**June 1935:**

**Challenger Plans Tactics to Wear Down Baer by forcing Action in Bout Thursday.**

By JOSEPH C. NICHOLS. Special to the New York Times.

LOCH SHELDRAKE, N. Y., June 8 --"The man in the better shape will win the fight, and I never was in better shape in my life." Thus spoke James J. Braddock in reference to the outcome of his bout with Max Baer. whom he will meet for the heavyweight title at the Madison Square Garden Bowl on Thursday night.

The New Jersey longshoreman, whose fistic career has had more ups and downs than a storm-tossed ship, has unbounded, sincere confidence in himself and, while not believing that he is a man of destiny, still thinks that it is in the cards for him to wear the mantle of heavyweight champion of the world.

**Will Curb Baer's Tactics.**

"I would like to say to the boxing fans and to the public at large that I will be in the best shape any athlete can possibly get into for the fight,'' declared the challenger. "And it will be some fight. Baer won't be able to take it easy with me; I won't let him. He will have to box fifteen rounds in two, not two in fifteen as he has been doing in his last few bouts.

"There will be no chance for him to clown, pull up his trunks or wave to the audience. I know what this fight means to me, and I will give the public all that it is humanly possible to give."

If the challenger's statement seems boastful, let it be said that that is actually not the case. He made the above declarations only after the most persistent questioning, and it is a safe bet that he never used the first person singular as often in his life as he did in the interview.

**Recalls Braddock's Trials.**

Joe Gould, Braddock's manager, is as confident as his fighter regarding the big bout. "Jimmy does not fear Baer, and that is a point in his favor, especially when you consider that the last few men to face the champion seemed to have too much respect for him," the pilot explained.

**"To Jimmy it's just another fight," Gould went on. "In my experience," and here he grew philosophic, "I have found that the toughest game is the game of life, and when a man can do in that game what Jim has done, what does a fight mean, or a punch on the chin?''**

No matter how the fight turns out, Braddock is sure of getting some lucrative bouts. He already has received offers to appear in England and Ireland, but whether he will take them or not depends on what he does on Thursday night.

1935 - Sports of the Times - By John Keirnan.  **Lucky Jim**

There he stands, Lucky Jim. Who would have believed It, who would have dreamed it a year ago? Not Jim Braddock. World's champion?

Why? Jersey James was a poverty-stricken pugilistic wreck. No money. No food. No job. No hope. A wife and three small children to support. A broken past and a dreary future.

The gas had been cut off in the Braddock home. Jim borrowed money to buy milk for the kids. He and his wite went hungry as long as they could stand it. Then the family went on the dole. Jim tried to get work on the docks. He had been a longshoreman. ''No Help Wanted." Jim trudged away. He did earn a few dollars now and then working for a railroad. He lugged creosoted yellow pine ties about for a track gang. But the going was tough and the outlook was gloomy.

Jim had a friend. The friend was his manager when Jim was a fighter. That's a queer tale, too. On the average, a fight manager is a human harpy who squeezes all he can out of the blood and bones of husky and courageous young fellows and then tosses them callously aside when they are battered hulks of no more financial advantage for him. But there are exceptions. Just a few. Jim drew one of the exceptions in Joe Gould. Though he didn't know it at the time, that was the start of his good luck.

**Two in the Swamp.**

Plain James is a tall, stolid, unimaginative fellow. Joe Gould is a small, excitable chap. An odd pair but firm friends. They made money years ago as Jim bounced out of the amateur ranks to knock a flock of no-account fighters to the floor in the professional ring. The late Bill Muldoon said that Jim would some day be heavyweight champion of the world. So did Gene Tunney. The outlook was rosy for Braddock and Gould. They made money in the ring. They made money in the market. Easy come, easy go. They spent freely, even lavishly. There was more where that came from.

Then came a series of crashes for them. Their investments melted away in the depression. Braddock met defeat after defeat in the ring. Lost to Hans Birkie. Lost to Martin Levandowskl. Lost to Al Stillman. Lost to Al Ettore. Broke his right hand three times. Broke two ribs. Broke his collarbone. Had twenty-two stitches taken in cuts on his face.

