

# “AS THE TWIG IS BENT” BOB HOFFMAN AND YOUTH TRAINING IN THE PRE-STEROID ERA<sup>1</sup>

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It is therefore agreed that we should employ gymnastic training, and how we should employ it. For until puberty we should apply lighter exercises, forbidding hard diet and severe exertions, in order that nothing may hinder the growth; for there is no small proof that too severe training can produce this result.<sup>2</sup>

—*Aristotle*

Pandarus: Why, he is very young; and yet will he, within three pound, lift as much as his brother Hector.<sup>3</sup>

—*William Shakespeare*

For most of the twentieth century the American sporting community and general public doubted the efficacy of weight training as a means to develop health, fitness, and athletic performance. In fact, it was widely believed to cause such physical irregularities as muscle-binding, heart strain, or rupture. Even more controversial was the proposition that children should train with weights. While Bob Hoffman, proprietor of the York Barbell Company and editor of *Strength & Health* magazine, was a strong proponent of weight training since the 1930s, it was only after World War II that he embarked on a sustained campaign to incorporate pre-teens and adolescents into his programs. It was a bold promotional strategy designed not only to capitalize on the growing desire of consumers for his strength and fitness apparatus and food supplements but to provide a youthful base for nurturing American athletes. What began with a monthly magazine series, “Especially for S & H Boys,” culminated in a popular “Boys Club” column launched by Hoffman in a 1956 editorial entitled “As the Twig is Bent.” This feature was devoted to youth training and included articles, success stories, and advice to parents on ways to guide their children to a

healthier and more athletic development. Its impact was enhanced by a focus on youth activities and achievements in other sections of the magazine and contributions of other members of Hoffman’s staff, some of whom enlisted their own children to promote weight training for youth. Readers who joined the “Boys Club” were offered the opportunity to purchase a line of “Little Samson” products, including training shirts and barbell and dumbbell sets.

Eventually some of Bob’s Strength and Health Boys grew up to become successful weightlifters and bodybuilders or accomplished athletes in other sports. Increasingly the magazine’s emphasis shifted to the achievements of these young adults, and as American physical culture changed, athletes became aware of other training aids and opportunities to enhance their development. The waning popularity of “Boys Club” by the mid-1960s was partly a product of its success. Training with weights was becoming more acceptable generally and more accepted by youth hoping to be bigger and stronger. But they were soon supplementing their weight exercises with another training aid that was more controversial than previous innovations to induce more mus-

cular strength and size. However, York could not market or openly endorse steroids and, much to Hoffman's chagrin, the twig was being bent in a different direction.

Hoffman did not start lifting weights until 1925 when he reached the age of 27, and even then most of his iron game associates, including members of his own York Oil Burner Weightlifting Club, were young adults. The idea of youth training likely came from George Jowett, who was publisher of the first fourteen issues of *Strength & Health* with Hoffman serving as editor. Jowett, an Englishman who migrated to North America during World War I, borrowed much of the magazine's format from *Health & Strength*, founded in London in 1898 by Hopton Hadley. One of its most popular and ongoing features was the Health & Strength League, conceived in 1906 to establish a "robust brotherhood" of physical culturists throughout the world to disseminate

the principles of health and strength. Leaguers were entitled to purchase badges, pendants, and brooches as well as a *Leaguer's Guide and Pocket Companion* and were invited to share news and experiences with others. By 1946 it boasted over 202,000 members.<sup>4</sup> The announcement of an American Strength & Health League that appeared in the first issue of *Strength & Health* in December 1932 bore a close resemblance to the English version, offering an array of medals, belts, shields, diplomas, and certificates to anyone interested in sport, exercise, bodybuilding, and strength. It was

the place to bring your problems and



Bob Hoffman believed—well before most “experts”—that weight training would be beneficial for children. In the 1950s he began marketing a “Little Samson” barbell set that fit the smaller stature of children and he also devoted a considerable portion of *Strength & Health* magazine to stories about boys who trained with barbells. This photo, taken at Hoffman's home in the mid-1950s, shows Hoffman helping an unidentified boy learn the basics of weight training.

*Photo courtesy John Fair*

find your pals. We keep on file here the names, ages, size, interest in sports, measurements, lifting ability and other athletic information about all subscribers to STRENGTH & HEALTH, all members of the A.S.H.L. We can tell you of athletic clubs in your territory, of those in your section interested in your sport. You can meet them personally or correspond with them. You can write to S. & H. Leaguers in this and other countries and never need be lonesome again in the happiness and good fellowship

you will obtain from these enthusiasts the world over.<sup>5</sup>

It was not until the second issue, however, that special attention was placed on youth, it being noted that the object of the organization was to promote right living and proper physical training “to improve the health of the youth of our nation in particular, but persons of all ages as well.” Jowett and Hoffman also put in place a system of military style ranks—sergeant, lieutenant, and captain—for those who organized local clubs, and a summer camp in Ocean City, New Jersey, for League members. It was a curious amalgam of the Boy Scouts and a pen pal club with a pronounced moral and nationalistic tone. While the organizers were no doubt sincere in their desire to “keep American citizens up with the rest of the world, mentally and physically,” the Strength & Health League was also a clever strategy to market magazines.<sup>6</sup>

As the circulation of *Strength & Health* grew dramatically during the most difficult years of the Depression—from monthly sales of 4,800 in June 1934 to 51,333 copies in October 1936—the Strength & Health League played an integral role in delivering Hoffman’s fitness message; and teenage weight trainees made up a substantial portion of its membership.<sup>7</sup> Hence when Bob prepared his primary statement on health, fitness, and well-being, *How to be Strong, Healthy and Happy*, in 1938, he dedicated it to “The Youth of America” and included a special chapter on the “Physical Condition of American Youth.” Although he applauded the efforts of the YMCA for the physical improvement of young Americans, he feared the nation was falling behind dictatorships that were “building a superior brand of mankind.” He estimated that “seventy-five per cent of the children in our schools have defects” and unless drastic changes were made it was possible to “lose our freedom and things worth more than life itself.” Physical activity, he argued, was “good for the youngsters. It will make them grow larger and stronger.”<sup>8</sup> This message was strongly reinforced by printed testimonies from Strength & Health Leaguers throughout the war.

Then suddenly this section of the magazine that seemed so mutually beneficial to publisher and reader alike was abruptly terminated with the January 1945 issue. A rationale for “No More S & H League” followed in response to an appeal for its reinstatement from a reader who shared a tale of betrayed innocence. Philip

Miller of Brooklyn, New York, had “made an offer of three prizes for photos sent to me. I only received twelve replies and most of these were from fellows who wanted to trade pictures of a questionable nature. You know what I mean, unadorned.” Bob replied:

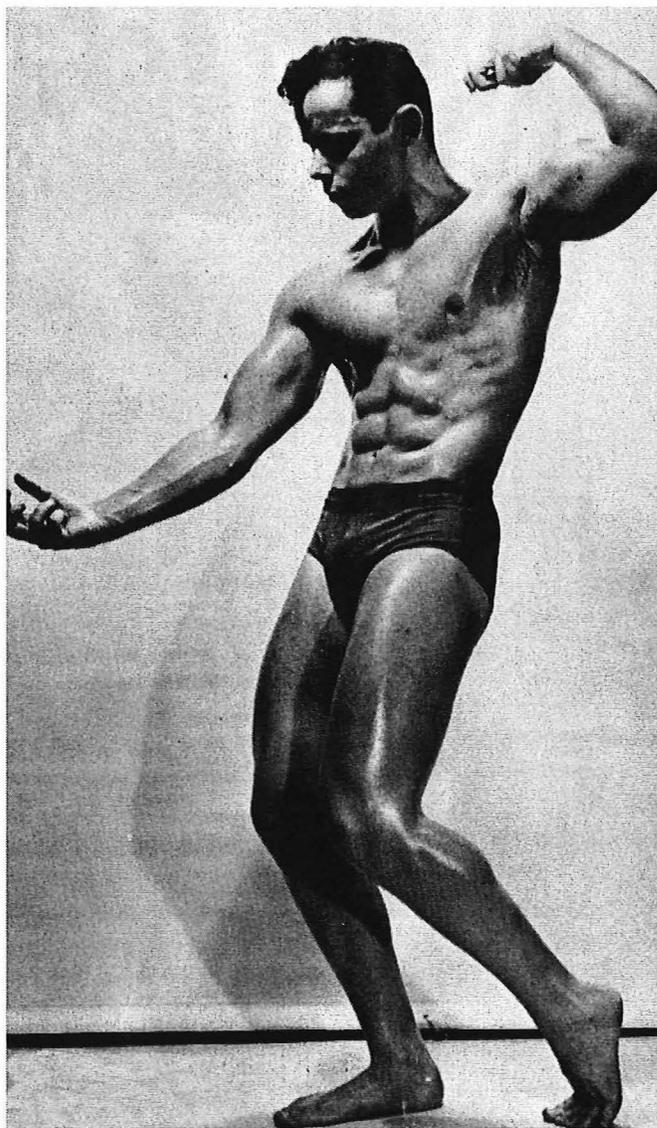
It takes all sorts of people to make a world they say, but too many of the wrong kind, those with queer tendencies took advantage of the league notes and it came very close to putting us out of business. It cost us \$10,000 in direct legal fees, and the case originated with post office inspectors who traced the writers of letters and the senders of the unadorned photos, who stated that they had found the names in the league notes. Although we were perfectly innocent . . . there was a serious attempt, to withdraw the mailing privileges from *Strength & Health* which would have put us out of business, and strange as it may seem to those who don’t know the procedure in Federal court, it would have put Ye Olde Editor in jail for an indeterminate period. I can still hear the U.S. district attorney shouting and ranting about that ‘Slimy Salacious *Strength and Health* magazine, that spawning ground, that breeding ground for unnatural sex practices. Why they even operate a department, in which they encourage readers to write to each other and exchange unnatural sex letters and pictures.’ . . . So the league notes are out of the magazine for some time at least, possibly [until] we can figure out some way to continue them without the wrong sort of people taking advantage of it.<sup>9</sup>

Indeed such a lucrative component of Hoffman’s growing business enterprise could not be allowed to lapse for long since the company was benefitting from a postwar boom in sales of barbells and other exercise apparatus to a heretofore untapped youth market. Company records indicate that gross sales increased from \$282,900 in 1945 to \$558,419 in 1946.<sup>10</sup> Following fast on the

removal of "League Notes" there appeared a new section of the magazine called "Especially for S & H Boys" which carefully avoided any hint of sexual impropriety or facilitation of interaction among young readers.

"Especially for S & H Boys" did, however, target youthful trainees. It was to be "a meeting place for young men who have made the right start on the road to health and happiness." Bob recognized that "the most critical stage of life is the period of puberty" which occurs for about two years between the ages of thirteen and seventeen. "During this period the young man is made over physically and spiritually. He comes into possession of all his bodily functions." Repeating a theme from his book, he believed that post-war Americans, though taller and heavier than their fathers, were "not active enough physically." Yet it was this new generation "on whom the future of our country depends."<sup>11</sup> Hoffman proudly illustrated the egalitarian nature of muscular manhood by displaying photographs and testimonials from all races, nationalities and regions, including such S & H Boys as Geddes Phillips (Trinidad); Richard Kajiyama (Hawaii); Steve Papadopoulos (Bronx); Irv Rutberg (Philadelphia); Reynaldo Raposo dos Santos (Rio de Janeiro); David Collier (Tennessee); Alex Matika (New Jersey); Joseph di Nota (Brooklyn); John Iaccino (New York City); Bill Hill (Montreal); John Patrico (Detroit); and V. Krishna (Fiji).<sup>12</sup> Virtually none of them were older than 17, and one "young superman," Thomas Lincoln Smith of Hopewell, Virginia, was only five months old, having built himself up in two months "from a scrawny eight pound baby to eighteen pounds of healthy solid flesh."<sup>13</sup> Above all, Bob sought to dispel existing myths about weight training, often held by parents and other well-meaning adults. They will

try to discourage you. They will try to frighten you with the common but untrue beliefs of those who do not know, that you will become muscle-bound, that you will injure or rupture yourself, that you will stunt your growth, shorten your life, have to exercise all your life or you will get fat or the muscles will waste away, you'll strain your heart, lose your vitality, so that you will not be the father of strong, healthy children when you have embarked on a life of marital bliss.



