CANASTOTA NEW YORK

Boxing Capital Of America!

YESTERDAY

TODAY

TOMORROW
DEDICATION

This booklet is dedicated to the sport of boxing. We hope that its contents will convey the idea that Canastota, New York is the ideal site for the International Boxing Hall of Fame.

We've attempted to capture the essence of the sport of boxing as a way of life in our community, a vital part of the social and economic fabric of Canastota.

We have gathered some pictures and stories that portray the importance of boxing in our town from the 19th century, thru the teens, the roaring twenties, the depression years, the post WWII era, the Carmen Basilio and Billy Backus championship eras, the present resurgence of boxing and into the future where our legacy of boxing may be shared with the rest of the world.

In preparing this brochure, we were ably assisted by a number of people who did the digging. Mike Milmoe, Ed Brophy, Frank Eltman, Peter Finn, John DeJohn, Barbara Jones and others. We thank you for helping with your time and effort.

We appreciate your help.

Sincerely,

Bill LeMon, Editor

Canal and Circus made Canastota Early Fight Town

In the early-to-mid 1800's, Canastota enjoyed a degree of prosperity provided by the Erie Canal. It is not difficult to imagine iron-muscled bargemen docking at Canastota and wagering a pint or two over the Saturday fights. When the circus made one of its frequent visits to the town, the roustabouts often tangled with the canalers, and the ghosts of those bareknuckle brawls probably still linger in Canastota on warm, summer nights.

One of those early pugilists was an immigrant from Tipperary, Ireland, one Paddy Ryan who settled in Watervliet and ran a saloon. He fought an 86-rounder to win the heavyweight title from a Joe Goss, then lost the title to one John L. Sullivan, the first "official" heavyweight champion of the world in accredited record books. Paddy Ryan, the King of the Erie Canal, most probably fought in Canastota.

Some historians feel that the roots of the Canastota boxing connection go way back into the 19th century, and it requires just a touch of imagination to substantiate their theories. The real beginnings of boxing as an organized sport came before the turn of the century and Canastota's involvement is a matter of well documented record.
First Motion Picture Projection... Canastota Boxing Match!

One of most significant events in the history of boxing and motion pictures took place in Canastota. The first motion picture projection was shown in Canastota and the subject was a boxing bout.

It was in August of 1895 that the forerunner of the Friday Night Fights was born. The photographic process was known as the Biograph and its inventor was W.K.L. Dickson, a frequent visitor to Canastota. On the fifth of August that year Dickson used his new invention to record a sparring match at noon behind a machine shop on West Center Street in Canastota. The stars of this historic match were Prof. Al Leonard and his pupil, Bert Hosley. According to a report in the Canastota Bee, "For more than one minute they went at each other in a scientific manner and both received several hard blows in the encounter."

Remember, this was long before the era of the instant replay, and it wasn't until November that Dickson's projection machine was ready and the very first projected fight film was shown to a small gathering outside Mahan's Machine Shop. The projector was set up inside the shop with the lens pointing through a window onto a makeshift screen outside the building.

For the next decade the Biograph was run at Keith's Theatre in New York City and was considered one of the technical wonders of the world. Now America has a means of recording rights and showing them to masses of people. Boxing was given an enormous boost. It all began in Canastota.

The James Mahan Machine Shop on West Center Street as of November, 1963. The August, 1992 sparring match and the November, 1995 projection both occurred at the rear of this building. Photo by WW Sharpe.

CANASTOTA—Boxing Hotspot of the Twenties!

by Mike Milmoe

When Canastota folks think about the golden days of boxing in the community they generally relate to the Carmen Basilio years of the 50s or the Billy Backus years from the mid 60s to mid 70s when the community spawned two world champions.

But there were some very other exciting times for the boxing buffs in Canastota. The village has been a boxing hotspot for decades.

We've been doing some research on our community boxing heritage as part of a special project the Carmen Basilio Memorial Committee is embarked on. Boxing and Canastota are intertwined. Remember the Canastota High School boxing teams of the late 20s and 30s?

