

History Worth Repeating

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New-York Daily Times
Vol. III, No. 646,
Thursday, October 13, 1853, p. 1

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Sporting Intelligence
The \$2,000 Prize Fight
Yankee Sullivan vs John Morrissey
Thirty-Seven Rounds Fought
A Row in and Around the Ring
Dispute as to whom is the Victor

The excitement was intense during yesterday and last night, in all parts of the City, respecting the great prize fight for a wager of \$2,000, between JAMES, or "Yankee" SULLIVAN and JOHN MORRISSEY, that was known by certain sporting gents, to have taken place in the interior of Putnam Co., New York, bordering on the States of Massachusetts and Vermont. The news spread around the City, to the effect, that the pugilists had been captured by the authorities of some county where they were passing through, but such persons who were posted in this ring contest disclaimed the rumor, and before 12 o'clock, noon, it was ascertained *positively* that the pugilistic encounter would certainly come off between the hours of 11 o'clock A.M. and 3 P. M., at the ground selected, near Boston Four Corners, on the line of the New-York and Harlem Railroad, about one hundred miles distant from this City. The trains of the Harlem Road were densely crowded on Tuesday afternoon, and yesterday morning, with hundreds of persons, whose curiosity was excited to such a pitch, as to prompt them to abandon their business, families, and all else, for the purpose of witnessing the brutal exhibition in the ring, between the two human beings above named. The cars were, accordingly, heavily laden with passengers, and it is estimated that over *three thousand* persons from New-York, Brooklyn, Williamsburgh, Jersey City, and surrounding places, left by the Railway between the hours of 12 o'clock, M., on Tuesday, and 6 o'clock, A.M., yesterday morning. Last night, all sorts of rumors were afloat in the City as to the result of the combat, and bets were made, varying from \$100 to \$500, that the fight had *not* taken place, all of which are of course lost, as the battle *was* fought, without any attempt, as far as we could learn, of interference by the authorities of the County in which the disgusting scene was enacted. The spot selected for the fight, was a large open lot in the County of Putnam, which is situated on land that seemed to be disputed territory, between this State and Massachusetts, as persons residing in both States claim to be the owners. This being a nice point; it was taken into due

consideration by the pugilists and their friends, and accordingly taken advantage of. At the arrival of the Harlem and Hudson River Railroad trains, last night the depot stations were besieged by crowds of persons anxiously inquiring as to the result of the contest. No information of a reliable character could be obtained up to near midnight, but "they did not give it up so," and when the Albany express train arrived, the news of the encounter, was sounded in all directions, and SULLIVAN proclaimed by his friends to be the victor of the fight. Others, who were favorable towards MORRISSEY, declared that he had won the battle, and received a decision in his favor by the Judges and Referee. It appears the pugilists met on the ground at 11 o'clock yesterday morning, amidst an assemblage of some four or five thousand persons, and nothing occurred to disturb them; the ring was formed and they were brought forth by their seconds, who were as follows: For SULLIVAN, ANDEE SHEEHAN, of the Fourth Ward, and WM. WILSON. For MORRISSEY, AWFUL GARDNER and TOM O'DONNELL. The favorite was MORRISSEY, \$100 to \$70, and in some instances \$100 to \$50, before they came to blows. They were both in good condition, and the six weeks' training appeared to have improved each of them in both appearance and strength. They walked up face to face, good naturedly smiled, and took their positions apparently in the best feeling. They squared off, and the first blood was drawn by SULLIVAN with a swift tap on MORRISSEY'S nose. He followed up his blows in quick succession, and the first round created considerable excitement among the spectators. The rounds were continued on to the *Thirty-seventh*, occupying fifty-five minutes, when MORRISSEY became very weak, and a general row was the result. Some persons rushed inside of the ring, and several of them received some severe punishment. The only blows SULLIVAN received was about the right side of his face, principally on his cheek bone, and the eye was much swollen.

The face of MORRISSEY was frightfully mutilated, and it is said by those who witnessed the affair, that he also received numerous severe blows on the body, which will no doubt render him disabled for a long time.

There is now a dispute as to who was victorious in the contest, and we learn the Judges decided in favor of MORRISSEY, on the ground of "foul blows," and "not coming to time," &c., &c.

This decision is, however, claimed to be wrong by the opponents of it, and the stake-holder [Jim Hughes, see NY Daily Times, July 28, 1854] was advised not to give up the \$2,000 prize, which he has held in gold coin since the match was made.

It is rumored that SULLIVAN has agreed to place \$1,000 additional to the sum already up, and fight the battle over again for the \$4,000, in one day or sixty days.

There will probably be great excitement eventually grow(ing) out of this whole matter, on and in half a dozen prize fights.

