

# Sports Forum

Sir,—It is almost impossible to tell the complete story of Stanislaus Kical, better known as the "Michigan Assassin" Stanley Ketchel. Here was a man who never weighed more than 160 pounds and met everyone from middleweights to heavyweights. He knocked out Jack (Twin) Sullivan and almost killed Billy Papke. They called him the "Michigan Assassin" and the nickname hardly did him full justice for in battle there never was a more inhuman snarling, vicious fighting animal in the ring. He knew no mercy and no pity but always fought to destroy or be destroyed.

Old-timers said that Ketchel never had a heart. Ketchel's parents were Russian on his mother's side and Polish on his father's. Mrs. Kical was only 14 when Stanley was born and when Stanley hit the road he was hardly that age himself.

After three years in hobo jungle he became a boxer at seventeen. He was active in the ring from 1903 to 1910.

Ketchel survived his first fight of record with a minimum of effort. His victim was Jack (Kid) Tracy, hailed throughout Butte, Montana as the man who had kayed everyone of his foes for a month. Tracy accomplished some of his fistie miracles with the help of his manager and a stout sandbag. Tracy would manoeuvre his guileless opponents over a curtain at the rear of the stage (these fights were always held in theatres and beer emporiums) and the manager would then hit him on the head with the sandbag.

Ketchel was no mastermind but he had followed the meteoric rise of Tracy and smelled a rat. He switched the script by backing Tracy against the curtain. Tracy's manager did the rest within a short period.

Ketchel became a tremendous drawing card in Montana, with plenty of easy money coming in. On one occasion he picked up a \$1,000 reward for capturing a half-breed Mexican killer who had slain the wife of a rancher.

Ketchel's reputation reached California in 1907 when he hopped a fast freight to Sacramento and knocked out a promising negro George Brown in three rounds.

When Tommy Ryan resigned the middleweight crown in 1907, Joe Thomas, known as the pride of California, loomed with Billy Papke, Hugo Kelly and the Sullivan twins Jack and Mike, as his most likely successor.

In three straight bouts Ketchel promptly belted Thomas out of the middleweight picture and on Feb. 22, 1908 Ketchel won the middleweight championship by stopping Mike Sullivan in one minute of the first round.

Jack (Twin) Sullivan was the first to challenge Ketchel for the title. Jack always had a feeling he could whip Ketchel for in 1906 he had battled to a 20-round draw with the "Michigan Assassin". However, when the title was on the line it was a different story. Sullivan was battered to the canvas in the 20th round.

After four successful defenses of his title Ketchel was finally stopped by Billy Papke, September 7, 1908. But two months later Ketchel regained the title by giving Papke one of the worst beatings ever handed out in a San Francisco ring.

On October 16, 1909, Ketchel engaged the great Jack Johnson. The fight chatter had it that the fight was to be nothing more than a sparring exhibition between a good big man and a good little man.

At the end of the 11th round Ketchel was ahead on points. In the 12th Johnson rushed at his opponent and Ketchel ducked a hard right at Jack's lowered head. Johnson instinctively dove but the punch caught him on the ear and he went down. When Johnson arose at the count of eight he was a frothing beast and quickly clipped Ketchel with a right to the jaw, a left to the stomach and as Ketchel reeled backwards another right bounced off his jaw and he went down in a heap.

The usually lively Ketchel had been knocked dead to the world. Two of his front teeth were embedded in Johnson's blood-soaked right glove.

Johnson had only kind things to say about his fallen rival. "He's a good puncher and a strong man. He can take a heavy blow. And I must say he has given me a sorer chin than I ever had before."

After the Johnson fight Ketchel took a long rest from the ring, the first in his career. He returned to the ring, March 28, 1910 and fought to a 6-round no-decision bout with Frank Klaus. Then followed up by doing likewise with Sam Langford.

Ketchel stopped off at Cleveland one St. Patrick's Day to put on a show for the amusement of the local Irishmen. The feared "Michigan Assassin" offered \$100 to anyone who could go three rounds with him. A musician named Ernest Ball immediately took up the challenge and, of course, took a severe beating from the champ.

But he was still on his feet at the end of three rounds to collect his money. With it he bought a train ticket to New York and eventually won fame and fortune as a song writer.

For the man who fought the "Michigan Assassin" to earn money to start his career wrote the ever-popular song "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling".

