



Smithsonian
National Museum of American History
Kenneth E. Behring Center

Guide to the Julian Black Scrapbooks of Joe Louis

NMAH.AC.0002

Robert Harding

1987

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	Julian Black Scrapbooks of Joe Louis
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.0002
Date:	1935-1944
Extent:	109 Volumes
Creator:	Black, Julian, Mrs. Black, Julian (boxing manager)
Language:	English
Summary:	The collection consists of 109 scrapbooks of newspaper clippings assembled by Julian Black, manager of Joe Louis, heavyweight boxing champion from 1937 to 1949. They document Louis's career from 1935 to 1944.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

This collection was donated by Mrs. Julian Black in two installments to the Division of Community Life (now the Division of Home and Community Life), National Museum of American History: twenty-two volumes in 1976 and eighty-seven volumes in 1977.

Provenance

The collection was transferred from the Division of Home and Community Life to the Archives Center on January 28, 1983.

Available Formats

Microfiche editions of the scrapbooks was published by Chadwyck-Healey, Inc. Two sets of microfiche are available in the Archives Center and one set is available through the Smithsonian Institution Libraries, American History branch. Two reels of microfilm for volume 2 (Joe Louis vs. Primo Carnera, 1935) and volume 19 (Joe Louis vs. Max Schmeling, 1936) are available in the Archives Center.

Processing Information

The collection was processed by Robert Harding, archivist, 1987. Some of the scrapbooks are water damaged. A representative sample of undamaged volumes were retained in their original condition.

Preferred Citation

Julian Black Scrapbooks of Joe Louis, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution

Restrictions

The collection is open for research. Use of microfiche and microfilm recommended. Some original volumes are fragile.

Conditions Governing Use

Collection items available for reproduction, but the Archives Center makes no guarantees concerning copyright restrictions. Other intellectual property rights may apply. Archives Center cost-recovery and use fees may apply when requesting reproductions.

Biographical

Joe Louis Barrow, the seventh child of Monroe and Lily Barrow, was born May 13, 1914 in a cabin in the cotton fields of Lexington, Alabama. While Joe was still a young boy, his father suffered a mental breakdown and later died in the Searcy State Hospital near mobile, Alabama. His mother later married Pat Brooks, a widower with many children of his own, and the combined family moved to Detroit when Joe was ten.

After an introduction to boxing and lessons by his friend Thurston McKinney, Joe tried his luck at competition. The Brewster East Side Gymnasium became a second home for him. At sixteen he entered his first amateur tournament.

Joe Louis was an outstanding amateur. He lost only four decisions in fifty-four fights, and forty-one of his wins were by a knockout. Joe fought his last amateur fight on April 13, 1934, in St. Louis.

John Roxborough had encouraged Louis as an amateur and became his manager when Joe turned pro. Roxborough hired Jack Blackburn, a boxer himself, to coach and train the young Joe Louis. At this time Roxborough also teamed up with Julian Black of Chicago in a business venture that carried over into the management of Joe Louis.

Joe's professional debut took place in Bacon's Arena in Chicago on July 4, 1934. He decisively defeated Jack Kracken for a fifty-dollar purse. Only four of his first twenty-seven foes lasted all fifteen rounds.

As Joe Louis worked his way up the ladder as a contender for the heavyweight championship he acquired the nickname the "Brown Bomber." On May 14, 1935, one day after his twenty-first birthday, the young pugilist signed a ten-year contract with Julian Black. The contract stipulated that fifty percent of Joe Louis's gross earnings from boxing contests, exhibitions, movies, and radio would go to Julian Black. Jack Blackburn, the trainer, was paid from Joe's portion of the money. John Roxborough, the other manager, claimed "to have a contract for twenty-five percent of Louis's gross earnings for an indefinite period."

The newly organized 20th Century Sporting Club, with Mike Jacobs as promoter, operated in competition with Madison Square Garden. The club signed the promising young boxer to an exclusive contract. Joe's first appearance in a New York ring took place at Yankee Stadium on June 25, 1935, against Primo Carnera. Joe KO'd Carnera in the sixth round. On September 24, 1935, also at Yankee Stadium, Joe knocked out Max Baer in the fourth round.