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New-York Daily Times,
Vol. III, No. 892
Friday, July 28, 1854, p. 8

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Sporting Intelligence
A Prize Fight between John Morrissey and William Poole
Morrissey Terribly Beaten and Left Friendless
The Origin of the Battle
Censorable Conduct of the Ninth Ward Police

Great excitement was occasioned yesterday in all parts of the City, in consequence of a brutal rough and tumble fight, which took place between the noted pugilists, JOHN MORRISSEY and WILLIAM POOLE, at the long Steamboat Wharf, foot of Amos street, North River. It appears that for a long time past, POOLE and "Jim" HUGHES have been at variance, and during Wednesday afternoon they accidentally met at the City Hotel, corner of Broadway and Howard street, where the matter was amicably arranged. While they were drinking at the bar to renew their friendship, MORRISSEY came in, accompanied by a number of friends. As he approached the counter he looked up and exclaimed, "HUGHES, are you going to give up that stake money that I won on the fight with SULLIVAN?" Mr. HUGHES replied, "I'll give it up when you convince me you won the fight, and not before." To this MORRISSEY made some sarcastic reply.

Meanwhile POOLE stood still, looking intently at MORRISSEY, and finally remarked in a loud tone, "HUGHES, don't you give it up to him; spend it for rum before you give it to that _____." This action on the part of POOLE enraged MORRISSEY, and he retaliated by telling POOLE that *he* nor any other man should spend *his* money. The parties then entered into an exceedingly rough argument, when MORRISSEY asked him to fight; POOLE said he would not, that MORRISSEY was too big for him, but if MORRISSEY would bring himself to an equal weight, he would fight him. Morrissey said that he did not fight that way; but he had seen the time when he could lick him any way he could name, and then wanted to know how he would fight. POOLE said he would fight with knives. At this answer, MORRISSEY called POOLE aside and told him that he had tried to avoid fighting in that way as much as possible, but as it was his wish he would do it. MORRISSEY then offered to go to Canada, each one to take a friend. This POOLE would not do. MORRISSEY then getting rather excited, told POOLE that he thought he was not doing the fair thing, and that he would like to fight him. POOLE feeling rather vexed at this last answer, said that MORRISSEY had spent half his time in State Prison, and used other harsh language. This led to some hard words on the part of MORRISSEY, who offered to bet one thousand dollars to fifty dollars that he could whip POOLE, and offered to fight him within twenty-four hours, at any place he named. This POOLE would not agree to. MORRISSEY

then offered to bet him fifty dollars that he dare not meet him in the morning at 7 o'clock, and fight. This POOLE agreed to; and it was settled to meet on the following morning at the foot of Amos street, North River. The match being made *bona fide*, the parties separated and Mr. POOLE immediately proceeded to Hoboken with a few friends, to stay for the night, to avoid being arrested. At an early hour in the morning, POOLE was up and dressed, and to use his own language, "felt like a race-horse."

News of the intention of POOLE and MORRISSEY to fight spread like wildfire among the sporting hours during the evening, and heavy bets were made as to the result of the encounter. At 6 1/2 o'clock in the morning a crowd had assembled on Amos street wharf to witness the affray. There could not have been less than three hundred persons present during the progress of the fight, consisting mainly of the "fancy," and the friends and admirers of POOLE and MORRISSEY. A little before 7 o'clock POOLE was rowed up to the dock in a small boat. There were no seconds or bottle-holders, it being understood that the fight was to be what is termed a "rough and tumble" - the advantage, of course, being in favor of the man who first got his opponent down. Prize-fighters being usually *before* rather than *behind* time, (as the time had now reached 6 1/2) the prediction was expressed that MORRISSEY would not appear - that he had managed to be arrested by the Police, &c. &c. POOLE expressed a wish that he would come - that he "would fight him like a man" - and thought d_____d sight more of the *fight* than of the *money*.

In a few moments, however, all doubt was abandoned as MORRISSEY walked down the dock, stripped for the occasion, where his antagonist stood to receive him. As he approached, the crowd opened to the right and left, and the shout went up, "Stand back! Let the two men meet!" To this some attention was paid, (perhaps as much as usual in such a fight,) when the parties met, "eager for the fray." He said, where is POOLE? Here I am, exclaimed POOLE, and both squared, and each eyed his antagonist with a kind of calculating ferocity, moving about for a chance for a half minute, when MORRISSEY put out his left hand, and simultaneously POOLE dropped, seized his adversary about the body and threw him. In this position they remained, POOLE uppermost, for about five minutes, when MORRISSEY said, "Enough," and the usual shout went up and the parties were speedily separated. The crowd, fearing the police would capture them all, hastily made their way off in various directions, and POOLE left in the same small boat he came across the river with.

