

Max Baer and the Death of Ernie Schaaf

By Michael Hunnicutt – (April 5, 2005)

It has long been considered part of boxing lore that the death of Ernie Schaaf on February 14, 1933 was directly the result of his bout with Max Baer on August 31, 1932. Due for release in June 2005 the movie “The Cinderella Man” a story of the life of Jim Braddock may well allude to Mr. Schaaf’s death at some point in the film and attribute the tragedy to Max Baer. If so, it will repeat what already has been considered fact from the 1956 movie “The Harder They Fall.” “The Harder They Fall,” was the fictionalized boxing story of Primo Carnera. In this movie, the Max Baer character, played by Max himself, spoke according to the script: “You know I’m the guy who nailed Gus (Ernie Schaaf), murdered him for 15 rounds. Don’t know what held him up, but when Gus (Ernie Schaaf) left the ring that night he was a dead man. All your joker did was tap him. I did all the work and they gave your guy all the glory,” your guy meaning Primo Carnera. Since the release of “The Harder They fall” and Max Baer’s appearance in it, whatever information about the death of Ernie Schaaf was minimized. From press clippings gathered by Dan Cuoco from the Baer fight to the autopsy, I will give a more objective view of the events leading to Mr. Schaaf’s death.

Certainly one of the most important and yet least known aspect of Mr. Schaaf’s death was the autopsy report shown accompanying this article . The cause of death was oedema to the brain; this is swelling of the brain. This was inflammation preceded by inflammation of the surrounding tissues of the brain, meningitis. The cause of the meningitis “cannot be known with certainty, but it may be referred to the recent attack of influenza with a reasonable degree of probability.” Perhaps, because Ernie came off two top shelf performances prior to the Carnera bout it would seem less likely he had this inflammation at that time. It was only after he contracted influenza that Mr. Schaaf gave the poor showing he did against Carnera. It seems to me to be fairly cut and dry, but of course, without absolute certainty.

Ernie Schaaf, born on September 9, 1908, was just shy of his 24th birthday when he entered the ring to box Max Baer on August 31, 1932. Prior to this bout, Erie had 71 professional bouts including a decision over Max in 1930. He had never been knocked out and was considered an excellent heavyweight prospect with a hard punch, a good chin, and good skills. The 23-year-old Baer was also considered to be an excellent prospect with improving skills. (The fact that Baer killed an opponent, Frankie Campbell in 1930, may have also played a part in the public mind following Ernie’s death; but not until years later).

The 1932 bout between Schaaf and Baer appeared to be a rather cautious affair for the first eight rounds. Both men were warned twice by the referee “for them to fight.” Baer took command of the bout in the ninth round, forcing Schaaf to the ropes and outclassed him with a heavy assault of punches. In the tenth and final round, *“Baer beat Schaaf around the ring and into the ropes with a savage attack to the head and body. Just before the round ended Baer dropped Schaaf to the canvas, but the bell sounded as Schaaf hit the floor... two seconds before the fight ended Schaaf was knocked flat on his face, completely knocked out. He was dragged to his corner and his seconds worked over him for three minutes before restoring him to his senses.”*

On October 20, 1932, Ernie next stepped in the ring with Ed “Unknown” Winston and lost on points in 10 rounds. The author has not found the press clippings for this bout. The rematch on December 12, 1932 was different. Schaaf knocked out Winston in the sixth round. The New York Times reported: *“Winston won the first round, but from there on his rival drove ahead at a pace that earned him one of the most impressive victories he has registered in a local ring.”*

On January 6, 1933, Schaaf met highly regarded Stanley Poreda who had previously decisioned him. Ernie knocked out Poreda in the 6th round after flooring him 3 times. The New York Times reported, *“Schaaf Superior to Carnera – Anyone who saw last night’s bout can easily visualize Schaaf battering down the Italian man mountain if the former fights in the manner he did last night.”* This impressive showing installed Ernie as a 7 to 5 odd favorite to beat Carnera.

