

September 2010 Historical Question

Which resident of Cottonwood Heights was a world wrestling champion?

Delbert Kunkel was born in 1905 in Salt Lake City and lived in Butlerville where he operated a plumbing business when he wasn't wrestling.

In the wrestling world, he was known as "Dynamite Del." Boasting the title of Light Heavyweight Champion of the Pacific Coast and Canada, Kunkel was a feature attraction at the McCullough Arena in Salt Lake City.

In Oregon in December of 1934, Kunkel defeated World Welterweight Champion Jack Reynolds. Reynolds had ruled as king of the welters for nearly 14 years. After a fight in which he used such moves as the Boston Crab, Kunkel lifted the champion sky-high in a terrific Australian Pile Driver that ended the match. Mat critics rated this bout as the greatest exhibition of grappling since a match in Albany in 1927.

With 10 years of grappling experience, Kunkel was rated among the top five middleweight wrestlers in the world. In 1937, having beaten every wrestler of importance under 200 pounds, Dynamite Del was named World Tigerweight Champion.

Kunkel passed away in 1980.