On Saturday we got engrossed in the 1925 issues of the Canastota Bee-Journals. That is the year that there were boxing shows all over the village and in surrounding communities. Canastota seemed to be a hub for much of the activity, providing the spark and the fighters.

Eddie Kelber was a catalyst for much of the activity. The former New York Giants baseball pitcher who had been gassed and lost a lung in World War I, had come to Canastota for marriage to a Canastota woman and became caught up in the boxing action. He was Commander of the American Legion that year and the legion promoted fights all over - in Newkirk Hall of Center Street, in Woolsey Hall on Center Street, on Moose Field at the Heilts farm near the Thruway entrance and in the Hubbard Canning Factory on Diamond Street. There were fights nearly every month and on the alternate weeks there were shows in Oneida, Sherrill, Sherburne and Syracuse.

The biggest name locally in boxing at the time belonged to Jimmy DeCapua who fought as a middleweight and lightweight. He had boxed in Florida before coming home to Canastota. At one time he was welterweight champion of Michigan. His career in boxing came in between his regular job as a policeman. Jimmy eventually had a bout with lightweight champion Mike McTigue, a bout that Jimmy won. McTigue was champion in 1923-25 with the bout between the two coming in Bennington, Vermont and in the late 20s.

There were lots of other local boys who were into boxing at the time. Danny Garofalo, now living in Utica, was fighting in 1925. He remembers it well, "I got out. There wasn't any money in it. They'd promise you '60 for a main bout and after it was over put '20 on the table and say that was it. Once when Jimmy DeCapua was my second we got our '60. Jimmy was a cop and he took out his gun and said we were going to be paid in full. They paid the '60."

Another fighter of the time from Canastota was Red Johnson. There was Dominick Bruno, Nick DeBalso, Johnny Beach, Danny's brother Sarafino. There was Pete Baltusnik, Freddie Lumbrico, Mike Costanzo.
KO Chappie moved from Binghamton to Canastota to be in the thick of things. As reported in "Kelsey's Ken" the B-J sports column of the day... "KO Chappie has located in Canastota. He appears to be a nice boy and can sure fire up a storm. He will be a welcome addition to our excellent crop of boxers. The addition of Chappie means that Canastota without a doubt will lead any Central New York village or city in the caliber of its boxers." Even then, we were a drawing card for young men getting involved in boxing.

Another of the fighters who came on the scene a bit later was Eddie Gordy, one of Canastota's all-time strong men. Eddie used to play hardball barehanded. He carried pianos up and down stairs. He boxed, he wrestled, he did it all. He had more strength than finesse and would often end up hitting himself with his round house

class, which if he takes care of himself, may carry him high in the world of fisticuffs."

So it isn't all Basilio and Backus when you think of Canastota boxing. There were those before and after who carry a rich boxing tradition for Canastota. The Canastota Boxing club is the longest established club promoting fights west of Albany in the state and the most active Syracuse club right now in operated by another Canastotan, Ed Brophy. The tradition continues...

KO Chappie moved from Binghamton to Canastota to be in the thick of things. As reported in "Kelsey's Ken" the B-J sports column of the day... "KO Chappie has located in Canastota. He appears to be a nice boy and can sure fire up a storm. He will be a welcome addition to our excellent crop of boxers. The addition of Chappie means that Canastota without a doubt will lead any Central New York village or city in the caliber of its boxers." Even then, we were a drawing card for young men getting involved in boxing.

Another of the fighters who came on the scene a bit later was Eddie Gordy, one of Canastota's all-time strong men. Eddie used to play hardball barehanded. He carried pianos up and down stairs. He boxed, he wrestled, he did it all. He had more strength than finesse and would often end up hitting himself with his round house

class, which if he takes care of himself, may carry him high in the world of fisticuffs."

So it isn't all Basilio and Backus when you think of Canastota boxing. There were those before and after who carry a rich boxing tradition for Canastota. The Canastota Boxing club is the longest established club promoting fights west of Albany in the state and the most active Syracuse club right now in operated by another Canastotan, Ed Brophy. The tradition continues...

