



# Tommy Burns: Canada's Unknown World Heavyweight Champion

*Dan McCaffery*

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## **Tommy Burns: Canada's Unknown World Heavyweight Champion** Dan McCaffery

"I will defend my title against all comers, none barred. By this I mean white, black, Mexican, Indian, or any other nationality. I propose to be the champion of the world not the white, or the Canadian or the American. If I am not the best man in the heavyweight division, I don't want the title."

In an era of pervasive racism, Tommy Burns had the courage to embrace bouts with African-Americans, including the great Jack Johnson. When Johnson won, the American South exploded with racial violence and Burns' reputation was widely smeared. But Burns was a terrific fighter who still holds many records after almost a century: he's the only World Heavyweight Champion to have defended his title twice in one night; his eight consecutive knockouts while champ have never been bettered; and at 5'7" he was the shortest titleholder in history.

Award-winning journalist Dan McCaffery at last tells Burns' astonishing story: his humble beginnings and hard-won success, as well as his personal tragedies and virtually unmourned death. Here is a heroic Canadian who beat the odds, defied world opinion, and came out swinging.

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