After winning twenty-seven straight fights, including twenty-three KO's, Louis was the heir apparent to James J. Braddock's heavyweight title. On June 19, 1936 he battled Max Schmeling, the former champ who was considered washed up. Schmeling surprised everyone by punishing and then finishing Louis off with a twelfth-round knockout.

A year later, in his thirty-sixth professional fight, Joe Louis won the heavyweight crown at twenty three years of age by defeating Jim Braddock in Chicago in eight rounds. Braddock fought Louis to avoid a fight with Max Schmeling and the possible loss of the title to a German. Braddock, however, insisted on a percentage of Louis's future purses. It is generally believed he received ten percent of all Joe's earnings over a period of fifteen years.

After defeating two easy opponents, Louis met Max Schmeling in a dramatic rematch on June 22, 1938. Like Jesse Owens in the Berlin Olympic Games, Louis symbolized American democracy versus an increasingly menacing Nazi Germany. The irony of a black hero representing a racially segregated society in a symbolic battle between freedom and oppression was not lost on all Americans and, although Louis himself was not a political activist, his example added fuel to the movement for racial equality and civil rights. Louis defeated Schmeling in two minutes and four seconds of the first round.

In the following years promoter Jacobs searched for opponents for Louis. After defeating five former champions - Carnera, Baer, Sharkey, Braddock, and Schmeling-the pickings were slim. On January 25, 1939, Joe "squared-off" with the first Black to fight him professionally -- John Henry Lewis (great-great nephew of Tom Molineaux, the first of America's Black heavyweight champions). Lewis was the light-heavyweight champion of the world and a natural 175 "pounder." He and Joe were close personal friends outside of the ring. Nevertheless, Joe totally outclassed Lewis in the ring.

Joe Louis defended his title twenty times before World War II interrupted his career. He was eventually classified 1-A and inducted into the Army. During the winter of 1941-1942 he staged bouts for the Navy and Army. The service relief fund received \$75,000 from the purse of each fight. While in the service the Brown Bomber traveled extensively, giving boxing exhibitions and refereeing bouts. For his service on behalf of the armed forces, he received a citation from the United States government.

Louis retired an undefeated champion March 1, 1949. He came out of retirement and lost a fifteen-round decision to Ezzard Charles on September 27, 1950 at Yankee Stadium. He won eight more fights from the end of 1950 until the fall of 1951. However, on October 26, 1951, Louis lost by a knockout in the eighth round to Rocky Marciano. He retired for good after this comeback attempt. For many years after he retired, Joe had income tax problems and other financial problems. He also underwent a brief stay in a Denver psychiatric hospital. Joe Louis died in 1981. [Click here to go to scope and content note.](#)

Scope and Contents

The collection consists of 109 scrapbooks of newspaper clippings assembled by Julian Black, manager of Joe Louis, heavyweight boxing champion from 1937 to 1949. They document Louis's career from 1935 to 1944. Louis became one of America's most celebrated sports figures both for his extraordinary boxing skills and for his role as a symbol of national pride, especially in his bouts with the German champion Max Schmeling. His national respect and international prominence stood in ironic contrast to the nation's legal and social practices of racial segregation.

Joe Louis's manager, Julian Black, assembled three sets of scrapbooks to document Louis's career. This collection consists of ninety-two volumes from Black's set, sixteen volumes from a similar but not identical set of scrapbooks assembled for Louis, and one oversize miscellaneous volume.

The third set of scrapbooks belonged to John W. Roxborough, Joe's manager or co-manager from 1933 to 1948. It is held by the Bentley Historical Library at the University of Michigan. This set contains ninety-

four volumes covering the period 1935 to November 1941. Part of this collection has been microfilmed. Although the numbering of the volumes in each of the three sets is different it appears that each set has the same information.

The scrapbooks contain newspaper clippings from throughout the United States and Canada from 1935 to 1944 and articles from *Ring* magazine. This collection documents Joe Louis's fights from June 25, 1935, through 1944, including championship fights from June 22, 1937, through September 29, 1941. (The Steve Ketchel fight on January 11, 1937, in Buffalo is not represented. See the scrapbook volume listing at the end of this guide.)