A washed-up fighter on his way out. No promoter wanted him any more. Gould and Braddock went down the road together. Gould had a little money. Braddock borrowed from him until it was all gone. Thus they came to the end of the road, and the end of the road was the Dismal Swamp.

**The Upward Swing.**

At the edge of the Dismal Swamp began the fairy tale, an Arabian Nights story for modern days.

Gould was hanging around Madison Square Garden - sitting on the Mourner's Bench outside Jimmy Johnston's office--when there was a hurry call for a victim to be flattened by Corn Griffin on the Baer-Carnera program of last year.

Gould suggested Braddock. Johnston laughed. Gould implored. Johnston laughed again. But he couldn't rustle up any one else in a hurry and finally took Braddock in desperation, hoping that Jim would be able to stand up until Corn Griffin hit him.

And Corn Griffin did hit the untrained and half-starved Braddock. He belted Jim to the canvas in the second round. But Jim got up. Perhaps hunger had made Jim a bit savage. Ordinarily he is a very mild gent. In the third round Jim belted Corn Griffin to the canvas and the cracked Corn didn't get up.

Food for the Braddock family, at any rate. Jim's share was $250. It looked like a bonanza to him. Then the bout with John Henry Lewis. Every one said that he couldn't win. But they told him that when he went in against Griffin. He wasn't thinking about John Henry Lewis, anyway. He was thinking about the money he would get. He won the fight and got $700. Then Art Lasky, against whom he had no chance, of course. Lasky was the dashing young fellow who was going to fight Baer if he could catch up with him. A victory and $4,100 for James J. Braddock. Astonishing. Even Jim thought so, especially the money part. The fighting part he took in his stubborn stride.

**The Set-Up.**

Reasonably enough, the fellow who drove Lasky out of focus was chosen to take Art's place in the heavyweighht picture. He was to be tossed in against Max Baer for the first shot at the heavyweight championship.

It was hailed as ridiculous on all sides. He had no chance against Max Beer. It was forgotten or ignored that he had no chance against Corn Griifin. John Henry Lewis and Art Lasky in that order and went on to win those fights.

Still Jim didn't care, He was eating regularly. He had paid his debts. He was many months off the dole. He and his family were far better off than they were a year ago. He would have the benefit of good training for the big fight. He would get a lot of money--for him--win, lose or draw. And to unimaginative Jim, Baer would be just another fellow in the ring. A bigger fellow than Jim. A harder hitter. It didn't matter. Jim would plod in there and do his best steadily and stubbornly.  **The Upset.**

Except for the happy ending, any mention of the fight is painful. The Baer who talked like a braggart was a shocking disappointment as a championship defendant. How did he hurt his hands early in the bout? It must have been by sitting on them between rounds. He didn't even aim a good windy blow at Plain James until the fifth.

He sneered at the referee. He flaunted his contempt of the booing crowd with jeering gestures. He tried to scare Braddock with a gargoyle grimace and a fierce snarl. It had worked against the bewildered Carnera, but Plain James didn't scare worth a nickel. He just plodded in and messed up the snarl and the grimace with a stiff left jab.

So Jim won. That's the only part of the program pleasant to dwell upon. From rags to riches. Strive and succeed. A man may be down but he's never out. Lucky Jim at the last. Not a great fighter but -- and possibly even Max Baer can see this -- a great lesson for courageous plodders in any walk of life.

Sports of the Times By JOHN KIERAN. (June 11, 1935. Just before the Baer fight.)

**Jersey James, the Odd Number**

Of all the odd tales of pugilism, the story of James J. Braddock will match the best. Slow of foot and none too fast overhead, Journeyman James has been rambling the pugilistic roads for close to ten years and only recently did the long lane bring him to a happy turn.

After eight or nine years of rough work in and out of the ring, James was pretty well down and almost out. He had a wife and three children. The husky young fellow who started out to write his name on the scroll of fame humbly asked somebody else to write it on the relief roll for him. His family needed food.

So did James, for that matter. In his younger days he had been a light heavyweight, but in later and temporarily happier times he earned enough to eat his fill and he grew into a heavyweight. He went as high as 200 pounds, eating regularly and even deliberately. Two or three times after that he went down toward the light heavyweight class again, much against his will. He went short of food because he was short of money.