Now, on February 10, 1933, Ernie fought Carnera and makes a “mediocre showing” so much so that when Schaaf collapsed in the 13th round, boos echoed the Garden; *“He (Schaaf) had been dangled, figuratively, on the end of Carnera’s long left jabs, sent off balance not infrequently with Carnera’s ponderous hooks, and smashed by the giant’s awkward right crosses and uppercuts. In every round of the twelve Carnera held the upper hand.”* The films of the bout only seems to bear this out. Perhaps, most importantly, Ernie seemed in this bout not able to ride or roll with virtually any of the punches that he received. His head was continuously being pushed, jerked, and snapped back through the 12 rounds as it was when the final jab in the 13th snapped his head back and Ernie collapsed. Under his condition of meningitis at that time, it is remarkable he did not collapse much sooner. Ernie was more than game, he was heroic in his final bout. Ernie died on February 14, 1933 at the age of 24. Following the autopsy results, Lucy Schaaf, Ernie’s mother, consoled Carnera: *“Kindly be assured that I do not consider you in any way responsible for the death of my boy. I feel toward you like I would have wished your mother to have felt toward my Ernie if you had met with some*

misfortune during your bout with him. I thank you for your offers of sympathy and for your expression of admiration for Ernie."

While it can never be said with absolute certainty, it seems now, as then, that Max Baer in a high degree of probability did not fatally injure Mr. Schaaf. In all of the tidal wave of press reports following the Carnera bout and death of Ernie, Max Baer's name was never even mentioned. The culprits were influenza, as noted in the autopsy and Ernie's obituary "just before his bout with Carnera, Schaaf went into reclusion in a religious retreat near Boston to recuperate from an attack of influenza" that produced the meningitis and then fighting with this condition. The reader may form their own conclusions.

My thanks to Dan Cuoco for his personal insights and the press clippings used in this article.

TO ERNIE!

Schaaf Suffered From Brain Inflammation; Ill When He Entered Ring, Tests Show

Ernie Schaaf, the heavyweight boxer who died in Polyclinic Hospital last Tuesday, four days after being knocked out by Primo Carnera, the giant Italian, at Madison Square Garden, was suffering from an inflammation of the brain before he entered the ring, according to a report made public yesterday by Dr. Charles Norris, Chief Medical Examiner, and Dr. Benjamin Morgan Vance, Assistant Medical Examiner.

Their report was based upon a microscopic examination of the brain. It found that Schaaf's condition probably was owing to an attack of influenza he suffered some weeks before the fight. According to the report, Schaaf's condition was aggravated during the bout by blows not in themselves dangerous, and his condition made him less able to avoid blows.

After relating the circumstances of Schaaf's death at the hospital, and of the autopsy that was performed the same day, the report continued:

"He [Schaaf] had been operated on the day before [that is, the day before his death], exploratory craniotomy and osteoplastic flap being made for the relief of cerebral compression.

"Examination of the head showed no fracture of the skull and no hemorrhage below or above the dura and no central hemorrhage. The cervical spinal cord was normal on inspection and after section.

"Microscopic examination disclosed, in addition to the extreme grade of cerebral compression due to a marked cerebral oedema, a few small hemorrhages of the brain.

"The deceased had a chronic or subacute meningo-encephalitis characterized by lymphocytic infiltrations around the blood vessels in the subarachnoid space and the adjacent cortex. The cause of the inflammation cannot be known with certainty, but it may be referred to the recent attack of influenza with a reasonable degree of probability.

"The meningo-encephalitis obviously antedated the boxing match, but because of its insidious development it would not necessarily give symptoms and would have been highly improbable to detect at the time of the physical examination before the bout. In the ring, however, it interfered with Schaaf's boxing skill so that he was less able to avoid blows.

"In addition, blows not in themselves dangerous aggravated the meningo-encephalitis with the result that oedema of the brain, cerebral compression and paralysis of the left side of the body developed. As these symptoms are similar to those produced by intracranial hemorrhage following head injuries, conditions often amenable to surgery, the operation performed at the hospital was clearly indicated."

BAER BEATS SCHAAF IN BOUT AT CHICAGO

California Heavyweight Gains
Verdict in Ten-Rounder as
5,000 Look On.

MISSES KNOCKOUT TRIUMPH

Victor Floors Bostonian in Final
Session, Bell Saving Opponent
From Being Counted Out.

By The Associated Press.

CHICAGO, Aug. 31. — Max Baer, Livermore, Cal., defeated Ernie Schaaf, Boston heavyweight challenger, in a ten-round battle tonight, with the bell depriving him of a knockout victory.

Two seconds before the fight ended Schaaf was knocked flat on his face, completely knocked out. He was dragged to his corner and his seconds worked over him for three minutes before restoring him to his senses.