Paul Waldman of Erie, Pennsylvania, was a serious weight trainer who won the Mr. High School physique contest in 1953. Because of his proximity to York, Waldman became friends with Jim Murray, John Grimek, and Bob Hoffman and began writing articles for the magazine. Waldman, now 76, continues to train regularly and has become an artist of considerable note who makes his home in New York City. In a recent interview, Waldman told Jan Todd that on the matter of youth training Bob Hoffman was a visionary. He also recounted a discussion he once had with Mr. America Jim Park who told him, "It won't be long before everyone will understand that athletes need to lift weights, and that they should start while they're still teenagers."

Quite to the contrary, Hoffman argued that it was not possible to strain the heart through exercise. "It is a muscle, and like all other muscles it strengthens and improves with use." Likewise from stretching his ligaments, tendons, and joints, any advanced barbell man



This photo of, Paul "Butch" Oudinot, at age eight, marked his first appearance in *Strength & Health*. He is shown here performing a wrestler's bridge with what's reportedly 150 pounds of additional weight via his sister and the old globe barbell he's holding at arms' length.

was "far more flexible than other athletes or ordinary people." Some could not only perform a full split but could even touch the floor with their elbows without bending their knees! More questionable was Hoffman's assertion that weight training would not only *not* stunt growth but could even enable youths to grow taller.<sup>14</sup>

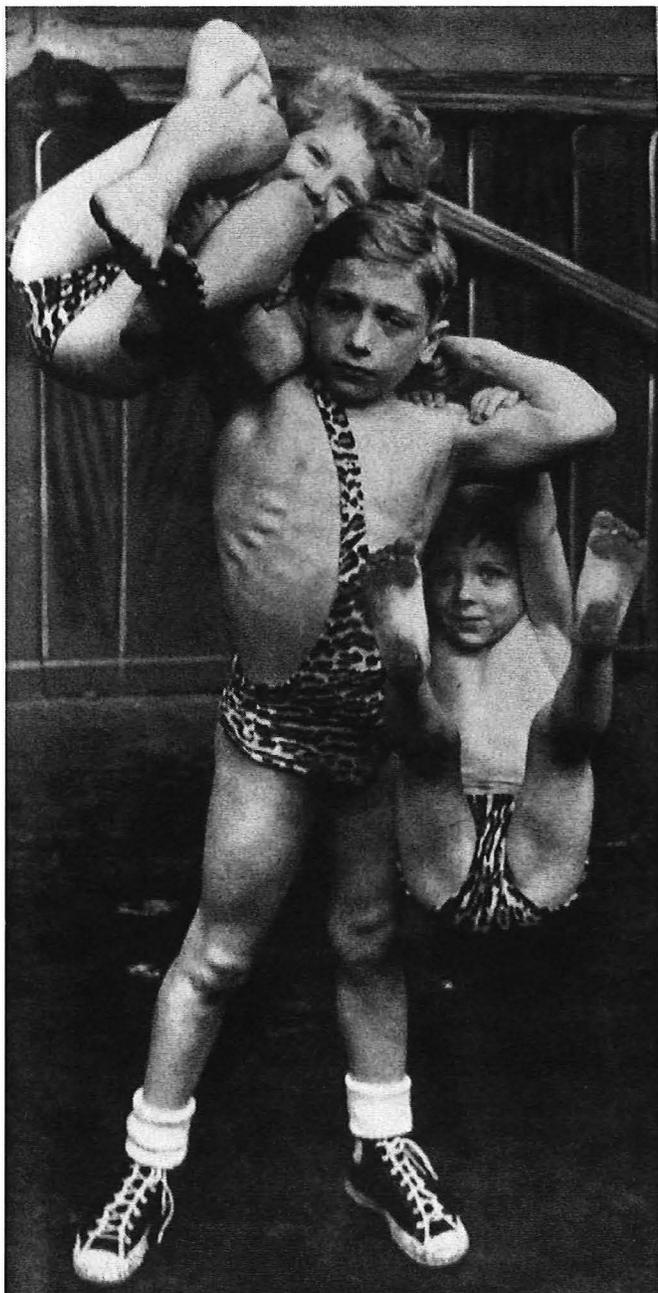
As to when a child should start lifting weights, Hoffman believed the earlier the better. "Gains are much easier to make very early in life, when the boy enters his teens or even before," he advised. To illustrate his argument, he pointed out numerous strength stars who had started early, the most spectacular being John Davis, who won the world light-heavyweight championship in 1938 at age 17 and went on to dominate the heavyweight class until the early 1950s. Then there was Frank Orant of Philadelphia, who became the youngest and lightest lifter (at 179 pounds) to jerk 400 pounds overhead. Arguably the most remarkable illustration of Bob's point, however, was Pete George, a product of Larry Barnholdt's American College of Modern Weightlifting in Akron. Dubbed a "Boy Wonder," George became a national champion at age 16 and at 17 became world champion and set a lightweight world clean and jerk record of 354½ pounds. He went on to claim a gold and two silver Olympic medals and four more world cham-

pionships.<sup>15</sup>

Also notable were some physique stars who started lifting at an early age. They included Armand Tanny of Rochester, New York, who was inspired to train at age 13 by his brother Vic and by reading *Strength & Health*. As a major bodybuilder, he won the Pro Mr. America (1949) and Mr. USA (1950) and later joined Mae West's famous troupe of musclemen. Another young talent, 17-year-old Marvin Eder of the East Side Barbell Club of New York City was a "superman" in both physique and strength. He later performed one of the most amazing feats in iron game history by doing parallel bar dips with 435 pounds. Little did Bob know that 17-year-old Eric Pedersen of Waterman, California, whose picture appeared in the August 1946 issue of *Strength & Health* would tie Steve Reeves for the Mr. America title the following year. Finally there was Gene Myers, a pupil of Vic Tanny in Santa Monica, California, who, by age 18 won the Mr. Los Angeles Contest. His fine physique merited him a cover shot and story in the July 1948 issue of *Strength & Health*.<sup>16</sup> Hoffman was emphatic that there was "no harmful stress or strain upon the immature body." To assuage parental concerns that even a hundred pounds might be too much weight, Hoffman made it "possible for the young fellows to get the weight they want, without their parents fearing they will injure themselves" by offering "a 70 pound set which will be enough to begin."<sup>17</sup>

Hoffman's "poster child," however, was Paul "Butch" Oudinot, Jr. of nearby Reading, Pennsylvania, who first appeared in the April 1950 issue of *Strength & Health* at age eight executing a wrestler's bridge of 150 pounds (with his sister Susanne and a barbell) and deadlifting 130 pounds.<sup>18</sup> By ten he was performing at annual *Strength & Health* picnics and Bob's birthday shows dressed in Sandow style breech clouts or a York Barbell Club t-shirt. His fame quickly spread with eight television engagements, including a prize-winning appearance on Paul Whiteman's *Goodyear Review*, the original "amateur hour," and a full-page feature in *Life* magazine. Weighing only 82½ pounds, Butch could press 105, snatch 105, clean and jerk 140, and squat 210, noted *Strength & Health* editor Jim Murray, as well as tear a Reading phone directory into quarters.<sup>19</sup>

Another of Butch's stunts is reminiscent of the way Arthur Saxon used to toss barbells around. He lifts his 85-pound



Child sensation Paul "Butch" Ouidnot of Reading, PA, became known as the "strongest boy in America" and put together a strength act that he did in television appearances and at the annual York Barbell picnic. Ouidnot is approximately ten in this photo and weighs about 80 pounds. *Photo Courtesy John Fair*

weight overhead and then lowers it to his shoulders. From there, he allows the weight to roll down his back where he again catches it before lowering it to the floor. But that isn't all! Butch then deadlifts the weight, without letting go

of it, to the small of his back, leans forward to allow it to roll up his back where he catches it at the shoulders and then jerks the 85 pounds from behind the neck. He then drops the bar, catching it in the crook of his arms before setting it down.<sup>20</sup>

Another strength prodigy that impressed Murray was Paul Waldman of Erie, Pennsylvania, who at age 14 did squats with 325 pounds.<sup>21</sup> By the time he was 16, he was bench pressing 325 and winning physique titles, including national Mr. High School in Chicago in 1953.<sup>22</sup> Waldman was not only good enough to merit a cover and feature stories, he started writing articles for *Strength & Health*. In the January 1952 issue he advised young readers that "one is never too young to lift weights."<sup>23</sup> Coverman for February 1955 was 19-year-old Glenn Bishop of Chicago, who finished second to Waldman in the Mr. High School contest. Bishop had been training since 1949 to strengthen his abdominal muscles after a hernia operation and could squat 300 pounds for ten repetitions.<sup>24</sup>

What confirmed Hoffman's belief that "one is never too young" was the victory of the American team under his tutelage at the 1950 world championships in Paris. All of his medalists—Joe Pitman, Pete George, Stan Stanczyk, and John Davis—had started training in their early teens and were now "Strength & Health Boys Grown Up," an expression Hoffman would use repeatedly over the next couple decades to express pride in his protégés, validate his recommendations for youth training, and strengthen the York/Hoffman brand. "Supermen, like Topsy, do not just grow. They are built, and the sooner they start, the more chance they have for outstanding success," he advised.<sup>25</sup> Soon support for this notion was being exemplified by members of the York staff who were raising children. Foremost attention focused on the "small fry" of John Grimek, who some regard as the greatest bodybuilder of all time. In an article entitled "How Young Should You Start 'Em?" Grimek advised that "if the child is carefully coached and a limited training schedule is given him, there shouldn't be anything but beneficial results." According to Grimek, the right age should depend on the child's desire and ability to do the exercises correctly.

Our first born, a girl, was provided with

light dumbbells to play with, carrying them around the house and making attempts to lift them. It wasn't until she was a year old that she could lift one overhead, which weighed five pounds, and later after seeing several lifting contests, she did a perfect two hands swing with both dumbbells, splitting under the weight. I had never coached or demonstrated the lift to her but seeing the contests gave her the idea of how it must be done. . . . The 'small fry' is a great mimic, a kind of 'monkey see, monkey do' affair, and when he sees his dad training it is only natural for him to ask when will he be able to train with weights. . . . One thing you must never do; force your child to train.

Pat Grimek Stover confirms that her father practiced what he preached and "never forced" her or her siblings to train. But it is Grimek's boys, Stevie and Bobby, ages six and five, who are primarily featured in the article with Bobby demonstrating five barbell movements and John "Mr. Everything" holding both boys aloft, one in each hand.<sup>26</sup>

Other members of the York gang followed suit. John Terpak was general manager of York Barbell and a former world champion. His son John Jr. was 14 years old and athletically inclined, lettering in football and track. John told Pudgy Stockton in California that his son had surpassed him in height and was lifting weights. As a "squatter," he had "cleaned 170 quite easily at 140 bodywt."<sup>27</sup> The namesake son of Jim Murray, Hoffman's managing editor since 1951, first appeared in the July 1952 issue with 3½-ounce dumbbells, and later his younger son, Jay, was shown in the September 1953 of *Strength & Health* with the same weights along with the elder son, Jim, who had graduated to an eight-pound barbell. No less notable was Rickey Terlazzo, pre-teen son of York loyalist John Terlazzo, shown with miniscule dumbbells, and pre-teen Donne Hale, Jr. whose father, at 15, had been an entrant in the first Mr. America Contest in 1939. A January 1956 article by the senior Hale closely mirrors Hoffman's approach to youth training, explaining how his ten-year-old son ("with a decade of training behind him!") was a "star performer" who "regularly defeats lads of twelve or thirteen in individual ath-

letic events."<sup>28</sup> By the late 1950s Jim Murray had oriented the format of *Strength & Health* towards weight training for athletics and even published a book on it with Peter Karpovich, a leading kinesiologist. The book had obvious youth appeal.<sup>29</sup>

However gratifying it must have been for Hoffman to see the children of his staff and keen supporters taking to weights and for others to reveal a correlation between resistance training and athletic performance; the winning seasons of high school sports teams that adopted York-inspired programs proved this point even more convincingly. The first occurred at York High School in 1953 when it won its first Central Pennsylvania championship after not winning a conference game for five seasons. For some years Hoffman had offered weights to York High coaches, but to no avail. When Eddie Waleski took over the helm, however, he accepted Hoffman's offer of three barbell sets along with Hi-Pro-teen nutritional supplements.

