WILLIAMS, SUNDEE KATHERINE. Jack Johnson: Victim or Villain. (Under the direction of Dr. Linda McMurry, Dr. Pamela Tyler, and Dr. Walter Jackson.)

Jack Johnson reigned as the first African-American heavyweight champion of the world from 1908 until 1915. Unfortunately, unlike future African-American athletes such as Joe Louis and Jackie Robinson, Jack Johnson infuriated Americans of all ages, classes, races, and sexes with his arrogant attitude; his expensive and usually imported automobiles, champagne, and cigars; his designer clothes and jewelry; his frequent trips to Europe, usually in the company of at least one beautiful white woman; his inclination to gamble and race sports cars; and his many well-publicized nights of dancing and playing jazz on his prized seven foot bass fiddle. However, his worst offenses, during his reign as heavyweight champion, were his two marriages to and numerous affairs with white women.

The purpose of the research has been to place Jack Johnson within the context of late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century culture, economics, law, politics, race, and sex. The influences of late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century American commercialization, immigration, industrialization, and urbanization on perceptions of femininity, masculinity, sexuality, and violence are investigated; and the implications of Jack Johnson’s defiance of racial and sexual constraints on the African-American community are interpreted.
Jack Johnson:
Victim or Villain

by
Sundee Katherine Williams

A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
North Carolina State University
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

HISTORY

Raleigh
2000

APPROVED BY:

Dr. Linda McMurry
Co-Chair of Advisory Committee

Dr. Pamela Tyler
Co-Chair of Advisory Committee

Dr. Walter Jackson
Chair of Advisory Committee
DEDICATION

In Loving Memory Of
Camp Stanley Huntington, Sr.
Dorothy Grace Maher

In Honor Of Family & Friends
Aaron Brantley Blake & Kathryn Reaves Blake
Laura Katherine Huntington
Edward Joseph Maher & Mary Monica Maher
Hunter Field Maher
William David Maher, Sr.
William David Maher, Jr. & Maribeth Huntington Maher
Robin Stringer-Thompson-Franklin A.K.A. “Erica Kane”
Maureen Gerette Taylor
Chris Bruton Williams
James Lucian Williams, Jr. & Geraldine Bruton Williams
BIOGRAPHY

Sundee Katherine Williams, the daughter of William David Maher, Jr. and Maribeth Huntington Maher, was born in Bartlesville, Oklahoma on August 29, 1973 and raised in Mississippi and North Carolina. She graduated from Wallace O’Neal High School in Southern Pines, North Carolina, in 1991. She subsequently attended Sandhills Community College in Southern Pines, North Carolina, from 1991 until 1993 and distinguished herself as a member of the Phi Theta Kappa national honor society.

In 1993, she transferred to Warren Wilson College in Asheville, North Carolina, and majored in United States History and minored in Political Science. Between 1993 and 1996, she was awarded three consecutive Scholars Awards, the Scholars Medal, and was the 1996 recipient of the George Willard Smith History Award. She received her Bachelor of Arts in United States History from Warren Wilson College in May 1996.

She subsequently attended North Carolina State University and majored in Nineteenth-Century and Twentieth-Century United States Gender and Race Relations; and graduated with a Master of Arts in United States History in December 2000. She further distinguished herself as a member of the Phi Alpha Theta national honor society.

Sundee Katherine Williams currently lives with her husband of five years, Chris Williams, and their two Chihuahuas, Williams Sir Cosmopolitan and Williams Lady Majesty, in Zebulon, North Carolina. She attends Bensalem Presbyterian Church in Eagle Springs, North Carolina; volunteers with Habitat For Humanity; and works as an Assistant Project Manager for Flythe Construction Company in Raleigh, North Carolina. However, she intends to pursue teaching opportunities within the North Carolina Community College System.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION .................................................................................. 1
2. CHAPTER I ...................................................................................... 6
3. CHAPTER II .................................................................................... 26
4. CHAPTER III .................................................................................. 51
5. CHAPTER IV .................................................................................. 75
6. CONCLUSION .................................................................................. 85
7. ENDNOTES ..................................................................................... 89
8. BIBLIOGRAPHY ............................................................................. 108
INTRODUCTION
Novelist and correspondent for the New York Herald, Jack London described Jack Johnson, the first African-American heavyweight champion, as “happy-go-lucky in temperament . . . easily amused . . . altogether absorbed in the present moment and therefore unmindful of the future.”¹ Columnist Alfred Lewis of the San Francisco Examiner characterized Jack Johnson as “essentially African . . . . He feels no deeper than the moment, sees no farther than his nose – which is flat and of the present . . . . Incapable of anticipation . . . . Johnson is safe in his soul shallowness and lack of imagination.”²

Historians such as Randy Roberts, author of Papa Jack: Jack Johnson And The Era Of White Hopes, continue to underestimate Jack Johnson and unintentionally and unnecessarily excuse his arrogant attitude, uninhibited personal behavior, and unrepentant professional behavior. Jack Johnson was a compulsive drinker, gambler, and womanizer. However, Jack Johnson’s madness was methodical. Jack Johnson was independent and intelligent rather than ignorant and impulsive. Furthermore, Jack Johnson was a performer and a promoter who provoked the police, the politicians, the press, and the public with presentations of his personal and professional personas on the vaudeville stage as well as in the boxing ring.

Similarly, historians such as Kevin J. Mumford, author of Interzones: Black/White Sex Districts In Chicago & New York In The Early Twentieth Century, continue to portray Jack Johnson as the innocent African-American heavyweight champion persecuted and/or prosecuted by racist local, state, and federal authorities. Jack Johnson’s interracial romantic and sexual relationships contradicted traditional definitions of race and sex and femininity and masculinity and therefore perpetuated the
condemnation and contempt of the police, the politicians, the press, and the public. However, despite dangerous and/or deadly consequences, Jack Johnson continued to fuel the flames of controversy. To believe that Jack Johnson did not manipulate late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century American racial and sexual tensions in pursuit of fame and fortune is fantasy rather than history.³

Throughout his adult life, Jack Johnson was characterized as a “bad nigger,” a “smart nigger,” and an “uppity nigger.” At the beginning of the twentieth-century, bad had a duality of meanings. African-American historian Lawrence Levine writes: “In black parlance the adjective bad does not invariably have negative connotations. The term can be one of approbation, especially when the “a” is prolonged and the word changed into something approaching b-a-a-a-d. Thus transformed, the term has been used to describe those who were admired because they had the ability, courage, and strength to flout the limitations imposed by white society . . . . the moral hard man.”⁴

However, Lawrence Levine contends that “the morality of” Jack Johnson and other African-American folk heroes, such as John Henry and Shine, “did not derive from their necessary acceptance of the society’s official moral code relating to such things as sexual conduct and personal behavior.”⁵ Consequently, the African-American community is confronted with conflicting impressions and implications of Jack Johnson.

Jack Johnson’s arrogant attitude and uninhibited personal and unrepentant professional behavior were simultaneously admired and admonished within the African-American community. Numerous depictions of Jack Johnson’s defeated, embarrassed, frustrated, and humiliated opponents provided demoralized and exploited African-
Americans with vicarious power, prestige, and pride; and have survived the passage of
time as testaments to Jack Johnson’s tremendous skill, speed, stamina, strength, and wit.⁶

Jack Johnson represented the African-American community and therefore
reflected the African-American community’s morals and values. Consequently, Jack
Johnson’s reputed drinking, gambling, and womanizing reinforced racial stereotypes.
Furthermore, Yale University Professor of History, John W. Blassingame, in the
introduction of Al-Tony Gilmore’s biography of Jack Johnson, entitled Bad Nigger! The
National Impact Of Jack Johnson, explains that Jack Johnson’s arrogant attitude,
uninhibited personal behavior, and unrepentant professional behavior as the first African-
American heavyweight champion abated the aspirations of African-American athletes.
Furthermore, Jack Johnson’s Mann Act conviction exemplified the punishment African-
American men could expect if they followed his “bad” example and defied the racial and
sexual constraints of late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century American
society and engaged in interracial romantic and/or sexual relationships.⁷

Jack Johnson’s fame and fortune classified him as an “uppity nigger.”⁸ The
Boston Globe described him in this manner: “Good clothes and plenty of them; enough
diamonds to illuminate his shirt front and hands to make his a conspicuous figure when
he promenades the streets . . . . Seldom does a day pass but what he will appear on the
streets three or four times in changed attire from head to foot.”⁹ Furthermore, Jack
Johnson’s lavish lifestyle of leisure and luxury classified him as a “smart nigger;”¹⁰
humility and modesty were the preferred qualities of a “good nigger.”

The story of Jack Johnson’s acquisition of fame and fortune and his triumph over
tremendous personal adversity epitomizes the “American Dream.” The son of former
slaves, John Arthur Johnson was born in Galveston, Texas on March 31, 1878, approximately fifteen years after the Emancipation Proclamation and one year after the official end of Reconstruction. Jack Johnson was a child of poverty who became a man of tremendous wealth. He was an awkward looking, “tall and gangly,” boy who became a formidable man of six feet one and one-quarter inches and at the pinnacle of his career weighed 215 pounds.

As a child, Jack Johnson assisted his father, the school janitor, clean the classrooms after school. Consequently, Jack Johnson was harassed and tormented by schoolmates. His mother described him as “a rank coward as a boy [who] simply would not fight. He was eternally in trouble with his playmates and always got the worst of it.” In a dramatic turn of events, Jack Johnson learned to fight while working on the docks of the Galveston, Texas, shipyards as a teenager. Remarkably, as an adult, Jack Johnson ascended the rough and tumble ranks of boxing and eventually reigned, from 1908 until 1915, as heavyweight champion of a segregated world, but no longer a segregated sport.
CHAPTER I
In 1896, the United States Supreme Court declared racial segregation constitutional in *Plessy vs. Ferguson*. Not until 1954 did the Supreme Court reverse its decision in *Brown vs. Topeka Board of Education*. During the fifty-eight years between these two landmark cases and for many years after, practically every aspect of American life was dictated by the principle of “separate but equal” facilities for the races. Hotels, restaurants, theaters, churches, schools, buses, trains, and sports were all segregated in accordance with local, state, and federal customs and laws. The sport of boxing was no exception.

The tradition of segregation within the heavyweight division can be attributed to John L. Sullivan, the first man to hold the heavyweight title and the first man to bring the sport of boxing to national attention. John L. Sullivan’s adamant refusal to ever fight an African-American man erected the racial barrier that Jack Johnson would eventually destroy.\(^2\) However, despite the precedent John L. Sullivan established for the heavyweight division, interracial fights were not unusual within the smaller weight divisions. Interracial fights attracted public attention and could therefore be instrumental in achieving a certain degree of notoriety for the African-American boxer as well as the white boxer. As a result, there were African-American champions, such as Barbados Joe Walcott, Joe Gans, and Dixie Kidd, within the smaller weight divisions.

Even though the previously mentioned African-American boxers were talented and deserved their respective titles, they were allowed the opportunity to be champions not because of their skill, but because of their weight divisions. They did not weigh enough to compete within the heavyweight division. They could never represent the strongest man in the world and therefore were not perceived as threats to the white
supremacist ideology that existed within American athletics at that time. In order to maintain the status quo, the majority of fights remained strictly segregated, especially within the heavyweight division. Prior to Jack Johnson, no African-American boxer was even allowed the opportunity to be a contender for the heavyweight championship title.

The importance of who reigned as heavyweight champion can be determined, in large part, by what the sport of boxing and the heavyweight championship title represented within American culture. The commercialization, industrialization, and urbanization that occurred within American society throughout the late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century resulted in a national preoccupation with competition. As a result, Charles Darwin’s evolutionary theories of “natural selection” and “survival of the fittest” permeated the American consciousness and encompassed practically every aspect of American life including athletics, economics, politics, race, and sex.

The image of combatants engaged in a battle of physical strength, stamina, speed, and skill is universally recognized. Consequently, the victories and defeats that occurred in boxing became popular, powerful, and profound metaphors for economic and political failures and successes as well as racial and sexual conflicts. However, boxing is most appealing, compelling, and deserving of respect when it is acknowledged as an intellectual endeavor as well as a physical endeavor. The ability to accurately and instantly recognize and respond to an opponent’s strengths and weaknesses and to develop, adjust, and execute effective defensive and offensive strategies requires tremendous intellectual discipline.
While Jack Johnson’s physical strength, stamina, speed, and skill were undeniable, the majority of white Americans believed that neither Jack Johnson nor any other African-American possessed the intellectual discipline to be heavyweight champion. In fact, the mere thought of an African-American in such a position of public power and prestige was preposterous. Of course, the certainty of their beliefs reflected the racial, religious, scientific, and social conditioning of the time. However, the certainty of their beliefs also reflected the importance of the heavyweight championship title, which symbolized not only the ultimate individual athletic achievement, but also national superiority and racial supremacy. According to boxing historian Harry Carpenter, author of *Boxing*, white Americans severely underestimated Jack Johnson’s intelligence. He described Jack Johnson’s fighting technique as cautious, deliberate, and patient and wrote: “Johnson was not by nature an attacker, but a master of the counter-punch, who seldom took chances and never pounced until the victim was ripe.” These are not the tactics of an ignorant man.

Similarly, the popularity of boxing can be attributed, in large part, to what boxing represented to its predominantly working-class and middle-class spectators. According to John Kasson, author of *Amusing The Million: Coney Island At The Turn Of The Century*, the working-class masses, predominantly Eastern and Southern European, German, Irish, and Italian immigrants, “worked just under ten hours a day, six days a week and barring layoff, fifty-two weeks a year for annual earnings of approximately $600.” In spite of or, perhaps, due to their limited energy, money, and time, the working-class struggle for economic survival encouraged rather than discouraged their desire to be amused and entertained.
The working-class used amusement and entertainment as diversions from the constraints and demands of their demoralized and exploited lives; as a means to achieve cultural assimilation; and/or as a means to achieve momentary anonymity within a crowd. Similarly, the middle-class used their capability and capacity to enjoy varied forms of amusement and entertainment as evidence of their unprecedented economic prosperity and cultural proclivity. The escapist and elitist atmospheres, combined with the congestion, crime, crowds, pollution, and poverty associated with commercialization, industrialization, and urbanization simultaneously created both a need and an audience for amusement and entertainment. As a result, boxing, like amusement parks, carnivals, circuses, dance halls, minstrel shows, movie theaters, music halls, vaudeville shows, and variety shows experienced unprecedented popularity and profitability during the late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century.\textsuperscript{16}

In spite of his talent or, perhaps, due to his talent, Jack Johnson struggled with society and with himself for the opportunity to be a heavyweight championship contender. In 1903, Jack Johnson became the Negro Heavyweight Champion. However, unsatisfied with his accomplishment, the characteristically arrogant and audacious Jack Johnson entered the San Francisco saloon owned and operated by the then white heavyweight champion, James J. Jeffries, and challenged him to defend his title.\textsuperscript{17} No one could ever accuse Jack Johnson of unnecessary subtlety.