The scrapbooks were assembled with great care using high-quality binding and paper. The clippings are neatly mounted and show great attention to detail. All clippings are identified by the name of the paper; the day of the week and the date; and the author, artist, or photographer. Clippings include full-length articles and brief sketches, cartoons, photographs, and records and statistics of the boxers. The clippings are grouped in volumes by each of Louis's fights and then arranged chronologically.

Hundreds of major and minor newspapers throughout the United States and Canada are represented in the scrapbooks. Coverage extends from very large metropolitan dailies to small-town newspapers. Among the newspapers represented are titles as diverse as: *Akron Beacon Journal*; *Daily Colonist*, Victoria, British Columbia; *Shreveport Times*; *Tribune Tulsa*; and the *Worcester Daily Telegraph*.

While these scrapbooks are about the Joe Louis fights, there is a wealth of material on many other people connected with boxing in this period, including all of Joe Louis's opponents, his trainer, his managers, his promoter Mike Jacobs, and most of the sports reporters and writers of the time. Anyone of any importance connected with boxing during this period can be found in the pages of these volumes. There are also retrospective articles on earlier boxers and historical fights.

The two sets of scrapbooks in this collection are numbered separately: the Julian Black Scrapbooks, Volumes 1-92; and the Joe Louis Scrapbooks, Volumes 17-20, 52-58, 61-63, and 71 and 72. Although much of the same material is found in both sets, there are sufficient differences in content and in physical condition of the volumes. The container list indicates the relationship between the two sets. The 109th volume consists of an oversize miscellaneous scrapbook of random news clippings, 1941-1944, of later Louis matches.

Arrangement

The collection is divided into two series. Clippings arranged chronologically in scrapbooks, grouped in volumes.

Series 1: Julian Black Volumes, 1935-1941

Series 2: Joe Louis Volumes, 1936-1940

Bibliography

Chalk, Ocania. *Pioneers of Black Sport*. New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1975.

Davis, Lenwood G. *Joe Louis: A Bibliography of Articles, Books, Pamphlets, Records, and Archival Materials*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1983.

Fleischer, Nat. *The Heavyweight Championship, An Informal History Of Heavyweight Boxing From 1719 to the Present*. New York: Putnam, 1961.

Gipe, George. *The Great American Sport Book, A Casual But Voluminous Look At American Spectator Sports From The Civil War To The Present Time*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1978.

Joe Louis Heavyweight Championship Fights, 1937-1950

1937 June 22	Joe Louis knocked out James J. Braddock, 8 rounds, Chicago.
1937 August 30	Joe Louis defeated TOUT Farr, 15 rounds, decision, New York City.
1937 August 30	Joe Louis defeated TOUT Farr, 15 rounds, decision, New York City.
1938 February 23	Joe Louis knocked Out Nathan Mann, 3 rounds, New York City.
1938 April 1	Joe Louis knocked out Harry Thomas, 5 rounds, New York city.
1938 June 22	Joe Louis knocked out Max Schmeling, one round,, New York City.
1939 January 25	Joe Louis knocked out John H. Lewis, one round, New York City.
1939 April 17	Joe Louis knocked out Jack Roper, one round, Los Angeles.
1939 June 28	Joe Louis knocked out Tony Galento, 4 rounds, New York city.
1939 September 30	Joe Louis knocked out Bob Pastor, 11 rounds, Detroit, Michigan.
1940 February 9	Joe Louis defeated Arturo Godoy, 15 rounds,decision, New York City.
1940 March 29	Joe Louis knocked out John Paychek, 2 rounds, New York city.
1940 June 20	Joe Louis knocked out Arturo Godoy, 8 rounds, New York city.
1940 December 16	Joe Louis knocked out Al McCoy, 6 rounds, Boston.
1941 January 31	Joe Louis knocked Out Red Burman, 5 rounds, New York city.
1941 February 17	Joe Louis knocked out Gus Dorazio, 2 rounds, Philadelphia.
1941 March 21	Joe Louis knocked out Abe Simon, 13 rounds, Detroit, Michigan.
1941 April 8	Joe Louis knocked out Tony musto, 9 rounds, St. Louis, Missouri.
1941 May 23	Joe Louis beat Buddy Baer, 7 rounds, Washington, D.C., on a disqualification.
1941 June 18	Joe Louis knocked out Billy Conn, 13 rounds, New York city.
1941 September 29	Joe Louis knocked out Lou Nova, 6 rounds, New York city.
1942 January 9	Joe Louis knocked out Buddy Baer, one round,, New York City.
1942 March 27	Joe Louis knocked out Abe Simon, 6 rounds, New York city.
1946 June 19	Joe Louis knocked out Billy Conn, 8 rounds, New York city.
1946 September 13	Joe Louis knocked out Tami Mauriello, one round, New York City.
1947 December 5	Joe Louis defeated Joe Walcott in a 15-round bout by a split decision, New York city.
1948 June 25	Joe Louis knocked out Joe Walcott 11 rounds, New York city.
1950 September 27	Ezzard Charles defeated Joe Louis in latter's attempted comeback, 15 rounds, New York City.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