The boys on the football team made use of them during their spare time throughout the year, as a club activity. They had the advantage that one of the squad members is an 'old-time' weightlifter. Johnny Terpak Jr., while only a substitute halfback as a sophomore, has had the advantage of the best possible coaching in weight training and lifting, so was able to pass his knowledge along to his buddies. . . . They were the strongest team physically in the league.

In addition to its undefeated record, two team members, Wilmot Banks and John Watkins, won all-state honors, being selected to the Associated Press first and second teams.<sup>30</sup>

Soon other stories began emerging of the successful application of weight training to other sports, especially track and field. Such was the message conveyed by Jim Murray repeatedly in his *Strength & Health* articles. He relates the story of how he helped Pete Haupt, a football player from Hasbrouck Heights High School, New Jersey, set up a summer conditioning program in 1954. After the season Haupt explained that weight training enabled his team to win all nine games, compile the best defensive record in the state, and outscore its opponents, 330 to 6. In his book with Dr.

Karpovich, Murray provided examples of collegiate and professional players who benefited from weight training, including:

Fullback Alan Ameche (Wisconsin, Baltimore Colts): tackle Stan Jones (Maryland, Chicago Bears): guard Alex Aronis (Navy): tackle-guard Walter Barnes (Louisiana State University, Philadelphia Eagles): and half back Steve Van Buren (L.S.U., Eagles). Ameche, Jones, and Aronis all began using the weights as high school boys, while Barnes first lifted as an already powerful collegian.<sup>31</sup>

Jones, who was an All-American lineman and played in seven straight Pro Bowls, attributes his success to weights. "I started lifting weights in high school in 1945," he explained in a 2003 interview, "I worked out pretty heavily. I gained 20 pounds a year for six straight years. If I hadn't lifted weights, I doubt if I could have played."<sup>32</sup> Foremost among the few educators who were subscribing to weight training by the mid-fifties was C. H. McCloy of the State University of Iowa. McCloy summarized the results of his studies, published mainly in scholarly journals, for *Strength & Health* readers. "Suffice it to say that in every case the trainees improved in speed and in muscular endurance." That there was "no evidence that they became any less flexible (more 'muscle bound') than they were before weight training"

must have been music to the ears of Hoffman and Murray.<sup>33</sup>

The most convincing testimony for their cause came from Louisiana, which became a hotbed of lifting and football owing largely to the efforts of one man, Alvin Roy. A native of Baton Rouge, Roy graduated from Istrouma High School before going on to Louisiana State University (LSU) and joining the U.S. Army at the outset of World War II. Although he had started weight training prior to the war, his passion for it was aroused by his post-war assignment as an *aide-de-camp* for the American weightlifting team that was competing in the 1946 World Championships in Paris. As Terry Todd explains in a 1992 article, Hoffman's lifters made a deep impression on Roy during their five-week visit to France, and their association continued after Alvin opened his gym in Baton Rouge in 1948 and extended to the 1952 Olympics in Helsinki where Roy served as trainer for the American weightlifting team.<sup>34</sup> It was only after his alma mater's bitter loss to cross-town rival Baton Rouge High, however, that Roy was able to convince Coach James "Big Fuzzy" Brown and Principal Ellis "Little Fuzzy" Brown to let him install and supervise a weight training program at Istrouma. Little Fuzzy recalls that

Al was such a



John Grimek's husky young son, Bobby, was featured in the advertising for Hoffman's Little Samson set. The short bar, when fully loaded, weighed eight pounds. The two-pound dumbbells, painted red, were described in the ad copy as "so cute your wife will want to put them on the living room mantle."

salesman and he believed so much in what he was doing that we decided to take a chance. He was relentless. But let me tell you, we were worried. We knew what it could mean if we got a bunch of boys hurt or if we had a real bad season. It could mean our jobs. Some of our friends in the business told us we were crazy. But the way Al told it, it sounded good and once we decided to do it, we went all the way.<sup>35</sup>

The results, as reported by Bill Williams in the *Baton Rouge State-Times* and later published in *Strength & Health*, were spectacular. Istrouma went undefeated through 13 games to win the state championship and “scored more points (432) than any team in state history. Four players were named to the all-state team. Only one boy on the squad of 40 failed to gain at least nine pounds before the season opener. Three of the standouts gained more. End Billy Castilaw gained 32 pounds of muscle, fullback Billy Cannon gained 28, and tackle Luther Fortenberry gained 15. Castilaw could deadlift 420 pounds, Cannon 410, and end Oscar Lofton 325.” Later Cannon, who went on to become an All-American and Heisman trophy winner at Louisiana State “tied the state 100-yard dash record in 9.7 which had stood for 14 years,” won the state meet in the 200 in 21.1 seconds, and also won the shot put. For Williams, such evidence put to rest the old canard that weight training would make athletes slow and muscle-bound.<sup>36</sup>

These revelations coincided with “The Fort Lauderdale Story” by Joe Kolb of the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News* in the same issue. Like Roy, local gym operator Al Christensen supervised a pre-season weight program in 1955 for the Fort Lauderdale High School football team which resulted in a 9-1 record, the best in school history. It was obvious to Coach Bill Armstrong that his players were stronger and had “more confidence.” So popular was Christensen’s program that another school employed him twice weekly to teach weightlifting, and two others were introducing it to their athletes.<sup>37</sup> The message was clear. Not only was weight training producing better athletes but it was teenagers who seemed most responsive to it. It was hardly a coincidence that a landmark editorial by Hoffman on youth training, “As the Twig is Bent,” accompanied the Louisiana and Florida football stories.

We are often asked this question: ‘At what age should I start my child on barbell exercise?’ Many are of the belief that no formal exercise should be done until a child reaches the teens. This is a dangerous attitude, because the time to guide your child into proper living habits is as soon as he can walk. . . . We are also completely sold on the thesis that the stronger you are, the healthier you are apt to be. And it goes without saying that we believe that progressive barbell training is the best means known to strength and health. So it naturally follows that when parents ask us about exercise for their children, we say start them as young as possible. . . . The most important people in America today are our children. Let us bring them up in the way they should go. Good habits once formed are hard to break. *As the twig is bent, the tree’s inclined.*<sup>38</sup>

Lest readers overlook the best way to become strong and happy, most pages of the magazine were littered with advertisements of Hoffman products to lift, eat, and wear. Specially designed for pre-teens was a York “Little Samson” set, made to “fit tiny hands” that parents could purchase for \$6.95.<sup>39</sup>

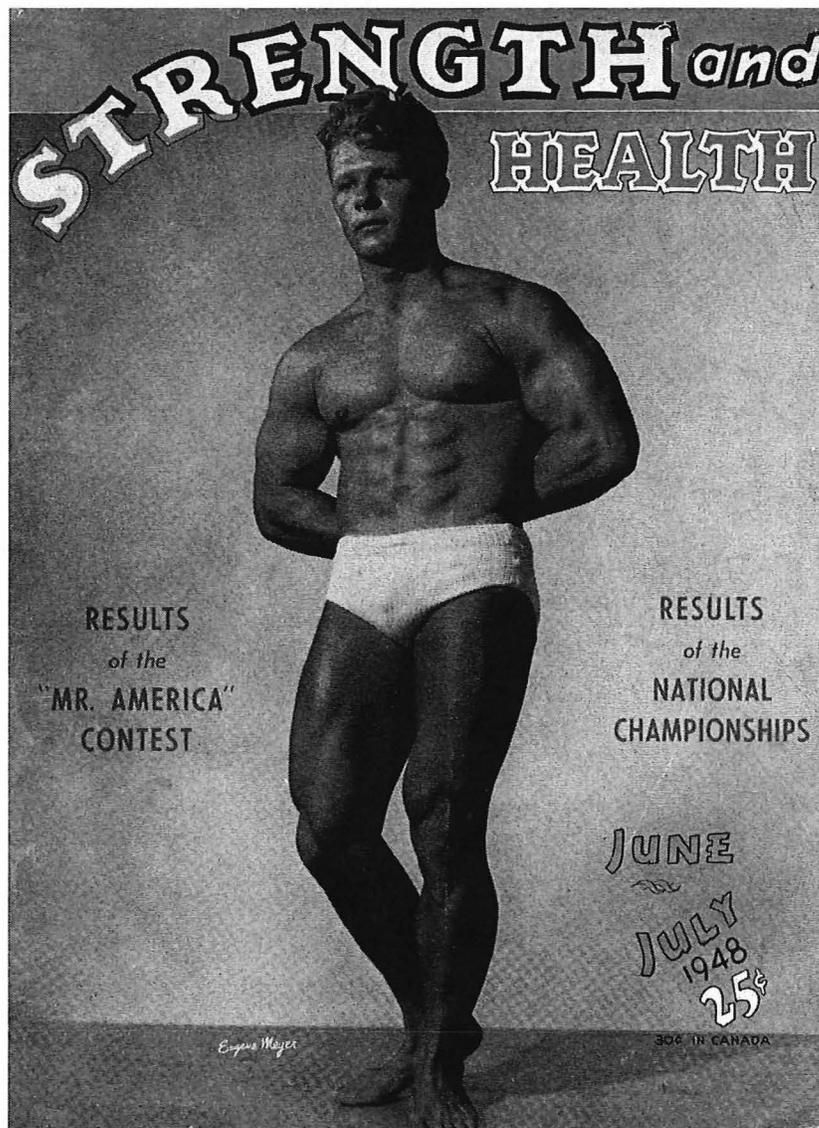
In the meantime, “Especially for S & H Boys” had disappeared from *Strength & Health* and was replaced by a new monthly feature in January 1956 called “Boys Club.” Exactly what inspired this latest surge of interest in youth training is unclear, but it closely coincided with the magazine’s coverage of weight-trained high school football teams, and the title echoes a 1951 article by George Bruce, co-owner of a gym in Van Nuys, California, “Let’s Start a Boy’s Club.”<sup>40</sup> No doubt the idea had been percolating in Hoffman’s mind over the preceding five years, encouraged by the youthful achievements of his Strength and Health Boys Grown Up and the exuberance shown by the children of his own staff for weight training. “Never have we seen such a crop of prospective barbell men, and if this keeps up, we need have no serious fears about any of our S & H boys failing to chin themselves or being able to do push-ups.” Many of the plans resembled features of the old Ameri-

can Strength & Health League, including awards, certificates, pictures, and inspiring stories of youthful accomplishments—but no reader interaction.<sup>41</sup>

Failing any possibility of resurrecting this risky stratagem, Hoffman latched on to the concept of reader identification. Boys Club would provide examples of teen and pre-teen boys for their peers to admire and emulate. Their impact would be enhanced by writings and illustrations of Hoffman's editor, Harry Paschall, who wielded the most powerful pen in iron game journalism. The most notable teenage role model was Roger "Rod" Allen, who trained at Vic Tanny's Santa Monica gym. At 4' 11" and 117 pounds, Allen could bench press 200 pounds and, according to Paschall, "has more shape than Steve Reeves. . . . This lad is a 'Wonder of Nature,'" he declared in the February issue of 1956.<sup>42</sup> Five months later, at age 14, Allen had grown 4½ inches, gained 17 pounds, and was the subject of a four-page article by Paschall.

