In 1977, Everett M. Skeehan published *Rocky Marciano: Biography of a First Son*, the first full-length and long overdue treatment of the great undefeated heavyweight champ. Rocky has a special place in most fight fansâ€™ hearts, but the author grew up in Brockton, Massachusetts, birthplace of the Rock, so that special feeling is magnified a thousandfold.

The New York Times Sunday Book Review called Skeehanâ€™s book "A knockout...a story of immense power and honesty."

Sports Illustrated described it as "The vivid, brawling story of the real Rocky, the greatest slugger in the history of boxing!"

That book has been revised and significantly expanded into a handsome new volume called *Undefeated: Rocky Marciano â€“ The Fighter Who Refused to Lose*
(Rounder Books, $18.45, October 2005).
Undefeated: Rocky Marciano
is a large format book, intelligently laid out, and loaded with lots of pics.

September 2005 marked the 50th anniversary of Rockyâ€™s last fight, so this is the perfect time to revisit Marciano.

Young Rocco Marchegiano entered the world an underdog. He came close to dying of pneumonia when he 19 months old. He grew up watching his father trudge home exhausted from long shifts at the Brockton shoe factories. Despite the drudgery, there was still barely enough money to feed his growing family. Also, being Italian-American meant he was looked down upon as second- or third-class citizen. The discrimination, the want, the uncertainty, fueled a desire in young Rocky Marciano; he smashed the odds and common wisdom, the old one-two, to become the only champion in history to retire with an undefeated record (49-0, 43 KOs).

When, at the age of 25, after an unsuccessful stint in minor league baseball, Rocky decided to pursue boxing, people laughed in his face. They all said he was too old. They said he was too small. They said he was too slow. They said his arms were too short. They said he was clumsy. And they were right. What they didn't know, what they would soon discover, was in the manâ€™s chest beat the heart of a lion. He redefined the meaning of willpower.

A grueling regimen, one of the all-time legendary trainers (Charlie Goldman), canny if crooked management, conspired to lead Rocky to the summit, and Rocky did the rest. After becoming heavyweight champion and successfully defending his title six times, Rocky Marciano retired from boxing in 1956.

He was a beloved ex-champ, but his post-fight years were marked by restlessness and insecurity â€“ an unending parade of undocumented business deals, nonstop travel, and a

never-ending string of meaningless personal appearances. Because of his phobia concerning banks, hundreds of thousands of dollars in cash, maybe more, is still unaccounted for â€“ buried treasure whose whereabouts are known only to Rocky and Rocky alone â€¦ a secret he took with him to his grave when he died in a 1969 plane crash.

Drawing on hundreds of hours of interviews, research, and intensive study of each of Rocky's classic bouts, Everett Skeehanâ€™s *Undefeated: Rocky Marciano â€“ The Fighter Who Refused to Lose* is the definitive document of a heavyweight boxing legend. Read more at the BLOG