Jim Jeffries refused Jack Johnson’s challenge and explained: “I won’t meet you in the ring because you’ve got no name and we won’t draw flies. But I’ll go downstairs to the cellar with you and lock the door from the inside. And the one who comes out with the key will be the champ.”\textsuperscript{18} When Jack Johnson expressed doubt about Jim Jeffries’
sincerity, Jeffries assured him that he was serious and that he was prepared to fight him immediately. Jack Johnson, undoubtedly embarrassed, frustrated, humiliated, and unprepared for such an offer, reportedly turned and walked away.¹⁹ James J. Jeffries, like John L. Sullivan before him, intended to protect the racial exclusivity of the heavyweight title and is reported to have said: “When there are no white men left to fight, I will quit the business . . . . I am determined not to take a chance of losing the championship to a Negro.”²⁰

Of course, the accuracy of the previous exchange between Jack Johnson and Jim Jeffries is dependent upon the reliability of its sources. Diaries, journals, and letters are generally accepted as more reliable due to the immediacy with which they are usually used to record an event, impression, or observation.²¹ Unfortunately, neither Jack Johnson nor his numerous mistresses or four wives appear to have faithfully maintained diaries, journals, or written correspondences with family and/or friends over the course of their lifetimes. Consequently, in the absence of diaries, journals, and letters, the sequence of events and even the events themselves need to be viewed with a degree of skepticism due to the passage of time between when events occurred and when events were recorded.

Similarly, motivations and perspectives change with the passage of time. Therefore Jack Johnson’s autobiography, In The Ring And Out, as well as other boxers’ recollections and reminiscences of Jack Johnson, may intentionally or unintentionally give the reader false impressions due to romanticized or selective memories and/or embellished or fabricated experiences. Jack Johnson’s autobiography was written years after his competitive boxing career had ended and years after the money he earned during
his boxing career and in vaudeville had been squandered; an amusing and entertaining autobiography would have undoubtedly resulted in increased sales and increased profits.

The encounter with Jim Jeffries was an undeniable disaster and undoubtedly wounded Jack Johnson’s pride. However, Jack Johnson remained undeterred in his efforts to become heavyweight champion. He continued to issue challenges and fight anyone who would get into the ring with him. In the process, he acquired the experience and the reputation he needed to attract a crowd and, equally important, attract a worthy opponent. Jack Johnson’s record indicates that between 1901 and 1906 he fought and won fifty-seven of fifty-nine registered fights and performed numerous boxing exhibitions in cities such as Boston, Chicago, Denver, Los Angeles, Memphis, New York City, Philadelphia, and San Francisco. However, Jack Johnson still did not have the respect he desired; only a fight with Jim Jeffries would achieve that lofty goal.

Ironically, by the time Jack Johnson was mentally and physically prepared to fight Jim Jeffries for the heavyweight championship, the title no longer belonged to Jim Jeffries. In the early days of American boxing, an undefeated heavyweight champion could retire with his heavyweight championship title intact; he essentially hand picked his successor and passed on the title in much the same manner as royalty. However, there was one significant difference. The heavyweight championship title had to be won or lost in the boxing ring. Consequently, Jim Jeffries chose the two fighters who he believed were the most capable to fight for the title and the most willing to defend the title in the future.

On July 3, 1905 in Reno, Nevada, Marvin Hart defeated Jack Root to become the heavyweight champion and Jim Jeffries quietly retired. Less than a year later, on
February 23, 1906, Tommy Burns defeated Marvin Hart to become the heavyweight champion. As a result of the obvious instability within the heavyweight division, the stage was set for Jack Johnson’s entrance into the public consciousness.

When Jim Jeffries retired, public interest in boxing diminished; Jack Root, Marvin Hart, and Tommy Burns simply did not have the charisma or the talent of Jim Jeffries. In this respect, Jack Johnson’s presence invigorated boxing; he possessed an abundance of charisma as well as talent. An accomplished performer and astute promoter, Jack Johnson once compared boxing to bullfighting and offered stylistic as well as tactical advice about both sports when he said: “If I was a bullfighter, I’d make the public think I was within inches of death, but I’d keep my margin of safety. I did it in the ring. My God, against the men I beat when I was at my best, I was paddling backwards around the ring for three rounds out of four. Defense always wins in the end, if it’s good enough.”

Furthermore, by his own admission, Jack Johnson enjoyed a good show and would do practically anything, except lose, to achieve suspense and provide exciting entertainment for the crowds that gathered to see him fight. One such occasion was Jack Johnson’s match with Stanley Ketchell, the then middleweight champion of the world. In his autobiography, Jack Johnson recalls thinking that he had to carry his less formidable opponent “in a way that would make the pictures snappy and worth seeing” and “so that spectators would not tire of the fight.” Consequently, he extended the length of the fight and allowed Stanley Ketchell to knock him down during the last round in order to make the fight’s ending more dramatic. Jack Johnson succeeded; after recovering from
Stanley Ketchell’s blows, he claims that he only “pretended to be groggy” before he knocked Stanley Ketchell out to win the fight a few seconds later.26

Obviously, Jack Johnson realized that the combination of controversy, excitement, and/or scandal aroused public interest, which, translated into higher attendance at and profits from his fights; an increased demand for fights and fight films; and more lucrative contracts to perform in vaudeville. Jack Johnson’s exploits were good for boxing and, to a degree, good for himself. He captured America’s curiosity and interest about boxing and single-handedly brought boxing back to the level of popularity it had experienced during Jim Jeffries’ reign as heavyweight champion.27

While Jack Johnson embraced and encouraged the boxing renaissance he inspired, Tommy Burns was understandably unenthusiastic about increasing pressure from the press and the public in favor of a Burns–Johnson fight. In an effort to profit from his own notoriety, Tommy Burns decided to travel around the world for a series of boxing exhibitions. However, Jack Johnson mercilessly followed Tommy Burns to both England and Australia in pursuit of a chance at the heavyweight championship title. Unable to evade Jack Johnson’s challenges, Tommy Burns eventually relented and agreed to defend the title in Sydney, Australia on December 26, 1908. The final terms of the fight heavily favored Tommy Burns and therefore demonstrate Jack Johnson’s confidence and commitment to the realization of his dream to become heavyweight champion of the world. Of the $35,000.00 purse, Jack Johnson agreed to receive only $5,000.00, win or lose. Jack Johnson even allowed Tommy Burns’ manager, H. D., “Huge Deal,” McIntosh, to referee the fight.28
The pre-fight activities, if Jack Johnson is to be believed, were much more exciting than the actual fight. Jack Johnson supposedly outran a kangaroo, which eventually caused the creature to die from exhaustion; chased and wrestled a greased razorback pig; and, with the help of two other men in his training camp, ran a jackrabbit to death. When the fight finally occurred, Jack Johnson’s financial concessions paid off. During the fourteenth round, the Sydney police stopped the fight in order to prevent Jack Johnson from inflicting further injury on Tommy Burns. Jack Johnson, age 30, much to the disdain of white Americans, became the first African-American heavyweight champion of the world. Ironically, it was also the first modern heavyweight championship fight to be fought off American soil.

Usually, public opinion regarding Jack Johnson divided along racial lines. However, Jack Johnson was defined by more than race. Therefore it would be overly simplistic to argue that white Americans vehemently despised Jack Johnson for no other reasons than his race and the fact that his athletic achievements and economic successes contradicted the basic tenets of their racial beliefs. Jack Johnson was indeed hated for these things, but he was hated more for the perceived failings of his character. A complex and controversial man, Jack Johnson infuriated people of both races with his arrogant attitude and uninhibited personal behavior and unrepentant professional behavior. He was white Americans’ worst nightmare, an African-American man with an attitude and the strength and talent to back it up in the boxing ring. Never in doubt of his ultimate success, in or out of the boxing ring, his confidence was correctly interpreted as cockiness.
In victory, Jack Johnson was perpetually arrogant. After he defeated Tommy Burns for the heavyweight championship title, Jack Johnson told his manager: “I’ll make them [the whites] kowtow to me.”  He went on to remark: “I felt no doubt of the outcome, . . . I could have finished Burns in the first few rounds . . . . He found out after the first few blows that he was done for, but he kept coming, . . . His blows had no strength and I do not recall that they as much as stung me. Certainly he never jarred me. I hit him at will, whenever I wished, but I never exerted my whole power on him.”  

Jack Johnson took tremendous pleasure in verbally taunting his opponents in the boxing ring, even going to the extent of creating opportunities for his opponents to hit him and then challenging them to try. No one was exempt from his constant harassment. In every fight, he carried on continuous conversations with the referee, his opponent, and his opponent’s doctors, managers, promoters, and trainers. Jack Johnson was so confident during his fights that he regularly made suggestions to newspaper reporters about what to write in their articles.

Two of the most blatant examples of Jack Johnson’s arrogance occurred during his fight with Tommy Burns, who reportedly accused Jack Johnson of cowardice prior to the fight. However, once in the boxing ring, “Johnson threw the accusation back at the champion, dropping his hands to his side and extending his chest and chin, inviting Burns to hit him and sneering: ‘Find that yellow streak . . . uncover it.’” Similarly, when at the beginning of the twelfth round of the scheduled twenty round fight a bookie called out: “‘Even money Burns is there at the finish!’ Johnson yelled back: ‘A hundred to one he don’t black my eye!’” Furthermore, a popular African-American anecdote regarding the Burns–Johnson fight contends that, prior to the fight, Tommy Burns told Jack
Johnson: “‘Boy, I’m gonna whip you good. I was born with boxing gloves on’ to which Johnson replied with a grin: ‘I have news for you, white man. You’re about to die the same way!’”

Jack Johnson’s victory over Tommy Burns haunted white Americans; the image of Jack Johnson publicly taunting his white opponent could not and would not be easily forgotten. Without television or radio coverage, newspapers controlled information until fight films were released for distribution to movie theaters throughout the country. The racial prejudices of the overwhelmingly white press undoubtedly influenced the coverage of the Burns-Johnson fight and consequently influenced the reactions of the public to Jack Johnson’s victory.

However, despite pervasive prejudices, the Burns–Johnson fight film revealed that Jack Johnson deserved much of the reprimands and ridicule he received. As previously discussed, his behavior in the boxing ring did not exemplify good sportsmanship. Similarly, the dialogue that accompanied the Burns-Johnson fight film provided evidence that Tommy Burns also gave as good as he got, at least with his mouth, if not with his fists. Boxing historian John V. Grombach, author of The Saga Of The Fist, writes that the battle of words, rich with insults and profanity, between Jack Johnson and Tommy Burns was much more interesting than the actual fight. Consequently, the dialogue, considered unacceptable for public consumption, did not accompany the Burns-Johnson fight film.

Jack Johnson’s victory over Tommy Burns distressed and disturbed white Americans. The novelist and New York Herald correspondent, Jack London, expressed the feelings of most white Americans in his final article from Sydney, Australia, after
witnessing the Burns–Johnson fight. He wrote: "‘But one thing now remains, Jim
Jeffries must now emerge from his alfalfa farm and remove that golden smile from Jack
Johnson’s face. Jeff it’s up to you. The white man must be rescued.’"[38] The press and
the public heeded Jack London’s pleas. However, the search for “the white man’s
salvation” quickly turned into the publicity campaign of a lifetime for Jack Johnson as
well as boxing.

In 1908, the sport of boxing had not achieved national respectability. However, it
was respectable to have an opinion about Jack Johnson and to express an interest in his
future. Those who hated him paid to attend his fights or watch the fight films in the hope
of witnessing his defeat. Those who loved him paid to attend his fights and watch the
fight films, as well, in the hope of witnessing his victory. The press quickly realized that
the public’s interest in boxing grew in direct proportion to the public’s interest in Jack
Johnson. Consequently, magazines and newspapers increased their coverage of Jack
Johnson as well as boxing and subsequently increased their profits. This mutually
beneficial economic relationship would continue for nearly seven years.

Despite the intense interest of the press and the public, Jim Jeffries did not
immediately respond to Jack London’s pleas and, in his absence, the search for a “White
Hope” began. Any white man who weighed more than 175 pounds could be a White
Hope.[39] The volunteers were many and always willing, if not necessarily able. However,
as Jack Johnson quickly and soundly defeated one White Hope after another, white
Americans increasingly turned their hopeful eyes to Jim Jeffries, whose premature
retirement was believed to be the origin of all the problems in the sport of boxing.
Jack Root, Marvin Hart, Tommy Burns, and Jack Johnson were imposters. Jim Jeffries was still considered, by many followers of the sport of boxing, to be the only true heavyweight champion and the only person capable of defeating Jack Johnson. Desperate to downplay Jack Johnson’s domination of the sport of boxing and determined to find a formidable white champion to defeat Jack Johnson in Jim Jeffries’ absence, white Americans anxiously created the White Hope championship as an alternative to the traditional heavyweight championship.\textsuperscript{40}

However, even with the creation of the White Hope championship, at no time did the public abandon their hope that Jim Jeffries would return to the boxing ring. The relentless campaign by the press to convince Jim Jeffries to come out of retirement and reclaim the heavyweight championship title never ceased. Eventually, Jim Jeffries relented to the immense public pressure as well as the lure of the $101,000 purse; the hopes of millions and thousands of dollars hinged on him and he knew it.

Jim Jeffries had not fought in five years and weighed nearly two hundred and sixty pounds. During months of disciplined training, Jim Jeffries lost the weight. However, in addition to his weight, Jim Jeffries had failed to maintain the skills of a championship fighter during his retirement. After years of inaction, the strength was still formidable. However, reflexes, skill, speed, and stamina were no longer there as they once were; and no amount of training would bring those qualities back.\textsuperscript{41}

Despite these tremendous disadvantages, the overwhelmingly white press portrayed Jim Jeffries to be in excellent physical condition and, of course, prepared for and overwhelmingly favored to win what was being promoted as “the fight of the century.” White Americans, desperate to rid themselves of the embodiment of evil
known to them as Jack Johnson honestly believed the press’ version of events and demanded more such reassurances. Approximately five hundred journalists enthusiastically, but naively, complied and covered the July 4, 1910 fight as well as the preceding week of pre-fight activities. The coverage, which ranged from 100,000 to 150,000 words each day, was substantial, if not impartial. The assurance to its readers by the San Francisco Examiner that the “spirit of Caesar in Jeff ought to whip the Barbarian” was typical of the coverage and further fueled the flames of public interest.