Once in a long time a youngster appears on the sport horizon who seems to have everything. In the world of weights we have had such figures as John Grimek, Steve Reeves, and a sparse handful of others. When the first photo of young Roger Allen passed over my desk, I knew we had in this lad a muscular phenomenon of unusual possibilities.

So . . . in the February Boys Club page we printed our first picture of Rod. What happen? The kids all over America took him to their collective hearts with all the juvenile enthusiasm of a school girl for Frank Sinatra. We got letter after letter wanting to see more pictures of the miniature superman and asking 'how he got that way?' . . . Doesn't look like weight training had stunted this lad, eh? Instead, he is growing up,

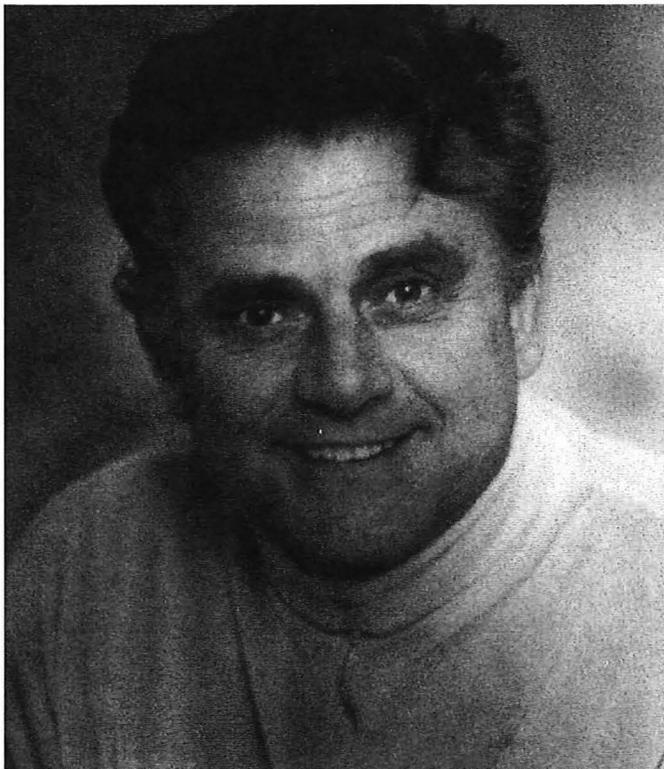


Eugene "Gene" Meyer was one of the first teenagers to appear on the cover of *Strength & Health*. Gene was trained by Vic Tanny at his gym in Santa Monica and won the Mr. Los Angeles Contest when he was only 18.

down and sideways at an almost unbelievable pace.

Allen could now bench press 230, do 34 chins, 135 push-ups, and repetition squats with 255 pounds. Otherwise he was a normal ninth grader who was popular in school.<sup>43</sup> Although updates on Allen followed his interest and development in Olympic lifting, it was his physique that most captivated and inspired readers over the next two years.<sup>44</sup>

Physique was also implicit in the promotion of Stevie and Bobby Grimek, pre-teen children of the great-



Louisiana native Alvin Roy was one of the most influential figures in the movement toward weight training for sport at mid century. In Baton Rouge, Roy established a gym in which he trained dozens of teenage boys on an individual basis, and he also organized weight training for the football teams of local Istrouma High School and Louisiana State University. After working with Roy, both teams had exceptional seasons and won their respective championships. Because of his long-time friendship with Hoffman, Roy's successes in training these young teams were reported in *Strength & Health* and inspired other coaches and young athletes to begin using weight training. Photo courtesy John Fair

est star in York's firmament of champions. In a June 1956 article entitled "Boys . . . Meet Little Samson," Hoffman portrays the Grimeks as a model family and applauds John for getting his boys involved in physical culture at a young age.

Bobby Grimek got a present on his eighth birthday—the very first *Little Samson* Barbell and Dumbell Shirt, plus a *Little Samson* Barbell and Dumbell Set, and Member Card Number one in the *Strength & Health Boys Club*. His younger brother Stevie got the Number Two Layout.

Naturally the boys were eager

to get down to business—the business of doing some training like their famous Pop. So, out into the Spring sunshine and with JCG shooting the pictures, we record for posterity the first official workout by the first authentic *Little Samsons*!

When is the proper age to start your youngster at weight training? We hope to answer that question right now for all time. Just as soon as he feels like imitating his old man, he should be given his own little outfit and encouraged to do some simple exercises. You cannot start too young . . . but you may start too late!

By training together, father and sons will "have a closer family relationship, and you'll all profit in better strength and health." "Like father, like sons" became one of Hoffman's favorite aphorisms. Although pictures of both boys appeared demonstrating exercises with their barbell on the lawn of the Grimek home, it was Bobby's likeness that appeared on monthly magazine ads into the early 1960s. A "Big Deal for Little Wheels" is how York pitched its *Little Samson* sets.

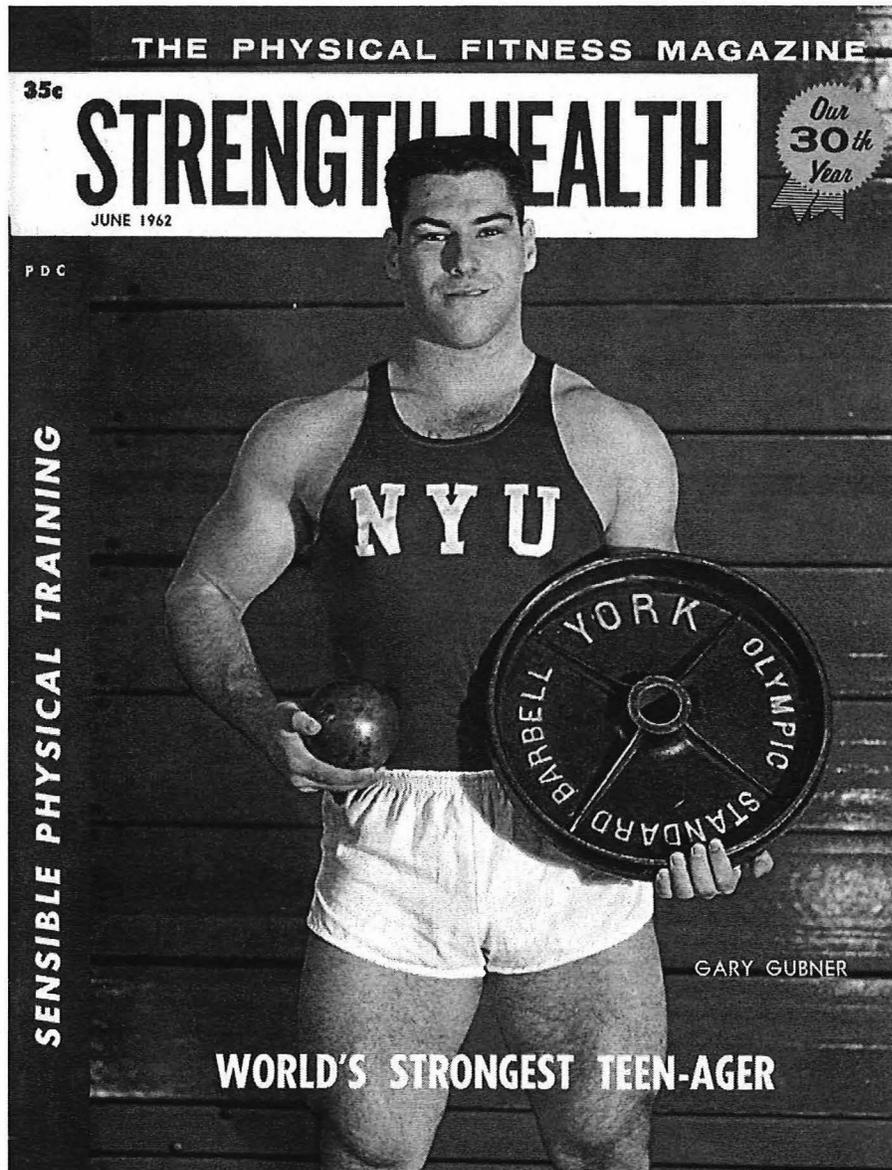
*Just like Daddy's!* Why cut down your big York set to make up a barbell for your youngster? That is like cutting down Pop's pants to make hand-me-downs for your child, and is quite apt (say psychologists) to give the lil fella a terrific inferiority complex. You wouldn't want that, wouldja, Pop? Give him a barbell of his own!<sup>45</sup>

This focus on family was later reinforced with a cover shot and article of a Labor Day gathering of all seven Grimeks (males lifting weights) entitled "Fun in Your Backyard."<sup>46</sup>

Hoffman, though once married, had no children of his own to showcase, but he must have gained a vicarious delight from seeing so many little Samsons emerging who seemed to be using his products and putting his ideas of youth training into practice. Some of their fathers were York loyalists, such as Joe Pitman whose 21-month-old son, Joe III, is shown pressing an eight-

pound *Little Samson* barbell with “form that looks better than his dad’s!” Three-year-old Bart Yarick, son of Ed and Alyce Yarick demonstrates the use of a *Little Samson* barbell in the show window of his parents’ gym in Oakland, and two-year-old David Paul Bendel, whose father Bob was a veteran AAU official in Riverside, New Jersey, is pictured with a pair of *Little Samson* two-pound dumbbells and breaking into a box of Hoffman cookies “to get his protein the easy way.”<sup>47</sup> And Hoffman showed no compunction to introducing his *Little Samson* sets to the grandchildren of his common-law wife Alda Ketterman for a little light exercise at family gatherings.<sup>48</sup> To what extent “Boys Club” figured into the profit margins of York Barbell in the mid-fifties is uncertain, but sales increased dramatically from \$521,703 in 1954 to \$1,280,056 in 1958.<sup>49</sup> And there was no reason for Hoffman not to think that his emphasis on youth training was part of this boom.

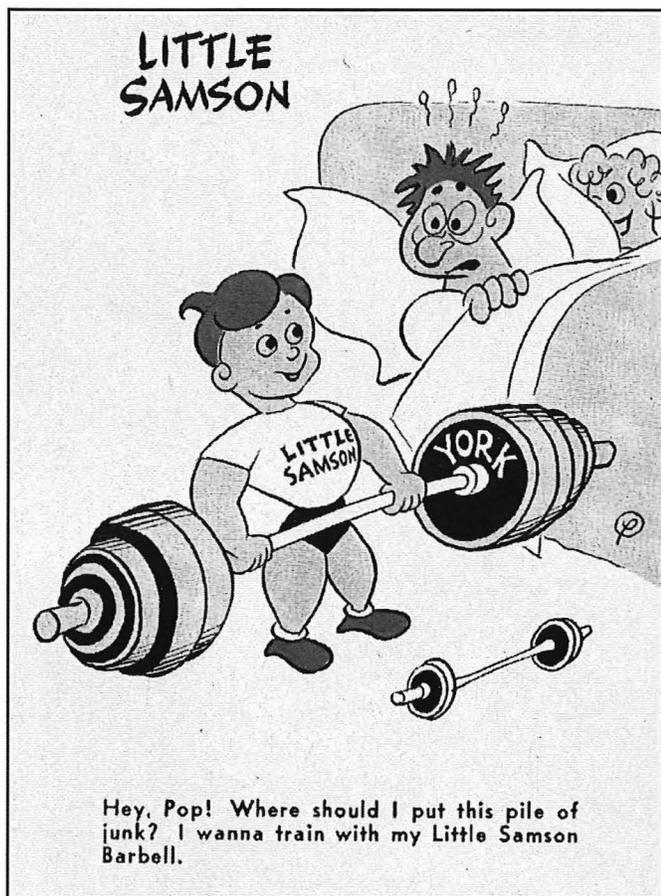
It is hardly surprising that other muscle marketers, given the popularity of York’s emphasis on youth, sought to capitalize on it, but none did it so systematically. Not unlike Hoffman, Peary Rader, editor of *Iron Man*, was an Olympic lifting enthusiast and “fathered” the first high school national weightlifting championships at the Duncan YMCA in Chicago in April 1956. Convinced that “by interesting the younger fellows in lifting that we can do more for the progress of the sport . . . than in any other way,” he intended to dedicate “much space in *Lifting News* magazine to this phase of the sport.” But Rader did little more than report the results of annual teenage weightlifting nationals and the Teenage Mr. America, also started in 1956. Rader’s interest was also stimulated by his teenage son Gene, who won the featherweight class at the 1957 teen nationals in Berkeley.<sup>50</sup> *Tomorrow’s Man*, edited by Irvin Johnson (Rheo Blair) and



Teen-age shot put champion Gary Gubner was one of the first track athletes to train with weights to enhance his performance. By the time he was 19, Gubner’s best with the 16-pound shot was 65’ 10½,” a phenomenal throw for one so young. Gubner’s coach, George Cohen, and Bob Hoffman in *Strength & Health*, attributed this success to barbell training.