KO Chappie moved from Binghamton to Canastota to be in the thick of things. As reported in "Kelsey's Ken" the B-J sports column of the day... "KO Chappie has located in Canastota. He appears to be a nice boy and can sure fire up a storm. He will be a welcome addition to our excellent crop of boxers. The addition of Chappie means that Canastota without a doubt will lead any Central New York village or city in the caliber of its boxers." Even then, we were a drawing card for young men getting involved in boxing.

Another of the fighters who came on the scene a bit later was Eddie Gordy, one of Canastota's all-time strong men. Eddie used to play hardball barehanded. He carried pianos up and down stairs. He boxed, he wrestled, he did it all. He had more strength than finesse and would often end up hitting himself with his round house

class, which if he takes care of himself, may carry him high in the world of fisticuffs."

So it isn't all Basilio and Backus when you think of Canastota boxing. There were those before and after who carry a rich boxing tradition for Canastota. The Canastota Boxing club is the longest established club promoting fights west of Albany in the state and the most active Syracuse club right now in operated by another Canastotan, Ed Brophy. The tradition continues...

KO Chappie moved from Binghamton to Canastota to be in the thick of things. As reported in "Kelsey's Ken" the B-J sports column of the day... "KO Chappie has located in Canastota. He appears to be a nice boy and can sure fire up a storm. He will be a welcome addition to our excellent crop of boxers. The addition of Chappie means that Canastota without a doubt will lead any Central New York village or city in the caliber of its boxers." Even then, we were a drawing card for young men getting involved in boxing.

Another of the fighters who came on the scene a bit later was Eddie Gordy, one of Canastota's all-time strong men. Eddie used to play hardball barehanded. He carried pianos up and down stairs. He boxed, he wrestled, he did it all. He had more strength than finesse and would often end up hitting himself with his round house

class, which if he takes care of himself, may carry him high in the world of fisticuffs."

So it isn't all Basilio and Backus when you think of Canastota boxing. There were those before and after who carry a rich boxing tradition for Canastota. The Canastota Boxing club is the longest established club promoting fights west of Albany in the state and the most active Syracuse club right now in operated by another Canastotan, Ed Brophy. The tradition continues...

KO Chappie moved from Binghamton to Canastota to be in the thick of things. As reported in "Kelsey's Ken" the B-J sports column of the day... "KO Chappie has located in Canastota. He appears to be a nice boy and can sure fire up a storm. He will be a welcome addition to our excellent crop of boxers. The addition of Chappie means that Canastota without a doubt will lead any Central New York village or city in the caliber of its boxers." Even then, we were a drawing card for young men getting involved in boxing.

Another of the fighters who came on the scene a bit later was Eddie Gordy, one of Canastota's all-time strong men. Eddie used to play hardball barehanded. He carried pianos up and down stairs. He boxed, he wrestled, he did it all. He had more strength than finesse and would often end up hitting himself with his round house

class, which if he takes care of himself, may carry him high in the world of fisticuffs."

So it isn't all Basilio and Backus when you think of Canastota boxing. There were those before and after who carry a rich boxing tradition for Canastota. The Canastota Boxing club is the longest established club promoting fights west of Albany in the state and the most active Syracuse club right now in operated by another Canastotan, Ed Brophy. The tradition continues...
Canastota High School
Boxing Teams

Above: These Canastota High boxers will meet Norwich High at Canastota in the final home meet of the season on Friday night. They are, l to r, V. Masucci, Warrington Austerman, Ray Bartholomay, Joe Corinzi, Sammy Tornatore, William Fine, Patsy Pugliano, Andy Pino, and Dan Garafola, former professional fighter, who is helping Athletic Director William Schmidt in training the Canastota squad.

Right - S.U.'s Ben Sgroi, Intercollegiate Boxing Champ from Canastota helped carry Orange to NCAA Title.

CARMEN BASILIO
The Canastota Clouter
by FRANK ELTMAN
Dispatch Sports Editor

CANASTOTA — Pinky Schmidt had to keep chasing him out of the Canastota High School gym. He only weighed about 85 pounds and the weight classes didn't go that low in high school boxing competition.

