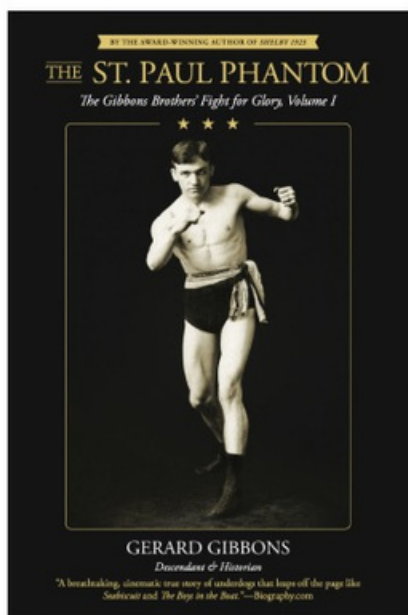




Publisher:
Independently
Published

ISBN:
9798218782092

Publication Date:
06/09/2026

Binding:
Paperback

Copyright Date:
N/A

U.S. SRP:
24.99

[BUY ON BOOKSHOP.ORG](#)

Get the best author info and savings on services when you subscribe!

IndieReader is the ultimate resource for indie authors! We have years of great content and how-tos, services geared for self-published authors that help you promote your work, and much more. Subscribe today, and you'll always be ahead of the curve.

Email *

Submit



THE ST. PAUL PHANTOM: THE GIBBONS BROTHERS' FIGHT FOR GLORY, VOLUME I

By Gerard Gibbons

★IR RATING:

4.4

Written by Gerard Gibbons, *THE ST. PAUL PHANTOM: The Gibbons Brothers' Fight for Glory, Volume I* is well-researched, emotionally powerful, and beautifully crafted. With a broader vision of a changing America, this work of narrative nonfiction proves a riveting debut volume.

★IR Approved Sports/Fitness/Recreation

Posted by IR Staff | May 4, 2026

This work of non-fiction tells the story of two Irish immigrant brothers' rise to prominence as boxers, from their struggles in the working-class neighborhoods and railyard shadows of St. Paul to their eventual national acclaim in early twentieth-century America.



THE ST. PAUL PHANTOM: The Gibbons Brothers' Fight for Glory, Volume I is a work of narrative nonfiction, as well as a family drama and American social history by Gerard Gibbons. This is an ambitious (and often thrilling) story, more so than other traditional tales of boxers. *THE ST. PAUL PHANTOM* is more of a broad brushstroke painting of immigrant aspiration, brotherly love, spiritual beliefs, and the societal violence inherent in America's cultural mythology. The two main subjects are Mike and Tommy Gibbons. From page one, the author demonstrates that this isn't simply the account of prize-fighting careers, but also how immigration, urbanization, spectacle, and war have shaped the society we live in today.

Gerard Gibbons's most significant strength lies in the cinematic nature of his narrative voice. He effectively writes action scenes with great momentum, and he does just as well with atmospheric ones. A line like "Their twilight movements were spectral at first: weightless, like ghosts gliding through mist" captures the kind of kinetic prose he sustains throughout. Gibbons also creates a clear picture of the cramped family home in Frogtown in St. Paul, the rooftop sparring sessions filmed for early cinema atop the Woolworth Building, the railroad labor, and even the emotions that surround Mike's climb up the ladder to success. All are vivid, all inhabited. The research was clearly done to an impressive degree, which provides a sense of authority to the biography without feeling heavy or overly burdened.

While the number of people in the historical cast is large, the book still manages to find its way back to the human aspects. That includes the relationship between the brothers, as well as how these people were influenced by those around them—such as George Barton (Mike's early sportswriter mentor), and Father Dunphy (the Irish priest who serves as Tommy's spiritual guide and sparring partner).

The occasional overreach, rather than a lack of accomplishment, is what keeps *THE ST. PAUL PHANTOM* from reaching its full potential. The quick flow of metaphors and rhetorical flourishes in the text may leave the reader with insufficient time to process them. If you're reading this book primarily for the sports plot, you may find that the wealth of historical detail and prominent characters drags you down. This is not a lack of resolve, but rather an overabundance of resources.

Reading *THE ST. PAUL PHANTOM* is similar to entering a true story. It will carry you away into the working-class neighborhoods of St. Paul where Mike first learned to fight, and through the larger sweep of history reshaping America during this period. The author does a wonderful job moving through fast-paced fight scenes and pulling back into the broader historical view to keep the momentum going. Perhaps the most important thing that makes this book work, however, is its heartwarming depiction of family—specifically Mike and Tommy Gibbons—and how they carry each other through it all. Needless to say, Volume II is eagerly anticipated.

Written by Gerard Gibbons, *THE ST. PAUL PHANTOM: The Gibbons Brothers' Fight for Glory, Volume I* is well-researched, emotionally powerful, and beautifully crafted. With a broader vision of a changing America, this work of narrative nonfiction proves a riveting debut volume.

—Felix Metiagi for IndieReader