Preoccupation with the Johnson-Jeffries fight culminated on the day of the fight and essentially eclipsed traditional holiday festivities. Throughout America, members of both races congregated in segregated auditoriums, stadiums, and theaters and anxiously awaited news of the fight. The streets outside the New York Times and the Atlanta Constitution headquarters were lined with crowds of approximately thirty thousand and ten thousand men respectively.

At 2:30 P.M. on July 4, 1910 in Reno, Nevada, the Johnson-Jeffries fight began as the band played the song “All Coons Look Alike To Me” in the background. In spite of the partiality of the crowd, Jack Johnson’s insults again found their mark. “‘Come on now, Mr. Jeff,’ he [Johnson] called out as they faced each other in the ring. ‘Let me see what you got. Do something, man. This is for the championship.’ Not content with humiliating one former white champion, he shouted over to another ex-champion, Jim Corbett, who sat in Jim Jeffries’ corner: ‘Watch this one, Jim . . . . How did you like that?’ He invited Jim Corbett to come into the ring and promised to take him on as well. Hitting Jim Jeffries almost at will, he boasted: ‘I can go on like this all afternoon Mr. Jeff.’
During the fifteenth round, in spite of pleas to stop the fight from the twenty thousand white men in attendance, Jack Johnson became the first man, of any race, to knock Jim Jeffries down. Jim Jeffries recovered to his feet before the count of ten, but not without assistance. The attempt was futile; Jack Johnson immediately cornered Jim Jeffries against the ropes and continued what could only be described as a beating. Jim Jeffries went down for the count of ten and Jack Johnson was declared the winner.

Adding insult to injury, Jack Johnson remarked after the fight: “Hardly had a blow been struck when I knew that I was Jeff’s master. From the start, the fight was mine . . . He found it almost impossible to get through my defenses and at no time did he hurt me. He landed on me frequently but with no effect.” Undoubtedly, the imagery of Jack Johnson’s invocation and reversal of the master-slave relationship between himself and Jim Jeffries further contributed to the anger and embarrassment of many white Americans over the outcome of the fight.

Jack Johnson’s victory over Jim Jeffries bewildered white Americans. “The Playful Ethiopian” and the “Negroes’ Deliverer” had survived not just another White Hope, but the “Hope of the White Race” and it seemed that all other possible contenders had previously been eliminated. Jack London’s New York Herald column read: “Johnson is a wonder. No one understands him, this man who smiles. Well, the story of the fight is the story of the smile. If ever a man won by nothing more fatiguing than a smile, Johnson won today. And where now is the champion who will make Johnson extend himself, who will glaze those bright eyes, remove that smile and silence that golden repartee?”
Despite Jack London’s plea, neither Jack Johnson nor the streets of American cities would be silent. The Johnson-Jeffries fight triggered violent race riots throughout every region of the United States. The actual number of deaths that can be directly attributed to the race riots cannot be confirmed, but estimates range from nine to thirty. While neither race was the instigator in all of the instances of violence, individual acts of celebration by African-Americans were usually interpreted as disrespectful and therefore justified violent acts of retribution by insulted white Americans.\textsuperscript{51} One such expression of African-American joy over Jack Johnson’s defeat of Jim Jeffries was this song sung by an African-American child in North Carolina.

\begin{quote}
Amaze an’ Grace, how sweet it sounds,  
Jack Johnson knocked Jim Jeffries down.  
Jim Jeffries jumped up an’ hit Jack on the chin,  
An’ then Jack knocked him down again.

The Yankees hold the play,  
The white man pulls the trigger;  
But it makes no difference what the white man say,  
The world champion’s still a nigger.\textsuperscript{52}
\end{quote}

African-American educator Benjamin E. Mays, author of \textit{Born To Rebel: An Autobiography}, explains that many white Americans reacted violently after Jack Johnson’s defeat of Jim Jeffries because “Jack Johnson committed two grave blunders as far as whites were concerned: He beat up a white man and he was socializing with a white woman – both deadly sins.”\textsuperscript{53} Even worse was the contempt Jack Johnson exhibited toward whites when he publicly displayed both his “sins” by seating his fashionably dressed and bejeweled white female companions at ringside during each fight.\textsuperscript{54}
It finally became evident to white Americans, if Jack Johnson could not be defeated in the boxing ring, then he would have to be defeated in the United States Congress and state legislatures. Expressing outrage at the occurrence of a violent prizefight on the most sacred of national holidays, Independence Day, state after state, in an alleged effort to prevent further rioting, passed laws which banned the distribution of the Johnson–Jeffries fight film to movie theaters. However, the state governments actually intended to spare white Americans from the further humiliation of witnessing the defeat of Jim Jeffries, the “Great White Hope,” at the hands of Jack Johnson.

Furthermore, on July 31, 1912, less than four weeks after the Johnson-Jeffries fight, Congress voted to prohibit the importation of fight films into the country and their transportation across state borders. This blatant act of hypocrisy was clearly aimed at Jack Johnson. If Jim Jeffries had defeated Jack Johnson, then the fight would have been celebrated rather than viewed as disgraceful and dishonorable. Laws forbidding interracial fights and marriages were also passed, in states where they previously had not existed, in response to Jack Johnson’s “non-traditional” lifestyle. Yale University Professor of History, John W. Blassingame, in the introduction of Al-Tony Gilmore’s biography of Jack Johnson, entitled Bad Nigger! The National Impact Of Jack Johnson writes: “many early Jim Crow regulations can be attributed to white fears that interracial contacts would lead to black-white sexual relations a la Jack Johnson.”

Much to the dismay of the politicians, the laws enacted by Congress and the state legislatures appeared not to affect, concern, or interest Jack Johnson. In fact, it appeared that boxing did not concern or interest him either. However, appearances can be deceiving. In Jack Johnson’s opinion, the best offense was a good defense; and the best
defense was no defense at all. If he did not lose the heavyweight championship title, then he remained heavyweight champion by default. Furthermore, despite cultural, legal, political, racial, and/or sexual implications, boxing authorities could neither prevent nor provoke fights. Consequently, Jack Johnson refused to fight during the two years immediately following his defeat of Jim Jeffries for the heavyweight championship title. Many observers of the sport of boxing contend that Jack Johnson’s refusal to fight was unwarranted, but characteristic of his calculating and cautious nature. In their opinion, the only boxer, of either race, who could have challenged Jack Johnson for the heavyweight championship title was an African-American fighter named Sam Langford. Unfortunately, a heavyweight championship fight between two African-American men did not interest investors, promoters, or spectators. Furthermore, Jack Johnson was determined to continue the tradition of racial exclusivity within the heavyweight division. He once told a friend, “I won’t box any of these colored boys now. I am champion of the world. I have had a hard time to get a chance and I really think I am the only colored fellow who ever was given the chance to win the title. I gave Langford, Jeanette, and those boys a chance before I was champ. I’ll retire still the only colored heavyweight champ.”

If Jack Johnson would not fight in the boxing ring, then he would have new and unfamiliar arenas to fight in: the state and federal courts. Every man, even the strongest man in the world, has certain weaknesses that, if exposed and exploited by his enemies, can destroy him. Jack Johnson’s greatest weakness would prove to be his personal behavior rather than his professional behavior. Unabashedly uninhibited and
unrepentant, Jack Johnson would continue to fuel the flames of racial and sexual fires, which would eventually engulf him.
CHAPTER II
According to John Kasson, author of *Rudeness & Civility: Manners In Nineteenth-Century Urban America*, commercialization, immigration, industrialization, and urbanization transformed nineteenth-century American culture, economics, and politics. Communication, education, and transportation improvements created and cultivated a civilized impression of nineteenth-century America. However, nineteenth-century Americans of all ages, classes, races, regions, and sexes were compelled to confront and control the chaos of competition, corruption, crime, crowds, pollution, and poverty associated with commercialization, immigration, industrialization, and urbanization.\(^5\)

Nineteenth-century American etiquette encouraged private and public conformity, cooperation, deference, dignity, discipline, efficiency, integrity, humility, morality, organization, productivity, refinement, respect, restraint, and stability. Furthermore, nineteenth-century American etiquette encompassed private and public possessions, practices, and principles such as: coughing, farting, fighting, laughing, nose blowing, sneezing, spitting, staring, and urinating; casual, formal, and seasonal clothing; sitting, standing, and walking; arrivals and departures; introductions; extending and receiving invitations; accepting and declining invitations; home design; room decoration; furniture, seating, and table arrangements; china, crystal, and silver selection; food selection, preparation, and portions; smoking and drinking; conversations and discussions; romantic and sexual intimacy; courtship; friendship; marriage; parenthood; and servant management.\(^6\)

Position and prestige were precarious within nineteenth-century America. Consequently, etiquette partially protected the powerful, the privileged, and the
prominent from the pursuits of the poor; and conversely provided the poor with the possibility of economic, educational, political, racial, and/or social advancement. Furthermore, the powerful, the privileged, and the prominent as well as the poor believed that etiquette determined character and therefore protected them from blackmailers, counterfeiers, embezzlers, forgers, pickpockets, and shoplifters who portrayed themselves as polite and proper.\textsuperscript{61}

However, etiquette books, magazines, and pamphlets for all ages, classes, races, regions, and sexes inundated nineteenth-century America, which complicated the concealment and detection of character. Furthermore, nineteenth-century American etiquette intensified individual inadequacies and insecurities as well as increased the stratification between the privileged, the prominent, the powerful, and the poor rather than provided protection from paranoia.\textsuperscript{62} Consequently, individuals frequently felt anxious, apprehensive, ashamed, and awkward.

Contrary to the confusion and contradictions of nineteenth-century etiquette, Jack Johnson confidently portrayed himself as a member of the powerful, the privileged, and the prominent. However, Jack Johnson was conspicuous, obnoxious, offensive, ostentatious, pompous, and pretentious rather than modest, mundane, polite, proper, sober, solid, and somber.\textsuperscript{63} Furthermore, Jack Johnson infuriated Americans of all ages, classes, races, and sexes with his arrogant attitude; his expensive and usually imported automobiles, champagne, and cigars; his designer clothes and jewelry; his frequent trips to Europe, usually in the company of beautifully dressed and bejeweled white women; his inclination to gamble and race sports cars; and his many well-publicized nights of dancing and playing jazz on his prized seven foot bass fiddle. All of these activities and
qualities were offensive. However, his worst offenses, during his reign as heavyweight champion, were his two marriages to and numerous affairs with white women.

White Americans, both male and female, of all regions, North, South, East, and West, expressed before, during, and after the Civil War a variety of popular ethnic, national, racial, and religious prejudices. These prejudices included, but certainly were not limited to anti-African, anti-African-American, anti-Asian, anti-Catholic, anti-Hispanic, anti-Irish, anti-Jewish, anti-Native American, and anti-Polynesian sentiments.\(^{64}\)

The most blatant expressions of the anti-African-American sentiment were the cultural and legal responses to interracial marriages. Throughout most of the United States, interracial marriages were illegal. Furthermore, even in the states where interracial marriages were legal, the couples usually experienced varying degrees of economic, legal, political, racial, religious, and social exclusion.\(^{65}\)

However, in spite of the racial realities of the time, Jack Johnson made a calculated and conscious choice to publicly display his interracial romantic and sexual relationships with his white mistresses and white wives as if to flaunt his immunity to the customs and laws of the nation. When asked to explain his actions, he sharply replied that he was not a slave and said: “I have the right to choose who my mate shall be without the dictation of any man. I have eyes and I have a heart and when they fail to tell me whom I shall have for mine I want to be put away in a lunatic asylum.”\(^{66}\)

Unfortunately, Jack Johnson’s words were prophetic. Ultimately, Jack Johnson’s interracial romantic and sexual relationships resulted in a criminal conviction. However, he was confined to prison rather than committed to an asylum. In retrospect, Jack Johnson admitted that women had been at the center of many of the pivotal personal and
professional moments throughout his life. In his autobiography, he wrote that women brought him “great happiness and also grief and tragedy . . . . They have been the cause of situations that turned the eyes of the world upon me, some merely gleaming with morbidness, others flashing condemnation and hate.”

Despite the reactions of the politicians, the press, and the public, Jack Johnson was not the first controversial heavyweight champion. John L. Sullivan was a womanizer and a heavyweight drinker as well as a heavyweight fighter. Furthermore, the African-American lightweight fighter Joe Gans married a white woman as well. However, in spite of similar indiscretions, John L. Sullivan and Joe Gans experienced far fewer and less serious repercussions than Jack Johnson. The reactions of the politicians, the press, and the public cannot be explained exclusively by Jack Johnson’s status as the first African-American heavyweight champion. However, the reactions of the politicians, the press, and the public can be explained by an examination of late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century economics, geography, politics, race, and sex.

Throughout the late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century, women became an increasingly popular labor source in the commercialized, industrialized, and urbanized economies of the North. Domestic service occupations, such as dressmakers, laundresses, chambermaids, and seamstresses, continued to employ the majority of women. However, the establishment of educational facilities; the expansion of a consumer and service economy; and technological innovations created new employment opportunities for women.

According to Joanne J. Meyerowitz, author of Women Adrift: Independent Wage Earners In Chicago, 1880-1930, the new educational and employment opportunities
attracted “women adrift.” The majority of “women adrift” were single and young. However, women of all ages, marital statuses, nationalities, races, and religions who immigrated and migrated to the commercialized, industrialized, and urbanized northern cities of Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, New York City, and Philadelphia and lived and worked independently of their parents, husbands, and/or children were referred to as “women adrift.”

Consequently, “women adrift” became beauticians in beauty parlors; maids in hotels; dishwashers and waitresses in restaurants; cashgirls and salesclerks in drug stores and department stores; assemblers and machine tenders in factories; clerks, secretaries, stenographers, and telephone operators in banks, insurance companies, investment firms, and law firms; and as nurses and teachers, the only professional careers widely available to “women adrift” at that time. Unfortunately, “women adrift” endured the insecurity of layoffs and the irregularity of overtime associated with such production-oriented, seasonal, semi-skilled, and sex-segregated industries.

“Women adrift” experienced exhaustion, which resulted from eight to seventeen hour days, depending upon the industry, of standing and bending over counters and/or operating dangerous and deafening machinery without sufficient light and/or ventilation. “Women adrift” also encountered age discrimination, ethnic discrimination, racial discrimination, religious discrimination, and sexual discrimination as well as sexual harassment by male supervisors, male co-workers, and male and female landlords. Furthermore, “women adrift” endured insufficient wages, which were, on average, approximately one-half that of men who performed identical tasks in identical industries.
As a result of insufficient wages, “women adrift” sacrificed amusement, entertainment, books, magazines, newspapers, and health and beauty aids in order afford clothing, food, rent, and transportation. In addition to these efforts, “women adrift” ironed, sewed, washed and dried their own laundry and/or shared clothing; prepared their own meals, shared meals, and/or skipped meals entirely; shared compact and confined bedrooms and bathrooms in boarding houses and/or private residences with insufficient light and ventilation; and walked to and from work. In spite of their exhaustive efforts, “women adrift” continued to encounter financial difficulties and live in constant fear for their survival. Even insignificant illnesses or injuries could be disastrous. “Women adrift” could not afford doctors visits, hospitals, and/or medicine. However, if illnesses or injuries were incorrectly diagnosed and improperly treated, then “women adrift” missed work, forfeited wages, and risked eviction and/or unemployment.