Schmidt, the coach of the Canastota boxing team, could take only so much pestering before he relented and let the scrappy kid box. After all, the match against Cato-Meridian was the last match a Canastota team would ever have.

What difference would it make anyway? It made plenty to a difference to that son of immigrant farmers who nourished that love of pugilism until it grew into two different world boxing championships and a lifetime of dedication to that sport.

Carmen Basilio, the Canastota Clouter as Ring Magazine once referred to him, has come a long way since the day Pinky Schmidt let him box.

His neighbors, the people of Canastota, want to make sure no one forgets the mark Basilio made on the boxing world.

Dozens of Basilio's friends are planning to erect a building honoring the boxing legend opposite the New York State Thruway exit in Canastota.

"Naturally I couldn't be nothing but happy about this, I really appreciate what the people of Canastota are doing. And I have to tell you, I'm a little bit nervous about the whole thing," said Basilio.

"This is something that never even entered my mind. It's a great honor that people think that much of me," he said.

Although Basilio's love of boxing grew when he was a youngster, he didn't actually start taking the sport seriously until after being discharged from the U.S. Marines; he served in Guam and Pearl Harbor during World War II.

In 1948, both Carmen and his brother, Paul won the Adirondack competition of the Golden Gloves. But someone had to work on the farm back in Canastota, so only one brother could make the trip to the national championships in Boston.

Paul agreed to stay home and Carmen went to the finals before getting beat by Charley Carton. It was that loss that convinced Basilio to turn professional, said Paul.

Basilio was largely known as "just a club fighter," in his early professional days. He also gained a reputation as a rugged, lion-hearted fighter who dishod out as much as he took.

After battling some of the greats of his day, including Kid Galavan, Chuck Davey, and Billy Graham, Basilio finally won the world welterweight title on June 10, 1955, when he knocked out Tony DeMarco in the 12th round in Syracuse.

He later went on to beat Sugar Ray Robinson for the world middleweight title in 1957. That accomplishment won Basilio the Hickok Belt, symbolic of the professional athlete of the year.

The Robinson fight earned Basilio nearly $200,000, which was a huge purse for any non-heavyweight bout in 1957. Basilio explained, "Well there was never any love lost between me and Robinson. There was a little friction. There was a lot of public interest and closed circuit TV. I was the welterweight champion and he was the middleweight champion. And he was five years older than I was. A lot of people wanted to see what would happen."

What happened was one of boxing's more memorable matches. Basilio and Robinson battered each other for 15 rounds before a large Yankee Stadium crowd. And Basilio won the title.

1941 BOXING TEAM
1st Row - (l to r) Frank Mariano, Eddie LeBlanc, Joe Russoitano, Leonard Nichols, George Sarbello.
2nd Row - Charlie Moore, Bug Hall, Ben Sgroi, Bill Tanner, Jim Rinaldo.
3rd Row - Ray Hay, Tony Montalbano

CARMEN'S BOXING RECORD
79 FIGHTS
WON — 26 KOs —————— 56
LOST —— 16
DRAWS —— 7
BASILIO: The Canastota Clouter...

BATTLE OF WELTERWEIGHT CONTENDERS
MAD. SQ. GARDEN - FRI. SEPT. 10

MAIN EVENT 10 ROUNDS
BASILIO
LEADING CONTENDER FROM CANASTOTA, N.Y. HAD KID GAVILAN ON THE FLOOR
VS
CARMINE
BROOKLYN'S GREAT LEFT HOOKER. ONE OF THE MOST DANGEROUS PUNCHERS IN BOXING

BOBBY BELL VS IKE CHESTNUT
HARLEM'S CLASSY FEATHERWEIGHT

IRWIN SCHULZ VS BILL TAIT
HARLEM PUNCHER

RESERVED - $2. $3. $4. $5. $6 & $8 inc. tax

Buy tickets now at MAD. SQ. GARDEN BOX OFFICE, 8th AVE. 49th to 50th STS. Tel. COlumbus 5-6815

‘GOOD LUCK, CARMEN!’
This 1952 photo shows Canastota Police Chief Freddie Verro, Canastota High School boxing coach Pinky Schmidt and Mayor Alex DeBruque wishing Carmen Basilio good fortune as the fighter waited for a train to take him to Chicago for his July 16 fight with Chuck Davey.
Another Canastota Contender

Still another Canastotan is a frequent entry into the boxing record books. He is Dick DiVeronica, a welterweight contender who was ranked as high as eighth in the world at one point in his career.

