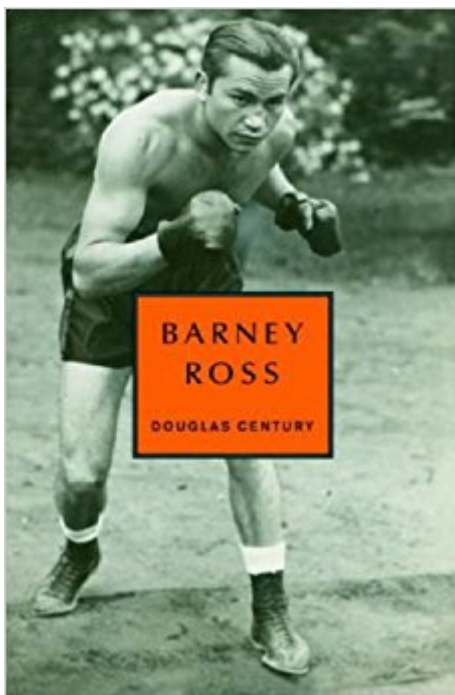


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# Barney Ross (Jewish Encounters)



## Synopsis

Part of the Jewish Encounter series Born Dov-Ber Rasofsky to Eastern European immigrant parents, Barney Ross grew up in a tough Chicago neighborhood and witnessed his father's murder, his mother's nervous breakdown, and the dispatching of his three younger siblings to an orphanage, all before he turned fourteen. To make enough money to reunite the family, Ross became a petty thief, a gambler, a messenger boy for Al Capone, and, eventually, an amateur boxer. Turning professional at nineteen, he would capture the lightweight, junior welterweight, and welterweight titles over the course of a ten-year career. Ross began his career as the scrappy "Jew kid," ended it as an American sports icon, and went on to become a hero during World War II, earning a Silver Star for his heroic actions at Guadalcanal. While recovering from war wounds and malaria he became addicted to morphine, but with fierce effort he ultimately kicked his habit and then campaigned fervently against drug abuse. And the fighter who brought his father's religious books to training camp also retained powerful ties to the world from which he came. Ross worked for the creation of a Jewish state, running guns to Palestine and offering to lead a brigade of Jewish American war veterans. This first biography of one of the most colorful boxers of the twentieth century is a galvanizing account of an emblematic life: a revelation of both an extraordinary athlete and a remarkable man.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Starred Review. A powerful account of the career of "one of the two greatest Jewish boxers of the twentieth century," this third volume in Schocken's Jewish Encounters series delivers a short but fascinating account of life in Chicago's Maxwell Street ghetto in the 1920s and '30s: "a riotous dream of Jewish gunmen and bookmakers, fighting furriers and smashed-nose boxers." Barney Ross (1909-1967) was the son of Eastern European immigrants; his father was killed in a robbery just before Ross's 14th birthday. The teenage Ross started boxing to earn money to free his siblings from an orphanage and went on to earn three world championship titles. *Century* (Street Kingdom) evokes the atmosphere of Ross's youth in a notorious neighborhood, as well as his later professional battles, especially a trio of now legendary 1930s bouts with Jimmy "The Babyfaced Assassin" McLarnin: "As the fighters made their entrances, pearl-grey fedoras bobbed expectantly and wisps of cigar smoke swirled into the night sky." *Century* also charts the "second narrative" of Ross's life, including heroism at Guadalcanal during WWII, a highly publicized struggle with morphine addiction and running guns to Palestine to aid the Jewish fight for a state "to show how Ross's life "was everything the Diaspora tradition had warned Jews not to become, but a fulfillment as well of its secret fantasy." Photos. (Feb. 7) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Barney Ross's life is a curious mix: a boxer with a religious streak who was haunted by the death of his own dad. Douglas Century has managed to deal with all of Ross's contradictions and mysteries, when Jewish fighters were like gods of the ghetto. This is a deeply moving book. • Jerome Charyn, author of *Savage Shorthand: The Life and Death of Isaac Babel* • Fascinating . . . A powerful account of the career of "one of the two greatest Jewish boxers of the twentieth century." • Publishers Weekly (starred review) • If there is still a queue of writers mining the Depression Era for racehorses or prizefighters with inspirational stories that will resonate with today's readers, Douglas Century has beaten them to the punch . . . Ross's consummate boxing skills and toughness made him one of the last heirs to a largely untold tradition of formidable Jewish pugilists. • Kirkus Reviews

Thank you.

Well written biography of a great, and somewhat forgotten, champion. Boxing champion, decorated war hero, political activist, and reformed drug addict, this man's life reads like a Hollywood script. Unfortunately the Hollywood film that was made about Ross was far from a memorable one. But the

author has given us a terrific look back at a remarkable life. I only wish that the book had been longer, it was hard to put down. A great read.

Great, well researched about a fascinating figure. Very well written. The book is a mesmerizing read that paints a story of troubled Jewish sports figure. I highly recommend.

Great book - great & efficient seller, Barney Ross was one amazing man & a true hero !

Biography of Barney Ross, the great Jewish fighter who in addition to being a champion, was also a war hero who fought an addiction to drugs. Good story of a boxing great from a bygone era.

I sent this book to my brother who said he was enjoying it very much. He said it was a great bio of a real champ.

I highly recommend this book. I read for entertainment and was thoroughly entertained. You do not have to be an admirer of the great pugilists of the past to enjoy this book. God bless Barney and what he left us.

Purchased as a gift for my son, we both loved this entertaining story. This is a well written book that turned out to be much more than a boxing tale. Highly recommended.

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