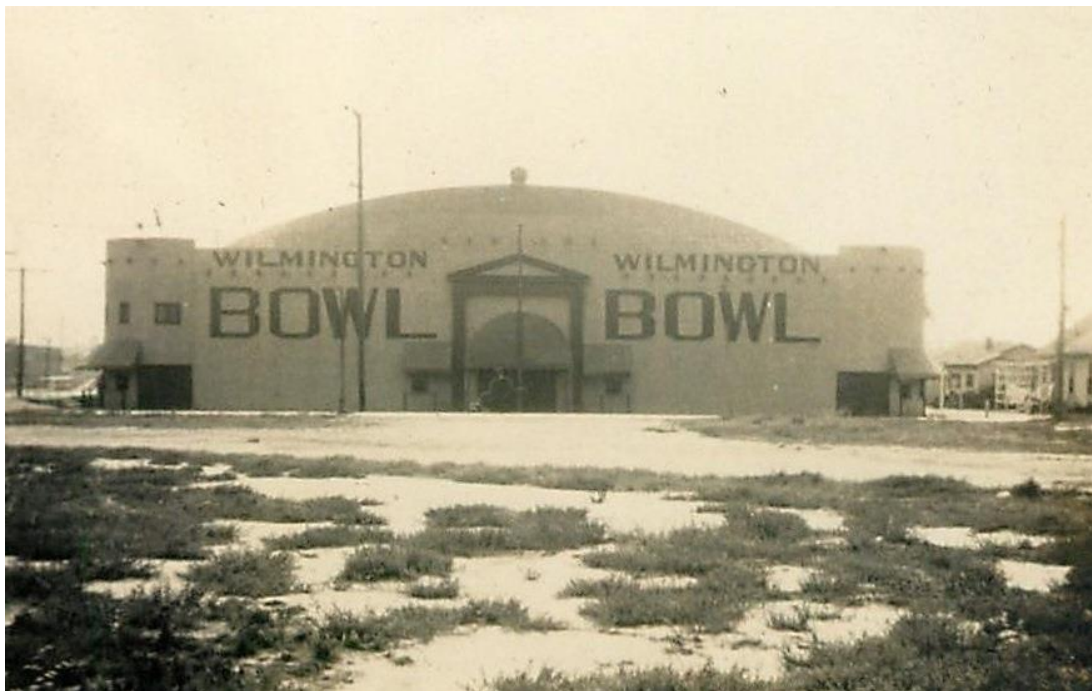
PREFIGHT YEARS

Boxing has had its share of unusual nicknames. From Juan "The Hispanic Cousin' Panic" Lazcano to Owen "What the Heck" Beck, there is no shortage of catchy or sometimes comedic monikers. Back in 1953 and into the first half of 1954, the pro boxing scene in southern California had one gentleman that delivered dairy by day and destruction by night. His name was Marco Polo "The Fighting Milkman." His short career never went beyond the Los Angeles metropolitan area, save for one bout. However, for a brief time he was one of the most talked about and exciting fighters to come out of the area. So, what happened to him and why has he fallen into obscurity? What follows is his life story, or as much as that could be discovered.

Marco Polo, born Marco M. Jauregui or Marion M. Jaurequi (as his name was recorded in the 1950 United States Federal Census) was born on March 8, 1934, in Los Angeles, California. When it comes to biographical information, there is little to go on. While his name can be found in the California Birth Index, 1905-1995, the info about his family is almost non-existent. Based on the former document and the 1950 United States Federal Census, Polo's mother, Christina Jaurequi (née Mejia) was born in Mexico about 1901. No information could be found about Polo's father. It can be deduced that he died sometime in or after 1937 based on the youngest child's birth year recorded in the 1950 census. It should also be noted that Christina Jaurequi's marital status

was listed as “Widowed” in that document as well. Polo has two brothers recorded in the 1950 census, John (17), who is listed as head of the household and Louie (13). Both John and Polo have “Dairyman” listed as their occupation and it appears that they owned their own business. The family is listed as living in Downey, California at the time. This is the extent of what can be learned at this time about Polo’s prefight life. He won’t appear again in the historic record until March of 1952.