The attendance fell far below expectations, due to the heat. It was estimated that not more than 5,000 were in the vast arena, with gate receipts around \$15,000.

Schaaf carried the fight to Baer in the first round, clipping him with lefts and rights to the head in his own corner. Baer dug two left hooks to the body, and they threw right uppercuts at the close range, with honors even.

In the second and third Schaaf drove lefts and rights to the jaw, with the Californian gamely fighting back and outscoring his rival at infighting. Baer forced Schaaf to retreat in the fourth, driving him to the ropes with blows to the head.

Baer Scores at Close Range.

They walked into each other, trading punches to the head and body with honors even, in the fifth round. Baer nailed Schaaf with a right to the head and outfought him at close range. Before the start of the sixth the referee warned both to become a little more warlike, but they bulled around the ring, wrestling and punching while holding each other.

They exchanged lefts to the head soon after the seventh opened, then Baer walked in to absorb Schaaf's punches and to outscore the Bostonian at close range. In the eighth Baer battered Schaaf's chin with blistering lefts and rights. After a lull in the fighting the referee again warned them to fight, and Schaaf responded by sticking three lefts in Baer's face and Baer nailed him with two rights to the jaw.

Blocks Baer's Return.

Both rushed out and slugged toe to toe in mid-ring with neither giving ground, in the ninth, then Schaaf shot a hard right uppercut to the jaw and blocked Baer's return. Baer hit Schaaf with a hard right to the head, forcing him to the ropes. He clearly outclassed Schaaf and continued his heavy attack as the Bostonian retreated.

Baer smashed a heavy right to the jaw that shook Schaaf to his heels, to start the last round, then walked into the Boston fighter, throwing both hands to the head and body. Baer drove three hard rights to the jaw that staggered Schaaf. Baer beat Schaaf around the ring and into the ropes with a savage attack to the head and body. Just before the round ended Baer dropped Schaaf to the canvas, but the bell sounded as Schaaf hit the floor.

Schaaf weighed 209½ pounds and Baer an even 200.

10,000 SEE SCHAAF KNOCK OUT WINSTON

**Boston Boxer Avenges Previous
Defeat, Stopping Hartford
Rival in Sixth.**

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

BOSTON, Dec. 12.—Ernie Schaaf, Boston heavyweight, avenged a previous defeat by knocking out Eddie (Unknown) Winston, Hartford, in the sixth round of a scheduled twelve-round bout for the New England heavyweight championship at the Boston Arena tonight.

The time of the round was 2 minutes and 45 seconds, Referee Johnny Martin making the count, and afterward, with Schaaf's help, assisting the defeated challenger to his corner. It was several minutes before he rallied from the effect of Schaaf's hard-driving attack.

An estimated gathering of 10,000, one of the biggest of the season, saw the bout.

Winston won the first round, but from there on his rival, who had the expert counseling of Jack Sharkey, drove ahead at a pace that earned him one of the most impressive victories he has registered in a local ring.

Schaaf started his winning surge in the second round when he fought desperately to end the fight with a knockout. He drove his opponent to all four corners of the ring with an attack to the body.

Schaaf weighed 210 pounds and his rival 185.

SCHAAF TO TRAIN HERE.

Will Work at St. Nicholas Gym
for Poreda Bout Friday.

Ernie Schaaf, stablemate of Champion Jack Sharkey, is to open local training quarters today at the St. Nicholas Gym for the finishing touches to his preparation for the ten-round ring struggle in which he is to engage Stanley Poreda, Jersey City heavyweight, Friday night in Madison Square Garden.

It is expected that Sharkey will be in attendance at Schaaf's workout, lending his advice to the boxer, in whose management he shares with his own manager, Johnny Buckley. Sharkey, incidentally, is to sail tomorrow for a short vacation in Bermuda.

Poreda is training at Joe Jeannett's gym, in Union City, N. J.

Announcement was made yesterday that Primo Carnera, who now is looked upon as a likely candidate for the proposed June title bout with Sharkey, is expected to sign articles of agreement today to meet the winner of the Schaaf-Poreda battle some time next month.

POREDA AND SCHAAF WILL FIGHT TONIGHT

*Jersey City Heavyweight Is
Favored Over Boston Rival
in Battle in Garden.*

HOW THE RIVALS COMPARE.