Paul Lange in the mid-fifties, featured a lot of teenage bodybuilders, but its singular focus was the male physique with no special emphasis on youth training. However, the September 1955 issue featured Paul Oudinot, Jr. as an age-group finalist in the magazine’s annual physique photo contest.<sup>51</sup>

Joe Weider’s publications were definitely oriented towards self-improvement, and ongoing columns entitled “Future Greats” in *Muscle Power* and “They Were All Weaklings” in *Muscle Builder* catered to this



Artist and *Strength & Health* editor, Harry Paschall, famous for his Bosco cartoons, also penned a series of Little Samson cartoons that appeared in the magazine in the 1950s.

concern. But ages of the subjects appearing in the many “before” and “after” pictures are not always clear, and there is little distinction for youth. Many appear to be young adults or older. For instance the “before” photo of Roger Rizzo in the June 1956 issue of *Muscle Power* depicts him as a child of no more than ten whereas he could easily pass for twenty in his “after” picture. Yet the caption reads that he “gained 41 pounds of He Man Muscle following The Weider System” in just one year. Even more unbelievable is a cover gambit, “How I Gained 85 Pounds of Solid Muscles in Two Months.”<sup>52</sup> What is most evident in these before/after depictions is commercialization, far less subtle than Hoffman’s—that all of these gains resulted from Weider training principles and products. In December 1955 Weider launched a publication called *Junior Mr. America* that appeared to be more focused on youth training. It was designed “for weaklings who want to build big muscles fast.” In order to build a “sensational body” and be an “All-American

He-Man” the answer was simple. “Order one of my sets and courses right away. You have nothing to lose but your skinny, weakling body.”<sup>53</sup> Despite its youthful title, the magazine carried the same kinds of transformative stories as Joe’s other publications, and there was no particular emphasis on youth. *Junior Mr. America* lasted only four issues, from December 1955 to August 1956. For Hoffman alone was youth training a crusade.

Meanwhile the Istrouma High football team continued its winning ways. In the 1956 season it again went undefeated on its way to a second state AAA championship. Once Alvin Roy instituted a rigorous program of weight training, Istrouma had not lost a game.<sup>54</sup> Roy then took his message across town to LSU whose new coach, Paul Dietzel, harbored the same doubts the Brown brothers had two years earlier. But Dietzel was aware of Billy Cannon’s transformation and, as he related to Terry Todd,

you have to remember that Jimmy Taylor had been a senior for us that year and I knew he’d been going to Al’s Gym for a year or two, and he was as good a testimonial for the weights as you’d ever care to see. Not only was Taylor bull-strong and hard as a rock, but he had great hands, soft hands. He could catch anything. . . . All I can say is that after seeing what Taylor and Cannon could do and after listening to Al, I was sold.<sup>55</sup>

Roy’s pitch was simple. “All you need is a barbell and a man to lift it.” Weightlifters, he contended, were “the strongest men in the world,” adding, “you must train your football players the same way.”<sup>56</sup> While his prescribed routine included a wide variety of exercises, he did not, according to his brother and fellow trainer Ray Roy, shy away from squats—“full squats” and “front squats. We made them do both.”<sup>57</sup> In 1958 LSU went undefeated, beat Clemson in the Sugar Bowl, and won its first national championship. Dietzel was named Coach of the Year and Cannon won the Heisman Trophy the next year. As Ace Higgins pointed out in *Strength & Health*, Louisiana State’s line “averaged only 197 pounds. But from end to end, each player could dead lift at least 400 pounds.” And Cannon—who could deadlift 600 by then—was, Alvin boasted, “the strongest football player in America.” It is not insignificant that accompa-

nying photographs show a pre-teen youngster in a *Little Samson* t-shirt watching Cannon curl 150 pounds and Roy coaching him on a heavy deadlift.<sup>58</sup> The following spring Cannon ran a 9.4 hundred-yard dash on his way to winning the SEC title in the 100, 200, and the shot put at 54' 4½."<sup>59</sup> It was an extraordinary record that was rooted in ideas implanted in the mind of the young GI assigned to assist American weightlifters at the 1946 world championships.

Having developed a successful formula for athletic success, Alvin Roy went on to become the first strength coach in professional football with the San Diego Chargers in 1963, which was a critical factor in their winning the American Football League championship for that year. But his legacy lived on in Louisiana where Istrouma won five state championships from 1955 to 1961, and LSU had four winning seasons for a 35-7-1 record until Dietzel departed for West Point in 1961.<sup>60</sup> Alvin also displayed his entrepreneurial skills by establishing 38 fitness franchises (a la Vic Tanny), called Roy Studios, throughout the country. But his interest in youth training did not wane. "That's all we did," recalls his brother Ray. "That's basically all we worked with until we started working with the Chargers. Oh yeah, we had adult clients, but as far as training for athletes, we loved to start them as young as they came." The Roys' star pupil was Mark Lumpkin, who "was 11 years old when he started, and he ended up throwing the discus farther than anybody's ever thrown it before or since in high school here." At the Golden West Relays Lumpkin threw 184'4" feet which "shocked" his competitors. Notwithstanding all the stories about the hazards of youth training at the time,

Alvin had a Saturday morning TV show called Alvin Roy's Future Champions. If I remember correctly, it started sometime in the fifties and was still going on in the sixties, and lasted about 30 minutes. It was on WBRZ in Baton Rouge which is ABC now. We became good friends with the guy that owned the station, Richard Manship. I don't know if it was Manship that brought up the idea, but we had a little house behind the health club where Alvin cooked boiled crawfish and crabs, and the TV studio was just right around the corner, and

Manship used to come eat crabs and crawfish with us, and he'd work out in the health club, and so, over the years we became real close friends.<sup>61</sup>

It was Ray who discovered bodybuilding champion Boyer Coe when he was operating one of Alvin's gyms in Lake Charles. "I got him started and brought him to a certain point," he recalls, "but he was gaining weight and getting stronger, so I took him over to Red Lerille's gym in LaFayette. . . . First thing I knew he was winning Mr. New Orleans contests. . . . I was so proud of him."<sup>62</sup> Eventually, Alvin spent time as the strength coach for the Kansas City Chiefs, Dallas Cowboys, New Orleans Saints, and Oakland Raiders, but he never moved from Baton Rouge where he continued to train youth until his death in 1979.<sup>63</sup>

By the late 1950s a new cohort of youthful stars was emerging in Boys Club. Tony Garcy of El Paso was only 16 and weighed 146 pounds, but he could already press 195, snatch 195, and clean and jerk 250. His favorite exercises were the push press off the squat-rack where he could do two repetitions with 250 and squats where he did five with 300.<sup>64</sup> No less promising was Gary Cleveland of St. Louis, the 1958 winner of the Boys Club Self Improvement Contest. In the course of three months he had added 130 pounds to his three-lift total and 90 to his squat at a bodyweight of 190, which earned him an engraved trophy and a York Olympic Standard barbell. He was no *Little Samson*, but Cleveland claimed, according to Hoffman, that he "followed York methods exclusively and that he used Hoffman's Hi-Proteen daily during this contest."<sup>65</sup> The most spectacular child prodigy, however, was Gary Gubner, who broke into the lifting world in 1959 as a 16-year-old junior at DeWitt Clinton High School in New York City. He was not a weightlifter *per se* but used lifting to improve his shot put, which stood at 61' 3¾", and he was squatting 400 pounds for repetitions. By the time he was 19, Gubner's best with the 16-pound shot was 65' 10½", second only to the great Dallas Long, gold medalist at the 1960 Olympics. Gubner's coach, George Cohen, attributed this success to weightlifting.

It would be impossible to say just how many feet less he would be throwing had he never lifted but surely the fact that he is the strongest and yet the

youngest and least experienced of America's top tossers answers that question adequately. Obviously it is his great barbell-developed strength which has put him up with men who have thrown twice as long as he, so quickly.

It even seemed possible for the young New Yorker, at that time a sophomore at New York University, to become champion in two Olympic sports. He had recently totaled 1,075, via lifts of 360-315-400, squatted 630, and won three medals at the Maccabean Games in 1959. For Hoffman, Gubner was "our best bet to return heavyweight supremacy to the United States."<sup>66</sup> It no doubt disappointed Hoffman that neither Garcy, nor Cleveland, nor Gubner were medalists at the 1964 Olympics in Tokyo.

Meanwhile other promising Boys Clubbers from the fifties were maturing and leaving the iron game. Most notable were Rod Allen and Paul Oudinot, Jr., both of whom had taken up Olympic lifting for a while and then disappeared, never to reemerge as "S & H Boys Grown Up." The latter instance coincided with the tragic death of Paul Oudinot, Sr., who as a gym owner had fostered and carefully monitored the development of his children. That the elder Oudinot died of a heart attack at age 39 was not a ringing endorsement of the healthy family image Hoffman projected.<sup>67</sup> John Terpak, Jr. chose football rather than weightlifting as his sport and was a mainstay in the backfield of the University of Pennsylvania Quakers.<sup>68</sup> The Grimek children, on the other hand, at 11 and 12 were still at home and training with barbells. Papa John's 1959 article "They're Never Too Young," echoed the sentiments he expressed six years earlier on youth training, noting that "any age is alright" as long as the exercises are taught correctly. "Once a youngster is taught the right method of training he seldom deviates from it." But Grimek was more aware of the importance of training for other sports than in 1953.