1952: THE AMATURE YEAR



***The Wilmington Bowl (Wilmington, California) aka “The Port Bowl” was the site of some of Polo’s amateur fights.**

The earliest mention of Polo can be found in the March 22 edition of *San Pedro News-Pilot* (California) where the sports section talks about the upcoming amateur bouts at the Wilmington Bowl on March 24. Polo, a middleweight, is scheduled to meet Bobby Lopez. Though a few days later on March 25 the *Wilmington-Press Journal* (California) records that Polo (152) won via decision over Rito Hernandez (158) the previous night. The “Fighting Milkman,” as he was first called in the April 15 edition of the *San Pedro News-Pilot* was making the sports pages almost weekly. In the April 19 issue of the same paper this is what the writer had to say about Polo’s rematch with Rito Hernandez:

“It will be Polo’s fifth start at the port arena and a rematch of a sizzler. The two battlers fought four weeks ago with Polo declared the winner. Fans thought that the worst Hernandez should have had was a draw. Monday the two punchers will settle- or at least hope to settle the dispute.”

It is also noteworthy to mention that the article refers to him as the “Paramount Milkman.” Paramount being a city in Los Angeles County about 13 miles north of Wilmington and 17 miles south of downtown Los Angeles. His nickname would oscillate for the remainder of his career between “The Fighting Milkman,” “The Paramount Milkman,” “The Fighting Milkman from Paramount,” and “The Hollywood Milkman.”

Polo had a busy summer that year. On June 30, Polo (153) laid in an assortment of heavy body blows and was just too rough and tough for Herman LaDay (159), winning the four-round amateur main event. A little over two weeks later on July 14, Polo (154) won via TKO in the 2nd round over Walter Kinoilo (151). By July 21, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that Polo was after his “8th Straight Win” that evening. Though no writeup could be located about that bout, he did lose via decision at the South Gate Arena on July 23 to Rainey Mays (161), which

was most likely the fight mentioned in the July 21 papers. Overall, Polo had a very exciting amateur career, even overcoming a broken leg that put him out of commission for almost three months before returning in December as the *San Pedro News-Pilot* records:

“Paramount’s rugged, glove-throwing Marco Polo returns to the fistic wars Monday night at Wilmington Bowl in the first “King of the Ring” elimination since KHJ-TV (9) began televising from the port arena two months ago.”

The last amateur bout that could be located pitted Felix Franklin “King of the Ring” against Polo, dubbed “The Wild Bull of Paramount” (this would be the only time this moniker was ever used). This unusual nickname may have sprung from his unorthodox punching style as *The Long Beach Press-Telegram* wrote:

“Marko just walks in rocking from side-to-side, winging punches. His judgement of distance is about as accurate as a self-appointed economist trying to balance the national budget.”

As the sun set on 1952, Polo was about to embark on a new chapter in his career, turning pro in '53.

1953/1954: THE PRO YEARS



Legion Stadium, Hollywood, where Polo fought eight of his nine professional bouts.

Polo's (154) first professional fight took place on June 29, 1953, at South Gate Arena where he defeated Johnny Martin (155) via points during an undercard bout. All of Polo's eight remaining pro fights would take place at Legion Stadium, Hollywood. The crowd-pleasing middleweight, Polo (152) faced Martin (154) in a rematch on July 18. This fight ended in a 2nd round TKO for Polo. The next two fights wouldn't yield great results for him. First, on September 12, with both Polo and challenger Bob McLain coming in at 155LBS, Polo lost via split decision. Next, Polo lost via points to Joe Cardenas on October 10. Polo would have his revenge a week later when the wild swinging “Fighting Milkman” (152) KO 'ed Cardenas (154) in the third of six rounds with a smashing left hook to the jaw. While his victory over Cardenas was impressive, Polo scored a larger victory just a month later when he and another man named Ramon Lopez were found innocent in the gang related slaying of James Kuiphof of Paramount, an innocent bystander who was in the wrong place at the wrong time. Four other youths involved pleaded guilty to Kuiphof's death. Kuiphof, who was writing a poem titled “This is America”, stepped out from his house and was cut down by a stray .22 rifle slug. Polo walked based on his written statement at the time of the shooting. In his last fight of 1953, Polo (155) KO 'ed Cardenas (157 ½) again, this time in the first round. He would only go on to have two more recorded professional fights in 1954 before dropping off the face of the Earth, losing first to Carlos Camacho (151 ½) via split decision on January 2 and then via points to Bob McLane (156 ½) on April 3. Though Boxing Ref doesn't record it, Polo (157)