Schaaf.	Poreda.
24 years.....	Age..... 23 years
210 pounds.....	Weight..... 198 pounds
6 ft. 2 ins.....	Height..... 6 ft. 1½ ins.
75.....	Reach..... 80½
17.....	Neck..... 16½
42.....	Chest (normal)..... 41
46.....	Chest (expanded)..... 44½
31.....	Waist..... 34½
15.....	Biceps..... 15
14.....	Forearm..... 13
8½.....	Wrist..... 8
23.....	Thigh..... 22
16.....	Calf..... 15½
11.....	Ankle..... 11

The return bout between Stanley Poreda, Jersey City heavyweight, and Ernie Schaaf of Boston will feature the first boxing show of the new year in Madison Square Garden. The boxers will meet in a ten-round battle tonight, marking the first boxing program in the Garden since Dec. 16.

Poreda and Schaaf met for the first time last Summer when the Jersey City boxer carried off the decision in a close ten-round bout. Poreda followed this triumph by defeating Primo Carnera, whereas Schaaf encountered defeats at the hands of Max Baer and Unknown Winston.

Because of his superior boxing ability Poreda is favored to win the battle at odds of 6 to 5. Schaaf is the harder hitter but Poreda is confident that he will be able to remain out of range of his opponent's devastating punches and at the same time roll up enough points to secure the decision.

Both boxers have trained diligently for the encounter, and each is reported in good shape. Schaaf will scale 210 pounds, while Poreda is expected to weigh 198.

SCHAAF KNOCKS OUT POREDA IN SIXTH

Sharkey Protege Floors Rival
Four Times at Garden—
Referee Halts Bout.

CROWD OF 6,000 ATTENDS

Victor's Hard Blows Twice Topple
Foe in Second—Massera Beats
Barlow in Semi-Final.

By JAMES P. DAWSON.

Ernie Schaaf, heavyweight protégé of Jack Sharkey, ended the championship aspirations of Stanley Poreda of Union City, N. J., last night, at Madison Square Garden. Schaaf knocked out his opponent in the sixth round before a crowd of about 6,000. He floored Poreda four times.

Schaaf thus avenged a defeat he suffered last year at the hands of Poreda, and qualified for a heavyweight title elimination match with Primo Carnera, with the prospect of complications.

It may yet develop that Schaaf, who is partly managed by Sharkey, will stand alone as the man to face Sharkey for the title next June, unless the heavyweight situation undergoes a decided change.

With Max Schmeling and Max Baer signed to fight under the banner of Jack Dempsey in opposition to the Garden, the Eighth Avenue organization has announced it plans to pair the winner of a Schaaf-Carnera match with Sharkey in June.

Schaaf Superior to Carnera.

Any one who saw last night's encounter can easily visualize Schaaf battering down the Italian man mountain, if the former fights in the manner he did last night.

Schaaf stopped Poreda in twenty-eight seconds of the sixth round in what was to have been a ten-round struggle. The battle came near ending in the second, when Schaaf dropped his foe shortly before the bell for a count of four.

With dogged courage, Poreda rose without taking the benefit of a full nine-second count, and was battered mercilessly through the short remaining period of the round. At the bell he was floored and had to be carried to his corner.

In the fourth round Schaaf again toppled his rival, this time for a count of nine, and Poreda again was rendered helpless. Right-hand drives to the jaw floored Poreda on each of his trips to the canvas and it was only because of Schaaf's wildness, coupled with Poreda's amazing resistance to some of these blows, that the battle went as far as it did.

Poreda Unsteady in Fourth.

Poreda wobbled through the fourth after regaining his feet and went around surprisingly well on uncertain legs through the fifth, but Schaaf's solid smashes took their toll.

With the start of the sixth, a left hook to the jaw hastened Poreda's downfall. Under this punch he floundered helplessly to the ropes, where Schaaf was upon him in a jiffy with the fury of a tiger. He rained lefts and rights on Poreda's head and jaw until the Union City heavyweight crumpled.

For nine seconds Poreda remained on the floor, arising only to face a fusillade which had him helpless and on the verge of certain knockout when Referee Arthur Donovan mercifully called a halt. Schaaf weighed 209½ pounds and Poreda 203.

20,000 SEE CARNERA KNOCK OUT SCHAAF

Boston Heavyweight Countec
Out in Thirteenth Round
of Bout at Garden.

