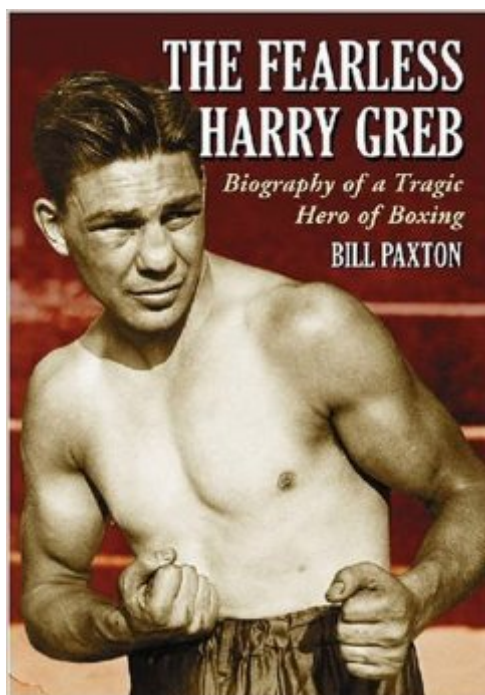


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The Fearless Harry Greb: Biography Of A Tragic Hero Of Boxing



Synopsis

The legendary Harry Greb stepped into the ring more than 300 times from 1913 to 1926, defeated opponents who outweighed him by more than 30 pounds, held the middleweight and light heavyweight titles and beat every Hall of Fame boxer he ever fought. Dubbed "the Pittsburgh Windmill" because of his manic, freewheeling style in the ring, Greb also crossed racial lines, taking on all comers regardless of color. An injury in the ring led to Greb's gradually going blind in one eye and should have ended his career, but he kept his condition secret and fought on. Tragically, the indomitable fighter would be dead by the age of 32, felled by complications during minor surgery. This biography of one of the toughest boxers of all time includes interviews, family recollections, modern doctors' analyses of Greb's eye injury and more than 120 rare photographs, as well as a complete fight record and round-by-round descriptions of his most famous fights.

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Customer Reviews

As no fight films of this fantastic pugilist are known to exist, Bill Paxton's new bio of the great Harry Greb (b. 1894, d. 1926, & fought from 1913 to 1926) is a godsend for hardcore fans of the sweet science. I have known of Greb for years - indeed, more than a decade before Paxton created his [...] website in 1996 - and have read many magazine and web articles about him, but it's always been frustrating that no in-depth book about this boxing immortal had been written. Until now. Paxton does a great job of informing the reader not only about Greb the man, but also of Greb the fighter, including his fighting style and the boxing techniques that he utilized, which is extremely interesting since, as I noted above, no films of any of his 299 - 299! - official pro bouts are extant. Relying

mainly on contemporary newspaper accounts of his fights, Paxton provides as vivid a description of what it was like to face the "Pittsburgh Windmill"/"Human Windmill"/"Smoke City Wildcat" as is possible by such means. Furthermore, the author meticulously addresses many of the myths regarding the fighter that legendary heavyweight champion Jack Dempsey was scared to tackle (interestingly, while the "Manassa Mauler" wouldn't give Greb a title shot, he did defend his crown against several fighters whom Greb, a [natural] middleweight, had already decisively beaten). One of these myths is that Greb was one of the "dirtiest" fighters of all-time. Here, Paxton elucidates that Greb only really started employing blatantly foul tactics after losing the sight of his right eye (Greb fought the last five years of his career with this handicap) and, even then, only employed the most flagrant and damaging of them AFTER an opponent had begun fouling HIM.

A "Fearless" biography of the relatively unknown but incredible boxer, Harry Greb. I've been looking forward to a book that puts together all of the pieces of Greb's incredible life since I discovered the harrygreb.com website about 8 years ago. It makes so much sense that the book I have been waiting for has been written by the very creator of that website. The book is incredibly well researched and documented. There are over 120 amazing and rare photographs, (most of which are not on the above mentioned Greb website) and almost 800 end-notes! It seems that every fact and statement is backed up with the source, mostly previously uncovered newspaper documentation. The facts are not just stated, but woven into a story that gives an understanding into what made Greb tick. Whenever a fight venue, location or opponent is discussed in the text usually a great photograph goes along with it. "The Fearless Harry Greb" is more than just an interesting biography and analysis of the mysterious Greb, however. It reads like an "American Experience" in book form. The descriptions of Greb's early years are full of details of what life was like during the early 20th century. An example of the depth of research is the chapter that delves into the mystery behind Greb's blindness. One of the remarkable aspects of his life and proof of his temerity is that he fought for years while blind in his right eye! Greb had to keep this a secret from his opponents, of course, so very little information about how and when this occurred has been known. This has always been one of the mysteries behind the Greb legend.

I totally disagree with D. Casey that the author's careful research of the facts detracted from the book. This is a biography, and as such is supposed to capture the essence of the man and tell the full truth about him. As to the many tall tales about Greb, an old history prof of mine used to say, "if it wasn't true it should have been." But if it wasn't true, it shouldn't be in the biography. The author

gives excellent round-by-round accounts of Greb's bouts, but, although Greb certainly was one of the greatest fighters of all time, he was not always as dominant as the author makes him sound. I just read a biography of Billy Miske, whom Greb defeated, but the defeat was not as one-sided as it sounds in this book. I found a few errors in the book: On page 5, the author tells of Greb being born in his father's "car" en route to the hospital. This was 1894, just a year after the Duryea brothers produced their first automobile, and two years before Henry Ford drove his first gasoline buggy. The vehicle in question here was almost certainly a horse-drawn buggy. On page 92, it says that Jimmy Darcy fought Jack Dempsey for the heavyweight championship. Darcy never fought Dempsey even in an exhibition, let alone a title fight. On page 137, a picture is featured showing Greb supposedly playing a ukulele, but the instrument in his hand looks more like a banjo. On page 190 there are two major errors. First, it says that Frank Klaus won the middleweight title when he defeated Georges Carpentier in France. That was for the European title only. Also, it says that Jack Dillon fought Jim Corbett. Dillon didn't start boxing until 1908, by which time Corbett was 42 years old and had been retired for five years.

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