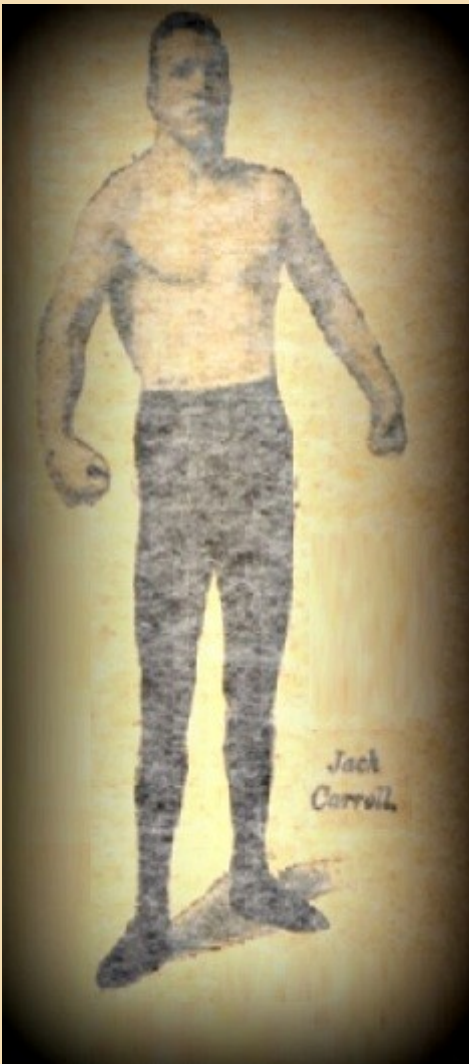


Ron Historyo's
Time Travel
to the

Wrestlers of the
Golden Age

Jack Carroll Young Whistler



If you happen to know the names of maybe a dozen pioneer wrestlers from before the 1930's then Jack and Joe Carroll will probably spin off your memory bank.

Most observers would be forgiven for thinking that they must be brothers and if not, then father and son. Neither is the case, Joe was Jack's uncle.

Within Wigan folklore and famous families wrestling I think it is worth looking at who the Carrolls were. After all I would think that there are plenty of family members about today that come from this dynasty.

The first thing that I will say is that they were strictly of Hindley. Yes you could walk it into Wigan via Ince, but you would need to do a few miles.

Because I have mentioned uncle Joe lets go back and look at this properly. The Hindley Carrolls started in the late 1840's with Patrick Carroll. Pat Carroll had been born in Dublin and was living in Hindley with his wife Ellen from Roscommon.

This was the age of railway building and Pat Carroll was a laborer on the railways. Not only that but between 1822 and 1850 the town of Hindley expanded due to the mills that were opened. Ellen was probably a victim of the Potato Famine in Ireland. The west of Ireland was hit the worst. It was a bit surprising to find Irish migrants

here in 1861. Patrick and family were living behind The Market Place Square in Hindley. This was a stable home for them, even ten years later they were still there. I will tell you one thing about the Irish in those days, in terms of social class they were very poor. This family were living all this time in a cellar dwelling. Man, wife and six children. Uncle Joe Carroll came along in 1868 or thereabouts.

INTERNATIONAL WRESTLING TOURNAMENT,

Promoted by the Right Hon. EARL OF LONSDALE and the Committee of the NATIONAL SPORTING CLUB, held at the
ALHAMBRA THEATRE, LONDON,
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Exclusive privileges—and our well-known perfect lighting system of interiors—enabled us to secure brilliant pictures of this event. From the result of each competition, cinematographed by us in their entirety, we have selected absolutely the best and most important portion only of these heats, which are now published in lengths suitable for a condensed but comprehensive exhibition of twenty minutes' duration.

FINAL BOUT FOR THE LIGHT WEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP.

JACK CARROLL ("Young Whistler" of Hindley, 10 stone) beat **FRANK TONGE** (Bolton, 9st. 8lbs.) Time: 18 min. 15 sec.

Carroll begins well, but the agility of Tonge enables him to evade each hold. Tonge is slippery and very quick, and for some time Carroll can make little impression. Tonge cleverly breaks various holds, but, unfortunately, damaging a muscle in his neck, loses it soon to retire. No. 2168. Code "LIGHT." Length 350ft. Price £5 10s. 6d.

SEMI-FINAL AND FINAL OF THE HEAVY WEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP.

JACK ESSER (Aberdeen, 16st. 10lbs.) beat **NAIDA YAMATO** (Japan, 11st. 4lbs.)
 First Fall, 30 min. Final Fall, 7 min. 30 sec.

