



# A Tiger Rose out of Georgia: Tiger Flowers Champion of the World

*Bob Mee*

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## **A Tiger Rose out of Georgia: Tiger Flowers Champion of the World** Bob Mee

Theodore 'Tiger' Flowers rose above racist bigotry of the Deep South to become the first African-American middleweight champion of the world. To do this, this Christian family man beat a boxing legend, Harry Greb, in the first of the great sporting cathedrals, Madison Square Garden. It was a victory that stunned the sporting world and made him a household name. Yet within a year, he had lost his championship on a decision some said was influenced by Al Capone. Within another year, Flowers was dead following a seemingly innocuous operation in the clinic of a controversial surgeon to remove lumps and scars above his eyes. Was his death at the age of 34 an accident, a result of negligence, or something more sinister? And what was behind his white manager's attempt to throw Tiger's widow into an asylum and their daughter into an orphanage? Flowers' inspirational and harrowing story, set against a horrific backdrop of lynching and routine prejudice, is largely forgotten now, but he paved the way for black sporting heroes like Joe Louis, Jesse Owens and Jackie Robinson

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