DiVeronica's idol and first manager was Carmen Basilio and he is built along the same lines as the champion. His promising career was interrupted in 1961 when he was drafted into the Army during the Berlin crisis. He had beaten Jay Fullmer, Tommy Tibbs and several other top welterweights. He fought Emile Griffith, a middleweight champion, Don Jordan and was a frequent star of the Friday Night Fights on T.V. Dick began his career in 1958 and worked under Carmen Basilio's former manager Johnny DeJohn. He also worked with Angela Dundee, Eli Hanover, and Lenny McMillen. He attended Cornell on a wrestling scholarship and was a three-year high school wrestling champ with a record of 81-4. DiVeronica boxed until 1967 and compiled a career record of 50-10.
BILLY BACKUS: Memories of Boxing twinkle in Backus' eyes...

by FRANK ELTMAN
Dispatch Sports Editor

Canastota — The fire that once burned in the eyes of Billy Backus has been reduced to a twinkling flame. But the warmth and love of boxing that allowed Backus to wear the world welterweight title belt in 1970 still glows. "I still watch the film of that fight. I can give you a blow by blow description if you want," gleamed Backus, allowing himself a brief moment of modest back-patting.

Backus, who retired in 1978 after a devastating eye injury and 75 professional fights, is joined by his uncle, Carmen Basilio, in being honored by the villagers of Canastota who want to pay tribute to their champions.

Statues of the champions are being made and a building on North Peterboro Street that will house the likenesses is planned. Backus is honored by the attention. "I'm happy they thought about me," said Backus, referring to the committee that is planning the tribute.

Basilio, who is 16 years older than his nephew, was the driving force behind many Central New Yorkers' attempts at boxing fame, says Backus. "Carmen was the leader. Most anyone who came from this area was a slugger, not a stylist. Many people wanted to follow the driving force behind many Central New Workers at boxing fame, says Backus. Carmen was a canastota who want to pay tribute to their champion.

But the warmth and love of boxing that allowed Backus to wear the world welterweight title belt in 1970 still glows. Memories of Boxing twinkle.

The fourth round was different, though. After discovering that he could take the best the champion had to dish out, Backus was ready to brawl. A cut over Napoles' eyebrow became progressively worse as the fight wore on.

Backus said. "I still watch the film of that fight. I can give you a blow by blow description if you want," gleamed Backus, allowing himself a brief moment of modest back-patting.

"In the third round he came out flying. He was dynamite. He kept moving; he was on his toes. He had every intention that he was gonna put me away. He hit me with his best shot and I was still there," grinned Backus.

CanaStOTA — The fire that once burned in the eyes of Billy Backus has been reduced to a twinkling flame. But the warmth and love of boxing that allowed Backus to wear the world welterweight title belt in 1970 still glows. "I still watch the film of that fight. I can give you a blow by blow description if you want," gleamed Backus, allowing himself a brief moment of modest back-patting.

Backus, who retired in 1978 after a devastating eye injury and 75 professional fights, is joined by his uncle, Carmen Basilio, in being honored by the villagers of Canastota who want to pay tribute to their champions.

Statues of the champions are being made and a building on North Peterboro Street that will house the likenesses is planned. Backus is honored by the attention. "I'm happy they thought about me," said Backus, referring to the committee that is planning the tribute.

Basilio, who is 16 years older than his nephew, was the driving force behind many Central New Yorkers' attempts at boxing fame, says Backus. "Carmen was the leader. Most anyone who came from this area was a slugger, not a stylist. Many people wanted to follow the driving force behind many Central New Workers at boxing fame, says Backus. Carmen was a canastota who want to pay tribute to their champion.

