

Boxing Ringside With Bobby Franklin

**Robert Edgren
Artist, Journalist, Athlete
Boxed With Jim Corbett**

Robert Wadsworth Edgren excelled in many fields. He became best known for his boxing writing, but was good at just about everything he tried.

While attending the University of California in the late 19th Century, he was recruited to join the track and field team for throwing events. At 6'5" and weighing 225 pounds, he set the world record in the hammer throw in 1901. In 1906, he competed in the Olympic Games in Athens.

Edgren went on to enroll in the Mark Hopkins Institute Of Art when that school became affiliated with the University of California. While still in school, he got a job at *the San Francisco Examiner*, which was owned by William Randolph Hearst. Hearst had taken a liking to Edgren and hired him even though he had no experience.



(Pic. Robert Edgren)

Upon graduating in 1896, he went to work full-time for the paper. His coverage of the Jim Corbett vs. Bob Fitzsimmons heavyweight title match held at Carson City in 1897 gained him notoriety and a national readership. All this time, he continued with his athletic endeavors.

While Edgren spent time at Corbett's training camp reporting on the champ's progress, Gentleman Jim noticed his size and athletic prowess. He suggested the two spend some time sparring in the ring. Edgren and Corbett sparred daily for the next five weeks, though by Edgren's own admission, he wasn't much of a challenge to Gentleman Jim. Fortunately, he survived to cover the fight.

I can't think of another time when a journalist sent to cover a world champion in training for a title fight became a sparring partner of the champ.

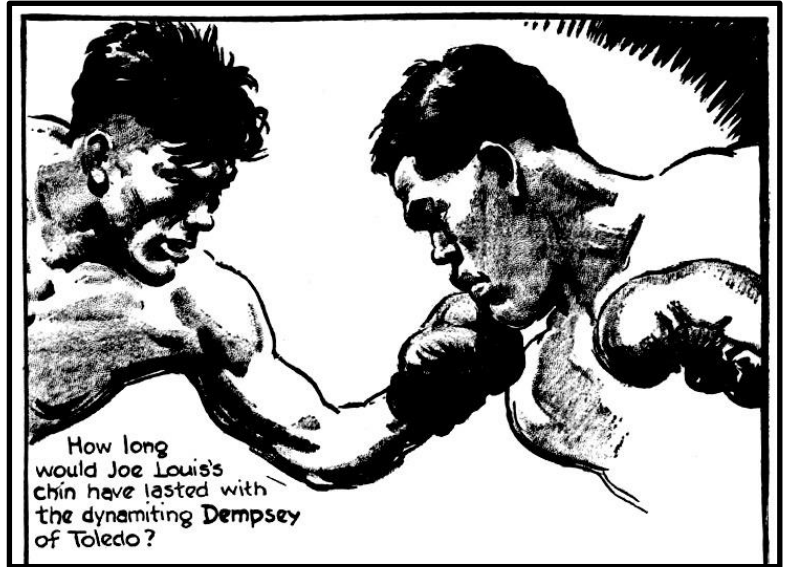
Bob Edgren was not only a great boxing scribe but also an outstanding artist who added illustrations to his columns. Beyond his talent as a writer and artist, he also had a reputation for his honesty. In the days of no-decision fights, gamblers relied on newspaper journalists's judgment when settling their bets. Often, reporters were paid

off by unscrupulous bookies to reflect the outcome of a fight that would be most profitable to them. Edgren never lowered himself to that practice. His reporting could always be counted on as truthful.

I have chosen to share some examples of Robert Edgren's artwork. He was a true Renaissance Man.



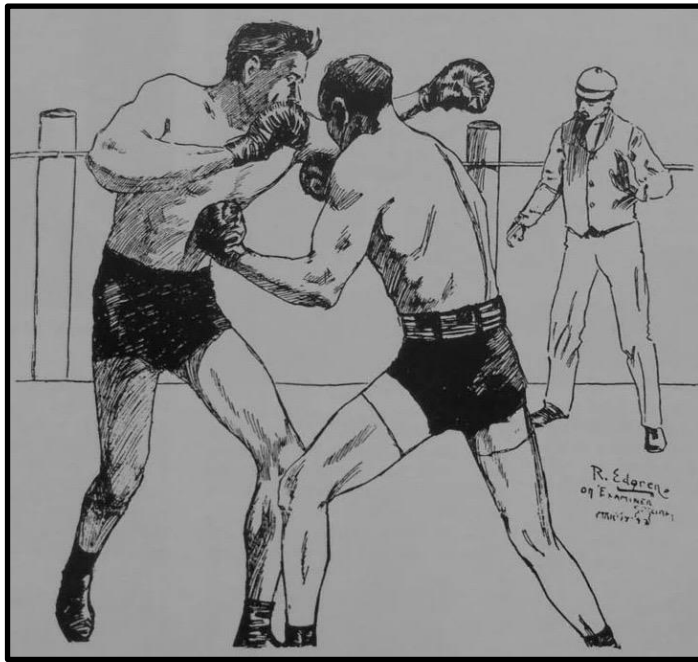
(Pic. Jack Johnson)