MORRISSEY, supported by two strangers, left the ground apparently severely injured. Poor MORRISSEY was weakened to such a degree, that he required assistance to get him on his feet at the close of the encounter. His main friend, JOHNNY LING, had in the meantime attempted to draw a revolver from his pocket, but before he could accomplish it one of POOLE'S friends knocked him down. The fight now became general, and for a time the wharf was a scene of the wildest confusion. The friends of POOLE being very numerous, beat MORRISSEY'S friends dreadfully, and LING was taken away almost insensible, and quite prostrated from the great loss of blood. MORRISSEY was then left entirely destitute of friends to aid him in getting home. He finally got into a

coach, and was driven to this house in Leonard street, near West Broadway, where he was attended by skillful physicians. He presented a shocking spectacle, and scarcely could any of his friends recognize him. His eyes were closed and one of them was found to be gouged from one end of the socket, which injury will probably impair his sight for life. There were large bunches on all parts of his head. His face above and below the eyes is blackened by violent blows given on the bridge of his nose. There is a hole in his cheek, and his lips are chawed up in a frightful manner. He also sustained fearful injuries about his breast, arms, and back, where POOLE kicked him with heavy cow hide boots after he halloed *enough*. So severe are MORRISSEY'S injuries, that (it) is very doubtful whether he walks in the street for the next six months.

During the day, some forty different stories were in circulation concerning the *fairness* of the contest. MORRISSEY and his friends positively declare that he was kicked, cuffed and punched by the friends of POOLE. On the other side, the parties assert, without fear of contradiction, that *no one struck MORRISSEY but Mr. POOLE*, and all that was done was accomplished in the short space of three to five minutes.

The conduct of the commandant of the Ninth Ward Police seems to be highly culpable, and justly deserving of severe censure. It seems the Captain was informed, at about 2 o'clock in the morning, of the arrangements that had been made for the battle - yet no police arrived at the wharf until a long time after the fight was over: and what is also strange, they appear to know very little about the fight, nor has there been any attempt made to arrest the parties, since the disgraceful affair was ended. We learn that BILL POOLE and his party of Ninth Ward friends left for Coney Island, yesterday, to have a jolly time over his success in whipping the bully who has made a noise in the sporting world for the last few months.

Account By An Eye-Witness

Subjoined we give an account of the brutal affair, furnished by a person who witnessed it. He says:

"Yesterday morning, about 7 o'clock, an encounter took place between JOHN MORRISSEY and WILLIAM POOLE on the pier at the foot of Amos street, North River. For some time past MORRISSEY has entertained the idea of attaining the unenviable notoriety attached to a fighting man. He has frequently challenged HYER to meet him in the ring and settle their animosities by a fisticuff battle. HYER'S good judgment, however, has deterred him from participating in such disgraceful business. It appears that on Wednesday night MORRISSEY and POOLE met in a public house on Broadway. Words ensued relative to the respective merits of HYER and MORRISSEY. The latter offered a wager of fifty dollars to Mr. POOLE that he dared not meet him at 7 o'clock, the next morning, he (MORRISSEY) giving POOLE the choice of ground. POOLE immediately accepted the proposition, and the money was posted. Mr. POOLE, as far as regards size and weight, is much the inferior to MORRISSEY, but he possesses more activity, and is considered a tremendous "rough and tumble"

fighter. Some time before the hour arrived for the meeting, POOLE appeared on the pier with a large number of his friends, and offered to bet \$3,000 with Mr. ALBURTIS, who was on the pier, that he could whip MORRISSEY or any other man in the world except TOM HYER: that he felt in super fine condition, and if MORRISSEY dared to show his face he would drum him off the dock, or any one else who interfered with him. No one, however, felt disposed to accept his wager.

At 6 1/2 o'clock, MORRISSEY was seen coming down Amos street unattended and exclaimed, "Where is POOLE?" On being answered that he was on the pier, took off his coat, without taking the precaution of unbuttoning his shirt collar, until reminded to do so by one of his friends, he immediately repaired there. POOLE stood ready to meet him. MORRISSEY struck out - a clinch ensued - MORRISSEY falling heavily with POOLE on top and who took advantage of his position to deal tremendous blows on MORRISSEY'S face, and before they had fought five minutes, MORRISSEY cried "enough." POOLE jumped into his boat, lying at the dock, and rowed away, while MORRISSEY, considerably chop-fallen and awfully bruised and beaten, was obliged to leave the ground amid the jeers and hootings of the assemblage. POOLE also said that he intended to go on an excursion at 7 o'clock, (meaning of course the fight,) that it was the last he expected to take and was only waiting for the boat to arrive but had some doubts whether it would stop at the pier to take him, as that was the last stopping-place. The fight was of very short duration. As soon as they clinched, the crowd gathered around, and it was almost impossible for any one except those within a foot of the belligerents to witness the conflict, which was over in five minutes after the first blow was struck. MORRISSEY left the scene in a light waggon, without a friend to attend to him, and drove off.

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