Whenever I want to encourage any one of the 'small fry' I usually ask him what his favorite sport is. Invariably his reply includes baseball or football, usually both. I then tell him: If you expect to become a champion in your sport you must develop and strengthen your mus-

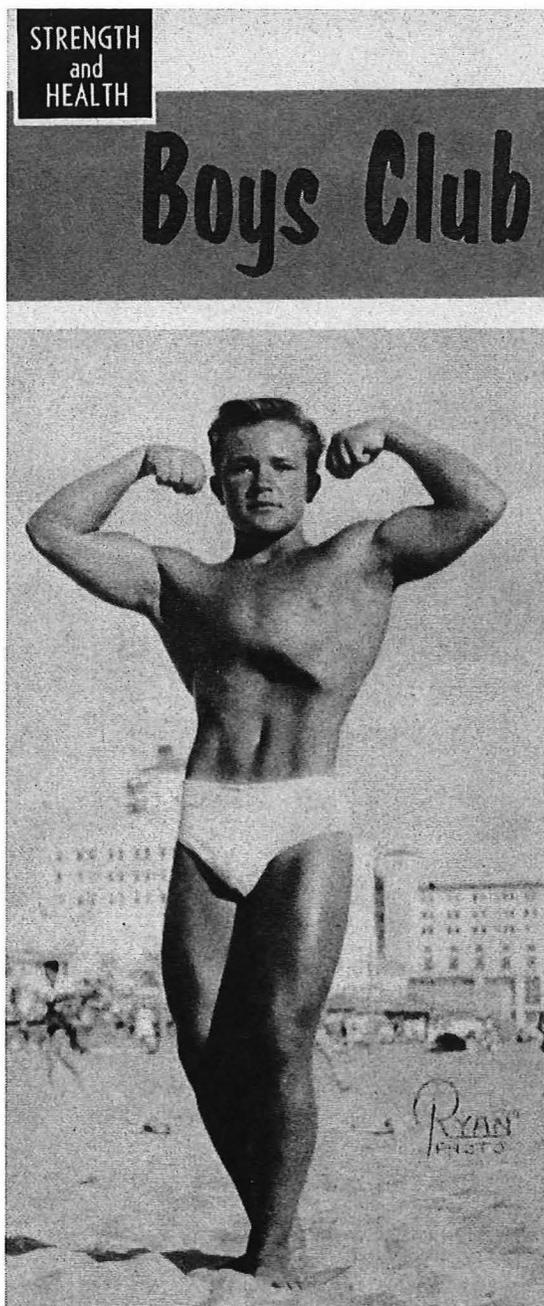
cles . . . and weight training will do just that. Besides, your muscles will acquire greater speed and timing and better coordination that will make any champion even a greater champion.

Along with illustrations of Stevie and Bobby doing their favorite exercises, they were joined by their two-year-old neighbor, "strongman" Ronnie Rosen in a Little Samson shirt. He was rumored to "eat more Hi-Proteen cookies than any other kid in the neighborhood."<sup>69</sup> In the fall of 1960 both Grimek boys were "first stringers" for their basketball team, and Bobby shows up in "Boys Club" wearing an attractive York Barbell Club windbreaker that is available for members at \$6.50. By this time they were joined by a baby brother, John D. Grimek, who was predicted to be "the first son of a Mr. America to succeed in his father's footsteps."<sup>70</sup>

Perhaps it was a premonition of the training changes on the horizon that there appeared in the January 1959 "Boys Club" column a picture of William Ziegler, "known around the neighborhood as 'Knee Deep' Ziegler," son of Dr. John Ziegler of Olney, Maryland, in a Little Samson shirt with two-pound dumbbells.<sup>71</sup> Dr. Ziegler regularly visited nearby York Barbell to administer functional isometric contraction, anabolic steroids, and other ergogenic aids to York lifters to enhance their performance. While the effects of steroids remained unclear, Hoffman identified isometrics as an innovation that could revolutionize training in the November 1961 issue of *Strength & Health*.<sup>72</sup> It required maximum exertion against an immovable object to obtain maximum strength. A Louisiana connection in its development was made possible for Hoffman and Ziegler through Alvin Roy and his association with Martin Bruoussard, trainer for the athletic department at LSU since 1943, and Dr. Francis Drury, an associate professor of physical education who had been doing research on isometrics since 1952. Hoffman, calling it "the greatest training system the world has ever seen," was soon marketing a "power rack" for individuals, schools, and colleges to use in training, and the idea was "sweeping the country like wild fire." Again, as with weight training in the fifties, York High and Istrouma High were major beneficiaries, as were the college and professional programs at LSU and San Diego with which Roy was associated.<sup>73</sup> Norm Olson, football and track coach at Florida State University, reported

“splendid results” from functional isometric contraction. In the 1961-62 season Olson’s team had a 10-0 record, including nine shutouts. His track team was state runner-up. Jim Goosetree, trainer at the University of Alabama, was so pleased with the weight program Roy had helped him implement five years earlier that he eagerly embraced the idea of isometrics after meeting with Broussard.<sup>74</sup> Likewise Coach John Adcock of Tampa’s Chamberlain High Chiefs that won the 1961 state championship believed this form of training could make his team even better. Tom Pruett, coach at Victoria (Texas) High School, was impressed with its convenience and availability. It was “the irresistible force meeting the immovable object.”<sup>75</sup> Company records indicate Hoffman sold power racks to 20 high schools and colleges in 1962, but many others undoubtedly made contraptions of their own.<sup>76</sup>

Whatever effect functional isometric contraction might have had on the increased strength and performance athletes were displaying in the early sixties was soon disregarded and attributed to anabolic steroids, which also increased muscle mass. Again there was a York-Baton Rouge connection. Not only was Ziegler administering steroids, along with isometrics, to York lifters but he found a willing subject for both in Louis Riecke, a graduate of LSU and an acquaintance of the Roy brothers and Dr. Drury.<sup>77</sup> The extent to which Alvin Roy was culpable for the proliferation of performance enhancing drugs in the 1960s to American athletes in general and youth-



Roger “Rod” Allen, described by Harry Paschall as a “wonder of nature,” could reportedly bench press 230 pounds and do repetition squats with 255 pounds. Trained by Vic Tanny, Allen was featured in *Strength & Health* several times in the 1950s but then disappeared from the weight scene.

coach, which was 1961, or later, because methandrostenolone (trade name Dianabol) was not developed by Ciba until 1958 and both Tony Garcy and Lou Riecke have said they did not even learn of it until John Ziegler introduced it to them in 1960.] As for

ful trainees in particular is difficult to determine. It is well known that he introduced them to professional football as strength coach of the San Diego Chargers, and his brother, Ray Roy, confirms that Alvin’s approach was defined in part by experimental use by the brothers and their nephew Norbert, one of Ziegler’s original subjects who utilized both steroids and isometrics as captain of the Notre Dame football team. I got “bigger and stronger,” Ray recalls, but he only stayed on them for a short time and was under a doctor’s prescription. It was this protocol that Alvin followed at San Diego. “The Charger thing was done under a doctor. It was always done that way, but you can’t help it when those other people find out about ‘em, thinking if one’s going to do so good, then 50’s going to do better.” As to whether Alvin also introduced them to LSU players, “I don’t think so” was Ray’s response, “at least not at first. That he would have corrupted the youthful innocence of the Istrouma High School boys was simply out of the question.”<sup>78</sup> Boyer Coe, however, is not so sure. He suspects that Dianabol, along with its weight training regimen, might have contributed to LSU’s success on the gridiron. [Editors’ note: Coe is mistaken, unless he is referring to LSU players during the last year of Paul Dietzel’s tenure as head

Istrouma, Coe perceived Alvin as “the kind of guy whose passion was so great for football, if he could have come back as anything, he’d want to come back as a professional football coach. But I don’t think he would knowingly give anybody something that he thought might be dangerous.”<sup>79</sup>

It was steroids, not isometrics, that revolutionized strength training in the 1960s, but there was no evidence for most of the decade of the former’s impact on youthful trainees. More than ever, Hoffman’s approach and magazine content was oriented towards youth. Even Vera Christensen’s “To the Ladies” column increasingly used photographs of teen models to illustrate exercises, and in the March 1961 issue she even used her own children, Cory at 3½ years and Cole at 21 months, in an article on “Exercise for the Small Child.” Her advice resembled Grimek’s, which was that the best way to encourage children is to do the movement yourself and that one should never force a child to exercise.<sup>80</sup> High school weight training received a special boost from 1961 to 1963, with coverage of programs in such disparate places as Sandia High (Albuquerque, New Mexico); Livonia High (Detroit, Michigan); New Hyde Park High (New Hyde Park, New York); Butler High (Butler, Pennsylvania); Herbert Hoover Jr. High (San Jose, California); and Jasper Place High (Edmonton, Alberta).<sup>81</sup> There was also an increased emphasis on collegiate programs as more of the nation’s youth were seeking a higher education. The March 1959 issue of *Strength & Health* included an article on “Weight Training for Track and Field Men at Villanova,” which highlighted Olympic champion and world record miler Ron Delany and marked the beginning of a “Barbells on Campus” series that extended into the 1970s. The July 1960 issue featured weight training at LSU with a photo of Harvey Cannon, Billy’s father, beside a squat rack in one of the school’s well-equipped dormitories.<sup>82</sup> “Today, as never before, the accent is on physical fitness, especially for the youth of America,” observed Hoffman.<sup>83</sup>

The early sixties also featured the advent of a new group of Olympic weightlifting hopefuls, including Russell Knipp of Pittsburgh who eventually made nine world records in the press; five-time national champion Joe Puleo of Detroit; twice national champion Bruce Wilhelm of Sunnyvale, California; Bob Bednarski, the “Woonsocket Wonder” who was world champion in 1969 and set many world records; and Joe Dube of Jacksonville, four-time world record holder and America’s

last men’s world champion.<sup>84</sup> Another remarkable youth of this period was bodybuilder Harold Poole, who not only placed second in the 1962 Mr. America Contest at age 18 but directly confronted the iron game with the civil rights issue the following year.<sup>85</sup> But Hoffman also tried to reach the grass roots level through periodic self-improvement contests. The 1963 version included 161 entrants from ages 9 to 18 representing 31 states and two Canadian provinces. The average age was 15.57 and the bulk of contestants (41%) hailed from the Middle Atlantic (New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, and Delaware) region. The winner, Thomas Morelle, 15, of Utica, New York, had gained 25 pounds of muscular bodyweight in several months with impressive before/after dimensions—neck 14½ to 16¼, chest 40 to 46½, thigh 21¼ to 24, biceps 13 to 16, and waist 30 to 29½, and strength gains—squat 210 to 365, bench press 205 to 300, and press 135 to 180. Nothing more was heard of Morelle, but third place winner Bill Reynolds of Port Angeles, Washington, became a prolific bodybuilding author and editor of Joe Weider’s *Flex* in the 1980s. John Coffee of Eastman, Georgia, did not place but eventually became a USA Weightlifting coach and benefactor.<sup>86</sup>

Changes too were underfoot at York that coincided with the influx of a new generation of editors that included Tommy Suggs, Terry Todd, Bill Starr, and eventually George Lugin, all by way of Texas and more in tune with the times. By the mid-sixties, as Suggs once quipped, isometrics was perceived as a “national fad” that was “all too soon forgotten.”<sup>87</sup> Boys Club remained, but the new editors expressed disappointment that they were not receiving enough good photos and stories to publish it every month. The feature also assumed a new title in 1965, “Bob Hoffman’s Boys Club, The Place Where Future World’s Champions and Mr. Americas Make Their Debut,” but its days were numbered. A 1967 survey of readers by Starr indicated that only 3% chose it as a feature they most enjoyed, while 36% selected it as one they enjoyed least. That “Boys Club” was “very unpopular” was “surprising since almost half of the total readers are teenagers,” observed Starr.<sup>88</sup> The concept for attracting youth to weight training that had worked so well for over three decades was apparently too old-fashioned. Likewise *Little Samson* seemed out-of-date, and ads featuring Bobby Grimek as an eight-year-old must have been embarrassing to a teenager of fourteen by the time they were pulled in the November 1962 issue of

*Strength & Health*. The *Little Samson* barbells, renamed *Little Hercules*, reappeared in the May 1963 issue and stayed on the market through 1967 with little fanfare. In the meantime the Grimek boys were pursuing other sports, Bobby played football for Catholic High and Stevie liked to bowl.<sup>89</sup> Hoffman, diagnosed in 1965 with serious health problems, seemed set in his ways, but his editorial on "The Younger Generation" in the November 1964 issue indicated that his commitment to youth was as great as ever.<sup>90</sup>

Fortunately his young editors were no less committed to youth training and continued to focus on school and college programs. Their "special teenage issue" of November 1966 with Phil Grippaldi, "America's Strongest Teen-Ager," on the cover, included articles on Teenage Mr. America Boyer Coe, Mexican Olympic hopeful Manuel Mateos, and the first teenage weightlifting camp that was held at York Junior College just after the Teenage National Championships in July. In his "America's Wonderful Teen-Age Lifters," Hoffman again applied his well-worn cliché, "As the Twig is Bent" to his successful mission in awakening the nation to the importance of youth fitness.