LOSER CARRIED FROM RING

Taken to Polyclinic Hospital
Unconscious, With Symptoms
of Slight Concussion.

FANS STUNNED BY FINISH

Crowd Boos as Schaaf Drops
Under Apparently Light Straight
Left to Face.

By JAMES P. DAWSON.

Primo Carnera, Italian giant, knocked out Ernie Schaaf of Boston in the thirteenth round of their bout at Madison Square Garden last night—a bout which developed a sensational aftermath.

While Schaaf lay unconscious in the ring 20,000 fans, constituting one of the largest crowds to attend a Garden fight in years, jeered and booed. They had seen Schaaf drop after Carnera had landed a straight left to the face which did not appear to carry much power.

But Schaaf was more seriously hurt than the crowd realized. He was carried to his dressing room, where twenty minutes of respiratory work failed to restore consciousness. The injured heavyweight then was removed to Polyclinic Hospital, where Dr. William H. Walker announced he found symptoms of a slight concussion of the brain.

Makes Mediocre Showing.

The finish of the bout came after 51 seconds of the thirteenth round and after Schaaf, a stablemate of Champion Jack Sharkey, had made a mediocre showing in a distinctly ordinary encounter.

Carnera's straight left to the face, a blow that did not seem powerful or dangerous, landed flush on the face. Schaaf went down under the ring ropes near Carnera's corner in a sudden collapse.

Referee Billy Cavanaugh, who

VICTOR IN GARDEN BOUT.



Times Wide World Photo.
Primo Carnera.

were completed Carnera held the upper hand. He is a greatly improved fighter over the man that lost to Sharkey two years ago. Lighter than ever on his feet and more confident, Carnera had things all his own way.

One round was like another, with little variation. Schaaf could do nothing and Carnera never became reckless to the extent of a flashy offensive. Instead the Italian let Schaaf come at him and then poked him with that boulderlike left or hooked the big fist to the head or jaw. At no time did Schaaf really hurt the big Italian.

It may be that Carnera's steady bombardment gradually wore Schaaf down to a point of complete exhaustion, but it is illogical to suppose that Carnera's straight left to the face rendered him helpless. Carnera weighed 264½, Schaaf 207½.

Heuser Beats Ebbets.

In the ten-round semi-final Adolph Heuser, a newcomer from Germany, defeated Harry Ebbets of Freeport. Each fighter went to the canvas in the first round, and Ebbets was floored for a count of nine in the second. The winner weighed 175½, and the loser 167.

Marty Fox, 189½, of the east side, scored a two-round knockout over Lou Barba, 198½, in a scheduled five-rounder. Another five-round bout saw Bob Moody, 205, of Freeport, Pa., gain the decision over Pietro Corri, Austrian veteran, who scaled 192½. The opening four-rounder, between Eddie Malcolm, 198½, of Harlem, and Lou Poster, 186, of Pottstown, Pa., ended in a draw.

Referee Billy Cavanaugh, who fought in olden days under the name of Billy Glover, counted out the fallen Schaaf. Stunned, the crowd stood about the vast arena, while Schaaf lay motionless on the ring floor. Champion Sharkey, one of his seconds, leaped through the ropes and carried his stablemate to his corner.

While the Garden rocked with the swelling roar of disapproval, Managers Sharkey and Johnny Buckley worked feverishly over Schaaf.

Announcer Joe Humphries informed the writers that Schaaf's rubber mouthpiece had become dislodged under that straight left jab and had to be removed forcibly.

Orders Removal to Hospital.

After Dr. Walker, physician for the State boxing board, had examined Schaaf in the dressing room, he ordered the boxer's removal to Polyclinic.

Schaaf regained consciousness an hour after reaching the hospital but remained there overnight to be under observation.

Manager Buckley attributed Schaaf's condition to a complete collapse under the hurculean task of trying to conquer a foe who outweighed him fifty-seven pounds and was taller by about half a foot.

The crowd in the arena, of course, knew nothing of all this activity that took place behind the scenes and in the privacy of Schaaf's dressing room.

They knew only that Schaaf had gone down to be counted out under a blow that did not appear to carry power enough to render helpless a perfectly trained ring husky.

Qualifies to Meet Sharkey.

The fans had in mind that Carnera, through his victory, qualified for a heavyweight championship bout next Summer against Sharkey, who is one of the managers of Schaaf.

