

# **Sam Solomon boxing papers**

**1989.048**

**Finding aid prepared by Celia Caust-Ellenbogen and Sarah  
Leu through the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's Hidden  
Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories.**

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Last updated on April 28, 2014.

African American Museum in Philadelphia

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository</b>	African American Museum in Philadelphia
<b>Creator</b>	Solomon, Sam, 1915-1998
<b>Title</b>	Sam Solomon boxing papers
<b>Call number</b>	1989.048
<b>Date [bulk]</b>	1965-1985
<b>Date [inclusive]</b>	1945-1989
<b>Extent</b>	5 linear feet
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Abstract</b>	<p>"Sam" Solomon was a boxing trainer, manager, and commentator active in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania from the 1950s into the 1980s. He coached five champions including Leon Spinks, who defeated Muhammed Ali in a famous 1978 bout with Solomon in his corner. Solomon also worked with "Lady Tiger," an early female boxer, and other athletes well known locally. The Sam Solomon boxing papers, 1945-1989 (bulk 1965-1985), consist of Sam Solomon's records of his boxing coaching business, materials he collected about boxing, and a small amount of papers from his own boxing career and about baseball. It includes a large number of photographs, newsletters and ephemera, and financial records. There are also U-matic videocassettes and boxing gear.</p>

## Biography/History

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"Sam" Solomon was a boxing trainer, manager, and commentator from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania whose proteges included champion Leon Spinks.

Born in 1915, Solomon grew up in Philadelphia and took up boxing at the age of 15. A star athlete, in addition to becoming a local boxing champion, he played catcher in the Negro Baseball League for the Central Stars. Solomon stopped boxing himself around the time of his marriage in 1937.

Solomon began coaching boxers in the 1950s and would continue to do so for almost 30 years, working out of several Philadelphia gyms including historic Frazier Gym. He coached five champions: heavyweights Ernie Terrell, Leon Spinks and Trevor Berbick, and light heavyweights Matthew Saad Muhammad and Leslie Stewart. Solomon was with Spinks when he defeated Muhammed Ali in a famous 1978 bout. Solomon's best-known local fighters included Eugene "Cyclone" Hart and "Lady Tiger," an early female boxer.

For over three decades Solomon worked for the Pennsylvania Railroad, primarily as a mail handler. After his retirement in 1975, he owned a grocery store and a laundromat in West Philadelphia. Solomon died in 1998.

### **Bibliography:**

Smith, Ramona. "Samuel Solomon, Veteran Boxer, Trainer." *Philadelphia Inquirer*, December 18, 1998. Accessed January 28, 2013. [http://articles.philly.com/1998-12-18/news/25721287\\_1\\_ernie-terrell-boxing-marvis-frazier](http://articles.philly.com/1998-12-18/news/25721287_1_ernie-terrell-boxing-marvis-frazier).

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## Scope and Contents

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This collection consists of Sam Solomon's records of his boxing coaching business, materials he collected about boxing, and a small amount of papers from his own boxing career and about baseball. It includes a large number of photographs, newsletters and ephemera, and financial records. There are also U-matic videocassettes and boxing gear.

The records of Solomon's boxing coaching business consist of ledgers, 1970-1983 (with gaps); management contracts, 1961-1982; and some correspondence, receipts, and other administrative records.

There are many materials relating to individual boxers in this collection, most of whom Solomon worked with, and some who may have just been of interest to him. There are resumes and biographies, press releases about fights, boxer ratings, bout schedules and advertisements, souvenir programs and ticket stubs, boxing scorecards/results, a quantity of clippings (circa 1971-1987), and a large number of photographs of boxers, in and out of the ring, some identified, some signed. There are many boxing

magazines and newsletters from around the country but especially Philadelphia-based, notably a run of "Tonight's Boxing Program" (Philadelphia, Pa.) issues dating from 1970-1991.

There are about 11 U-matic videocassettes in the collection, labeled as follows:

- "The Contender - Ernie Terrell," undated
- A tribute to Rev. Leon Sullivan, undated
- Billy Daniels vs. Cleveland Williams, undated
- Cyclone Hart vs. Benny Buscoe, undated
- Cyclone Hart vs. Benny Buscoe, undated
- Ernie Terrell vs. Muhammed Ali, undated
- Hart vs. Gregory, undated
- Philadelphia Boxing Connection, undated
- Solomon interview and still, 1989 April 26 (boxing reel #8)
- Solomon interview, 1989 April 26 (boxing reel #7)
- Sugar Ray Robinson vs. Jake La Motta, undated
- Unlabeled, undated

Some items of boxing gear are also included in the collection: one mouth guard, two red robes, two sets of gloves, one yellow jacket, one blue sweater, one gray sweater, one red sweater jacket, one black jacket, and four different colored socks.

A rough, handwritten inventory is available on-site.

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## Administrative Information

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African American Museum in Philadelphia

Finding aid prepared by Celia Caust-Ellenbogen and Sarah Leu through the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories.

### Sponsor

This preliminary finding aid was created as part of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories. The HCI-PSAR project was made possible by a grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

### Access Restrictions

Contact African American Museum in Philadelphia for information about accessing this collection.

### Immediate Source of Acquisition Note

Accession AAMP.1989.048.

## Processing Information Note

Summary descriptive information on this collection was compiled in 2012-2014 as part of a project conducted by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania to make better known and more accessible the largely hidden collections of small, primarily volunteer run repositories in the Philadelphia area. The Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories (HCI-PSAR) was funded by a grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

This is a preliminary finding aid. No physical processing, rehousing, reorganizing, or folder listing was accomplished during the HCI-PSAR project.

In some cases, more detailed inventories or finding aids may be available on-site at the repository where this collection is held; please contact African American Museum in Philadelphia directly for more information.

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## Controlled Access Headings

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### Geographic Name(s)

- Philadelphia (Pa.)

### Personal Name(s)

- Solomon, Sam, 1915-1998
- Spinks, Leon, 1953-
- Terrell, Ernie, 1939-

### Subject(s)

- African American athletes
- African American boxers
- African Americans
- Boxers (Sports)
- Boxing
- Boxing managers
- Boxing trainers
- Coaches (Athletics)

- Sports