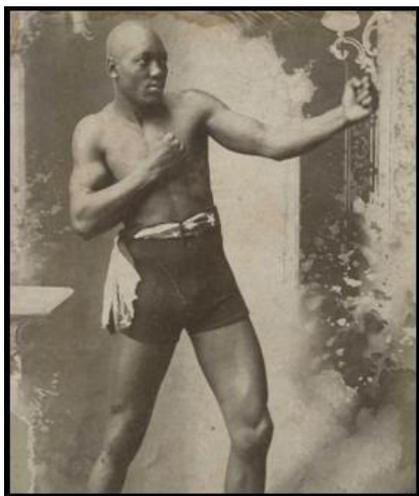


Jack Johnson



In April 2009, Rosenberg Library received a collection of photographs of the famous boxer, Jack Johnson, taken by noted Galveston photographer Henry Hyams Morris. The collection is a gift from Morris' great-granddaughter, Deana Snow.

United States Senator John McCain made headlines when he expressed his wish to obtain a Presidential pardon on behalf of Jack Johnson, one of the all-time boxing greats. Johnson, a son of Galveston, was the first African American to win the world heavyweight boxing championship.

Born John Arthur Johnson, Jack Johnson (1878 – 1946) became a professional boxer in 1897 and departed Galveston after the 1900 Storm. In 1910, he was awarded the world heavyweight championship title after defeating James Jeffries in Las Vegas. Three years later, Johnson was convicted of violating the Mann Act, which prohibited white slavery; his conviction led to Senator McCain's statement.

Johnson defeated a succession of white boxers, each of whom was optimistically termed the "white hope." He led a flamboyant lifestyle, marrying three times and driving fast cars. In Galveston, Jack Johnson Boulevard, also known as 41st Street, commemorates this remarkable figure. Johnson is the subject of several photographs taken by noted Galveston photographer Henry Hyams Morris (1869 – 1956). Morris' great-granddaughter, Deana Snow, donated them to the Rosenberg Library's Galveston and Texas History Center. She received the images in 1980 from her grandmother, Clotile Morris Nelson. Henry H. Morris settled in Galveston in 1889, where he became an award-winning photographer. He was a charter member of the Photographers Association. The Rosenberg Library has preserved Morris' images of Galveston after the 1900 Storm, as well as other local subjects. His work is notable for its exceptional clarity.



Above: Jack Johnson's managers and his opponent reach a gentleman's agreement by shaking hands for a forthcoming boxing match. Johnson's opponent and his manager stand on the left.

For more information regarding the photos, please contact Lauren Martino, Special Collection Manager, at lmartino@rosenberg-library.org.