African American athletes
Boxers (Sports) -- 1930-1950
Boxing
Sports -- 1930-1950

Types of Materials:

Clippings -- 1930-1950
Scrapbooks -- 20th century

Names:

Jacobs, Mike
Louis, Joe, 1914-1981
Roxborough, John

Container Listing

Series 1: Julian Black Volumes, 1935-1941

Volume 1	Joe Louis vs. Primo Carnera, 1935
Volume 2	Joe Louis vs. Primo Carnera, 1935
Volume 3	Joe Louis vs. Levinsky, 1935
Volume 4	Joe Louis vs. Primo Carnera, 1935
Volume 5	Joe Louis vs. Max Baer, 1935
Volume 6	Joe Louis vs. Max Baer, 1935
Volume 7	Joe Louis vs. Max Baer, 1935
Volume 8	Joe Louis vs. Max Baer, 1935
Volume 9	Joe Louis vs. Paulino Uzcudun, 1935
Volume 10	Joe Louis vs. Paulino Uzcudun, 1935
Volume 11	Joe Louis vs. Paulino Uzcudun, 1935
Volume 12	Joe Louis vs. Paulino Uzcudun, 1935
Volume 13	Joe Louis vs. Charles Retzlaff, 1936
Volume 14	Joe Louis vs. Charles Retzlaff, 1936
Volume 15	Joe Louis vs. Charles Retzlaff, 1936
Volume 16	Joe Louis vs. Max Schmeling, 1936
Volume 17	Joe Louis vs. Max Schmeling, 1936
Volume 18	Joe Louis vs. Max Schmeling, 1936
Volume 19	Joe Louis vs. Max Schmeling, 1936
Volume 20	Joe Louis vs. Max Schmeling, 1936
Volume 21	Joe Louis vs. Max Schmeling, 1936
Volume 22	Joe Louis vs. Max Schmeling, 1936
Volume 23	Joe Louis vs. Max Schmeling, 1936

Volume 24	Joe Louis vs. Jack Sharkey, 1936
Volume 25	Joe Louis vs. Jack Sharkey, 1936
Volume 26	Joe Louis vs. Al Ettore, 1936
Volume 27	Joe Louis vs. Jorge Brescia, 1936
Volume 28	Joe Louis vs. Eddie Simms, 1936
Volume 29	Joe Louis vs. Bob Pastor, 1937
Volume 30	Joe Louis vs. Natie Brown, 1937
Volume 31	Joe Louis vs. James J. Braddock, 1937
Volume 32	Joe Louis vs. James J. Braddock, 1937
Volume 33	Joe Louis vs. James J. Braddock, 1937
Volume 34	Joe Louis vs. Jams J. Braddock, 1937
Volume 35	Joe Louis vs. James J. Braddock, 1937
Volume 36	Joe Louis vs. James J. Braddock, 1937
Volume 37	Joe Louis vs. James J. Braddock, 1937
Box 38	Joe Louis vs. James J. Braddock, 1937
Volume 39	Joe Louis vs. James J. Braddock, 1937
Volume 40	Joe Louis vs. James J. Braddock, 1937
Volume 41	Joe Louis vs. Tommy Farr, 1937
Volume 42	Joe Louis vs. Tommy Farr, 1937
Volume 43	Joe Louis vs. Tommy Farr, 1937
Volume 44	Joe Louis vs. Tommy Farr, 1937
Volume 45	Joe Louis vs. Tommy Farr, 1937
Volume 46	Joe Louis vs. Tommy Farr, 1937
Volume 47	Joe Louis vs. Nathan Mann, 1938
Volume 48	Joe Louis vs. Harry Thomas, 1938
Volume 49	Joe Louis vs. Max Schmeling, 1938

