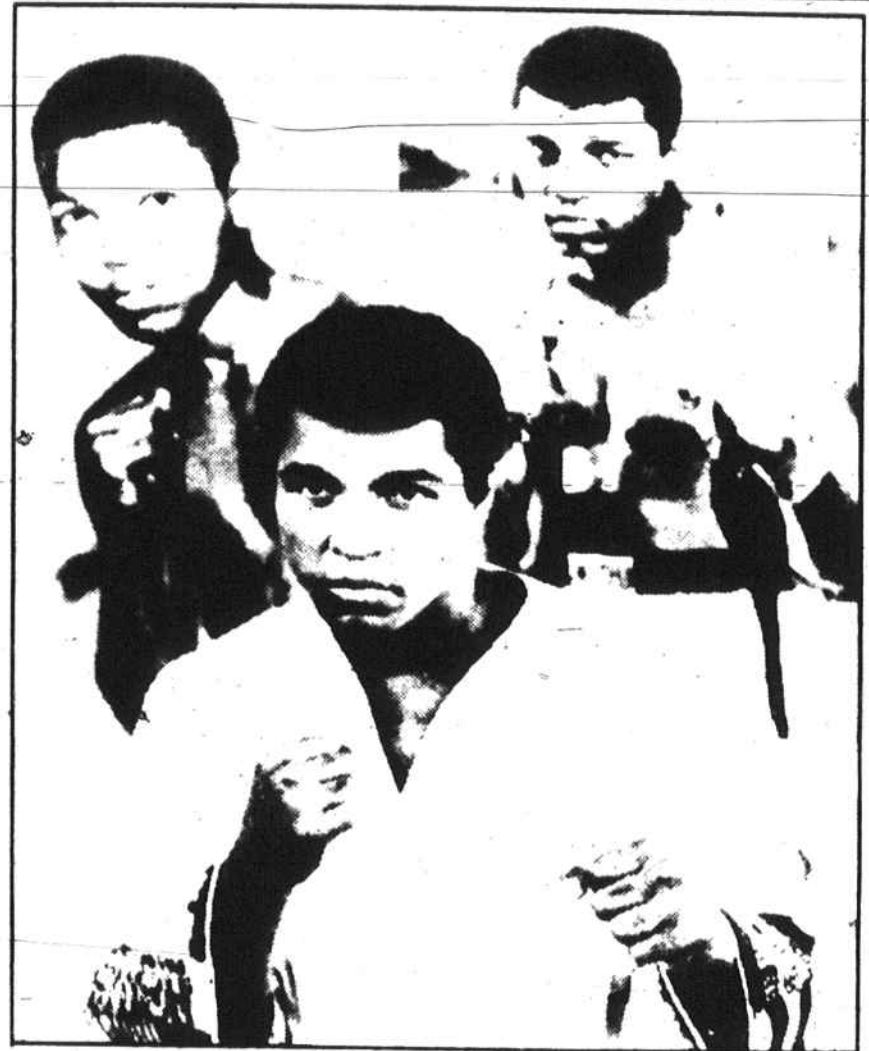


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Arturo Alfonso Schomburg was born in Santurce, Puerto Rico in 1874. Interested in promoting all aspects of black history, he established a research library during the Harlem Renaissance in the 1920s. Today, New York's Schomburg Center for Research and Black Culture houses over 100,000 volumes, 80,000 microfilms, and 12,000 sound recordings

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Muhammad Ali

Muhammad Ali was born in Louisville, Kentucky as Cassius Clay. He first exhibited his talents at the 1960 Olympics. The then Cassius Clay won a gold medal and began to take the country by storm.

He was managed as a professional boxer by ten businessmen from Louisville. This colorful and talented boxer won his first 19 bouts. In 1964 he defeated Sonny Liston and gained the heavyweight championship. In the midst of the civil rights movement, this young fighter displayed wit, courage and skill.

In 1962, Cassius Clay adopted the Black Muslim religious faith. He took the name Muhammad Ali in 1964. During the Vietnam War, he became a conscientious objector and refused to be drafted into the U.S. Army. His status as a conscientious objector was not recognized by U.S. military officials. In fact, the Black Muslim faith was not accepted as a religion by the government. Ali received much publicity, most of it negative. He experienced severe punishment. His championship title, as well as his boxing license, was rescinded. Ali's spirit remained, as he insisted that "I am the Champ!" Among the masses of African-Americans, he was a hero.

In 1970, things began to look brighter. A court order overturned his suspension from boxing. It was a glorious day! He began a remarkable comeback. While he lost to Joe Frazier in 1971, he reclaimed the championship title in 1974. At age 32, in Zaire, Africa, Muhammad Ali defeated George Foreman by a knockout in the eighth round. Ali made lots of noise and recited rhymes about the championship status.

Ali was only the second man to regain the heavyweight title. However, in 1978, Ali lost the title to Leon Spinks. Although he is no longer the heavyweight champion, he is respected and revered. He remains a Muslim. Until his illness affected his speech, he was sought after as a speaker. Whenever Ali is seen, he is asked for autographs. As a celebrity, he maintains visibility and is remembered with pride and respect, and is a champ!

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