

# Braddock, 58, Takes \$170 Job Along Jersey City's Waterfront



James J. Braddock, 58, once heavyweight champion, works for company making parts for Verrazano-Narrows Bridge.

## Ex-Champ Likes 'Hard Work — Lost a Million Since Quitting Ring in '38

By GAY TALESE

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20—They once called Jim Braddock the "Cinderella Man" because, after working as a longshoreman, he won the heavyweight boxing title and earned almost \$1,000,000 until his retirement in 1938.

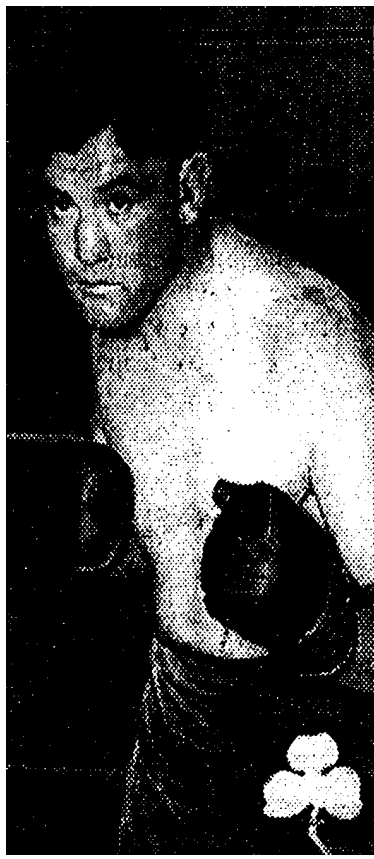
Today, at the age of 58, James J. Braddock was back on the waterfront. He is one of 140 men employed by the American Bridge division of the United States Steel Corporation to work on the massive steel components that will float by barge across the harbor next month to form the upper and lower decks of the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge.

He handles a number of tasks, including operating a crane and maintaining a welding machine. At work, his clothes get greasy, his fingernails black, and his arms so dirty that it is hard to see the tattoos he got one night in the Bowery, in 1921, when he was a frolicsome boy of 16.

Now Braddock earns \$170 a week, and some of the bridge workers on the edge of New York Bay, near the Bayonne Navy Yard, say (as men so often like to say of former champions): "Well, easy come, easy go; now he's broke, just like Joe Louis."

But the Braddock story is not another maudlin epic about a broken prizefighter. He is an erect man of quiet dignity. He says he has a "few thousand" in the bank. He still owns the \$14,000 home he bought in North Bergen shortly after getting knocked out by Louis, June 22, 1937. He still loves his wife of 33 years' marriage and still appears healthy enough to work hard for a living.

His sons work hard, too. One son, Jay, 32, who weighs 330



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The fighter as he looked in 1935, the year he won the world championship.

pounds and stands 6 feet 5 inches, works in a Jersey City powerhouse. Another, 31-year-old Howard, a 240-pounder at 6 feet 7 inches, is in road construction.

"What the hell, I'm a working man," the former champion explained today. "I worked as a longshoreman before I was a fighter, and now I need the money, so I'm working again. I always liked hard work; there's nothing wrong with it."

He lost \$15,000 on a restaurant, Braddock's Corner, once on West 49th Street. The money he put into a marine supply house, which he operated for 10 years, proved not to be a profitable venture.

So now, being a member in good standing with Local 825—Newark's branch of the International Union of Operating Engineers—he is again using his hands.