It has been a privilege and an honor to have been associated with these wonderful teen-agers, these 'Bob Hoffman Boys Grown Up,' who have made their mark not only in the lifting world, but in all phases of life. . . . Some of them will go far. A wonderful lot of boys who will become a wonderful lot of men and have a great deal to do with keeping American lifting at the top of world weightlifting.<sup>91</sup>

America was hardly at the top of world weightlifting any more, but a significant number of sports medicine authorities and physical educators were now won over to Bob's principle of weight training for youth.

It was the view of chiropractor Samuel Homola in 1968 that "since weight training is now an important part of athletic training, the boy who begins a little lifting about 12 years of age will be a bigger, better, and stronger athlete when he enters high school."<sup>92</sup> Professor Eric Hughes used data from strength tests administered at the University of Washington in 1951-52, 1958-59, and 1966-67 to determine whether physical fitness

had improved in the schools. "Have our youth become stronger?" His results showed "a very significant improvement" in the press, curls, squats, and pull-ups and a lesser increase in sit-ups, a change Hughes attributed to "better school and community physical education programs that are producing a stronger, more physically fit college student."<sup>93</sup> It was the view of Gene Primm, a physical education teacher at Bellevue School in Peoria, Illinois, that

A well-established and well-supervised program of regular, progressive weight-training is one of the most beneficial and healthful activities in which a child may take part. The 'athletic heart' and 'musclebound' theories have gradually given way to the knowledge that weight training is not detrimental to the young person's health, and the same theory is proving true at the lower age level of grade school *if* the program is administered under the auspices of one who has an adequate knowledge of weight training and a sufficient amount of common sense.<sup>94</sup>

By 1970 it was evident to Charlie West that "in the last three years the coaches across the country have literally jumped on the bandwagon for weight training. There are very few holdouts in this day and age." Both coaches and parents understood the "importance of bigger and stronger athletes" and the "need to keep up with the competition."<sup>95</sup> Hoffman, after all, had been right for decades not only about the benefits of weight training but its applicability to other sports, even for youngsters.

There appeared to be no significant differences between Hoffman and his young cohorts throughout the sixties, most of whom were ardently spreading the gospel. Bill Starr relates that he, Tommy Suggs, Bill March, and Bob Bednarski did countless exhibitions "in every imaginable site: church basements, health fairs, Rotary Clubs, Lion's Clubs, Knights of Columbus, Kiwanis, Masonic Lodges, VFWs, lots of high schools," and the annual York Fair; and each exhibition added \$25 to their weekly salaries of \$100. Although Hoffman was apt to regard these outings as opportunities to "talk about himself and sell his products," according to Starr, he and Suggs started their own exhibitions where their sole aim

was “to get young athletes to lift weights.”<sup>96</sup> Their enthusiasm for youth lifting was also reflected in their articles. To address the “regular flow of mail” from parents requesting information on how and when to begin pre-teen training, Suggs, as Grimek had done in the 1950s, used his own kids, Debbie and Bubba, to illustrate movements. Like Grimek, he believed that “some discretion is necessary in supervising their physical activity” and that one “should not push youngsters for records and all-out attempts.” But he makes the important point that they are no more endangered from lifting than from other more popular activities like baseball (“little league elbow”) or the rough-and-tumble sport of football. “A child is ready to start training any age after six. And after age 16 he is ready for heavier training that includes heavy single efforts.”<sup>97</sup> How closely the ideals of Starr and Hoffman coincided on youth development is indicated in a series of articles on nutrition in 1968 and 1969. In an article on adolescent growth and nutritional requirements, Starr concluded that “proper nutrition, coupled with a sound exercise program . . . are the two keystones to a sound, healthy adult life. The foundation for this life of healthful living is laid in the formative years and most importantly when the boy or girl is passing through the teen years.” Hoffman, in a subsequent article not only makes virtually the same points but uses many of Starr’s words. That youthful nutritional habits lay the basis for adult health ultimately shows up in a final “As the Twig is Bent” editorial in which Hoffman reminds readers that “the future of America depends on the boys and girls of today.”<sup>98</sup>

Notwithstanding this apparent meeting of minds over what was arguably the most important issue confronting American society, there was a growing cultural cleavage between Hoffman and his younger editors. On one level the generation gap was signified by longer hair, psychedelic sights and sounds, and a more casual lifestyle generally. Beyond that it took on political overtones, incorporating the anti-Vietnam War movement, civil rights protests, and women’s liberation. But its most distinctive feature was the widespread use of drugs on all levels of society, particularly among young people. The younger generation at York was hardly immune to these influences, which included consumption of both recreational and performance enhancing drugs. The former took the form of parties—sometimes at the Suggs farm—or in town homes where lifters experimented with marijuana and hallucinogenic substances. Drugs, of

course, had been a part of the training protocol at York since Dr. Ziegler’s experiments in the early sixties, and even after steroids spread to all sports and parts of the country over the ensuing decade they remained a tightly-guarded secret for the record performances of Hoffman’s lifters. Tensions at York were palpable. [*Editors’ Note: For a more detailed discussion of the drug scene at York in the late 1960s see John Fair’s Muscletown USA.*]

A crack occurred when Starr, reflecting the liberated views of his generation, printed a letter from Jeff Everson of Stoughton, Wisconsin, in the February 1971 issue of *Strength & Health* criticizing Hoffman’s hypocrisy for condemning rebellious drug-taking youths while failing to mention the drug abuse at York. It was accompanied by an editorial defense of “anabolics and amphetamines” from Starr.

Some go so far as to say that it is immoral to use anabolics. It should be considered cheating and any drug user should be banned. Yet anabolics are being used by just about everyone in the sport. I seriously doubt if there were over two lifters at this year’s Senior Nationals who were not using anabolics. . . . I do believe that anabolics are safe when used properly and that they do result in a substantial strength gain. I believe that amphetamines do bring positive results to some lifters and are not harmful when used properly.<sup>99</sup>

After Starr was swiftly dismissed, there was a general policy of reaction and retrenchment that set into York Barbell in the early seventies. Hereafter Bob’s management was controlled by traditionalists as the company went into a spiral of decline in the 1970s. Feeling betrayed by the youth in whom he had placed so much trust without ever comprehending their cultural values, Hoffman was bitter and disillusioned: “Three I’m sorry I ever met are Starr, Suggs and Lugin.”<sup>100</sup>

Other changes included an orientation of the magazine to family fitness, general health, softball, and a variety of other physical culture topics, with no obvious focus on youth training. The April 1972 issue marked the last appearance of Boys Club, an anachronistic concept for hip baby boomers. It would be easy to conclude that its demise was also symbolic of the failure

of Hoffman's concept of weight training for youth, but it would be more accurate to perceive it as a victim of its own success. By that time, though remnants of the supposed dangers of muscle-binding, stunted growth, athletic heart, and rupture remained among the unenlightened, the concept of weight training for pre-pubescent and adolescent youngsters was not only more widely accepted by practitioners of sport and exercise but embedded in much of the popular literature of physical culture. With its increasing general acceptance, the need to promote the concept was less urgent. As Bill Curry, noted Southern weightlifter and Merchandise Manager for Diversified Products, once observed, Bob was a "true missionary" in sports science.<sup>101</sup> But once his conversion of weightlifting's disbelievers was complete there was little need to continue proselytizing.<sup>102</sup>

Perhaps the truest test of whether children who participate in resistance training programs are safe and will increase in strength can be found in the many studies carried out within the scientific community since the 1970s. Early results were inconclusive, there being no indication of their effectiveness.<sup>103</sup> Scores of later studies, however, have verified Hoffman's pioneering principles. By 1993, according to William Kraemer and Steven Fleck in their widely used text, *Strength Training for Young Athletes*, there was a greater understanding among scientific and medical authorities on the subject and unrealistic fears were "starting to diminish." They concluded that children could "safely and effectively perform resistance training," although it should be done with proper supervision, correct technique, and never with maximum poundage.

Proper program design along with knowledgeable supervision makes resistance training safe, rewarding, and fun. Improved physical function will in turn enhance physical fitness, health, injury prevention, and sport performance. *Perhaps an even more important outcome is the child's development of an active lifestyle. Proper exercise behaviors can contribute to better health and well-being over a lifetime* [authors' italics].<sup>104</sup>

While close counseling of young trainees reflect Grimek's approach with his boys, Kraemer and Fleck's

latter lines echo Hoffman's "As the Twig is Bent" aphorism.

Thomas Baechle and Roger Earle, in the 2008 *Essentials of Strength Training*, have accumulated more up-to-date research evidence in support of weight training for children. They note that "clinicians, coaches, and exercise scientists now agree that resistance exercise can be a safe and effective method of conditioning for children" and "major sports medicine organizations support children's participation in resistance exercise provided that the programs are appropriately designed and competently supervised." Numerous studies demonstrated that "boys and girls can increase muscular strength" beyond normal "growth and maturation" and that "strength gains of roughly 30% to 40% have been typically observed in untrained preadolescent children following short-term . . . resistance training programs, although gains up to 74% have been reported." Contrary to the "common misperception . . . that resistance training will stunt the statural growth of children . . . it probably has a favorable influence on growth at any stage of development." Furthermore it would likely "minimize or offset the incidence and severity of sport-related injuries common to young athletes" and improve their performance. As to when to start a child on a lifting program they were in sync with the early practitioners at York.

Although there is no minimal age requirement for participation in a youth resistance training program, children should have the emotional maturity to follow directions and should be eager to try this type of activity. . . . The goals of youth resistance training programs should not be limited to increasing muscular strength but should also include teaching children about their bodies, promoting an interest in physical activity, and having fun. *It seems likely that children who enjoy participating in physical activities and sports are more likely to be active later in life* [authors' italics].<sup>105</sup>

Although they were scientifically and independently derived, these findings were implicit in the empirically-based conclusions of Hoffman and Grimek two genera-

tions earlier.

The most definitive endorsement of youth weight training, summarizing 258 studies, appears in the 2009 position statement of the National Strength and Conditioning Association. Its seven authors, representing a variety of exercise and medical scientists and practitioners, concluded that “research increasingly indicates that resistance training can offer unique benefits for children and adolescents when appropriately prescribed and supervised” and that its acceptance “by medical, fitness, and sport organizations is becoming universal.” Building on previous statements in 1985 and 1996, they affirmed under seven headings that youth resistance programs (“properly designed and supervised”) were relatively safe, could enhance muscular strength, improve cardiovascular health, improve motor skill and sports performance, increase resistance to injuries, improve psychosocial well-being, and (*a la* Hoffman and Grimek) promote and develop exercise habits during childhood and adolescence.<sup>106</sup> But the most emphatic statement that weight training for youth was no longer an issue came from the sub-title of the first chapter of William Kraemer’s 1993 book: “The Controversy Resolved.”<sup>107</sup>

Or is it resolved? Its acceptance has given rise to new questions with no less serious consequences that are rooted in the rupture that took place at York in the early 1970s. Both Hoffman and Starr were strong believers in the merits of weight training for children and teens, and even after nearly a half century Starr remains unwavering in his commitment, having published two articles entitled “Youngsters Need Strength Too” in 2011.<sup>108</sup> It is doubtful, however, that he, any more than Alvin Roy, would condone or endorse administering steroids to youngsters, yet it has inadvertently become the logical endgame of youthful weight training. For Starr, and Hoffman too, it was “Catch 22.” Data drawn from the Department of Health and Human Services for Alan Klein’s 1993 book *Little Big Men* indicate that about 250,000 of the estimated million Americans who took steroids at that time were high school students. A multi-authored 2000 study for *The Adonis Complex* reckons that “a typical high school boy in the United States would think nothing of taking anywhere between 300 and 1,000 milligrams of steroids per week,” and a competitive weightlifter “might take up to several thousand milligrams per week.” And according to a 2009 CBS News report, based on figures from the Census

Bureau and the Centers for Disease Control, almost 700,000 students admitted using steroids in 2005.<sup>109</sup> Bodybuilding promoter Cliff Sawyer believes that when track star Ben Johnson got caught at the Seoul Olympics in 1988 with steroids in his system, “it turned off a lot of parents to having their kids go to a gym and work out.”<sup>110</sup> [Editors’ Note: *Not all parents reacted in this way to the Johnson situation, and there were reports from gym owners that in the wake of his positive test they got calls from parents wanting to know how they could acquire for their sons the same sort of anabolic agents which had helped Johnson develop his heavily muscled and explosive body, especially since their sons would almost never have to face Olympic-style drug testing.*] Although proponents of weight training for children and teens can take satisfaction in debunking some of the most stubborn myths that have plagued physical culture for most of the twentieth century, their euphoria must be short-lived and accompanied by a realization that an even greater controversy has emerged, like the Hydra, over the health and well-being of youth who train with weights.