On a crisp fall morning of October 15, 1910 Ketchel was at breakfast at his ranch in Conway, Missouri, when a farmhand named Walter Dibley fired a load of buckshot into the champ's back. Three hours later Ketchel was dead at the age of 24.

I am, Sir, etc.,  
WILFRED O. McCLUSKEY,  
Charlottetown.

**Invites Maple Syrup Event**

ALBANY, N. Y. (AP)—Governor Averell Harriman Saturday invited maple syrup producers around the world to compete for a "Governor's Cup" at the state sugar festival in Cooperstown next April.

Harriman is sponsoring a taste-test competition at the maple festival principally to settle rival claims over the quality of maple syrup produced in New York, Vermont, Maine, New Hampshire and the province of Quebec.

The governor's office said the competition would be open also to producers in all other states and "friendly nations." The festival is scheduled for April 6-7.

New York has been embroiled in a tongue-in-cheek hassle with the other states and Quebec over the quality of respective home-produced syrups.

The debate was touched off last Monday when Vermont's Governor Joseph B. Johnson took exception to a bill in the New York legislature that would designate the sugar maple as the official tree of New York.

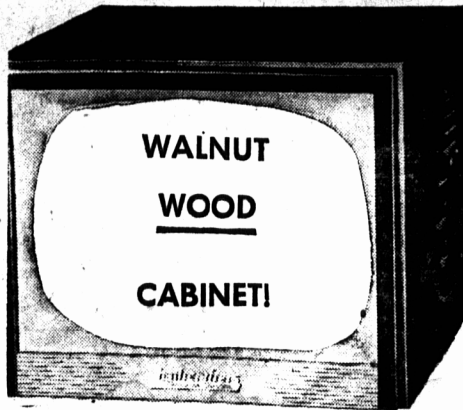
Harriman's office said a panel of food editors would be selected to taste-test syrups entered. Harriman will attend the festival April 6 to crown a state maple queen.

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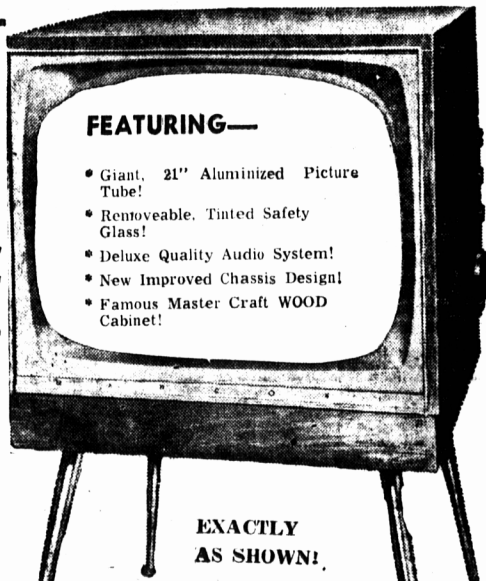


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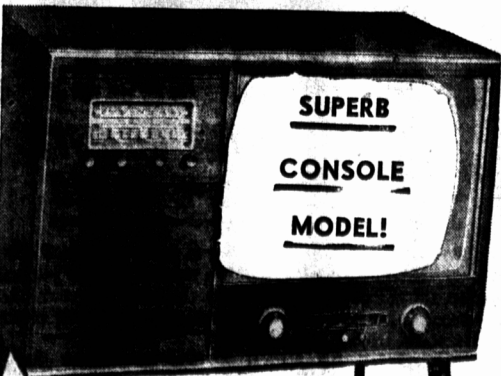


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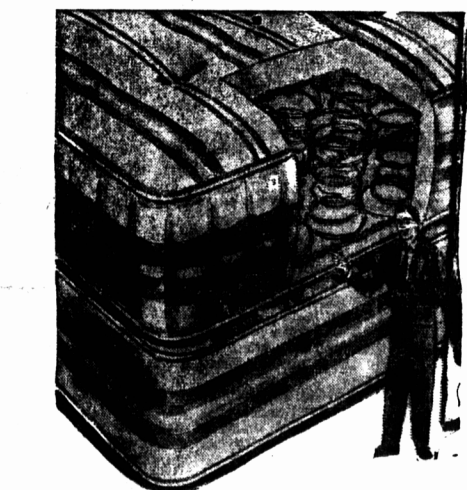
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