

ABINGTON, 1919
BOOK 1330, PAGE 339-340
JOHN L. SULLIVAN
“The Boston Strong Boy”

FIRST MODERN HEAVYWEIGHT BOXING CHAMPION
OF THE WORLD

John Lawrence Sullivan, also known as “The Boston Strong Boy”, was the first modern Heavyweight Boxing Champion of the World, holding the title from February 2, 1882 to September 7, 1892. Born in 1858 to Irish immigrant parents in Roxbury, Sullivan is notable for holding titles under both the modern “Marquess of Queensbury Rules” and the bare-knuckle “London Prize Ring Rules.” Sullivan’s seventy-five round win over Jake Kilrain in 1889 would be the last significant bare-knuckle bout in boxing. Although boxing historians disagree as to the exact number of matches Sullivan won - between 35 and 38 - it is accepted that his only loss came at the hands of “Gentleman Jim” Corbett in 1892. After the loss to Corbett, Sullivan would never fight again. He retired to a 60 acre farm at 704 Hancock Street, in Abington, which he inherited from his wife, the former Catherine B. Harkins. Sullivan would live there until his death in 1918.

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