

Jim Jeffries

James J. Jeffries was born in a two-story log cabin near the corner of Carroll Northern and Basil Western Roads on April 15, 1875, the son of Alexis and Rebecca (Boyer) Jeffries. The family moved to California when Jim was about seven years old.

After graduation from high school Jeffries worked a number of jobs, including one as a boilermaker – thus giving him the nickname for his later professional boxing career. A natural athlete and a quick study, he was soon moving up in boxing circles and soon earned a reputation as an intelligent fighter who could take “inhuman” amounts of punishment.

He defeated Bob Fitzsimmons in New York in 1899 to claim boxing’s highest prize and defended the title seven times, which was unusual for the time as many champions would not risk it. He retired undefeated in 1905, saying, “There is no one left to fight.”

Coaxed out of retirement in 1910 for a fight with then world heavyweight champion Jack Johnson, Jeffries was out of shape and a shell of his former self but still put up a good fight before losing in the 15th round with a TKO.

He went back to retirement at his Burbank, California, ranch where he continued to train young boxers. Jeffries died on March 3, 1953.

Jim Jeffries was named to the International Boxing Hall of Fame and is considered by many experts to be one of the top three boxers of all time.

~Provided by the Carroll Area Historical Society

(This is another version of story of Jim Jeffries This article was written by Bob Hunter a Sports Reporter for the Columbus Dispatch and was contributed by the Village of Carroll Municipal Office.)

"THE GREAT WHITE HOPE," JAMES JEFFRIES, WAS BORN IN CARROLL, OHIO.....James Jeffries, the World’s Heavyweight boxing title holder from 1899 to 1905, was born in Carroll, Ohio. Although James lived in California as an adult, Carroll residents always considered him there own. (It is believed that James lived in Carroll until the age of 6, when

his father, a Methodist minister, moved the family of eight children to California.)

Carroll residents reveled in Jim's **six** successful title defenses during his reign as "World Heavyweight Champion." In 1905, he chose to retire undefeated. At the age of 35, Jim decided to come out of retirement and lost to the great champion, Jack Johnson, in what was termed the "fight of the century" on July 4, 1910.

The day after the fight, *The Dispatch* compared Jeffries loss to the only other "major" tragedy that had confronted the tiny Fairfield County town 30 years before. "Never since the day the body of Jim Jeffries' grandfather was snatched from its peaceful resting place in the little cemetery at Carroll has that town been so deeply cast into gloom as when the news of the big fight reached there on Monday evening announcing that Carroll's idol had bitten the dust in the ring at Reno.

"Jim's grandfather was buried in the cemetery, and shortly afterwards it was discovered that the grave had been opened and that "body snatchers" had been at work. The little town was stirred into a furor and a searching party visited every medical college in Columbus without avail. The body was never located, but it has been believed in Carroll that medical students in Columbus had stolen it."

That incident has since been forgotten in Carroll, but the boxer's memory still lives on street signs that greet the visitor with the news that it is the birthplace of Jeffries, the former heavyweight champion. He died in California in 1953.

(This article was written by Bob Hunter, a Sports Reporter for the Columbus Dispatch and was contributed by the Village of Carroll Municipal Office.)