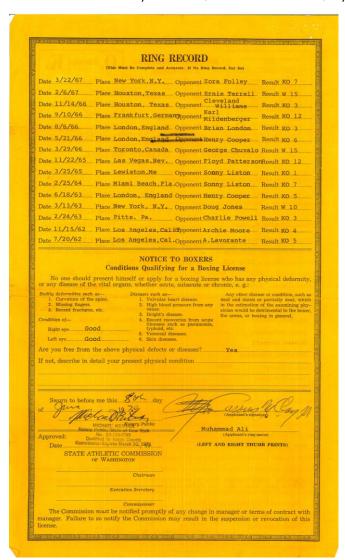
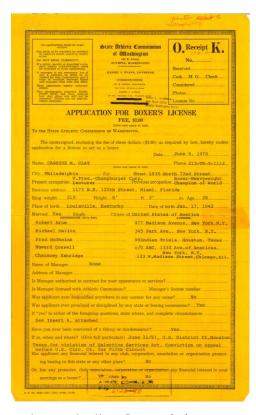
Muhammad Ali in Washington State

One of the hottest controversies of the summer of 1970 was whether or not to allow a boxing match to take place at Seattle in the fall between Cassius Clay, the former heavy-weight champion of the world, and Joe Frazier. The controversy is detailed in the records of the Professional Athletic Commission found in the Archives.

At the time, Clay was described as "boxing's most non-grata person" for his 1967 refusal to be inducted into the armed forces. He was ultimately found guilty by the U.S. District Court in Houston, Texas, for violating the Selective Service Act, a felony. Although the Supreme Court reversed that decision in 1971, the felony conviction essentially made him ineligible for a boxing license in Washington State.

The issue was very heated, as can be seen, by the





correspondence to the Commission on both sides of the issue. The main arguments were that as a conscientious objector he should not be allowed to fight at all, and the other side stated it was un-American not to allow Clay to make a living in his profession while his case was under appeal. Ultimately the Commission decided 2-1 to deny Clay's application thereby putting an end to the issue in Washington.

There a few items of interest in Clay's application to the Commission. First, he lists his previous occupation as "Boxer-Heavyweight Champion of the World." Second, one of the references listed by Clay was Howard Cossell. And lastly he began to sign the application Muhammad Ali, but crossed that out and wrote Cassius Clay.