Volume 50	Joe Louis vs. Max Schmeling, 1938
Volume 51	Joe Louis vs. Max Schmeling, 1938
Volume 52	Joe Louis vs. Max Schmeling, 1938
Volume 53	Joe Louis vs. Max Schmeling, 1938
Volume 54	Joe Louis vs. Max Schmeling, 1938
Volume 55	Joe Louis vs. Max Schmeling, 1938
Volume 56	Joe Louis vs. Max Schmeling, 1938
Volume 57	Joe Louis vs. John Henry Lewis, 1938
Volume 58	Joe Louis vs. John Henry Lewis, 1939
Volume 59	Joe Louis vs. John Henry Lewis, 1939
Volume 60	Joe Louis vs. John Henry Lewis, 1939
Volume 61	Joe Louis vs. Jack Roper, 1939
Volume 62	Joe Louis vs. Jack Roper, 1939
Volume 63	Joe Louis vs. Tony Galento, 1939
Volume 64	Joe Louis vs. Tony Galento, 1939
Volume 65	Joe Louis vs. Tony Galento, 1939
Volume 66	Joe Louis vs. Tony Galento, 1939
Volume 67	Joe Louis vs. Tony Galento, 1939
Volume 68	Joe Louis vs. Bob Pastor, 1939
Volume 69	Joe Louis vs. Bob Pastor, 1939
Volume 70	Joe Louis vs. Arturo Godoy, 1940
Volume 71	Joe Louis vs. Arturo Godoy, 1940
Volume 72	Joe Louis vs. Arturo Godoy, 1940
Volume 73	Joe Louis vs. Johnny Paychek, 1940
Volume 74	Joe Louis vs. Johnny Paychek, 1940
Volume 75	Joe Louis vs. Arturo Godoy, 1940

Volume 76 Joe Louis vs. Arturo Godoy, 1940
 Volume 77 Joe Louis vs. Arturo Godoy, 1940
 Volume 78 Joe Louis vs. Arturo Godoy, 1940
 Volume 79 Joe Louis vs. Arturo Godoy, 1940
 Volume 80 Joe Louis vs. Al McCoy, 1940
 Volume 81 Joe Louis vs. Al McCoy, 1940
 Volume 82 Joe Louis vs. Red Burman, 1941
 Volume 83 Joe Louis vs. Gus Dorazio, 1941

[Image\(s\)](#)

Louis Fights Dorazio Here Tonight in 14th Title Defense [newspaper article], 1941

1 Item (mounted; 13.6"x11.6")

[Image\(s\): Louis Fights Dorazio Here Tonight in 14th Title Defense \[newspaper article\].](#)

Evening Bulletin (Philadelphia, Pa.), Publisher

Newspaper article from Evening Bulletin - Philadelphia, 17 February 1941, on page from scrapbook 83; photos of Gus Dorazio and Joe Louis.

Vol. 83, page 27.

Ink on paper.

Local Numbers

AC0002-0000003.tif (AC Scan No.)

Names: Louis, Joe, 1914-1981

Topic: Boxing

Genre/ Clippings -- 1930-1950

Form: Newspapers -- 1940-1950

Photographs -- 1940-1950 -- Reproductions

Culture: African Americans

Volume 84 Joe Louis vs. Abe Simon, 1941

[Image\(s\)](#)

Louis Stops Simon but in 13 Rounds [newspaper article], 1941

1 Item (mounted; 13.6"x11.6")

[Image\(s\): Louis Stops Simon but in 13 Rounds \[newspaper article\].](#)

The Honolulu Advertiser, Publisher

Newspaper article from The Honolulu Advertiser, 22 March 1941; includes photograph of Joe Louis.

