

Rumble on the Rio Grande

Written by Kelsey McCarson
Tuesday, 08 January 2013 00:00



It was a fistic carnival like none before it. More than three hundred souls stood with mouths wide while Judge Roy Bean readied the trains for a return. The trek had been far. The bulk of them had travelled over sixteen hours on dust-filled, rocky terrain from El Paso, which was hard going in 1896 even for wondrous steam engines.

This cult of punchers was hoping to see heavyweights Bob Fitzsimmons and Peter Maher etch another torrid brawl into the marbled halls of *Fistiana*. Instead, the rough and tumble men, who had paid roughly thirty-two dollars apiece (train ride plus fight ticket) for the *privilege* of becoming lawfully lawless hobos, bore witness to one of the fastest ending prizefights in heavyweight boxing history.

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A sharp left hook by Ruby Robert Fitzsimmons had spun poor Peter Maher down to the hard canvas at just one minute thirty-five seconds of round number one. Oh miserable brood of oddities, thy name is boxing.

This is the story of how it came to be.

“Law West of the Pecos”

Law in Texas (especially the sparsely populated western parts of Texas) was different back then. This was particularly true of the law handed down by Justice of the Peace, Roy Bean of Val Verde County. Bean, proclaiming himself the “Law West of the Pecos,” doled out a myriad of unorthodox sentences from his very own saloon, The Jersey Lilly.

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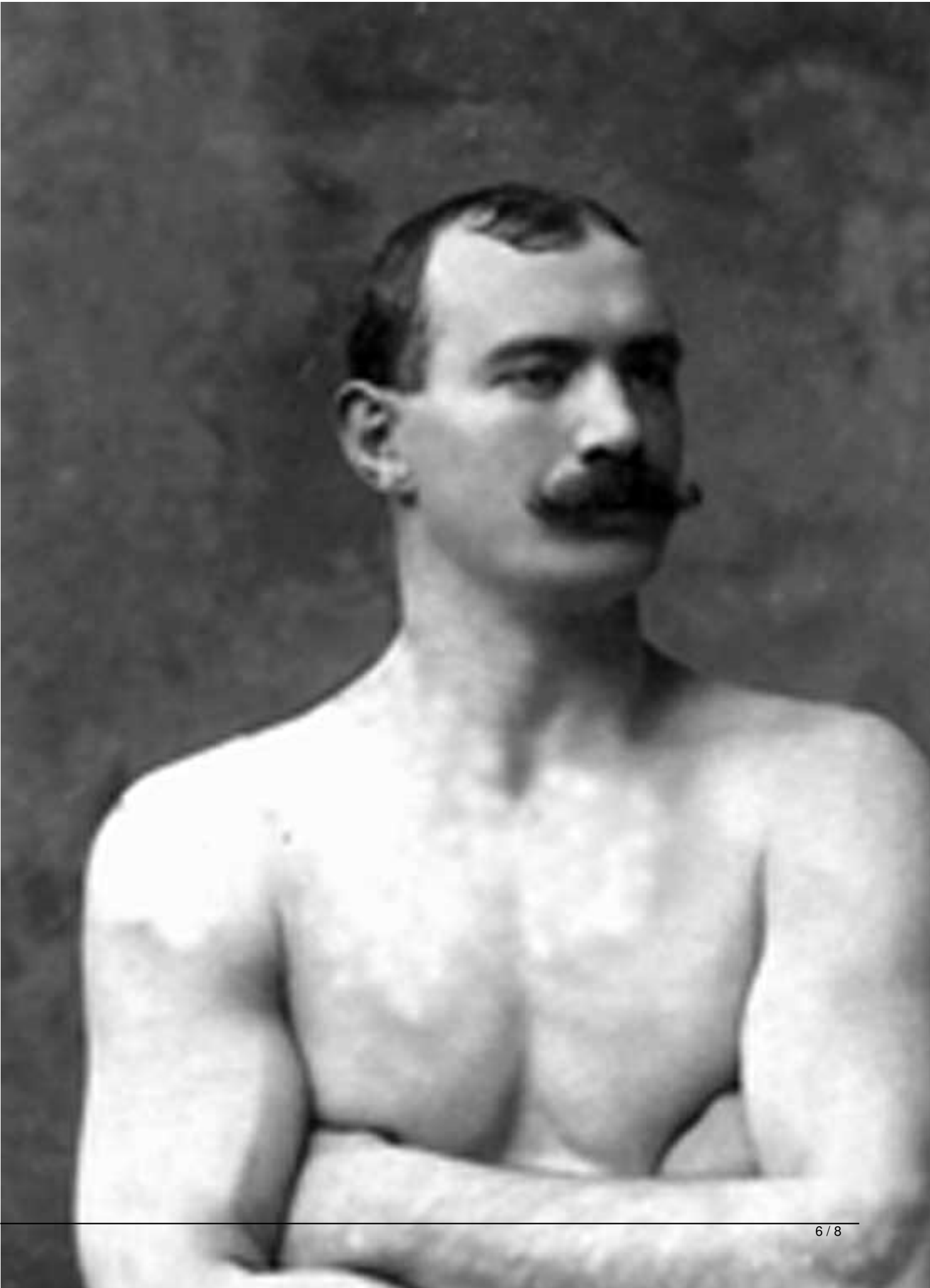
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[Common Article 3](#) of the Geneva Conventions of 1949, which prohibits the use of force against persons who are hors de combat, and the use of force against persons who are hors de combat.