Disconcerting reports before the fight, regardless of whether they were justified or not, made this gathering skeptical. It had been announced by Madison Square Garden in advance of the battle that Carnera had been signed to fight Sharkey sometime before next June 30, contingent on the Italian's success against Schaaf.

Boxing followers looked askance upon a proposal to make Schaaf eligible for a bout with his manager, Sharkey, when it was broached some time ago, although it had been announced that Schaaf and Sharkey had parted company, following Schaaf's recent conquest of Stanley Poreda.

At the time it was announced that the Buckley-Sharkey contract on Schaff expired in March, but subsequently it was learned this document still has several years to run.

Thousands Turned Away.

Speculation over these unusual angles of the situation helped create the interest which resulted in a jammed arena. So widespread was the enthusiasm that thousands of fight fans were turned away.

An hour after the battle, after Schaaf had been removed to the hospital, fans gathered in knots and debated the fight.

Some critics agreed the fight "did not look good," notwithstanding Schaaf's removal to the hospital.

Perhaps there is a weakness in Schaaf's physical armor that has never been brought to light before. This may account for his collapse because few, if any at the ringside who saw it, will ever believe that Carnera's straight left, the finishing punch, or any other blow struck during the thirteen rounds by the massive Italian, could have produced the scene enacted at the finish of the bout.

Yet, Schaaf had gone through twelve rounds of trying to move a human mountain; trying to batter past the huge arms of the giant Carnera, without making an impression worthy of consideration.

He had been dangled, figuratively, on the end of Carnera's long left jabs, sent off balance not infrequently with Carnera's ponderous left hooks, and smashed by the giant's awkward right crosses and uppercuts.

In every round of the twelve the

were completed Carnera held the upper hand. He is a greatly improved fighter over the man that lost to Sharkey two years ago. Lighter than ever on his feet and more confident, Carnera had things all his own way.

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Howan Book Photo

Schaaf's last 15 fights

1932-02-05	Salvatore Ruggirello	New York, NY, USA	W TKO 4
1932-02-26	Young Stribling	Chicago, IL, USA	W PTS 10
1932-04-25	Ted Sandwina	Holyoke, MA, USA	W PTS 10
1932-05-13	Jack Gross	New York, NY, USA	W PTS 10
1932-05-16	Ed (Unknown) Winston	Springfield, MA, USA	W KO 4
1932-06-07	Tony Galento	Newark, NJ, USA	W PTS 10
1932-06-24	Stanley Poreda	West New York, NJ, USA	L PTS 10
1932-07-07	Salvatore Ruggirello	Scranton, PA, USA	W TKO 2
1932-07-25	Paolino Uzcudun	Long Island City, NY, USA	W PTS 15
1932-08-01	Ted Sandwina	New Orleans, LA, USA	W PTS 10
1932-08-31	Max Baer	Chicago, IL, USA	L PTS 10
1932-10-20	Ed (Unknown) Winston	Boston, MA, USA	L PTS 10
1932-12-12	Ed (Unknown) Winston	Boston, MA, USA	W KO 6
	(New England Heavyweight Title)		
1933-01-06	Stanley Poreda	New York, NY, USA	W TKO 6
1933-02-10	Primo Carnera	New York, NY, USA	L KO 13

MIAMI BEACH, Fla., Feb. 13 (P).

—Jack Sharkey left here tonight for New York, less than a day after his arrival for a vacation, to be at the bedside of Ernie Schaaf, critically ill as a result of injuries received in his fight last week with Primo Carnera.

Sharkey and his wife arrived here this morning, but the heavyweight champion made up his mind to return to Schaaf's bedside after a telephone call to New York tonight.

ERNIE SCHAAF DIES; BOXING UNDER FIRE

Move to Repeal Walker Law
Begins in Albany—Lehman
Orders Full Inquiry.

CARNERA IS EXONERATED

Prosecutor and the Medical
Examiner Find No Proof
Punch Caused Death.

Ernie Schaaf, the young Boston heavyweight who collapsed under the mighty blows of Primo Carnera in a prizefight at Madison Square Garden Friday night before 20,000 fans, many shouting "faker," died yesterday in Polyclinic Hospital.

Governor Lehman immediately ordered the State Athletic Commission to make a thorough investigation into "all the circumstances," and among members of the Legislature in Albany there arose a movement to repeal the Walker boxing law, under which the sport has flourished in this State for the last decade.