The Jap, who gives away 5 inches in height and over 4 stone in weight, is tremendously handicapped. Remarkably quick on his legs, he is difficult to fix, and repeatedly wriggles free of his giant opponent, who picks Yamato up on several occasions and hurls him to the mat, only to see him escape. Esser tries all his different locks, but none succeed, and the Jap stays the limit, the first fall being awarded to Esser on points. The second bout is contested with unaltered vigour, but Yamato finally overcomes to a half Nelson, and Esser is declared the winner. No. 2167. Code "HEAVY." Length 400ft. Price £6 10s. 4d.

SEMI-FINAL AND FINAL OF THE MIDDLE WEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP.

JOE CARROLL (Hindley, 11st. 8lbs.) beat **PETER GOTZ** (London, 10st. 10lbs.)
 First Fall, 18 min. 15 sec. Second Fall, 2 min. 35 sec.

A DESPERATE STRUGGLE. First Carroll and then Gotz is on top, and each defeats leg holds by skilful head work. Gotz tries to trip but without avail, and is in some trouble. Then and then as he will, he cannot break free and is beaten in the first fall. In the second fall by a prettily executed leg strike, Carroll again wins. No. 2169. Code "MIDDLE." Length 360ft. Price £5 16s. 6d.

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The snapshot I am taking is 1871 when an older child Michael Carroll was working in a coal mine at the age of 11 as a Coal Drawer. Michael Carroll was to be Jack Carroll's father.

At 48 years old Pat Carroll was now a Coal Hower and I assume his son went to work with

him. Yes twelve hour shifts. Uncle Joe Carroll seems to have escaped this as a child as he was a Card Minder in a Cotton Mill at age 13. Whilst on the surface the Carroll's had an Irish Ancestry, Jack Carroll's ancestry was enriched as his mother was Welsh, from Newport in Monmouthshire.

Jack Carroll was born in 1883. His upbringing was at Bridgecroft Street and Ellesmere Street in Hindley. By the age of eighteen I found Jack Carroll working down the mine as a Coal Drawer. He was still doing this and living in Hindley after his best years as a catch wrestler.

In 1903 at the birth of his competitive wrestling Jack Carroll married Mary Cowan in Wigan. Mary was from Carlisle and adds a further dimension to the gene pool of anyone who came from them. When Jack Carroll began wrestling competitively, uncle Joe who had been at it for many years was no doubt his mentor. There was a half generation, fifteen year age difference.

I can only take a guess as to why they called Jack "Young Whistler" Uncle Joe had been to USA and mixed with the best, maybe he had been impressed with the stories of the great Clarence Whistler, a Greco Roman Wrestler who had died way back in 1885 at a very young age.

A few years experience and Jack Carroll knew the London scene and by 1908 Bettinson and Bankier had dropped the idea of mixed styles of wrestling and began a Catch Tournament to all comers at the Alhambra (bill above) It was a great year to enter the new competition.

In the opening heat Jack Carroll beat A.C.Halls of Bloomsbury and in the next round a good hard fought half hour beating J.W.Price of Burnley. Many Lancashire v Lancashire

matches were decided on points as half an hour was not always long enough to beat a defensive opponent who knows the Lancashire moves.

Next to fall was J Broadbent of Accrington. Can you picture the scene with William Bankier as MC and Arthur Gutteridge (Jackie Pally's Granddad) one of the seconds?

Sadly for Bolton's Frank Tongue who Carroll fought in the final, it was over quickly with Tongue hurting his neck.

The real icing on the cake was the fact that uncle Joe Carroll won the middleweights by beating Peter Gotz in the final. Maybe fortuitous that Gotz had not entered the light weights, in those days 10 stones was a hard weight for Gotz to come in at. The following year Young Whistler tried going up to Middleweight but was beaten by Henry Irslinger who did not even win the tournament. Winner was Frank Crozier (Middle Weight).

In June 1909 Carroll fought Peter Gotz at Higginshaw grounds in Oldham before 1200 Spectators and after a long fight Gotz paid a pound to buy a draw because he had a Music Hall appearance in Hyde.

January 1910 and it was Alhambra time again at Middleweight Jack went out in the fourth round to Butan Singh, that body weight of ten stone just too hard to get down to. Had he done so he would have met the 1909 and 1910 lightweight winners Gotz and Tom Rose.

