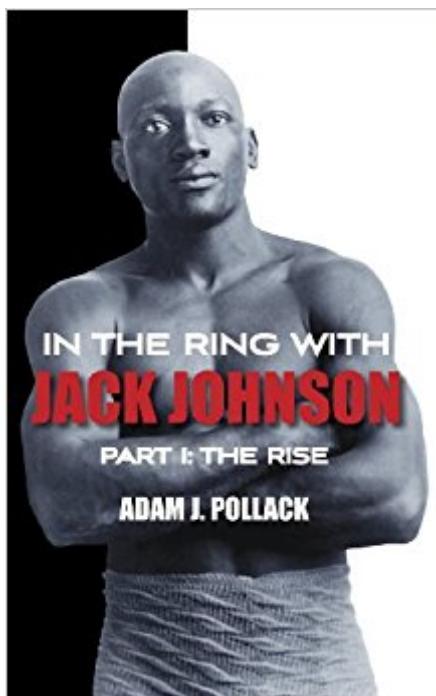


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# In The Ring With Jack Johnson - Part I: The Rise



## Synopsis

At 710 pages, *In the Ring With Jack Johnson - Part I: The Rise* is the most detailed and thorough book ever written on Jack Johnson. This book alone (the first of two on Johnson) covers the start of Jack Johnson's career up to his winning the world heavyweight championship. It is chock-full of detailed descriptions of each bout from multiple local next-day primary sources. The book also contains plenty of context and background, details and perspectives about race from both white and black-owned newspapers, as well as approximately 225 rare photographs, cartoons, and advertisements. Boxing fans will obtain knowledge and insight into Jack Johnson's career like never before. This is the seventh book in Adam J. Pollack's series on the heavyweight champions of the gloved era, which include: *John L. Sullivan: The Career of the First Gloved Heavyweight Champion*, *In the Ring With James J. Corbett*, *In the Ring With Bob Fitzsimmons*, *In the Ring With James J. Jeffries*, *In the Ring With Marvin Hart*, and *In the Ring With Tommy Burns*. Adam J. Pollack is a boxing judge, referee, and coach, and member of the Boxing Writers Association of America. He is also an attorney practicing law in Iowa City, Iowa.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

As expected, Adam Pollack has delivered a boxing tome as effective and as accurate as a Johnson uppercut. First, look at the cover.. half black and half white with Johnson standing on the color line with arms folded. Very compelling.What I find most fascinating about this book is that Pollack intersperses various news accounts of lynching, riots, racial disharmony and prejudice in-between

accounts of Johnson's bouts. This allows the reader to have a sense of what the world was like during Johnson's time as a boxer. Pollack also analyzes each bout. He provides various and sometimes conflicting views that were published at the time of the fights and after the fights concluded. Johnson often had to decide whether it was better to fight cautiously and win on points versus dominating a fight and perhaps scaring off contenders for future bouts. It also becomes apparent that Johnson improved steadily from early in his career until he reached his prime. He aged like a fine wine. This book is a must have for your personal library. As I read it, I felt transported back to those times, to a world so different from our own. No 24 hour sports channels, no cell phone, YouTube or even radio. You were either at the bout or you read about it. Thank you Mr. Pollack for another great book and I am looking forward to the next edition.

An excellent work--the best boxing book I have read in many years. Adam's approach has always been good, but Johnson has always been such an enigma that his style in this case, works remarkably well for fleshing out the bull. I have read every book ever written on Johnson (even involved in the Unforgivable Blackness project), watched every documentary, read hundreds of fight reports and newspaper stories on him and I can honestly say that this book has given me a new appreciation for the man. And for the first time I feel like I have true grip on his fighting career and just how good this guy was--not to mention the enormous courage and self confidence he had. Again, this is not a re-hash of everything you have already read on Johnson--it is a fresh, inspired effort that deals in facts and facts alone. Great job Adam. I personally thank you for this volume and state emphatically that it is a must have addition to any boxing fan, or historian's, library.

Awesome book!

This book gives so much insight on not just the champ, but the times in which the champ lived in. Overall, a great read.

Fascinating historical treatment of Johnson's early life and career.