State Senator Henry G. Schackno, Bronx Democrat, led the movement for repeal, saying he would introduce a bill to that effect soon. Assemblyman Saul S. Streit introduced a bill to create a commission to investigate the administration of boxing and wrestling in the State and file a report Feb. 15, 1934.

Carnera Is Absolved.

Carnera, examined by Assistant District Attorney James J. Daly, was willing to concede that his punch might have had lethal force, but of course, denied any intent beyond that of winning the right to fight Jack Sharkey for the world's heavyweight championship. Authorities were disposed to agree that there was no direct connection between the Italian heavyweight's punch and Schaaf's death.

Chief Medical Examiner Charles W. Norris said that the absence of any skull fracture or external cerebral hemorrhage indicated that Schaaf was suffering from an old injury or some undiscovered and perhaps undiscoverable constitutional weakness when he entered the ring to face Carnera.

Dr. Benjamin N. Vance, Assistant Medical Examiner, who performed the autopsy, said death was due to a cerebral hemorrhage, but he declined to "go so far as to say death was due to natural causes." It would take several days, perhaps a week, he said, to complete the microscopic examination of the brain which would provide the final answer to the question.

Mr. Daly, after questioning most of those directly connected with the fatal fight, declared he had found no evidence of criminal responsibility or negligence on the part of any one. The investigation would be continued, he said, until the final report of the medical examiner is filed, but it was understood that prospects of a grand jury investigation were slight. No charge was made against Carnera, who agreed to hold himself available for further questioning.

Commission Upholds Officials.

The State Athletic Commission, popularly known as the boxing commission, of which James A. Farley, Democratic National Chairman, is head, held a hasty meeting, and after investigation into the circumstances of the boxer's death issued a statement absolving its officials of negligence. The

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ERNIE SCHAAF DIES; CARNERA ABSOLVED

Continued from Page One.

statement signed by William Muldoon and General John J. Phelan follows:

"In connection with the death of Ernie Schaaf, the commission, while deeply regretting this unfortunate occurrence, is thoroughly satisfied that none of its officials were negligent either in examining the boxer, permitting him to box or attending him after the bout.

"Everything within discretion on the part of the commission's representatives and the medical skill of the commission's physician, as well as Schaaf's personal physician, who was present at Madison Square Garden, was done prior to his confinement at the Polyclinic Hospital, where he received the best medical attention."

Mr. Farley, who returned from Miami too late to attend the meeting of the commission, issued a statement expressing regret at the death of Schaaf, whom he described as a "good fighter and a mighty fine individual," but adding that fatalities occur on the football field, the baseball field and in swimming, diving and bicycle contests as well as in boxing. The death, he said, was no reflection upon the conduct of boxing in this State.

Over The Associated Press wires came similar expressions of regret from such outstanding figures of the boxing world as Jack Dempsey, Gene Tunney and Jack Sharkey, the latter one of Schaaf's managers, who is due here this morning from Miami, where he went after Friday's fight before learning of the gravity of his protégé's condition.

Johnny Buckley, co-manager of Schaaf, James J. Johnston, boxing director of Madison Square Garden, and William F. Carey, president of the Garden corporation, also issued statements paying tribute to the ability and gameness of the 25-year-old pugilist.

Operation Fails to Save Him.

Schaaf died in Polyclinic Hospital at 4:10 A. M. He had been operated upon a few hours earlier in a last desperate effort by surgeons to relieve the deep-seated intra-cranial pressure that had kept the 205-pound fighter in a condition of coma and partial paralysis ever since he was carried from the ring.

The surgeons in attendance were Dr. Byron Stookey, who said after the operation that he believed Schaaf must have received his injury in the fight with Carnera; Dr. Harold Meeker, Dr. William V. Healy and Dr. Phillip Goodhart, Professor of Neurology at Columbia University. Schaaf rallied a little immediately after the operation but by midnight was so much worse that hope of saving him began to vanish.

Soon after midnight, Schaaf's

DEAD AFTER BOUT.



Times Wide World Photo.

Ernie Schaaf, Pugilist, Who Died in Hospital Yesterday.

mother, Mrs. Lucy Schaaf, and his sister, Mrs. May Daly, were summoned to his room. A priest administered extreme unction and a little before dawn Schaaf died.