But the warmth and love of boxing that allowed Backus to wear the world welterweight title belt in 1970 still glows. Memories of Boxing twinkle.

The fourth round was different, though. After discovering that he could take the best the champion had to dish out, Backus was ready to brawl. A cut over Napoles' eyebrow became progressively worse as the fight wore on.

Backus said. "I still watch the film of that fight. I can give you a blow by blow description if you want," gleamed Backus, allowing himself a brief moment of modest back-patting.

"In the third round he came out flying. He was dynamite. He kept moving; he was on his toes. He had every intention that he was gonna put me away. He hit me with his best shot and I was still there," grinned Backus.

CanaStOTA — The fire that once burned in the eyes of Billy Backus has been reduced to a twinkling flame. But the warmth and love of boxing that allowed Backus to wear the world welterweight title belt in 1970 still glows. "I still watch the film of that fight. I can give you a blow by blow description if you want," gleamed Backus, allowing himself a brief moment of modest back-patting.

Backus, who retired in 1978 after a devastating eye injury and 75 professional fights, is joined by his uncle, Carmen Basilio, in being honored by the villagers of Canastota who want to pay tribute to their champions.

Statues of the champions are being made and a building on North Peterboro Street that will house the likenesses is planned. Backus is honored by the attention. "I'm happy they thought about me," said Backus, referring to the committee that is planning the tribute.

Basilio, who is 16 years older than his nephew, was the driving force behind many Central New Yorkers' attempts at boxing fame, says Backus. "Carmen was the leader. Most anyone who came from this area was a slugger, not a stylist. Many people wanted to follow the driving force behind many Central New Workers at boxing fame, says Backus. Carmen was a canastota who want to pay tribute to their champion.

But the warmth and love of boxing that allowed Backus to wear the world welterweight title belt in 1970 still glows. Memories of Boxing twinkle.

The fourth round was different, though. After discovering that he could take the best the champion had to dish out, Backus was ready to brawl. A cut over Napoles' eyebrow became progressively worse as the fight wore on.

Backus said. "I still watch the film of that fight. I can give you a blow by blow description if you want," gleamed Backus, allowing himself a brief moment of modest back-patting.

"In the third round he came out flying. He was dynamite. He kept moving; he was on his toes. He had every intention that he was gonna put me away. He hit me with his best shot and I was still there," grinned Backus.

CanaSTOTA — The fire that once burned in the eyes of Billy Backus has been reduced to a twinkling flame. But the warmth and love of boxing that allowed Backus to wear the world welterweight title belt in 1970 still glows. "I still watch the film of that fight. I can give you a blow by blow description if you want," gleamed Backus, allowing himself a brief moment of modest back-patting.

Backus, who retired in 1978 after a devastating eye injury and 75 professional fights, is joined by his uncle, Carmen Basilio, in being honored by the villagers of Canastota who want to pay tribute to their champions.

Statues of the champions are being made and a building on North Peterboro Street that will house the likenesses is planned. Backus is honored by the attention. "I'm happy they thought about me," said Backus, referring to the committee that is planning the tribute.

Basilio, who is 16 years older than his nephew, was the driving force behind many Central New Yorkers' attempts at boxing fame, says Backus. "Carmen was the leader. Most anyone who came from this area was a slugger, not a stylist. Many people wanted to follow the driving force behind many Central New Workers at boxing fame, says Backus. Carmen was a canastota who want to pay tribute to their champion.

But the warmth and love of boxing that allowed Backus to wear the world welterweight title belt in 1970 still glows. Memories of Boxing twinkle.

The fourth round was different, though. After discovering that he could take the best the champion had to dish out, Backus was ready to brawl. A cut over Napoles' eyebrow became progressively worse as the fight wore on.

Backus said. "I still watch the film of that fight. I can give you a blow by blow description if you want," gleamed Backus, allowing himself a brief moment of modest back-patting.

"In the third round he came out flying. He was dynamite. He kept moving; he was on his toes. He had every intention that he was gonna put me away. He hit me with his best shot and I was still there," grinned Backus.