fought an additional bout on March 24 against Joe Cardenas (158) in a charity event held in Las Vegas with Cardenas winning with a unanimous 8 round decision. Just why Polo walked away from the fight game is unclear.

Polo's post-boxing life is again poorly documented. He married Elizabet (Elizabeth) L. Viscarra on April 24, 1955, and the couple resided in Paramount. His last appearance in any public record comes from the California, U.S., Voter Registrations, 1900-1968, where he is living in Orange, California as a registered Democrat in 1968. Nothing further can be found about him via the tools available to the author. It's even unclear whether he had any children or if he is still alive. With no census data available post-1950, a very common last name in southern California, and no obituary to give the names of remaining kin, Marco Polo's whereabouts today are a mystery. Who knows, maybe the "Fighting Milkman" is still out there making deliveries to this day.

LIST OF ALL KNOWN AMATURE AND PRO FIGHTS

1952: AMATURE

Mar 24	Rito Hernandez	W/D	Wilmington Bowl
Apr 14	Gail Jackson	W/D	Wilmington Bowl
Apr 21	Rito Hernandez	W/D	Wilmington Bowl
Apr 29	Bobby Harris	W/D	Wilmington Bowl
May 5	Opponent and Outcome Unknown		Wilmington Bowl
May 20	Bobby Harris	Draw	Wilmington Bowl
Jun 16	Rainey Mays	Draw	Wilmington Bowl
Jun 23	Herman LaDay	W/D	Wilmington Bowl
Jul 14	Walter Kinolio	TKO	Wilmington Bowl
Jul 16	Luie Alaniz	W/D	South Gate Arena
Jul 23	Rainey Mays	L/D	South Gate Arena
Jul 30	Rainey Mays	Draw	South Gate Arena
Aug 6	Frankie Romero	W/D	South Gate Arena
Aug 13	Davey Lopez	Outcome Unknown	South Gate Arena
Aug 27	Gerald Zapata	Draw	South Gate Arena
Sep 8	Rainey Mayes	Draw	Wilmington Bowl
Sep 10	Frankie Romero	W/D	South Gate Arena
Dec 1	Alex Diaz	Outcome Unknown	Wilmington Bowl
Dec 29	Felix Franklin	Outcome Unknown	Wilmington Bowl

1953: PROFESSIONAL

Jun 29	Johnny Martin	W-PTS	South Gate Arena
Jul 18	Johnny Martin	W-TD	Legion Stadium, Hollywood
Sep 12	Bob McLane	L-SD	Legion Stadium, Hollywood
Oct 10	Joe Cardenas	L-PTS	Legion Stadium, Hollywood
Oct 17	Joe Cardenas	W-KO	Legion Stadium, Hollywood
Nov 7	Frankie Haynes	W-PTS	Legion Stadium, Hollywood
Dec 5	Joe Cardenas	W-KO	Legion Stadium, Hollywood

1954: PROFESSIONAL

Jan 2	Carlos Camacho	L-SD	Legion Stadium, Hollywood
Apr 3	Bob McLane	L-PTS	Legion Stadium, Hollywood

1954: CHARITY EVENT

Mar 24	Joe Cardenas	L-D	Las Vegas, Nevada
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