Employers and politicians rationalized the insufficient wages that “women adrift” earned with the explanation that women were expected to work briefly before marriage and motherhood; and that women who worked received supplemental support from male family members, such as a brothers, fathers, or husbands. Consequently, women were paid as dependent wives and children. Conversely, men were paid with the expectation to support their wives and/or their children. Kathy Peiss, author of Cheap Amusements: Working Women & Leisure In Turn-Of-The-Century New York, confirms the existence of late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century immigrant, single, and young women who lived with family and worked to contribute to the family income until marriage and motherhood. However, such reasoning ignored abused, deserted, divorced,
orphaned, and widowed women and/or the women who never had the inclination, intention, or opportunity to marry or remarry.\textsuperscript{73}

Coincidentally, the economic, educational, political, racial, and social opportunities of the North attracted African-American men from the South as well as “women adrift.” Consequently, Jack Johnson’s status as the first African-American heavyweight champion attracted attention. However, Jack Johnson’s interracial romantic and/or sexual relationships attracted additional attention to the trials and tribulations of white “women adrift.” Furthermore, Jack Johnson exploited late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century racial and sexual tensions.

According to Gail Bederman, author of \textit{Manliness & Civilization: A Cultural History Of Gender & Race In The United States, 1880-1917}, Al-Tony Gilmore, author of \textit{Bad Nigger! The National Impact Of Jack Johnson}, and Kevin J. Mumford, author of \textit{Interzones: Black/White Sex Districts In Chicago & New York In The Early Twentieth Century}, Jack Johnson accentuated the appearance of his penis with gauze bandages before fights, which validated white male apprehensions about African-American male violence and virility as well as white female virtue and vulnerability. Consequently, the politicians, the press, and the public condemned Jack Johnson and contemplated the dignity, health, integrity, morality, purity, safety, sanity, and virtue of white “women adrift” among African-American men.\textsuperscript{74}

Despite popular perceptions, which the previously discussed behavior perpetuated, Jack Johnson’s romantic and sexual inclination toward white women evolved over time and did not manifest itself until adulthood. In 1898, at the age of 20, Jack Johnson married an African-American woman from Galveston, Texas, named Mary
Austin. In his autobiography, Jack Johnson described their marriage as happy. However, in 1901, they filed for permanent separation and divorced after only three years of marriage.75

Despite depression and disappointment, Jack Johnson developed an attraction to another African-American woman from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, named Clara Kerr. Apparently, the attraction was mutual. Clara Kerr became Jack Johnson’s constant companion and accompanied him to and from fighting engagements, the profits from which enabled them to enjoy a lavish lifestyle of furnished suites, fine food, fine wine, fine clothes, and fine jewelry.76 Regrettably, infatuation and infidelity would interfere with their life of leisure and luxury.

While in California, Jack Johnson, Clara Kerr, and William Bryant, an acquaintance of Jack Johnson’s from New England, shared accommodations. A romantic and sexual relationship developed between Clara Kerr and William Bryant, which resulted in their deliberate disappearance. Adding insult to injury, Jack Johnson’s clothes and jewelry deliberately disappeared as well.77 A successful search, an unsuccessful reconciliation, another deliberate disappearance, and an unsuccessful search ensued and consumed Jack Johnson’s energy, money, and time; and gambling consumed money loaned to him by friends.78

Betrayed, desperate, destitute, and devastated, Jack Johnson eventually found comfort in the company of other women. However, the emotional and financial wounds inflicted upon him by Mary Austin and Clara Kerr caused him “to forswear colored women and to determine that my lot henceforth would be cast only with white women.”79
Jack Johnson explained his reasoning by writing that African-American women “‘don’t play up to a man the way white girls do. No matter how colored women feel towards a man, they don’t spoil him and pamper him and build up his ego. They don’t try to make him feel like he’s somebody.’”

In 1909, Jack Johnson married his second wife, a white woman from Brooklyn, New York, named Etta Duryea. According to Jack Johnson, they were happily married. However, in 1911, she tragically committed suicide by a gunshot wound to the head. Rather than accept responsibility for her obvious unhappiness, Jack Johnson attributed Etta Duryea’s suicide to the recent death of her father. However, Randy Roberts, author of Papa Jack: Jack Johnson And The Era Of White Hopes, describes their relationship quite differently. He contends that Jack Johnson beat Etta Duryea frequently and, on occasion, quite severely, which could have contributed to her decision to commit suicide. Former White Hope heavyweight champion, Gunboat Smith, corroborates this version of their relationship. He says, Jack Johnson “treated her like a dog.”

During his marriage to Etta Duryea, Jack Johnson opened the extremely popular, profitable, and integrated Cabaret de Champion in his adoptive city of Chicago, Illinois. Throughout its existence, the Cabaret de Champion, rather than boxing, occupied Jack Johnson’s time and supported his flamboyant lifestyle. The “colorful” lifestyles, figuratively and literally, of the Cabaret de Champion’s clientele were controversial and attracted considerable criticism from the police, the politicians, the press, and the public. Consequently, Jack Johnson believed that his association with the Cabaret de Champion, rather than his own actions and arrogant attitude, destroyed him personally and professionally. However, it is difficult to believe that Jack Johnson, a man who
conspicuously displayed a life-size portrait of himself and his white wife for all to view immediately upon entering the Cabaret de Champion, did not, at least on some level, enjoy inciting danger.

Jack Johnson, overwhelmed with grief and guilt after Etta Duryea’s death, contends that he decided to close the Cabaret de Champion. However, Randy Roberts contends that Jack Johnson’s liquor license was revoked by the state of Illinois; and he was therefore forced to close the Cabaret de Champion. Regardless of Jack Johnson’s motivations, the Cabaret de Champion closed. Furthermore, he became professionally distracted as well as personally distant; and, as a result, employed Lucille Cameron, a white woman from Minneapolis, Minnesota, as an accountant.

Historian Finis Farr, author of *Black Champion: The Life And Times Of Jack Johnson*, describes Lucille Cameron as respectable. However, Gail Bederman, Kevin Mumford, Randy Roberts, and David Langum, author of *Crossing Over The Line: Legislating Morality And The Mann Act*, describe Lucille Cameron as an experienced prostitute prior to her involvement with Jack Johnson. Furthermore, Randy Roberts contends that Jack Johnson and Lucille Cameron were intimately involved prior to Etta Duryea’s death, an indiscretion, which could have contributed to her decision to commit suicide.

In his autobiography, Jack Johnson denies romantic and/or sexual involvement with Lucille Cameron prior to Etta Duryea’s death and, in an attempt to defend Lucille Cameron’s reputation, describes their relationship as professional rather than personal. Furthermore, Jack Johnson attributes his arrest for Lucille Cameron’s abduction to
rumors of a romantic and/or sexual relationship, which Lucille Cameron’s mother assumed were accurate.  

Jack Johnson was accustomed to accusations, arrests, and arraignments. However, according to the police, the politicians, the press, and the public, Jack Johnson consistently avoided accountability for an assortment of aggravated assaults. Consequently, Jack Johnson’s characteristic confidence continued at his arraignment for Lucille Cameron’s abduction. According to the Chicago Daily News, Jack Johnson “appeared at the Criminal Court in a high powered automobile and with a bodyguard of two other Negroes and three white men . . . the Negro strolled into the courtroom half an hour late, carrying a long black cigar in his mouth, and smiling every step.” Jack Johnson’s arrogance affirmed his “bad nigger” status.  

Jack Johnson was tried for the abduction of Lucille Cameron. However, Lucille Cameron refused to corroborate the abduction charges and additional witnesses failed to appear in court. Consequently, Jack Johnson was acquitted on November 20, 1912. South Carolina Governor, Cole Blease, responded to Jack Johnson’s acquittal, during a speech at the annual Governors Conference on December 3, 1912. He declared: “the black brute who lays his hands upon a white woman ought not to have any trial . . . . If we cannot protect our white women from the black fiends, where is our boasted civilization?”

The publicity that had surrounded the abduction trial had destroyed Lucille Cameron’s reputation. Consequently, according to Jack Johnson, Lucille Cameron proposed marriage to him. Jack Johnson accepted Lucille Cameron’s proposal and they were married on December 4, 1912. However, their attempt at respectability attracted
additional criticism. Their marriage legitimized their relationship, which politicians argued never should have been allowed to occur. The existence of a state sanctioned interracial marriage contradicted segregation and consequently became an explosive national issue.

In a letter to the Cleveland Gazette, a white woman from Oklahoma expressed the feelings of many white Americans when she wrote: “down in this part of the country, he would never have lived to marry the second white girl.”95 In response to Jack Johnson’s marriage to Lucille Cameron, Governor Blease said:

> There is but one punishment, and that must be speedy, when the Negro lays his hands upon the person of a white woman . . . . In the South we love our women, we hold them higher than all things else, and whenever anything steps between a Southern man and the defense and virtue of the woman of his nation and his states, he will tear down and walk over it in her defense, regardless of what may the consequences.”96

Outraged by the marriage of Jack Johnson and Lucille Cameron, Representative Seaborn A. Roddenberry of Georgia introduced a constitutional amendment to ban interracial marriages on the floor of Congress. He said:

> Intermarriage between whites and blacks is repulsive and averse to every sentiment of pure American spirit. It is abhorrent and repugnant. It is subversive of social peace. It is destructive of moral supremacy, and ultimately this slavery of white women to black beasts will bring this nation to a conflict as fatal and as bloody as ever reddened the soil of Virginia or crimsoned the mountain paths of Pennsylvania . . . . Let us uproot and exterminate now this debasing, ultra demoralizing, un-American and inhuman leprosy.”97
Of course, it should come as no surprise that the passionate words of condemnation and criticism as well as the threats of violence against Jack Johnson were spoken by white southern men in defense of white female purity.

Distinctions of class, race, and sex determined cultural, economic, political, religious, and social position, power, prestige, privilege, and prominence within southern society. Furthermore, racial and sexual purity defined women as ladies and the protection of racial and sexual purity defined men as gentlemen. Consequently, interracial romantic and/or sexual relationships between “violent” and “virile” African-American men and “virtuous” and “vulnerable” white women were deliberately discouraged throughout the South.  

The Civil War signified the deterioration of the national commitment to slavery. However, northern and southern attitudes continued to correspond regarding interracial romantic and/or sexual relationships. The prevention of interracial romantic and/or sexual relationships between “violent” and “virile” African-American men and “virtuous” and “vulnerable” white women preoccupied the North and permeated the South. However, the hysteria was hypocritical. The South condoned rather than condemned the rape of “virtuous” and “vulnerable” African-American women as “a rite of passage” for “violent” and “virile” white men. Consequently, “historians estimate that by the Civil War approximately ten percent of the southern [African-American] population was mulatto.”

Regrettably, an examination of the experiences of African-American men in late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century American society reveals that variations of the racial and sexual tensions that existed in the South extended to the North. The
commercialized, industrialized, and urbanized cities of the North, such as Chicago and New York City, offered African-American men economic, educational, and political opportunities as opposed to the economic, educational, and political oppression of the South. Similarly, the North offered African-American men interracial romantic and sexual opportunities as opposed to the interracial romantic and sexual oppression of the South. However, despite distinctions, discrimination existed within the North as well as the South.

African-American men interpreted romantic and sexual encounters with white women as indications of acceptance and assimilation into American society as well as erotic and exotic experiences. Regrettably, African-American men realized that erotic and exotic experiences with white women were expensive; the only white women readily accessible, attainable, and/or available to African-American men were prostitutes. However, the preferences and prejudices of prostitutes and patrons predictably corresponded to the preferences and prejudices of the general population. Consequently, white prostitutes preferred white patrons; and white patrons preferred “pure” white prostitutes rather than “nigger lovers.”

The Everleigh Club exemplified the racial and sexual tensions that existed within late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century prostitution. Ada and Minna Everleigh established the exclusive and expensive Everleigh Club in a four-story mansion on Dearborn Street in Chicago, Illinois. Furthermore, to protect its prestige and profits, its prostitutes’ prestige and profits, as well as its patrons’ prestige and preferences, the Everleigh Club prohibited African-American prostitutes and African-American patrons.
Jack Johnson, despite fame and fortune, was excluded from the Everleigh Club. However, Belle Schreiber, an Everleigh Club prostitute from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, commenced and continued an interracial romantic and sexual relationship with Jack Johnson, which exposed the Everleigh Club to controversy. Furthermore, Jack Johnson and Belle Schreiber’s interracial romantic and sexual relationship, corresponded with his marriage to Etta Duryea, an additional indiscretion, which could have contributed to her decision to commit suicide. Consequently, Ada and Minna Everleigh expelled Belle Schreiber from the Everleigh Club. Unfortunately, Jack Johnson and Belle Schreiber continued their interracial romantic and sexual relationship.

On November 7, 1912, Jack Johnson was charged with violating the White Slave Traffic Act, which was written by Chicago, Illinois, Representative James R. Mann and therefore referred to as the Mann Act. The primary purpose of the Mann Act was to prohibit “the transportation of women across state lines for immoral purposes.” Jack Johnson was accused of transporting Belle Schreiber from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to Chicago, Illinois, for the immoral purposes of prostitution as well as “debauchery,” “crimes against nature,” and “unlawful sexual intercourse.” Jack Johnson’s Mann Act trial was scheduled for May 14, 1913.

Jack Johnson’s consensual interracial romantic and/or sexual relationships, with Lucille Cameron and Belle Schreiber respectively, resulted in consecutive persecutions and/or prosecutions by local, state, and federal authorities. Consequently, Jack Johnson exemplified the considerable cultural, economic, legal, political, religious, and social consequences African-American men could expect if they defied the racial and sexual
constraints of late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century American society and engaged in interracial romantic and/or sexual relationships.\textsuperscript{106}

Similarly, the police, the politicians, the press, and the public accused Etta Duryea and Lucille Cameron of prostitution and attacked their dignity, integrity, morality, sanity, and virtue.\textsuperscript{107} Consequently, Etta Duryea and Lucille Cameron exemplified the considerable cultural, economic, legal, political, religious, and social consequences white women could expect if they defied the racial and sexual constraints of late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century American society and engaged in interracial romantic and/or sexual relationships.