Notified of the tragic ending of the fight which he had looked upon as a rung on the ladder of fame, Carnera hastened to New York from New Jersey, issued a statement expressing sympathy for the bereaved family of his opponent, sent a telegram of condolence and awaited the arrival of detectives to take him to the District Attorney's office for questioning.

Boxing Figures Questioned.

Others who were questioned by Mr. Daly were Dr. Vance, Dr. William H. Walker, brother of the former Mayor, who is the Boxing Commission's examining physician; Buckley, Johnston, the match maker Billy Duffy, American agent for Carnera; Mannie Seamon, one of the Italian's trainers; William J. Cavanaugh, who refereed the bout; George Bannon, the timekeeper, and the two judges, William P. Dunn and George Bannon. Sharkey and Charlie Goodman, the deputy boxing commissioner who supervised the matches, probably will be questioned today.

During the examination of Carnera, the proceedings were interrupted long enough to permit the boxer to discuss the case for the sound news reels and assure fight fans that the tragic accident would not keep him from fighting on.

Carnera, who believed he would be matched to fight Sharkey for the championship title if he succeeded in disposing of the champion's protégé, said he noticed no signs of distress on the face of his opponent, who, according to observers, sagged and started to fall even before the blow which looked so inconsequential.

The big fighter, who outweighed Schaaf by more than fifty pounds

and stood six inches taller than the 25-year-old Boston pugilist, added:

"The blow may not have appeared so powerful to the spectators, but I know it was. I delivered several like it in the fight, but that last one was the hardest."

Not in Good Condition.

Dr. Norris declared it would be "grossly unfair" to say that Schaaf died as the result of Carnera's blow because there was no fracture of the skull, no evidence of any outside hemorrhage and because the "compression seems to have been caused from within the brain." It seemed to him that Schaaf, who recently recovered from influenza, was not in perfect condition, having a "superfluity of subcutaneous fat."

The chief medical examiner, at pains to emphasize that he meant no reflection on the doctors who examined Schaaf prior to his appearance in the ring, said that his investigation thus far indicated that the boxer was suffering from some constitutional defect which might have resulted fatally from a run after a trolley car as easily as from a blow in a fight.

He insisted that there was no disagreement between him and his assistant, Dr. Vance, who, he said, merely was reserving final judgment.

Dr. Walker, who certified that Schaaf was fit to fight, declared he found the fighter's heart and lungs in perfect condition and said that Schaaf assured him he felt as well as he ever did. There were no indications, Dr. Walker said, that Schaaf was not in condition to fight.

Schaaf's body was sent from the morgue to Sheldonville, Mass., last night for burial from the home that he bought his mother with the proceeds of his first professional fight.

Product of Amateur Ring.

Ernie Schaaf was a product of the navy and the amateur ring. His interest in fighting began during a short hitch in the navy where he came in contact with Jack Sharkey, the present heavyweight champion, who was one of his managers in his last fight.

After some months of navy boxing, Schaaf, who was born in Elizabeth, N. J., Sept. 27, 1908, of German-French parentage, turned to the amateurs for further experience. His fine physique and skill as a boxer made him an outstanding performer of the non-professional ring. His powerful build also led to his being selected as the model for the Muldoon-Tunney Heavyweight Trophy which stands in the lobby of Madison Square Garden.

Schaaf's development as a fighter under the management of Phil Schlossberg from 1925 to the middle of 1930 was slow but comparatively steady. Up until the night of his last fight records failed to show that he ever was knocked out. He lost few fights of consequence, although among the reverses he suffered were decisions lost to Johnny Risko and Tommy Loughran in 1929.

In 1930, when Schaaf lost a decision to Babe Hunt, Schlossberg gave him up and sold his interest in the fighter's contracts to Buckley and Sharkey, who was then a challenger considering retirement. Since then Buckley and Sharkey have recovered their original investment with interest.

Under their management Schaaf became a determined fighter campaigning for the heavyweight title. He went along smoothly until last

Summer, when he suffered reverses in bouts with Stanley Poreda, Unknown Winston and Max Baer. Schaaf's followers attributed these setbacks to a breakdown in his physical condition. Recovering, Schaaf started his come-back with a knockout over Winston and another over Poreda.

Just before his bout with Carnera, Schaaf, who, according to his friends, was a devout Catholic who always wished he had become a priest, went into seclusion in a religious retreat near Boston to recuperate from an attack of influenza.