'In the Ring with Jack Johnson Part I: the Rise' is the seventh entry in an outstanding series of books by Adam Pollack, each focusing upon the boxing career of a heavyweight champion -- Pollack's previous books have had, as their subjects, John L. Sullivan, Jim Corbett, Bob Fitzsimmons, James J. Jeffries, Marvin Hart, and Tommy Burns. All these boxing biographies are

exhaustively researched, relying primarily on first hand accounts when reporting the boxers contests; Pollack also does a good job of digging up photographs and illustrations contemporaneous with his subjects. The previous entrees have covered the boxers careers from begining up to the point they lost -- or, in Jeffries case, relinquished -- their heavyweight titles. (Pollack does try to cover historically post-championship bouts of his subjects in subsequent books of the series). 'In the Ring with Jack Johnson Part I' -- due no doubt to the mass of information Pollack has uncovered -- departs from this structure slightly, covering Johnsons career from start to the immediate aftermath of his winning the title from Tommy Burns. Even so, the book runs to over 700 pages. (Needless to say, I eagerly await the release of 'In the Ring with Jack Johnson Part 2: the Reign'). Pollack's books are boxing biographies. Their particular focus is the boxing contests, with a great deal of coverage as well given to match-making and the boxers preparations. Pollack also (in all of his books) gives coverage to social and legal factors influencing (often heavily) the boxers careers. Pollack is an ideal writer on the subject of the legalities of boxing, as he is a professional lawyer who is also significantly involved with organized boxing. Pollack is also knowledgeable regarding the social and -- particularly, but not exclusively, relevant to his 'Johnson' entrees -- racial attitudes of the time, both internationally, nationally to the United States, regionally within the USA, and also within the broad sporting community (boxers, trainers and managers, promoters, and journalists). As a boxer, Jack Johnson was, and to some extent remains, an enigmatic figure. It's a generalization to say that he tended to be safety first, and sometimes seemed to do just about enough to win and to discourage his opponents from getting frisky; but there was sometimes justice in this view. He didn't always perform in a crowd pleasing manner, sometimes didn't seem to be exerting himself, and also was a fellow who was very difficult to look good against -- that last sometimes being interpreted to Johnson's disadvantage (i.e., people thought Johnson won because the other boxer was undistinguished, rather than holding that Johnson was so good he made other fighters look ineffectual). It was hard to gauge Johnson: once he'd matured as a fighter he rarely if ever seemed pressed to his limits, so it was hard to say just what those limits were. Granted that Johnson had a manner of fighting which tended to shroud his exact abilities, Pollack gives us as much information as to Johnson's (and his opponents) performances as we're liable to have at this time, and is sometimes as probing regarding Johnson's journalistic exponents and naysayers as he is regarding the fighters themselves. [It seems to me that, around 1907, Johnson began to fight in a way that was more active yet still defensively secure. Notable white contenders, such as Al Kaufmann and Bill Squires, who might have done much to build (Kaufmann) or restore (Squires) a reputation by besting Johnson, were conspicuously averse

to any talk of meeting Jack. Sports media began to relent a bit from talk of Johnson having a yellow streak. The book ends with Johnson's preeminence among contemporary heavyweights generally acknowledged, those having viewed his controlled, secure and steady dismantling of champion Tommy Burns having difficulty imagining any active boxer wresting the title from Johnson].

Mr. Pollack does an outstanding job on this deeply researched volume on the early career years of heavyweight legend Jack Johnson. For those familiar with the author's previous works , you can expect the now customary top of the line job and then some. For those who have not as of yet sampled any of Mr. Pollack's work , you are in for a treat. There is not a more detailed, interesting portrait of a prizefighter and historical figure than Pollack's Johnson. AS with all his work, this is highly recommended for sports fans of all kinds.

Pollack's latest book is worth its weight. As a historian, he errs on the side of thorough, covering Johnson's career in great detail. The book offers multiple perspectives--white, black, American, and international--and through all of these, the reader really gets an authentic look at his life and times. Pollack definitely gets that two people can watch the same fight and walk away with entirely different conclusions. 'In the Ring with Jack Johnson' offers a glimpse into an athlete's psyche--fears, motivations, strengths and weakness--and not just Jack's but also all the guys fighting him. Race, money, fights, controversy...this book has all of it.

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