The prevailing perception of nineteenth-century prostitution was an exchange of sex for money. Furthermore, the police, the politicians, the press and the public portrayed nineteenth-century prostitutes as women who preferred the perversion of prostitution to the piety and the purity of marriage and motherhood and therefore relinquished their rights to redemption and rehabilitation. However, perceptions of twentieth-century prostitution reflected perceptions of twentieth-century poverty. Consequently, perceptions of twentieth-century prostitution expanded beyond exchanges of sex for money.

“Charity girls” who were “treated” to gifts of clothes, hats, jewelry, perfume, shoes, food, and/or were “treated” to entertainment at amusement parks, amusement parlors, beach resorts, community theaters, concert halls, dance halls, dime museums, foreign language theaters, marionette shows, movie theaters, music halls, nickelodeons, penny arcades, picnic grounds, private clubs, saloons, social clubs, theaters, variety shows, and vaudeville shows in exchange for flirting, fondling, hugging, kissing, and/or
sex in tenement alleyways, doorways, hallways, stairwells, stoops, and neighborhood sidewalks, streets, and street corners were portrayed as prostitutes. Similarly, “occasional prostitutes” who periodically rather than persistently exchanged sex for money, primarily during periods of unemployment, were also portrayed as prostitutes.

Furthermore, married and/or single women who had affairs with married men; abandoned their husbands and children for other married and/or single men; had premarital sex and/or lived with men that were not their husbands or engaged to be their husbands; and/or had interracial romantic and/or sexual relationships were portrayed as promiscuous and therefore probable prostitutes. However, the police, the politicians, the press, and the public portrayed twentieth-century prostitutes as deceived, degraded, and depraved women who therefore retained their rights to redemption and rehabilitation.108

Jack Johnson was an attractive alternative to the degradation, demands, destitution, dreariness, and drudgery “women adrift” encountered at home and at work. Jack Johnson embraced the culture of dancing, drinking, fashion, flirting, gambling, gossiping, independence, individuality, laughing, slang, smoking, sex, and swearing, which “women adrift” created and cultivated despite cultural and religious objections from employers, families, and political and social reformers. Consequently, it is possible, if not probable, that Etta Duryea and Lucille Cameron were “women adrift” as well as “charity girls” or “occasional prostitutes” rather than “professional prostitutes.”

Furthermore, respectability and responsibility insulated the reputations of late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century women from insults. Consequently, it is possible, if not probable, that the police, the politicians, the press, and the public
reprimanded and ridiculed Etta Duryea and Lucille Cameron for their refusals of redemption and rehabilitation rather than their initial indiscretions.\textsuperscript{109}

Etta Duryea married Jack Johnson. Furthermore, Etta Duryea refused to divorce Jack Johnson. Consequently, Etta Duryea’s suicide provoked guilt as well as grief from the politicians, the press, and the public. Similarly, Lucille Cameron refused to testify against Jack Johnson in her abduction trial. Furthermore, Lucille Cameron married Jack Johnson. Consequently, Lucille Cameron’s mother “proclaimed, ‘I would rather see my daughter . . . in an insane asylum than see her the plaything of a nigger,’” and with the support of local, state, and federal authorities “swore to a formal complaint that Lucille was insane.” Lucille Cameron was subsequently arrested and awaited her abduction trial in “protective custody” in a Rockford, Illinois, penitentiary.\textsuperscript{110}

Similarly, Jack Johnson and Belle Schreiber’s interracial romantic and sexual relationship as well as their trips across state lines to and from fighting engagements were consensual. However, if women conspired with the men who transported them across state lines, then the Mann Act provided for the prosecution of women as well as men.\textsuperscript{111}

Consequently, it is conceivable that Belle Schreiber’s testimony was coerced by local, state, and federal authorities. Conversely, it is conceivable that Belle Schreiber’s testimony was contrived by her contempt for Jack Johnson and Lucille Cameron. Coerced or contrived, Belle Schreiber’s testimony compelled the jury to convict Jack Johnson.

Jack Johnson was sentenced to a one year and one day prison term and a $1,000.00 fine with the following words: “The crime which this defendant stands convicted of is an aggravating one. The life of the defendant, by his own admission, had
been such as to merit condemnation . . . This defendant is one of the best-known men of his race, and his example has been far-reaching, and the court is bound to consider the position he occupied among his people.”

Jack Johnson later declared that the trial was a “rank frame-up. The charges were based upon a law that was not in effect at the time Belle and I had been together, and legally was not operative against me.” Jack Johnson was technically correct; his relationship with Belle Schreiber occurred from 1909 through 1911, the majority of which preceded the proposal and passage of the Mann Act by Congress in 1910. However, the Mann Act’s proposed purpose, to prevent the forceful transportation of women across state lines for prostitution, was neither unprecedented nor unwarranted.

In 1908, the United States ratified an international treaty to prevent the forceful transportation of women across national borders for prostitution. Furthermore, between 1907 and 1914, magazine and newspaper articles, books, and movies “investigated” and/or “informed” the American public of, historically debatable, international and national syndicates of foreign and/or immigrant men who bought and sold white women into prostitution. Images of emotionally, physically, and sexually abused, captured, corrupted, deceived, drugged, imprisoned, intimidated, and/or tempted virtuous and vulnerable white women as the prey of foreign and/or immigrant sexual predators resulted in a national hysteria commonly known as the “white slavery” panic.

The primary purpose of Jack Johnson and Belle Schreiber’s interracial romantic and sexual relationship, rather than illegal, illicit, and immoral sex, was companionship, which is not prohibited by the Mann Act. However, incidences of illegal, illicit, and immoral sex were irrelevant; intentions to initiate illegal, illicit, and immoral sex justified
the Mann Act. Furthermore, due to previously discussed perceptions of prostitution and prostitutes, the Mann Act was interpreted to include the commercial and noncommercial transportation of women across state lines. Consequently, citizens of the United States were hostages of their own local, state, and federal governments; the Mann Act legislated their morality as well as their movements.

There was considerable and continued confusion among Congress, the Supreme Court, the Justice Department, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and federal judges and juries about acceptable applications of the Mann Act to the noncommercial transportation of women across state lines. However, hypocrisy, hysteria, and paranoia prevailed. Religious reformers routinely resisted recommended Mann Act restrictions and revisions. Furthermore, gas station, hotel, and restaurant managers, owners, and staffs as well as jealous and/or jilted husbands and wives, parents of disobedient daughters, and “concerned” acquaintances and/or neighbors continued to inform the Justice Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation of “suspicious” couples. Consequently, unmarried couples lived and traveled in constant fear of detection and harassment from local, state, and federal authorities.

While awaiting an appeal, Jack Johnson escaped police surveillance and crossed the United States border into Canada dressed as a member of the Foster’s Giants, an African-American baseball team from Chicago, Illinois. Jack Johnson reportedly paid one of the actual Foster’s Giants team members, who resembled him in height and weight, to dress like him and act as a decoy for the police while he made his way to Ontario, Canada. From Ontario, Canada, Jack Johnson traveled to Montreal, Canada, where he was reunited with his wife, Lucille Cameron, who had traveled separately.
Together, Jack Johnson and Lucille Cameron boarded a steamship and arrived in Paris, France, on July 10, 1913. Gail Bederman disagrees with Jack Johnson’s clandestine version of events as detailed in his autobiography and; asserts that Jack Johnson’s escape from the United States was actually encouraged, if not endorsed, by federal government officials, who were anxious to permanently absolve themselves and the United States of accountability for Jack Johnson’s past and future actions. However, regardless of its covert or overt origins, Jack Johnson’s seven-year exile from the United States had officially begun.

From July 1913 through July 1920, when he voluntarily surrendered himself to United States officials in San Diego, California, Jack Johnson claims to have had numerous adventures. Even as a man without a country, he continued to live flamboyantly and usually beyond his means. He traveled to Belgium, England, France, Germany, Norway, Poland, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Argentina, Cuba, and Mexico. He supported himself and his entourage primarily through boxing exhibitions and theatrical engagements, similar to those he performed in vaudeville in the United States. However, while in Mexico and Spain, he also attempted bullfighting.

In his autobiography, Jack Johnson vividly describes traveling throughout Europe during World War I as well as his escapes from Germany, Poland, and Russia immediately following their declarations of war. Furthermore, he describes “conducting investigations of German submarine operations off the coast of Spain” for the Spanish American attaché, Major Land; and details his friendships with Carranza, President of Mexico, Poncho Villa, the famous Mexican revolutionary, and General Mario Menocal, President of Cuba. Gail Bederman and Randy Roberts once again disagree with Jack
Johnson’s version of events as detailed in his autobiography. It appears that Jack Johnson’s experiences and recollections from this period of his life were either embellished and fabricated or extremely romanticized and selective.\textsuperscript{120}

Jack Johnson attempted to justify his flight from the United States in his autobiography. He wrote: “My conduct had been no worse than that of thousands of others. I felt that I had committed no heinous crime and that because of my color, perhaps, and because of prejudices and jealousies I was being persecuted and prosecuted.”\textsuperscript{121} However, as a result of Jack Johnson’s blatant disregard for the customs and laws of the United States, even if it was an unjust law such as the Mann Act, condemnation and contempt continued to control the perspectives of the politicians, the press, and the public.

If Jack Johnson had remained in the United States, he could have been vindicated. On appeal, part of his conviction was reversed. Furthermore, the appeals court insisted on higher standards of evidence for future Mann Act cases,\textsuperscript{122} which could have eventually led to Jack Johnson’s conviction being thrown out or could have eventually led to a new trial. However, unlike future African-American heavyweight champion, Muhammad Ali, who, fifty-four years later, was willing to go to jail for his refusal to fight in the Vietnam War due to his religious beliefs, Jack Johnson fled.

Tempted by $30,000, Jack Johnson accepted an offer to fight a relatively unknown six foot six and a half inches tall and 250-pound boxer named Jesse Willard. Originally, Jack Johnson wanted the fight to be held in Mexico. However, reported threats to kidnap him for ransom and return him to the United States, where he would
promptly be thrown into jail by federal authorities, made him reconsider. He eventually decided that the fight would be held in Havana, Cuba.\textsuperscript{123}

On April 5, 1915, Jesse Willard knocked out Jack Johnson, age 37, in the twenty-sixth round with a hard right punch to the head to reclaim the heavyweight championship title for the white race, just as it had been lost, on foreign soil.\textsuperscript{124} However, the memories of Jack Johnson would not die with his defeat. His legacy extended at least another twenty-two years, until Joe Louis began his eleven-year reign, from 1937 to 1948, as the next African-American heavyweight champion of the world.

Suspicion surrounds the Johnson-Willard fight. Some historians believe the fight was fixed. However, other historians believe Jack Johnson did not perceive Jesse Willard as a serious threat to the heavyweight championship title and therefore was unprepared. While being helped out of the boxing ring by his cornermen, Jack Johnson supposedly said that “It was a clean knockout and the best man won. It was not a matter of luck. I have no kick coming.”\textsuperscript{125} However, several months later, Jack Johnson changed his story and said that he had been promised $35,000 and a pardon from the United States government if he fought Jesse Willard and lost.\textsuperscript{126} If the promises were made, then they certainly were not kept.

Jack Johnson voluntarily surrendered to United States federal authorities on July 20, 1920. He served time in both Jolliet and Geneva federal prisons while his lawyers pleaded for leniency and awaited his new sentence. Eventually, the $1,000 fine and the prison term of one year and one day were upheld. The presiding judge from Jack Johnson’s Mann Act trial, refused to reduce the original sentence saying: “If the conduct of the defendant had been such as to indicate that he regretted his criminal act, I might
feel differently . . . On the contrary, Johnson has behaved in a manner to indicate complete disregard for the laws and institutions of this country.” However, his sentence was eventually reduced to a little less than ten months due to good behavior. He entered Leavenworth prison on September 14, 1920 and was released on July 9, 1921. Once out of prison, Jack Johnson continued boxing nationally and internationally. However, Jack Johnson never seriously contended for the heavyweight championship title again.

In 1924, after twelve years of marriage, Jack Johnson and Lucille Cameron divorced. He married his fourth wife, another white woman, named Irene Marie Pineau in 1925. Twenty-one years later on June 10, 1946, Jack Johnson, age 68, died from injuries he received during a car accident thirty miles north of Raleigh, North Carolina, in Franklinton, North Carolina. After a funeral ceremony attended by thousands of African-Americans and only a handful of whites, Irene Marie Pineau had him buried beside Etta Duryea in Graceland Cemetery in Chicago, Illinois.
CHAPTER III
In many respects, Jack Johnson’s problems paralleled the problems of boxing. Immorality appeared to flourish around Jack Johnson specifically and boxing in general. This association contributed to the public outcry to defeat Jack Johnson on one hand and abolish boxing on the other hand. However, timing, rather than the perceived absence or presence of immorality, was the critical factor in the fates of Jack Johnson and boxing. The economic, political, racial, religious, sexual, and social agendas of the Progressive Era and the powerful influence of segregation hindered the efforts of Jack Johnson and the boxing community to achieve respectability.

Throughout the Progressive Era, middle-class Protestant activists organized into groups such as the Law and Order Leagues and Committees of Public Decency, in an effort to purge late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century American society of immoral forces such as alcohol, gambling, and prostitution. However, immorality was not limited to brothels, poolrooms, and taverns. American and European psychologists and sociologists, such as Edward A. Ross, researched the “destructive,” “frantic,” “frenzied,” “immoral,” “impulsive,” “intense,” “irrational,” “primitive,” and “volatile” qualities of crowds, which profoundly influenced the Progressives. Consequently, the Progressives also crusaded against amusement parks, boxing, dance halls, melodrama theaters, movie theaters, and music halls.

The Progressives believed that commercialized amusement and entertainment corrupted, exploited, and manipulated the presumably ignorant and primarily immigrant working-class masses for profit. As an alternative, the Progressives encouraged society to embrace culturally inspiring and morally uplifting venues for and forms of entertainment such as community centers, gymnasiums, and public parks. However, the
working-class masses neither needed nor wanted culture and/or morality defined for them or explained to them.\textsuperscript{132} Furthermore, the working-class, middle-class, and, to a lesser degree, the children of the culturally elite upper-class coming of age in the United States during the late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century preferred exciting, frivolous, and fun experiences, regardless of the expense, rather than culturally inspiring and morally uplifting experiences for free.\textsuperscript{133}

The Progressive movement of the late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century attracted both men and women to its membership. However, women, empowered by the doctrine of separate spheres as the traditional protectors of civilization, morality, and virtue, found the moral platforms of the anti-alcohol, anti-gambling, and anti-prostitution campaigns especially appealing. Consequently, the most visible and vocal members of the Progressive movement were women.

