

LVI. MARSHALL COUNTY'S ONLY PRIZE FIGHT.

An epoch in the history of Marshall County occurred by a prize fight at Baugherville, on the Lake Erie & Western Railroad, about nine miles northwest of Plymouth, between Lou C. Allen of Chicago, and H. C. Hammer of Michigan City, middleweights, on the evening of April 30, 1891, which was to have been a fight to a finish, and would have been had it not happened that Sheriff Henry L. Jarrell was informed of the affair and with two deputies, Eugene Marshall and Wm. T. Leonard, and William Klinger, marshal of Plymouth, pounced upon them and put a stop to the

fun just as the first round was being finished, the particulars of which will be related hereafter. The writer of this history cannot afford to, allow as important an historical event as this to go unrecorded as showing the trend of public opinion in regard to this particular line of amusement. It will not be necessary to mention the names of any of the spectators, a large number of whom were present, and therefore only the names of the principals are deemed necessary to be given in this connection.

On the afternoon of the eventful evening a number of the "boys" in the county seat were let into the secret that a prize fight was to take place at Bougherville, northwest of Plymouth, between 11 o'clock that night and 3 o'clock next morning, and the favored few who were let into the secret were on tip-toe of expectation, and preparations were made to pull out quietly by livery teams about 9 o'clock. The secret was to be kept from Sheriff Jarrell, and from those who would likely give him a pointer in that direction. Up to a certain point in the proceedings everything worked like a charm, and in birdological parlance "the ornithological webb-footed specimen of stupidity was altitudinally elevated." The night was dark and the corduroy road through the woods was more than ordinarily rough. Some of the drivers lost the direct road and went a considerable distance out of the way; others ran into "chuck holes," breaking a spring or single tree or something of that kind, but where there is a prize at the end of the goal there is always found a way to reach it. On they went, helter-skelter, an occasional lighter vehicle and a faster team passing those in the lead, and in this way, after an hour and a half of intense expectation the place was reached. The prize ring was in a large barn near a saw mill and a lumber yard near the Lake Erie & Western railroad, a short distance northwest of Tyner. Lumber was piled up and scattered about everywhere, and there were acres of saw logs and slabs and log wagons; and there were no lights about to indicate that there was any- thing unusual going on, and those who were not familiar with the lay of the land had to feel their way in the dark. The Lake Erie fast train from the north had arrived at 11 o'clock, bringing the pugilists and about 150 sports from Chicago, Michigan City and other points along the line, and it was but a short time until the preliminary arrangements had all been completed. A twenty four foot ring had been measured off, the building was gorgeously lighted, and in the glare of the kerosene the lamp of Aladdin would have cast but a faint glimmer. The 175 spectators who had each paid an admission fee of \$5 were seated about the ring as conveniently as circumstances would permit, and the remainder were stowed away in the haymow, in balcony rows, one above another, from which elevated position they were enabled to look down upon the interesting spectacle before them through the large opening in the center.

The gladiators were stripped to the skin and took their places in the ring, accompanied by their backers, trainers, seconds, umpires, spongers and assistants, and nearby were a couple of reporters for two of the leading Chicago dailies. The doors of the barn were locked and guarded, and the doorkeeper was ordered not to admit anyone under any pretext whatever. Time was called and the pugilistic pounders came smilingly to the scratch. They knocked away at each other with all the strength they possessed, and from the appearance of the bruises on Hammer's face there was no doubt

but they meant business from the word "go." The first round was a success, and applause greeted the bruisers as they retired to their corners to be rubbed down and catch their wind.

It was late in the evening when Sheriff Jarrell was informed of what was going on. He and his deputies pulled out from the county seat shortly after 9 o'clock and drove rapidly toward the seat of war. He had the misfortune to break his buggy, which delayed him several minutes, and he did not arrive until just as the first round had been fought. The sheriff and his deputies alighted hitched their horses and asked the doorkeeper to be admitted. That distinguished dweller in the tents of iniquity informed, them that under no circumstances could they be admitted, where upon the sheriff jerked the latch off, opened the door, and he and his deputies rushed in upon the pugilists and their assistants, who were standing in the ring, ready to commence the second round. Then ensued a scene of consternation which no pen can describe. There was a general stampede for the door and in the rush and confusion several were run over and knocked down; some of the lights were turned out and for a few minutes it seemed that pandemonium had been turned loose. Both principals escaped the officers and got out of the building with only their thin fighting suits on. In the melee that ensued Ed Corey, trainer, and Con Cavanah and Dick Ford, seconds, were captured. The remainder got away. Hammer, one of the principals, found it was so cold with only his tights on that he could not stand it, and in returning in search of his clothes was captured by the sheriff. Allen, the other principal, took the railroad track north as fast as he could run and never stopped until he reached Walkerton, where he boarded a freight train for Michigan City, and thus made good his escape.

The spectators - well, they were panic-stricken, and, if anything, were worse frightened than the fighters. When the sheriff and his party entered, the rapidity with which that audience dispersed has never been equaled in this part of the country. They did not stand upon the order of their going, but they went at once. It was every fellow for himself and the devil take the hindmost. As soon as they got out of the building they took to the woods as fast as their legs could carry them. They tumbled over one another, went head over heels over saw logs, log wagons and lumber piles, skinned their shins and bruised themselves up generally. Those who were in the hay loft, and most of them happened to be Marshall county fellows, were all captured without an effort. They had climbed up on a ladder which had been removed when the fight began, and there they were, prisoners and unable to make a move for liberty. So they scrambled back as far as they could and covered themselves with hay, except their feet, which stuck out in irregular sizes all around the first row, and waited further developments. The suspense did not last long. One of them came near smothering in the hay and yelled out, "Put up that ladder; I can't stand it with this d-d gang any longer." The ladder was put up, and you would have just died laughing to have seen capitalists, merchants and business men, old men and young men, bald heads and gray heads, married men and single men, backing down that ladder with hayseed in their hair, and on their hats and all over their clothes. As he reached the floor one of them remarked: "What in ---- would my wife say if she could see me in this fix?" And the other fellow replied, "Damfino." They were greatly

relieved when Sheriff Jarrell informed them that he had no use for them and that they could go about their business. The fun was over, the procession re-formed, and, headed by the sheriff and his four prisoners, slowly and solemnly wended its way homeward. "

The next morning Hammer, one of the principals, and the three others who had been arrested, appeared before Justice Harley Logan, waived examination and were bound over to court in bonds of \$300 each, which was furnished, and all were released. When court convened Dick Ford was released; the others pleaded guilty, were fined \$50 each, which was promptly paid, and thus ended the only prize fight ever witnessed in Marshall county.