**The Clouded Campaign Record.**

Just about a year ago Jersey James was a much-battered plodding pugilist on the road to nowhere. He had been beaten some twenty-one times by various gents, some of whom were excessively unimportant in the pugilistic world.

One of his opponents broke a couple of ribs for him in a kindly way. Another broke his collarbone by accident. He was aiming at the Braddock chin but his aim was bad. Jersey James helped to swell the accident record by breaking his own right hand two or three times.

He met a stranger in the ring one night and the stranger presented him with a cauliflower ear. That was for remembrance. Other fellows cut him about the face with their gloves and there was much hem-stitching to do to repair the features of the stubborn fellow from New Jersey.

With all that behind him, James apparently had nothing ahead of him. He was washed up as a fighter: He was penniless. He had a family to support. Ne couldn't get work, even though he was a handy man at all sorts of jobs. Things looked dark for the Braddock family.

Then Max Baer fought Prime Camera, and Journeyman James, the plodding pugilistic, got a break. Some smart fellows were building up a fighter named Corn Griffin. He was to be an the Baer-Carnera program, in the supporting cast. He needed a victim to prove his sterling worth. Somebody happened to think of Jersey James. He would do nicely for a victim. He needed the money and what would one more beating be to him?

**The Road Back.**

So James came over from Jersey, an alleged lamb for the slaughter. His right hand had only recently healed from one of its broken fits. He had no time to train but that didn't make any difference because he had no money to pay for training expenses and neither did his manager. Both were broke. If nothing else, this was a chance to eat.

The tall Corn Griffin laid into the untrained and half-starved Braddock in the Long Island Bowl and gave Jersey James hark-from-the-tomb for a couple of rounds. Mr. Braddock went back to his corner on wobbly pins. But in the third round Jersey James, the stubborn gent, caught the full-flowering Corn Griffin on the chin and spread Corn all over the canvas.

That was one thing about Jersey James. They might out-box him or even belt him around. But he was stubborn and he could hit.

The victory over Griffin was the first step on the road back far Jersey James. But this Battle of Long Island didn't put James on Easy Street, It just about paid his debts and provided a little much-needed food.

In November be drew another lucky break. Somehow he managed to win a decision over John Henry Lewis who was--and is--a pretty good fighter. This meant that Jersey James was off the relief roll and on the regular fighting rolls again.

**The Big Jump.**

His next advance was a long leap. Art Lasky bad been coming along fast as a heavyweight contender. Art didn't want to fight Braddock because beating Jersey James wouldn't mean much. But in the end Art had to be content with the match because Braddock seemed to be the only one who wanted to fight him. At that stage Jersey James would have been willing to fight Lasky, Baer, the National Guard and a Bengal tiger in the same ring for $500 in cash and give the tiger the first three bites.

The story of that evening was that Lasky went in there alone with Jersey James and Jersey James gave him a fierce walloping. If Lasky had won, as expected, the boxing commissioners would have made him No. 1 Man on Max Baer's list of callers. When Jersey James won, they put him in that favored spot.

**He Can't Lose**

Around town the query is: Has Braddock any chance? Well, in a certain and very important fashion for the Braddock family, James can't lose. He was broke and now he is headed for a heavy chunk of money. His family was hungry and now the Braddocks, big and little, are assured of good food and pleasant lodgings for same time to come. That was what James was after -- and it seemed far, far away -- when he started to rise from the depths a year ago. He has put that in the winning column by coming up for this fight for the heavyweight championship.

As for Braddock's chances of winning the fight, Jack Dempsey always said that any one who could punch was a dangerous opponent. That was why the Manasss Mauler tore in with speed and tried to finish off his opponents in a hurry. He didn't want to linger in a vicinity where danger was stalking.

The hilarious Harlequin of Hollywood is younger, stronger, bigger and faster than Jersey James, the journeyman plodder. By any system of accounting, Baer figures to win. But Braddock is a stubborn gent and he can punch with his right hand. He has been hungry and this is his chance at a fortune. He has a chance. Probably it is just a chance. But a year ago it seemed that he had no chance whatever to get anywhere. And look where he is now.