Initially, men accepted and respected women’s increased involvement and influence in matters of public morality; it was viewed as a natural extension of the private moral instruction wives and mothers provided their husbands and sons. However, as women invariably extended their targets from brothels and taverns to include athletic clubs, boxing matches, and fraternal lodges, men began withholding their support and became increasingly intolerant of women’s efforts to enforce conformity to traditional feminine standards of civility and morality.

The dispute between boxing opponents, led primarily by women, and boxing supporters, led primarily by men was especially contentious. Both sides perceived themselves to be the protectors of the hearts, minds, and souls of the American public. The impassioned plea of a male, middle-aged, and middle-class boxing supporter is
representative of the contempt feminine interference with masculine pleasures encountered during the Progressive Era.

In Heaven’s name leave us a saving touch of honest, old-fashioned barbarism! that when we come to die, we shall die, leaving men behind us, and not a race of eminently respectable female saints. 

One such battle in the war over boxing occurred over the proposed location of the Johnson–Jeffries fight, which was originally to take place in San Francisco, California. However, boxing opponents managed to pressure California’s governor, James J. Gillett, to prohibit the fight. Gunboat Smith, White Hope heavyweight champion of 1914, believed that Jack Johnson’s arrogance heavily influenced Governor Gillette’s decision. He said, “They wouldn’t stand for a nigger to beat a white man in California. Johnson was a goddamn fool to begin with. He was always showing off, a big shot.”

In addition to Jack Johnson’s arrogance and the standard objections to alcohol, gambling, and prostitution, the Progressives manipulated escalating racial and sexual tensions to their advantage. Some Progressives essentially argued that interracial fighting was unnatural and that no white woman’s honor would be safe as long as Jack Johnson was in the state of California. In spite of Governor Gillett’s decision to prohibit the Johnson–Jeffries fight, the opposition was only partially victorious; the fight was quickly relocated to Reno, Nevada.

As demonstrated by the relocation of the Johnson–Jeffries fight, the Progressives were unable to win any substantive victories against boxing. The popularity and eventual respectability of boxing was the result of the cultural evolution of white middle-class masculinity and its relationship to or, depending upon your perspective, dependence on sports and violence.
The definition of manhood has evolved with American culture; the expectations of and implications for American men profoundly different with each new generation. Historian E. Anthony Rotundo, author of *American Manhood: Transformations In Masculinity From The Revolution To The Modern Era*, contends that there have been three distinct eras of white, middle-class manhood throughout American history: communal manhood, self-made manhood, and passionate manhood.

Communal manhood reflected the moral and social values of the eighteenth-century colonial New England towns and villages of the period. The community took precedence over the individual; public demands took precedence over private concerns; men were superior to women in their virtue and in their capacity to reason and control individual weaknesses; ambition, defiance, and envy were believed to be detrimental to community harmony and to the salvation of the individual soul; men were defined primarily by their family heritage and their community involvement rather than by their individual achievements; women were defined by their husbands; and children were defined by their fathers. Due to the mutual economic dependence of community members, a man’s economic failure, rather than his economic success, was more apt to attract community attention. Similarly, a man’s failure to fulfill familial obligations to his wife and children also resulted in community intervention and/or ostracism.\(^{138}\)

The eventual decline of communal manhood coincided with the development of self-made manhood in the late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century. Self-made manhood resulted from a combination of factors, which included the American Revolution and the republican form of government it established as well as the creation and expansion of a free market economy and the middle-class it perpetuated.
Throughout the era of self-made manhood, society increasingly defined men and men increasingly defined themselves by their economic, political, and professional accomplishments rather than their family heritage. Society expected men to attain and maintain economic, political, and professional superiority and dominance and encouraged men to pursue their self-interest through purposeful and profitable acts of ambition, aggression, and rivalry. Independence and individualism became qualities which society valued rather than condemned and which men fiercely defended rather than denied. The result was a gradual, but nonetheless steady decline in men’s communal and familial involvement. Could civilized society survive amidst such carnage and chaos? Could the souls of selfish husbands, fathers, and sons be saved under such circumstances? While some members of society believed that men could control themselves through their own innate ability to reason, other members of society believed that women were naturally better suited to control the new breed of aggressive and ambitious self-made men.

During this period, women continued to be defined primarily by their husbands. However, society began to attribute women with qualities, such as morality and virtue, which were complimentary to those of the new aggressive and ambitious self-made men. The favorable redefinition of women was an important social development. Women were subsequently viewed as different from men rather than inferior to men, which made the ideal of companionate marriages possible. The existence of companionate marriages based on personal preference, mutual affection, and love allowed wives and mothers the authority to effectively influence the private and public behavior of their husbands and sons. Society still expected men to fulfill familial obligations, such as financial support and personal protection. However, society now expected women to compensate for
men’s frequent and extended absences from the home with an increased involvement in child rearing that emphasized male self-control and self-restraint.  

In many respects, passionate manhood, which was conceived in the mid-nineteenth century and gradually developed through the late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century, was simply a natural progression of self-made manhood. Throughout the era of self-made manhood aggression, ambition, assertiveness, combativeness, and competitiveness were merely tolerated as economically, politically, and professionally necessary. However, throughout the era of passionate manhood, aggression, ambition, assertiveness, combativeness, and competitiveness were accepted, admired, and encouraged as virtues rather than merely tolerated.  

The most significant difference between self-made manhood and passionate manhood was the prevailing attitudes toward “the self,” which is defined by E. Anthony Rotundo as “that unique core of personal identity that lay beneath all the layers of social convention.” The era of self-made manhood attempted to manipulate and repress male passions through its emphasis on self-control, self-denial, and self-restraint, while the era of passionate manhood valued and encouraged male passions through its emphasis on self-expression and self-fulfillment. The new emphasis on the self was manifested, most notably, through the new societal importance of male consumption and male body image. 

The era of passionate manhood witnessed significant increases in disposable income and leisure time; the modernization, professionalization, and commercialization of sports such as baseball and football; and the advancement, advertisement, affordability, and availability of new conveniences and technologies such as the automobile and the movies. These developments provided working-class and middle-
class men, women, and children with the opportunity to experience a variety of socially acceptable and pleasurable escapes from the traditional confines of home, school, and work. Consequently, society expected economically, politically, and professionally successful men to amuse, entertain, and indulge themselves, their wives, and their children with athletic and leisurely activities as well as the latest technological and domestic conveniences. How men and women of America’s new middle-class chose to spend their disposable income and their leisure time became an expression of individuality and became, for men, as much of a determinant of manhood as their chosen careers.

It was also during the era of passionate manhood that magazine and newspaper advertisements began to emphasize the importance of products previously ignored by men. Personal hygiene items, such as combs, brushes, shampoo, mouthwash, toothbrushes, toothpaste, cologne, razors, shaving cream, soap, talcum powder, and tanning aids, were credited with the enhancement of men’s masculine, sexual, and youthful image.

Clothing styles for men, influenced by magazine and newspaper advertisements as well as the movies, experienced a transformation as well. Seasonable and stylish fashions were suddenly more important than form and function. The acquisition of the latest styles of coats, hats, jackets, pants, shirts, shoes, sweaters, and even underwear were subsequently portrayed as the potential difference between economic, political, and professional success or failure as well as romantic and sexual success or failure with women.
The images that continually bombarded men and women in magazine and newspaper advertisements and at the movies increased the romantic and sexual expectations associated with consumer products in a deliberate attempt to increase profits. Unfortunately, they also increased the romantic and sexual anxieties of men as well as women. As a result, men became increasingly concerned with their physical appearance and physical fitness. According to magazine and newspaper advertisements, the movies, and prescriptive literature, the ideal twentieth century man could attract any woman if he attained and maintained a muscular and youthful image and cultivated an adventurous, charming, charismatic, magnetic, sophisticated, and youthful personality. Initially, men were unfamiliar and uncomfortable with such superficial standards of assessment; previously only women had been compelled to attend to such details. However, now, more than in any previous generation, both men and women were concerned with societal as well as their own perceptions of attractiveness.\(^\text{143}\)

In an attempt to counteract their increased romantic and sexual anxieties, young working-class and middle-class men and women attempted to assert their independence. They seized control and transferred supervision of their romantic and sexual relationships from their families and the private realm of the home to their peers and the public realm of amusement parks, dance halls, and movie theaters. Unfortunately, the economic, romantic, and sexual independence that resulted from increased disposable income and leisure time had tremendous individual as well as societal disadvantages, which would eventually attract the attention of the Progressives.

The era of passionate manhood witnessed a continual increase in casual sex, premarital sex, physical and sexual violence committed against women by men, and the
availability of pornographic books, magazines, and photographs. However, regardless of
the disadvantages, working-class and middle-class men and women continued to demand
exciting and innovative forms of amusement and entertainment and entrepreneurs eagerly
attempted to fulfill the demand. Consequently, amusement parks, dance halls, and movie
theaters of tremendous scale and scope were subsequently designed and developed in
every major early twentieth-century American city.144

The importance of consumption and body image to individual identity increased
sequentially among all white men during the era of passionate manhood. The creation
and development of bureaucratic corporations and national markets combined with
urbanization hindered individual entrepreneurial efforts. White men increasingly chose
careers as managers and salesmen rather than farmers and/or small businessmen because
economic and professional independence and/or success was no longer guaranteed during
the era of passionate manhood as it once was during the eras of colonial manhood and
self-made manhood. The confined career opportunities for white men were further
complicated when they were suddenly compelled to compete with increasingly large
numbers of Catholic and Jewish immigrants as well as women for positions that would
have been exclusively white, male, and Protestant in previous generations.145

In addition to their economic, political, and professional achievements, disposable
income, and leisure time, men of the era of passionate manhood increasingly defined
themselves and other men in terms of physical appearance, size, skill, speed, stamina,
strength, toughness, vigor, virility, and vitality. During the pre-Civil War era of
passionate manhood, individual sports such as cycling, gymnastics, and skating became
popular for both men and women. The immense popularity of bodybuilding among men
was an example of their preoccupation with measurements of physical appearance such as height, weight, and muscle tone.

Individual sports were incredibly popular because it was believed that they not only motivated individuals to exercise, but also encouraged individuals to resist the moral temptations of decadence, excessiveness, extravagance, idleness, and indulgence through discipline. It was also believed that participation in individual sports counteracted the effeminate, impulsive, and individualistic tendencies associated with the relative economic prosperity of late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century American society.

Conversely, during the post-Civil War era of passionate manhood, the tremendous popularity of competitive sports such as baseball, boxing, fencing, football, horseracing, golf, rowing, tennis, and track among male participants and spectators of all ages and classes eclipsed previously recommended individual sports. The transition from an emphasis on exercise to a preoccupation with competition was an essential and inevitable event. The increasingly competitive atmosphere aggravated the economic, moral, political, professional, religious, romantic, and sexual anxiety, confusion, frustration, inadequacy, insecurity, nervousness, and uncertainty that existed within late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century American society. As a result, men devoured adventure novels and created, observed, and participated in competitive sports in unprecedented numbers in an attempt to reassure themselves and each other of their manhood. The evolution of the competitive sport of boxing from the individual sport of bodybuilding is representative of this trend.\textsuperscript{146}
Furthermore, between the end of the Civil War and the beginning of the Spanish American War and again between the end of the Spanish American War and the entry of the United States into World War I, American fathers struggled to teach their sons the virtues of war in the absence of war. It was widely believed that competitive and organized athletics, especially team athletics, such as baseball and football, encouraged assertiveness, boldness, character, confidence, courage, decisiveness, determination, discipline, endurance, forcefulness, self-control, self-restraint, strength, and vigor just as war had done for previous generations of American men. Similarly, it was widely believed that competitive and organized athletics, to an even greater degree than individual sports or the century old tradition of moral influence and instruction by mothers and wives, discouraged selfishness, vanity, and immoral activities such as gambling, idleness, and lying among American men. The virtues of competitive athletics were considered essential to the successful fulfillment of men’s personal and professional responsibilities.\(^{147}\)

The relative economic prosperity and political stability America experienced during the late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century prompted, self-proclaimed expert on American manliness and masculinity and future President of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt to implore American men to avoid the temptations of complacency and decadence. As an alternative, Theodore Roosevelt recommended that American men strive to live “the strenuous life,” which included a strict regiment of vigorous individual athletic activities such as climbing, fishing, hunting, riding, rowing, and shooting. Theodore Roosevelt believed that the mastery of nature was the ultimate test of a man and would guarantee the continued development of virile and virtuous American men.\(^{148}\)
In addition to his support for individual athletics, Theodore Roosevelt was also an outspoken advocate of the benefits of competitive athletics and expressed the sentiments of generations of men when he said: “In life, as in a football game, the principle to follow is: Hit the line hard; don’t foul and don’t shirk but hit the line hard.” Jack Johnson, perhaps more than any other professional sports figure of that generation, realized the truth of Theodore Roosevelt’s statement. The experiences of competitive athletics paralleled and therefore prepared men for the realities of life in an economically, politically, and professionally competitive world.

An important parallel between Jack Johnson and boxing, was the desire for respectability. Even though boxing was illegal throughout most of the United States, it steadily gained acceptance during Jack Johnson’s lifetime. Throughout the nineteenth-century and twentieth-century, many of the perceptions and eventually the realities about violence, in general, and boxing, specifically, changed for the better; unfortunately, the same cannot be said for Jack Johnson.

The societal perceptions of violent exchanges between young and adolescent boys changed dramatically throughout the nineteenth-century. The eras of communal manhood and self-made manhood perceived violent exchanges between young and adolescent boys as signs of evil, immaturity, and/or weakness. However, during the era of passionate manhood, violent exchanges between young and adolescent boys were admired and endorsed as essential to the development of manly character and maturity. The dramatic transformation social perceptions of violence underwent during the era of passionate manhood created the ideal environment for “boy culture.”
According to E. Anthony Rotundo, economically, ethnically, geographically, and racially distinct boy cultures developed and flourished throughout America independent of the influences of young girls and adult men and women. Boy culture exerted its initial influence over American boys around the age of six and continued to exert its influence until advanced education, employment, and/or marriage became the primary priorities in their lives.¹⁵⁰

Boy culture contributed to the emotional, mental, physical, and social development of American boys through the creation and cultivation of an atmosphere that paralleled and therefore prepared boys for the realities of life in an economically, politically, and professionally competitive world. Boy culture established a competitive atmosphere through the utilization of athletic contests, emotional manipulation, physical intimidation, ritualistic violence, and violent games. Boy culture also encouraged constant comparisons, measurements, and observations of age, appearance, assertiveness, boldness, courage, daring, endurance, loyalty, personality, height and weight, size, skill, speed, stoicism, and strength among its members. As a result of its competitive nature, boy culture encouraged self-assertion, self-control, and self-mastery and discouraged the expression of affection, fear, grief, pain, and vulnerability.¹⁵¹ It is possible, if not probable, that Jack Johnson experienced boy culture. Consequently, it is possible, if not probable, that boy culture contributed to the development of Jack Johnson’s skill, speed, stamina, and strength and therefore contributed to his success.

