Dixon, George

(b. July 29, 1870, Halifax, N.S., Can.--d. Jan. 6, 1909, New York City), U.S. boxer, first black to win a world boxing championship. He is considered one of the best fighters in the history of the bantamweight and featherweight divisions (present weight limits 118 pounds and 126 pounds, respectively).

A resident of Boston from 1887, Dixon won the world bantamweight championship by knocking out Nunc Wallace of England in the 18th round on June 27, 1890, in London. Later that year he resigned the title, after one successful defense, and subsequently fought as a featherweight. He held the championship of that class from July 28, 1891, when he knocked out Abe Willis of Australia in the fifth round in San Francisco, to Oct. 4, 1897, when he lost a 20-round decision to Solly Smith, also in San Francisco. He regained that title on Nov. 11, 1898, when he defeated Dave Sullivan in the 10th round in New York City, and he held it until Jan. 9, 1900, when he was knocked out by Terry McGovern in the eighth round, also in New York City. In 20 years of professional boxing (1886-1906) he fought 158 bouts (some boxing historians say 700), including 33 championship fights.