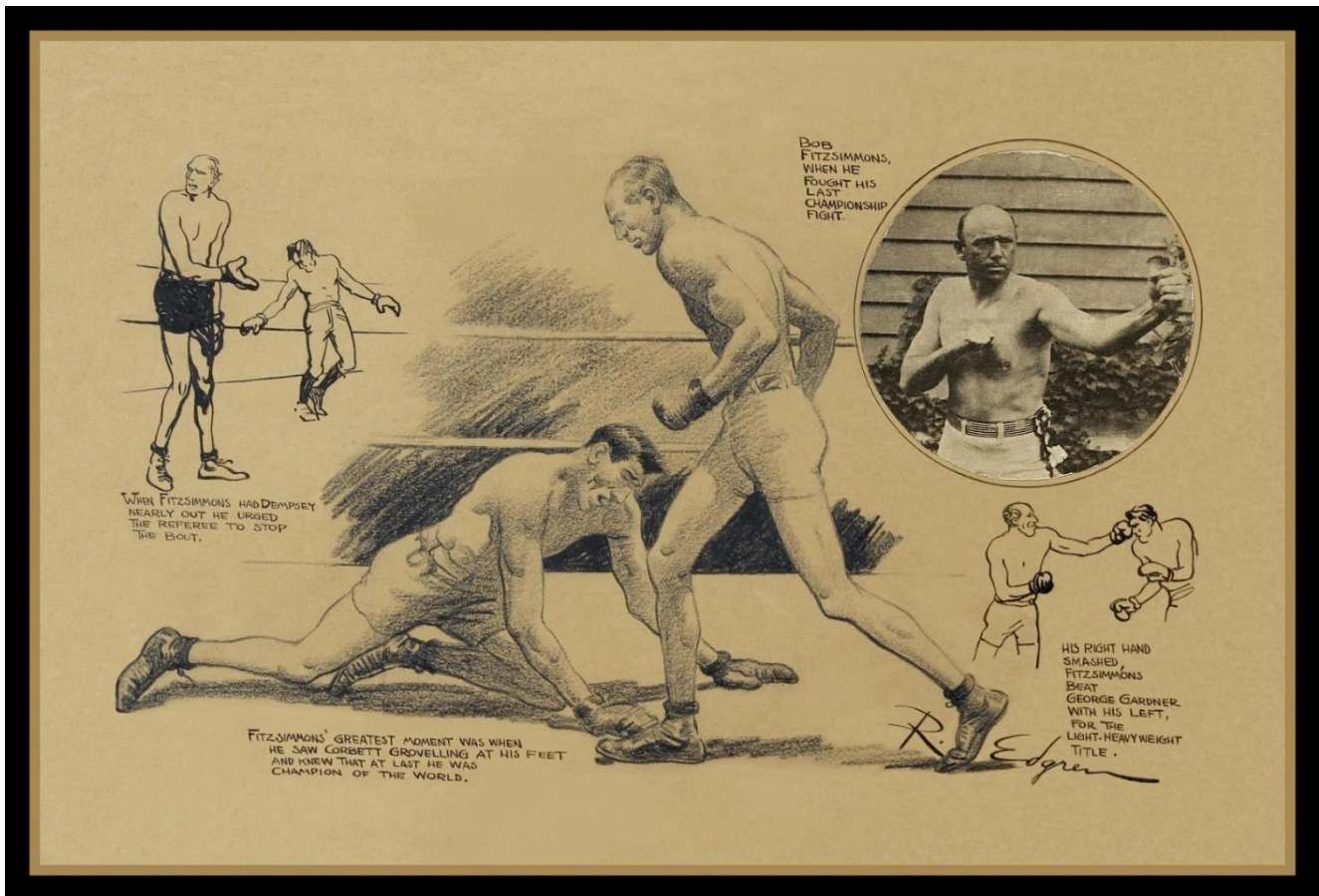
(Pic. Jack Dempsey and Joe Louis)



(Pic. Edgren was not high on Harry Greb)



(Pic. Capturing the famous solar plexus)



(Pic. Edgren's coverage of Fitzsimmons-Corbett)