The increased societal acceptance of violence was instrumental in the eventual societal acceptance of boxing. Beginning in the 1880s, the perceptions and the realities of boxing began to undergo a transformation; it became more organized, professional,
regulated, and, eventually, respected under the watchful eyes of newly created athletic clubs. However, the modern age of boxing essentially began in 1892 when athletic clubs adopted and strictly enforced the safety standards of the Queensberry Rules. Fighters were required to wear protective gloves; rounds were limited to three minutes with a one-minute rest period between rounds; and fights were required to be fought on canvass.

Athletic clubs further modernized boxing with the establishment of four new weight classifications: bantamweight, featherweight, welterweight, and middleweight. Previously, there had only been a lightweight division and a heavyweight division, which resulted in fights between individuals with tremendous weight differences. However, the new classifications allowed for more equality among fighters, which resulted in higher standards of competition and safety.

Athletic clubs completed the modernization of boxing when they replaced the amateur challenge system with direct negotiations. Guided by athletic club representatives, two fighters, their managers, and/or their promoters arranged the official date, time, and location of their fight as well as the amount of prize money awarded to the winner and the loser at the conclusion of their fight.\textsuperscript{152}

As a result of the modernization efforts of the athletic clubs, boxing was subsequently promoted as a “civilized” sport rather than as a fixture of the urban underworld, which existed and flourished in every major early twentieth-century American city. Even though athletic clubs distanced boxing from its urban underworld origins, boxing benefited from the extreme popularity of urban underworld activities, which also included alcohol, gambling, homosexuality, and prostitution. While homosexuality and prostitution remained taboo, American working-class and middle-
class men of all ages, ethnicities, nationalities, races, and religions increasingly embraced alcohol, boxing, and gambling as acceptable recreational releases from the economic exploitation they experienced throughout their daily lives.²⁰³

In addition to the increased societal acceptance of violence, the modernization efforts of the athletic clubs, and the economic exploitation of American working-class and middle-class men, the increased societal acceptance of boxing can also be attributed to a masculinity crisis. During the last decades of the nineteenth-century white, middle-class, American men, empowered and inspired by the scientific theories of Social Darwinism, rejected the Victorian doctrines of separate spheres and civilized manliness and replaced them with their own doctrine of primitive masculinity. In many respects, the doctrine of primitive masculinity resonated with the images of boxing.

According to Gail Bederman, author of *Manliness & Civilization: A Cultural History Of Gender & Race In The United States, 1880-1917*, adherents of primitive masculinity aspired to counteract what they believed to be the effeminizing effects of excessive civilization by recreating themselves in the image of the “natural man.” The natural man was aggressive, dominant, forceful, impulsive, instinctive, passionate, powerful, primal, primitive, savage, selfish, sexual, strong, untamed, violent, and, most importantly, void of the moralistic self-control and self-restraint characteristic of Victorian civilized manliness. Even though the terminologies of civilized manliness and primitive masculinity appear to be diametrically opposed, each ideology existed to protect the economic, political, professional, religious, sexual, and societal power structures of white, middle-class, American men.²⁰⁴
E. Anthony Rotundo asserts that adherents of the doctrine of primitive masculinity respected rather than repressed impulse and instinct and recognized passion rather than reason and restraint, despite their continued societal importance, as the foundation of civilization. As long as the expression of conflicting passions remained balanced, controlled, and directed rather than denied, civilization would be protected from the social evils of corruption and war. E. Anthony Rotundo also asserts that adherents of the doctrine of primitive masculinity considered Africans, African-Americans, Asians, Hispanics, Native Americans, and Polynesians to be inferior and frequently referred to them as animals, barbarians, carnivores, primitives, and savages. However, honorable primitive virtues, such as chastity and moderation, were creatively, enthusiastically, methodically, and simultaneously embraced.

Imitations of primitive customs and rituals as well as amusing and mischievous theatrical productions were frequently performed during fraternal lodge initiations and athletic club events. The performances emphasized comparisons between their members and their primitive counterparts as well as encouraged their members to transform themselves, at least momentarily, into their primitive ancestors. Men, in an attempt to become better fathers, husbands, and sons, designed these experiences to restore the connection with their primitive passions, which they believed centuries of feminized civilization had repressed. The movement registered with a tremendous number of men. At the turn of the century, fraternal lodges were estimated to have had five and a half million members.  

The last decade of the nineteenth-century witnessed another popular movement among American men, which like primitive masculinity also intended to restore the
connection with their primitive passions. However, guided by Clark University professor and President, G. Stanley Hall, this movement focused its efforts on the American boy rather than the American man.

The ideal American man was supposed to be powerful, strong, and virile. However, Victorian civilization demanded that men practice delayed gratification, self-control, and self-restraint; and expected men to be emotionally reserved. Followers of G. Stanley Hall believed that a lifestyle of denial, discipline, repression, and suppression resulted in exhaustion, impotence, nervousness, and weakness. These symptoms were characteristic of a disease caused by advanced and/or excessive civilization and commonly known as neurasthenia. According to G. Stanley Hall, American men possessed a limited amount of energy and therefore were especially susceptible to the effeminizing or emasculating effects of neurasthenia. Consequently, the decay, decline, degeneration, and destruction of American society would be inevitable if neurasthenia could not be cured or, at least, controlled among American men.

G. Stanley Hall was extremely critical of feminized teaching methods, which he believed contributed to the occurrence of neurasthenia among American men. However, the cooperation of American educators was essential to his efforts to vaccinate current and future generations of American men against neurasthenia. American educators were subsequently encouraged to recognize, respect, and encourage the emotional and physical expressions of the innate primitive and savage desires, emotions, impulses, instincts, and passions that existed within American boys; and to introduce violent games, violent sports, and violent stories, into the educational curriculum. G. Stanley Hall’s
recommendations were essentially an intellectualized, institutionalized, scientific, and supervised version of boy culture.

The prescribed cure for neurasthenia was based on the scientific theory of recapitulation. According to recapitulation theory, individual boys emotionally and physically experienced the entire course of human evolution during their lifetimes, beginning in infancy, continuing through childhood, and finally ending in adolescence. Each stage of individual development corresponded to stages of evolution. If any stage of individual development and its corresponding stages of evolution were either ignored or interrupted, then all future stages of individual development would be jeopardized and the course of civilization would be adversely affected.

The experiences of our primitive ancestors were believed to be an integral part of both human evolution and individual maturity. If American boys were denied the opportunity to emotionally and physically repeat the experiences of their primitive ancestors during childhood, then their immune systems would be weak; they would be susceptible to afflictions, such as neurasthenia, during adulthood; and civilized society would descend deeper into decay and decline. Conversely, if American boys were allowed the opportunity to emotionally and physically repeat the experiences of their primitive ancestors during childhood, then their immune systems would be fortified with the strength and virility of their primitive ancestors; they could resist afflictions, such as neurasthenia, during adulthood; and civilized society would progress toward perfection. The development of powerful American men that could confront and survive the constraints of civilization depended upon whether or not American boys received the
appropriate dosage of primitive masculinity before they learned discipline during their pre-adolescent years.\textsuperscript{156}

During adolescence, the final and most advanced stage of individual development, American boys acquired the capacity for advanced intelligence and inherited the learned traits of their parents and grandparents. Adolescence has frequently been characterized as an emotionally and physically confusing, difficult, and turbulent time. However, according to G. Stanley Hall, the duration, intensity, and severity of adolescence corresponded directly to the ethnic diversity of an American boy’s ancestors.

The ethnically diverse American population, which resulted from the constant introduction and assimilation of immigrant cultures, differed dramatically from the ethnically stable populations of African, Asian, and European countries. An American boy with an ethnically diverse heritage would emotionally and physically repeat the experiences of multiple primitive ancestors simultaneously. According to G. Stanley Hall, ethnically diverse heritages sequentially increased American boys’ potential to evolve into the most advanced and complete men the world had ever produced. However, G. Stanley Hall recommended that in instances of ethnically diverse heritages, adolescence be extended to safely accommodate the barrage of evolutionary advancements and intellectual knowledge that would be triggered by the onset of adolescence.

An extended adolescence was not only a safety precaution, but was also a source of tremendous national, personal, and racial pride. African-Americans, Africans, Asians, Hispanics, Native Americans, Polynesians, or white American women could not attain
advanced intelligence; only white American men had such an evolved intellectual capacity and therefore only white American boys required an extended adolescence.

If the previous stages of development were successful, then American men could be healthy, strong, romantically, sexually, and violently passionate as well as civilized, cultured, disciplined, and refined without the risk of neurasthenia. The continued advancement of civilization depended upon the evolution of barbaric, primitive, savage, and ignorant boys into civilized, intelligent, and manly men, who could retain and utilize the desires, emotions, impulses, instincts, and passions of their primitive ancestors.157

The discovery and gradual acceptance among the scientific community, between 1894 and 1904, that genetics rather than racial recapitulation determined inheritance was a tremendous disappointment to G. Stanley Hall and his supporters. While education remained an influence, it was no longer the primary determinant, in the advancement of individuals, races, nations, and civilizations toward ultimate perfection. Even though the movement was eventually discredited and its members discouraged, G. Stanley Hall remained undeterred; his primary concern remained the education of white adolescent American boys. However, he expanded and modified his crusade to include the primitive races of Africa and Asia, who he characterized as “adolescent races.”

Whereas G. Stanley Hall had previously insisted that white adolescent American boys emotionally and physically repeated the experiences of their primitive ancestors during childhood, he now insisted that members of “adolescent races” had never developed beyond the evolutionary stages of their own primitive ancestors; were the reincarnation of their primitive ancestors; were uncorrupted by the decadence of civilization; and therefore possessed the potential to eventually achieve perfection.
According to G. Stanley Hall, there were similarities as well as differences between white adolescent American boys and the “adolescent races.”

Even though neither white adolescent American boys nor the “adolescent races” had developed the mental capacity and maturity for advanced intellectual thought and action, each possessed the capability to perform advanced tasks as well as the capacity to evolve. Consequently, it was essential that white adolescent American boys and the “adolescent races” receive education, moral guidance, and protection from exploitation, from benevolent, civilized, and intelligent white men who would nurture and protect the integrity of primitive desires, emotions, impulses, instincts, and passions.158

Variations of Charles Darwin and G. Stanley Hall’s philosophical principles found expression in the economic, military, political, racial, and social policies Theodore Roosevelt formulated and implemented throughout his political career as Secretary of the Navy, Vice President, and President. Theodore Roosevelt was a complex, complicated, and controversial man who applied his belief in and interpretation of Charles Darwin’s theories of natural selection and survival of the fittest not only to species of animals, but to nations and races as well. Consequently, Theodore Roosevelt viewed the future of America, as a nation and as a race, in evolutionary terms. Continuous competition and conflict were essential, not only for survival, but, more importantly, for dominance of inferior nations and inferior races such as African-Americans, Africans, Asians, Hispanics, Native Americans, and Polynesians as well as for control of resources and territories both foreign and domestic.

Similarly, Theodore Roosevelt, like G. Stanley Hall, was concerned about the potential effeminizing and emasculating effects of excessive civilization on American
men. Theodore Roosevelt believed that the temptations to succumb to national complacency and racial decadence were immense and could be disastrous to current and future generations of American men as well as the American nation. Therefore, it was imperative that American men fight to attain and maintain national superiority and racial supremacy. In order to fulfill their national and racial obligation to fight, American men had to possess the correct combination of primitive masculine desire, impulse, instinct, passion, strength, vigor, and virility as well as the benevolence, intelligence, and morality characteristic of civilized manliness.

Once again, like G. Stanley Hall, Theodore Roosevelt believed that it was America’s responsibility to achieve, advance, and eventually perfect civilization, which would unequivocally establish the superiority of the American nation and the American race. Interference with the fulfillment of America’s divine destiny and duty could not and would not be tolerated. Theodore Roosevelt subsequently encouraged the use of violence to achieve national expansion against Native Americans on the American frontier and international imperialism against Hispanics and Polynesians in Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines during the Spanish American War.

Such acts of aggression were in accordance with Theodore Roosevelt’s belief that most immigrant nations and immigrant races were overwhelmingly inferior to America. However, he also believed that some immigrant nations and immigrant races, such as the Japanese, had achieved a level of advanced civilization and therefore were tremendous threats to America as a nation and as a race. Consequently, Theodore Roosevelt limited immigration in order to minimize the potential conflicts for jobs and land, which, in his opinion, would inevitably lead to deadly struggles for racial supremacy.
Theodore Roosevelt also believed that racially diverse societies, such as the United States, would inevitably experience racial violence as well. However, inevitable racial violence was not necessarily justifiable racial violence, in Roosevelt’s opinion. He publicly denounced lynching as uncivilized on two separate occasions in 1903 and 1906 and attempted to control the occurrence of racial violence between white American men and African-American men within the United States throughout his presidency.

Theodore Roosevelt realized his inability to control, curtail, remove, or reverse the steadily increasing African-American population within the United States. Furthermore, Theodore Roosevelt believed that African-Americans were more civilized than their African counterparts due to the advanced cultural influences of the United States and therefore presented a potential threat to the authority of white American men. However, Theodore Roosevelt remained convinced of the inferiority of African-Americans and conversely confident in the superiority of white American men. Consequently, Roosevelt instituted policies that encouraged individual competition rather than racial competition in an attempt to achieve racial equality and avoid the violence against African-Americans that he believed would result if a racial struggle for jobs and land occurred.159
CHAPTER IV
Always a thorn in the side of white Americans, Jack Johnson did not achieve the total acceptance and/or admiration of the African-American community either. Views toward Jack Johnson among African-Americans were varied. Many admired and on some level lived vicariously through him. One example of African-American folklore that developed says: “Jack Johnson went to a Jim Crow hotel and asked the desk clerk for a room. When the clerk raised and saw that the man was black he angrily responded ‘We don’t serve your kind here.’ Johnson again asked for a room and the clerk responded the same. The champion then laughed, pulled out a roll of money, and politely told the clerk, ‘Oh you misunderstand me, I don’t want it for myself, I want it for my wife – she’s your kind!’” Others feared the possibly violent consequences of publicly supporting Jack Johnson in a white dominated society. Their fears were substantiated by the riots after the Johnson–Jeffries fight and prompted many African-Americans to publicly condemn him instead.