CanaSTOTA — The fire that once burned in the eyes of Billy Backus has been reduced to a twinkling flame. But the warmth and love of boxing that allowed Backus to wear the world welterweight title belt in 1970 still glows. "I still watch the film of that fight. I can give you a blow by blow description if you want," gleamed Backus, allowing himself a brief moment of modest back-patting.

Backus, who retired in 1978 after a devastating eye injury and 75 professional fights, is joined by his uncle, Carmen Basilio, in being honored by the villagers of Canastota who want to pay tribute to their champions.

Statues of the champions are being made and a building on North Peterboro Street that will house the likenesses is planned. Backus is honored by the attention. "I'm happy they thought about me," said Backus, referring to the committee that is planning the tribute.

Basilio, who is 16 years older than his nephew, was the driving force behind many Central New Yorkers' attempts at boxing fame, says Backus. "Carmen was the leader. Most anyone who came from this area was a slugger, not a stylist. Many people wanted to follow the driving force behind many Central New Workers at boxing fame, says Backus. Carmen was a canastota who want to pay tribute to their champion.

But the warmth and love of boxing that allowed Backus to wear the world welterweight title belt in 1970 still glows. Memories of Boxing twinkle.

The fourth round was different, though. After discovering that he could take the best the champion had to dish out, Backus was ready to brawl. A cut over Napoles' eyebrow became progressively worse as the fight wore on.

Backus said. "I still watch the film of that fight. I can give you a blow by blow description if you want," gleamed Backus, allowing himself a brief moment of modest back-patting.
Still Number One Sport for Canastota!

With such a rich tradition of boxing in the past, it would not be difficult to overlook the tremendous enthusiasm for the sport that exists in Canastota today. We have several gyms, one of the oldest fight clubs in the state, young amateur boxers and promoters. One of these promoters is Ed Brophy, and if ever a young man had boxing in his blood, it is Ed Brophy. Fan, fighter, promoter, trainer, preacher of the Gospel according to Boxing, he’s done it all.

Ed has been a boxing fan since he was five years old. He began clipping articles and pictures from magazines and newspapers in the early 1960's and has put together a collection of boxing memorabilia that is the envy of many collectors throughout the country. In fact, his scrapbooks, photo albums, posters and signs were included in Brophy’s fights at the War Memorial.

In 1973 Ed tried the gloves himself, then went into coaching teenage amateurs from Canastota. He still maintains a gym in his garage. In 1982, he began to realize his lifelong dream and promoted two events in Syracuse under the Dome International Promotion banner.

Last year, Ed Unveiled his SYRACUSE IN SEARCH OF A CHAMPION series of shows featuring up-and-coming pro boxers from Central New York. The program has been a success at the gate, with the media and throughout the entire boxing community. Brophy has demonstrated a unique ability to combine boxing savvy with skillful showmanship. His SEARCH fights feature special effect lighting, stirring music on the PA system, a glamorous Round Card girl and many other trappings that have spelled success in his first two ventures. His most recent promotion offered free champagne and cigars to top-price ticket purchasers. At 25 years of age, Brophy has gained more experience in more phases of boxing than many of us do in a lifetime. He is one reason why the sport of boxing is alive and well in Canastota today.

Promoter/Trainer/Manager Ed Brophy works with promising lightweight Roger Rainwater at Bruno Novelty Gym.

Boxing...
8 REASONS WHY
THE INTERNATIONAL BOXING HALL OF FAME SHOULD BE
ESTABLISHED IN CANASTOTA, N.Y.

1. The Boxing Tradition...
   Boxing has been part of the fabric of Canastota's lifestyle since the 19th century. It is the home of the first projection motion picture equipment, and the first movie projected was in Canastota of a sparring match filmed in Canastota.

2. The Boxing People...
   Canastota is the hometown of some of America's best known boxers, managers and promoters. Carmen Basilio, Billy Backus, Dick DiVincenzo, Tony Graziano, Benny Sgrol are just a few of this elite group of Canastotans who have made their mark in the boxing world.