Vol. 84, page 78.

Ink on paper.

Local Numbers

AC0002-0000002.tif (AC Scan No.)

Names: Louis, Joe, 1914-1981
 Topic: Boxing
 Place: Hawaii
 Honolulu (Hawaii)
 Genre/
 Form: Clippings -- 1930-1950
 Newspapers -- 1940-1950
 Photographs -- 1940-1950 -- Reproductions
 Culture: African Americans

Volume 85 Joe Louis vs. Tony Musto, 1941

Volume 86 Joe Louis vs. Buddy Baer, 1941

Volume 87 Joe Louis vs. Buddy Baer, 1941

Volume 88 Joe Louis vs. Billy Conn, 1941

[Image\(s\)](#)

Odds Swing Heavily to Brown Bomber [newspaper article], 1941
1 Item (mounted; 13.1"x10.7")

[Image\(s\): Odds Swing Heavily to Brown Bomber \[newspaper article\].](#)

Evening bulletin (Providence, R.I.), Publisher

Newspaper article from Evening Bulletin, Providence, Rhode Island, 18 June 1941; cartoon of Billy Conn and Joe Louis by Lanning, article by Lawton Carver.

Vol. ?, page ?.

Ink on paper.

Local Numbers

AC0002-0000004.tif (AC Scan No.)

Names: Louis, Joe, 1914-1981
 Topic: Boxing
 Culture: African Americans

Volume 89 Joe Louis vs. Billy Com, 1941

Volume 90 Joe Louis vs. Lou Nova, 1941

Volume 91 Joe Louis vs. Lou Nova, 1941

Volume 92

Joe Louis vs. Lou Nova, 1941

Miscellaneous volume (oversize), 1941-1944

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Series 2: Joe Louis Volumes, 1936-1940

Volume 18	Joe Louis vs. Jorge Bresci, 1936
Volume 18	Joe Louis vs. Eddie Simms, 1936
Volume 19	Joe Louis vs. Bob Pastor, 1937
Volume 20	Joe Louis vs. Natie Brown, 1937
Volume 52	Joe Louis vs. Jack Roper, 1939
Volume 53	Joe Louis vs. Jack Roper, 1939

[Image\(s\)](#)

Will Roper Share Same Fate As Other Heavy Title Contenders? [newspaper article], 1939

1 Item (mounted; 13.7"x11.9")

[Image\(s\): Will Roper Share Same Fate As Other Heavy Title Contenders? \[newspaper article\].](#)

San Francisco Call Bulletin, Publisher

Newspaper article from San Francisco Call Bulletin, 17 April 1939, on page from scrapbook volume 18; photos of Jack Roper, Nathan Mann, Jim Braddock, Tommy Farr, Harry Thomas, John Henry Lewis, and Joe Louis.

Vol. 18, page 18.

Ink on paper.

Local Numbers

AC0002-0000001.tif (AC Scan No.)

Names: Louis, Joe, 1914-1981

Topic: Boxing

Genre/ Clippings -- 1840-1940

Form: Newspapers

Photographs -- 1930-1940 -- Reproductions

Culture: African Americans

Volume 54	Joe Louis vs. Tony Galento, 1939
Volume 55	Joe Louis vs. Tony Galento, 1939
Volume 56	Joe Louis vs. Tony Galento, 1939
Volume 57	Joe Louis vs. Tony Galento, 1939
Volume 58	Joe Louis vs. Tony Galento, 1939
Volume 61	Joe Louis vs. Arturo Godoy, 1940

Volume 62	Joe Louis vs. Arturo Godoy, 1940
Volume 63	Joe Louis vs. Arturo Godoy, 1940
Volume 71	Joe Louis vs. Al McCoy, 1940
	Joe Louis vs. Al McCoy, 1940

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