Interest in Jack Johnson was intense. African-American educator Booker T. Washington received numerous letters regarding Jack Johnson’s behavior. One such letter asked: “If Washington could do something to change Johnson from a ‘sporting, loud, dislike-exciting nigger to a sober, sane, wise, and admirable Negro.’ . . . Accordingly, Washington’s secretary, Emmett Scott, wrote Johnson asking if he would follow Mr. Washington’s example in simplicity and humility of bearing, which will win for yourself, and win for the race a great many friends.”

Jack Johnson’s response was an adamant refusal of Booker T. Washington’s advice. Jack Johnson rejected the restrictions of racial segregation, regardless of the economic, legal, political, racial, sexual, and social repercussions. Furthermore, Jack
Johnson acted in accordance with his morality and motives rather than the morality and motives of leaders and members of the African-American community. Consequently, Booker T. Washington believed that Jack Johnson was an embarrassment to his race and only succeeded in hindering efforts to further improve the economic and social status of African-Americans within American society. Furthermore, Booker T. Washington lashed out at Jack Johnson during a speech he gave at a YMCA in Detroit, Michigan, when he said:

> It is unfortunate that a man with money should use it in a way to injure his own people in the eyes of those who are seeking to uplift his race and improve its conditions . . . . In misrepresenting the colored people of this country, this man is harming himself the least. Jack Johnson has harmed rather than helped the race. I wish to say emphatically that his actions do not meet with the approval of the colored race. Johnson, fortunate or rather unfortunate, it seems in the possession of money, is doing a grave injustice to his race . . . . Undoubtedly Johnson’s actions are repudiated by the great majority of right-thinking people of the Negro race.  

The *New York Age*, a newspaper with strong loyalties to Booker T. Washington, wrote an editorial entitled “Advice to Jack Johnson.” It asked Johnson to:

> Conduct himself in a modest manner. He can hurt the race immeasurably just now if he goes splurging and making a useless noisy exhibition of himself. We hope that he will not be arrested on any charge. Any undue exhibition on the part of Mr. Johnson will hurt every member of the race; on the other hand, becoming modesty and self-control will win him many lasting friends.  

Similar sentiments of disappointment regarding Jack Johnson’s entertainment of “the wildest of the underworld of both sexes and especially of the white race,” were expressed by anti-lynching and feminist crusader Ida B. Wells. Her concern with the effects of Jack Johnson’s behavior on America’s agitated and intolerant white population
was not unwarranted. During Jack Johnson’s reign as heavyweight champion, racially motivated violence escalated; “at least 354 blacks were lynched, eighty-nine of them accused of insulting, assaulting, or raping white women.”

After the Civil War and Reconstruction, segregation replaced slavery as the preferred form of racial subordination. However, violence remained the preferred method of enforcement. Historians, including James Oakes, author of *The Ruling Race: A History Of American Slaveholders*, and Drew Gilpin Faust, author of *Mothers Of Invention: Women Of The Slaveholding South In The American Civil War*, agree that the survival of slavery depended upon the threat of violence and the use of violence, both of which were the fundamental instruments of racial control and dominance in the antebellum South. Similarly, segregation was also dependent upon the threat of violence and the actual use of violence.

Violent acts committed against slaves were accepted, encouraged, and expected by white southern society; lenient masters were looked upon with suspicion. Faust contends that violence “in support of male honor and white supremacy was regarded as the right, even the responsibility, of each white man - within his household, on his plantation, in his community, and with the outbreak of war, for his nation.” The justification of violence, specifically lynching, remained constant and continued throughout the establishment and existence of segregation.

Ida B. Wells attacked lynching through her vivid descriptions of the arbitrariness, brutality, and cruelty of lynching; through her appeals to people’s moral sensibilities and desire for order through the courts rather than chaos in the streets; through her meticulous compilation of lynching statistics; and most importantly through her research into the
supposed causes of lynchings. Ida B. Wells discovered that in the majority of lynching cases rape was not even the actual charge, as many lynching proponents had vigorously claimed; and in the cases where rape charges were provided as the justification for lynchings, the majority of the interracial sexual encounters were either consensual or did not occur.

Ida B. Wells finally concluded that lynchings were an efficient and systematic means of racial control. Rather than a method of intimidation to keep African-American men from sexually assaulting or insulting white women, the primary purpose of the majority of lynchings was actually to prevent African-Americans from acquiring too much economic independence.\textsuperscript{167} However, despite Ida B. Wells’ best efforts to discourage such behavior, the increased frequency of lynchings combined with the dramatic increase in the popularity of boxing among middle-class men during Jack Johnson’s reign as heavyweight champion signaled the acceptance of animal, barbarous, primitive, and savage behavior as natural, popular, powerful, and profound expressions of masculinity among middle-class men.\textsuperscript{168}

Ida B. Wells’ criticism of Jack Johnson is especially interesting since his numerous relationships with white women corroborated at least one of her arguments against lynching: white women could be romantically and/or sexually attracted to African-American men and consequently did engage in consensual interracial relationships. Furthermore, Jack Johnson’s lifestyle also proved Ida B. Wells’ contention that economically independent African-American men received intensified condemnation and contempt from white Americans.
Ironically, Ida B. Wells’ discussion of rape and consensual interracial sex between white women and African-American men disturbed people almost as much as Jack Johnson’s numerous affairs with and eventual three marriages to white women. During this particular period of American history, white women were considered to be passionless as well as more civilized, ethical, and moral than men. White women were not supposed to want sex, interracial or otherwise, much less enjoy sex; and respectable women of either race were not supposed to publicly discuss sex. Such restrictions on candid discussions of sex only reinforced such societal misconceptions of women.\textsuperscript{169}

Historians, generations removed from the controversies that surrounded interracial sex and marriage at the beginning of the twentieth century, have substantiated Ida B. Wells’ claims. Interracial sexual relationships between white women and African-American men, although uncommon, did exist in all regions, North, South, East, and West before, during, and after the Civil War. However, these relationships usually occurred at tremendous risk to both individuals involved.

The pregnancies that resulted from such relationships and the corresponding births of mulatto children were difficult for white women to conceal, much less explain. Subsequently, the discovery of such relationships almost always resulted in the destruction of the white women’s reputations and/or marriages. Even if the relationships were consensual, white women’s only alternative to salvage their reputations and/or marriages was to betray their African-American lovers and claim rape. Furthermore, few options existed for the African-American men, especially within the South. The discovery of such relationships, regardless of whether or not they were consensual, usually resulted in the painful deaths of the African-American men. Consequently,
relationships between white women and African-American men were rare and usually initiated by the women.\textsuperscript{170}

Contrary to the criticisms of Booker T. Washington and Ida B. Weld, Jack Johnson was not oblivious to American race relations. Jack Johnson admits in his autobiography that his fight with Tommy Burns was void of racial significance for him; he was more concerned with acquiring the heavyweight championship title for himself rather than for the African-American community. However, his thoughts about American race relations and his role as a prominent African-American evolved during the time between his fights with Tommy Burns and Jim Jeffries. He contends that he saw his fight with Jim Jeffries as more than a championship fight; it was a fight for “my own honor, and in a degree the honor of my race.” Jim Jeffries expressed similar sentiments of racial honor when he said: “I am going into this fight for the sole purpose of proving that a white man is better than a Negro.”\textsuperscript{171}

In spite of Jack Johnson’s focus on his boxing career, Jack Johnson’s opinions on race issues were certainly not limited to his experiences in the boxing ring. In 1910, Johnson publicly criticized Booker T. Washington for his 1901 acceptance of a private dinner invitation from, the then President of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt, at the White House. Jack Johnson said it was insulting to African-Americans that Theodore Roosevelt did not invite Booker T. Washington to a public dinner with his family and political advisors and even more insulting that Booker T. Washington accepted the invitation.\textsuperscript{172}

Unfortunately, Jack Johnson and Booker T. Washington were equally guilty of their inability to see the shades of gray in what they portrayed to be a black and white
situation. Booker T. Washington’s efforts to educate and improve the economic and social status of African-Americans within the established racial confines of American society complimented Theodore Roosevelt’s previously discussed racial policy of individual competition, which may explain why Theodore Roosevelt extended and Booker T. Washington accepted the private dinner invitation at the White House.

Traditionally, African-American newspapers expressed similar scorn for Jack Johnson and his continued escapades with white women as white newspapers. The New York Age wrote: “Mr. John Arthur Johnson is in trouble again. As a black champion, he has given the Negro more trouble by his scandals than he did in twenty years as a black tramp.” The Baltimore Afro-American Ledger wrote that Jack Johnson had “proved himself anything but a credit to his race.”

The New York Age wrote: “Marriage is a question for every citizen to decide for himself . . . . We do not need to favor the marriage of blacks and whites as a personal matter, but we do need to stand by the principle that blacks and whites shall be free to marry if they so desire, without legal or sentimental restriction.” Such an opinion of the Johnson–Cameron marriage was typical of many African-American newspapers and their readers of the time. However, many African-Americans, especially African-American women, were insulted by Jack Johnson’s repeated public preference for white women and deliberately distanced themselves from Jack Johnson’s sexual escapades.

African-American women were struggling to attain an image of social respectability and sexual restraint previously denied them by the slavery, which true to southern racist form, classified degraded and demeaned female slaves into one of two extreme categories. Female slaves were either sexually alluring, attractive, captivating,
flirtatious, impulsive, promiscuous, provocative, seductive, sensual, tempting, and
voluptuous Jezebels or capable, compassionate, courageous, devoted, dignified, loyal,
nurturing, pious, resourceful, respected, strong, tough, ugly, virtuous, and wise
Mammies. Unfortunately, the stereotypical images of African-American women
established during slavery retained their power fifty years after emancipation.

The records, reports, and statistics compiled by the Chicago Committee of Fifteen
and the New York City Committee of Fourteen vice investigative units consistently
concluded that more African-American women than white women were arrested,
convicted, and imprisoned for prostitution; and more African-American women than
white women were streetwalkers, arguably the most dangerous and least lucrative form of
prostitution. Consequently, African-American prostitutes were portrayed as physically
aggressive and sexually assertive.

Furthermore, black was not beautiful in late nineteenth-century and early
twentieth-century prostitution. As previously discussed, white prostitutes were more
desirable and therefore more expensive than African-American prostitutes among white
patrons and African-American patrons. However, exceptions existed among African-
American prostitutes; increasingly fairer skin tone variations from black to brown to
yellow accounted for more expensive rates among African-American prostitutes and their
white patrons and African-American patrons.

In addition to their feelings of betrayal and/or rejection by a member of their own
race, African-American women were also betrayed and/or rejected by members of their
own sex. Segments of white northern and southern women deliberately distanced
themselves from African-American men and women in an attempt to obtain the right to
vote. These women asserted that race rather than gender was the determinant factor in the creation and advancement of civilization; and in a calculated attempt to further feminist/suffragist goals and emphasize the importance of racial differences rather than gender differences, allied themselves with white men rather than with African-American women who were struggling to obtain the right to vote as well. Such an alliance served to strengthen the doctrine of white supremacy rather than weaken the doctrine of male supremacy in any significant manner. African-American women were sacrificed out of political necessity and left to suffer the consequences of both the doctrine of white supremacy and the doctrine of male superiority on their own.178
CONCLUSION
Jack Johnson’s exploits were exaggerated and frequently fabricated by the police, the politicians, the press, and the public. However, Jack Johnson’s arrogant attitude and uninhibited personal behavior and unrepentant professional behavior could be neither denied nor disputed. Consequently, Jack Johnson’s legacy to the African-American community was increased and intensified isolation rather than integration. Unfortunately, Jack Johnson’s legacy extended twenty-two years beyond his seven-year reign, from 1908 to 1915, as the first African-American heavyweight champion until Joe Louis’s eleven-year reign, from 1937 to 1948, as the second African-American heavyweight champion.

Jack Johnson and Joe Louis possessed similar size, skill, speed, stamina, strength, and talent, which was neither denied nor disputed. However, Joe Louis’s opportunity to contend for the heavyweight championship and his heavyweight championship career depended upon presentation as well as talent. Consequently, Joe Louis’s managers, promoters, and trainers created and cultivated an image of personal and professional dignity, discretion, humility, integrity, modesty, and respectability, which prevented further personal and/or professional comparisons with Jack Johnson. Consequently, Joe Louis’s "clean, quiet, sportsmanlike" image provided protection from the preliminary prejudices of the police, the politicians, the press, and the public.

Joe Louis neither privately nor publicly engaged in romantic and/or sexual relationships with white women; and therefore avoided the appearance of racial or sexual impropriety with his dignity and discretion. Similarly, Joe Louis preferred that his managers, promoters, and trainers speak for him rather than speak for himself during pre-fight interviews, post-fight interviews, and press conferences; and therefore appealed
apprehensive audiences with his humility and modesty. Furthermore, Joe Louis protected the competitive integrity of the heavyweight championship. Unlike Jack Johnson, Joe Louis consistently defended the heavyweight championship title an incomparable and incredible twenty-five times. Consequently, Joe Louis’s opponents were collectively recognized as "The Bum Of The Month Club."^181

The racial and social implications of Joe Louis’s personal and professional behavior as heavyweight champion were powerful and profound. Joe Louis achieved acceptance and admiration among Americans of all ages, classes, cultures, races, regions, religions, and sexes; and therefore inspired African-American athletes such as hall-of-fame baseball player, Jackie Robinson, and future heavyweight champions, Floyd Patterson, Sonny Liston, Muhammad Ali, and Joe Frazier.

Unfortunately, the acceptance and admiration Joe Louis achieved among Americans of all ages, classes, cultures, races, regions, religions, and sexes diminished and/or distorted Jack Johnson’s importance and influence within the athletic community and the African-American community. Fortunately, Jack Johnson finally received recognition and respect from the athletic community for his tremendous skill, speed, stamina, strength, and talent. In 1954, eight years after his death, Jack Johnson was inducted into the Boxing Hall of Fame as a charter member.

However, Jack Johnson continues to concern the African-American community. In retrospect, Jack Johnson was ambitious, arrogant, attractive, audacious, bold, calculating, capable, complex, competent, competitive, confident, conspicuous, controversial, courageous, dedicated, defiant, deliberate, determined, diligent, exploitative, independent, intelligent, manipulative, naïve, obnoxious, offensive,
opportunistic, pompous, proud, provocative, tragic, triumphant, uninhibited, and unrepentant. However, Jack Johnson was neither a victim nor a villain. In an era of cultural, economic, legal, political, racial, religious, sexual, and social conflicts, conformity, confusion, constraints, and contradictions, Jack Johnson was an individual, whom the African-American community should recognize and respect without reservation.
ENDNOTES


BIBLIOGRAPHY