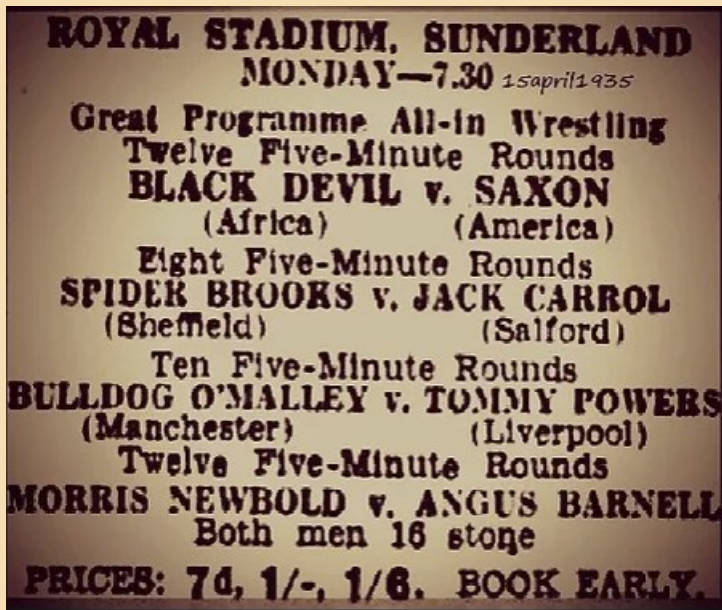
He fought and lost to Wano Katonen at Wigan in 1911 and, in 1912, two thousand spectators packed into Atherton FC to see him fight Job Shambley. A fair chance it was stage managed with Whistler getting rough and disqualified. With Lancashire men resenting the money made out of them in the Music halls of London, Catch wrestling was being promoted by men like the Carrolls, Rose and Shambley at local football grounds in Lancashire.

For those who like career records, well you won't find that here, I will leave that for another site. Late in 1909 there is also one other highlight that I will mention.

On the 26th October 1909 a Steam Ship sailed out of Liverpool for new York. The Carmania had three passengers on board who were wrestlers, Jack and Joe Carroll and an Irishman Con O'Kelly.

By now Joe's career was nearing a conclusion although he did some Lancashire matches for another ten years. I can guess that Joe Carroll had spotted an opportunity. He had his own school of wrestling at the Walworth Empire and I am as sure as I can be that he did some managing and promoting. If he could get Jack some matches all the better, but George Cornelius O'Kelly was a 1908 giant Gold Olympian wrestler born Cork now from Hull, a policeman and fireman. At six three or four he was seriously big in 1909. It was a very brief tour and I suspect that it all went wrong. That of course is my speculation, it could be that money was made.

The team were after O'Kelly fights with Gotch, Jenkins, Connolly or the Terrible Turks Mahmout and Marat. Joe Carroll could smell the money. On 22nd November Con O'Kelly



got his fight with Pat Connelly in New York, Connelly gouged his eyes and the whole thing turned into a fist fight, the worst wrestling ever witnessed in new York proclaimed one newspaper. Maybe that is why I did not find out much more about that tour.

Despite challenging anyone at his weight I was unable to pick up Jack Carroll meeting anyone of significance.

But there is one more chapter to the life of Jack Carroll. The end of 1930 saw the birth of a new "All In" or "Free Style wrestling." Propped up with

imports and veterans Jack Carroll was one of the oldest wrestlers to work in the new era. He wrestled in four different decades. He was not the oldest though, I should imagine that Peter Gotz (born 1877) would hold that record.

In November 1931 Carroll and Gotz had a draw at the London Spots club . It must have been just like old times. In January 1932 they did it again at the Imperial Hall Barnsley, another draw. Then Carroll beat Strangler Cregg at Hull. Later that year there was a comical mixed wrestling match with Miss England at Lincoln where Carroll was disqualified for choking. I should imagine Miss England was Marjory Sword who Carroll had plucked from a Preston Mill to train himself. Pantomime of course.

In April 1933 Carroll wrestled Harold Angus at Doncaster but hurt his shoulder. By now arguably Angus was as great a lightweight as George Kidd and Johnny Saint later became. I have a couple of souvenirs of Carrolls time in the New Age. Above left take a look at 1932 at Beverley and an incredible 1935 at Sunderland.

It's was a long association with wrestling that can only come from a love of the game itself.

Regrettably I usually sign off with a conclusion to a persons life. Jack Carroll seems to have had six children, but I am unsure if he stayed in Hindley and do not know his date of death.

A pleasure though to look at his wrestling career.

With thanks to Ruslan Pashayev over in USA, a Catch Wrestling Enthusiast who helped me along the way.

Historyo