3. The Community Spirit...
   Our people have just completed the Carmen Basilio Memorial, a project worth approximately $100,000 featuring bronze statues of Carmen and Billy Backus. The project is completely paid for and our next goal is the Hall of Fame. It's something we want.

4. The Location...
   Canastota is perfectly situated for the Hall of Fame. The site we have chosen is ringside to the New York State Thruway Exit 34 in the heart of the State. We're within an easy one-day drive of 40% of the population of the nation and 78% of the population of Canada. We're close to Syracuse, another great boxing community, with its War Memorial and Carrier Dome, two of America's great sports facilities.

5. Near Other Halls of Fame...
   In a single day a family could visit the Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, Mass., the Baseball Hall in Cooperstown, the Soccer Hall of Fame in Oneonta and the Boxing Hall in Canastota. A few hours more and it's the Football Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio.

6. Media Center...
   Proximity to Syracuse means top notch media availability for wire services, two excellent daily newspapers, all major radio and TV network affiliates, an aggressive cable TV operation and stringers for national magazines.

7. A Boxing Hotbed...
   Central New York is enjoying a Renaissance of boxing with Canastota Ed Brophy promoting his SYRACUSE IN SEARCH OF A CHAMPION series at the War Memorial, national promoters using the War Memorial for title fights, and the presence of the Carrier Dome which can seat up to 60,000 for an indoor fight, one of the few facilities to make such a boast.

8. Hometown Flavor...
   People like the feeling of Hometown, U.S.A. and Canastota lives up to the image with tree-lined streets, neat, comfortable homes, prosperous business district and a pace not quite as hectic as most vacationers are used to keeping during the other fifty weeks of the year. Canastota is a far cry from the flash and glitter of America's gambling capitals, and that charm is the unique benefit we have to offer the International Boxing Hall of Fame.

CANASTOTA... Today and Tomorrow

The All-American Community!!

The Carmen Basilio Memorial which will be opened to the public this summer is more than a monument honoring one of our most famous citizens. It is a tribute to a community spirit that says "CAN DO" - and DOES! With the same enthusiasm and leadership that made the Basilio Memorial a reality, we are actively seeking establishment of the International Boxing Hall of Fame in our community. We have the land available adjacent to the New York State Thruway Entrance.

We have the means of raising the dollars necessary to build the Hall of Fame. A highly attractive program encouraging commerce, industry and government to participate in the Hall will soon be in place.

We have the special appeal of a small town, the same quality of life that has made Cooperstown so successful as the site of the Baseball Hall of Fame.

If you wish to help our cause, WELCOME. We hope you will talk about us, write about us, support us, criticize us, and possibly even say a little prayer for us, for we feel that Canastota is indeed the ideal site for the INTERNATIONAL BOXING HALL OF FAME.
The Committee

OFFICERS
Joe Bonaventura - Chairman
Charles Sgroi - Vice President
Charles Bidinger - Secretary
Ed Brophy - Treasurer

MEMBERS
Donald Cerio - Mayor of Canastota
Mike Perretta - Attorney
Anthony Pulverenti - President, Canastota Office, Oneida National Bank
Case Mulford - Real Estate Broker
Peter Finocchiaro - Town Councilman
Mike Milmoe - Editor-Owner, Canastota Bee Journal
Fred Davis - Genesee
Rocky Altamero - Contractor-Owner, Canastota Construction Company
Joe Eppolito - Aide to Sen Martin Auer; County Republican Chairman
Paul Basilio - Owner Food Processing Company
Joe Paone - District Public Relations, Niagara Mohawk
John Emmi - Motel Owner
Joe Rinaldo - Restaurant Owner
Dave Beach - Owner of McDonald's Franchises
Bob Arnold - Audio/Visual Technician
Grace Rapasaddi - Town & Village Clerk
Felix Montalbano - Business Owner
Jack Rogers - Office Supply Corp. Owner
Rich Rinaldo - Pabst Beer Sales Representative

FOR FURTHER DETAILS ON THE PROGRESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL HALL OF FAME,
Contact Ed Brophy 315-697-7835