#### NOTES:

1. This familiar idiom is derived from Alexander Pope, “’Tis Education forms the Vulgar Mind, Just as the Twig is bent, The Tree’s inclin’d,” in *An Epistle To the Right Honourable Richard Lord Viscount Cobham* (London and Dublin: reprint by George Faulkner, 1734), 11.
2. Aristotle, *Politics*, Book VIII, Part 4, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959), 648-49.
3. William Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, Act I, Scene 2, Anthony B. Dawson, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 87.
4. “Health & Strength League,” *Health & Strength* 26 (February 21, 1920): 128; and Laurie Webb, “League Notes,” *Health & Strength* 75 (December 1946): 526.
5. “American Strength & Health League,” *Strength & Health* 1 (December 1932): 13.
6. “American Strength & Health League,” *Strength & Health* 1 (January 1933): 20; “American Strength & Health League,” *Strength & Health* 1 (February 1933): 20; and “American Strength & Health League,” *Strength & Health* 1 (May 1933): 24.
7. Sales Records, *Strength & Health*, Hoffman Papers, John Fair Collection.
8. Bob Hoffman, *How to be Strong, Healthy and Happy* (York, PA: Strength and Health Publishing Co., 1938), 7, 227, 303, 372.
9. “Letters from Readers,” *Strength & Health* 15 (April 1946): 5. A decade later Hoffman’s problem with the *Strength & Health* League was used against him by his commercial rivals, Joe and Ben Weider. “This column was the meeting place of more homosexuals than Kraft-Ebing or Kinsey ever dreamed of! Ostensibly a ‘pen pals’ club, it became notorious with the passing years and was finally discon-

- tinued by 'request,' rumor hath it, of higher authorities." It was, the Weiders alleged "the first time in history the faggots have ever been organized." Joe and Ben Weider, "People Who Live in Glass Houses," *Muscle Builder* 9 (December 1957): 56. See also: David K. Johnson, "Physique Pioneers: The Politics of 1960s Gay Consumer Culture," *Journal of Social History* 43, no. 4 (Summer 2010): 867-892.
10. Money Order Books, 1942-1950, Hoffman Papers.
  11. "Especially for S & H Boys," *Strength & Health* 13 (October 1945): 16-17.
  12. "Especially for S & H Boys," *Strength & Health* 13 (November 1945): 16-17; "Especially for S & H Boys," *Strength & Health* 14 (December 1945): 17; "Especially for S & H Boys," *Strength & Health* 14 (February 1946): 16-17; "Especially for S & H Boys," *Strength & Health* 14 (March 1946): 16; "Especially for S & H Boys," *Strength & Health* 14 (April 1946): 19; Bob Hoffman, "The Best Time to Start," *Strength & Health* 15 (December 1946): 23. The first female featured was "barbelle" Mary Jean Allman of Battle Creek, Michigan, who celebrated her twelfth birthday by cleaning and jerking 75 pounds and deadlifting 180 pounds. "Letters from Readers," *Strength & Health* 17 (January 1949): 7.
  13. Steve Stanko, "Self Improvement Contest Winners," *Strength & Health* 16 (December 1947): 18.
  14. "Especially for S & H Boys," *Strength & Health* 14 (April 1946): 18-19.
  15. "Especially for S & H Boys," *Strength & Health* 18 (April 1950): 15, 33.
  16. John Grimek, "The Man on the Cover," *Strength & Health* 17 (April 1949); Steve Stanko, "Self Improvement Heroes," *Strength & Health* 9 (August, 1949): 22; "Especially for S & H Boys," *Strength & Health* 14 (August 1946): 23; and George Eiferman, "The Man on the Cover," *Strength & Health* 16 (June/July 1948): 8.
  17. Hoffman, "The Best Time to Start," 23.
  18. "Especially for S & H Boys," *Strength & Health* 18 (April 1950): 15.
  19. "Life Tours the Children's TV Shows," *Life* 31 (December 24, 1951): 73; Jim Murray letter to John Fair, July 5, 2011, letter in possession of John Fair; and "Weight Lifting News," *Strength & Health* 21 (December 1952): 7.
  20. Jim Murray, "Paul Oudinot Jr.—Ten-Year-Old Strength Prodigy," *Strength & Health* 20 (April 1952): 10-11.
  21. Murray letter to Fair; and Steve Stanko, "Self Improvement Success," *Strength & Health* 19 (September 1951): 17.
  22. Jim Murray, "Paul Waldman, Youthful Body Building Sensation," *Strength & Health* 21 (April 1953): 30-31; and "Weight Lifting News," *Strength & Health* 21 (August 1953): 7.
  23. Paul Waldman, "My Training Experiences," *Strength & Health* 20 (January 1952): 32-33. See also Jim Murray, "Coverman Paul Waldman," *Strength & Health* 22 (August 1954): 9, 39; and Paul Waldman, "John Terlazzo Trains the Businessman," *Strength & Health* 21 (August 1953): 12.
  24. Jim Murray, "Coverman—Glenn Bishop," *Strength & Health* 23 (February 1955): 31.
  25. Bob Hoffman, "Building Young Supermen," *Strength & Health* 19 (February 1951): 9, 47; and "Especially for Strength & Health Boys," *Strength & Health* 21 (December 1952): 28.
  26. John Grimek, "How Young Should You Start 'Em?" *Strength & Health* 21 (February 1953): 12-13; and John Fair interview with Pat Grimek Stover, July 28, 2011, York, Pennsylvania. Hy Schaffer, who coached strength prodigy Isaac Berger at his Adonis Health Club in Brooklyn, effectively responded to Grimek's query a year later in an article entitled "Start 'Em Young," *Strength & Health* 22 (March 1954): 16, 44.
  27. John Terpak letter to Pudgy Stockton, October 20, 1952, Les and Pudgy Stockton Papers, H.J. Lutchter Stark Center for Physical Culture & Sports, University of Texas, Box 6, folder 141, 1951-52. See also Jim Murray, "Barbell Bits," *Strength & Health* 21 (December 1952): 14.
  28. Jim Murray, "Barbell Bits," *Strength & Health* 20 (July 1952): 16; Ray Van Cleef, "Strongmen the World Over," *Strength & Health* 21 (September 1953): 23; Jim Murray, "Muscle Miscellanea," *Strength & Health* 21 (June 1953): 15; Steve Stanko, "Success Stories," *Strength & Health* 22 (August 1954): 20; and Donne Hale, "The Story of a Boy," *Strength & Health* 24 (January 1956): 34, 62-63.
  29. Jim Murray and Peter V. Karpovich, *Weight Training in Athletics* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1956).
  30. Bob Hoffman, "York High Wins First Football Championship," *Strength & Health* 22 (March 1954): 12-13, 44. See also Bob Hoffman, *Better Athletes Through Weight Training* (York, PA: Strength and Health Publishing Co., 1959): 225-28.
  31. Murray and Karpovich, *Weight Training*, 115.
  32. Matt Schudel, "Hall of Fame Lineman with the Chicago Bears; All-American at U-Md," *Washington Post*, July 26, 2010, B7.
  33. C. H. McCloy, "Weight Training for Athletes?" *Strength & Health* 23 (July 1955): 8.
  34. Terry Todd, "Al Roy: Mythbreaker," *Iron Game History* 2 (January 1992): 13-14; and John Fair interview with Ray Roy, January 18, 2012, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. That Roy was responsible for much of his lifters' success in Paris is the view of Hoffman in "Details of the World's Championships," *Strength & Health* 15 (January 1947): 10-11. For additional details on Roy's personal life, see Lee Feinswog, "Powerful Impact," *Our City* 225 (February 2009): 47-50.
  35. Terry Todd interview with Ellis Brown, December 23, 1984, Shreveport, Louisiana, cited in Todd, "Al Roy," 14.
  36. Bill Williams, "Barbells Build Winning Football Team," *Baton Rouge State-Times* in *Strength & Health* 24 (May 1956): 8-9, 39-42. See also Hoffman, *Better Athletes*, 217-224; Bob Hoffman, "Football and Alvin Roy," *Strength & Health* 38 (June 1970): 59, 70-71; and Bob Hoffman, "Weight Training and Football II," *Strength & Health* 38 (July 1970): 46-47, 79-80.
  37. Joe Kolb, "The Fort Lauderdale Story," *Fort Lauderdale Daily News* in *Strength & Health* 24 (May 1956): 10, 42, 44.
  38. Bob Hoffman, "As the Twig is Bent," *Strength & Health* 24 (May 1956): 3-4, 39.
  39. The set included an aluminum bar with two 2½ and six 1¼ pound weights, a pair of two-pound dumbbells, a training course for boys, a Little Samson training shirt, and a membership card in the Strength & Health Boys Club. "York Barbell for Small Fry," *Strength & Health* 24 (May 1956): 63.
  40. George R. Bruce, "Let's Start a Boys' Club," *Strength & Health* 19 (February 1951): 20.
  41. "Strength and Health Boys Club," *Strength & Health* 24 (March 1956): 34-35.
  42. "Strength and Health Boys Club," *Strength & Health* 24 (February 1956): 34.
  43. Harry Paschall, "Rod Allen," *Strength & Health* 24 (July 1956): 12-13.
  44. See "Strength and Health Boys Club," *Strength & Health* 24 (June

- 1956): 35; "Strength and Health Boys Club," *Strength & Health* 24 (October 1956): 36; "Strength and Health Boys Club," *Strength & Health* 25 (January 1957): 36-37; "Strength and Health Boys Club," *Strength & Health* 25 (February 1957): 36; and "Strength and Health Boys Club," *Strength & Health* 26 (March 1958): 41.
45. John Grimek and Bob Hoffman, "Boys . . . Meet Little Samson in which the Younger Grimeks become Little Samson Addicts," *Strength & Health* 24 (June 1956): 28; and "York Barbell for Small Fry," *Strength & Health* 24 (June 1956): 63.
46. "Fun in Your Backyard," *Strength & Health* 26 (February 1958): 33. Bobby, "Li'l Samson," is also depicted beside a pool in the "Boys Club" section as liking "most of the games and sports youngsters of his age play, but is especially fond of diving and swimming and does very well for his age." "Strength and Health Boys Club," *Strength & Health* 26 (February 1958): 40.
47. "Strength and Health Boys Club," *Strength & Health* 25 (December 1956): 37; "Strength and Health Boys Club," *Strength & Health* 25 (November 1957): 40; and "Strength and Health Boys Club," *Strength & Health* 26 (February 1958): 40.
48. Hoffman/Ketterman Family photographs, Hoffman Papers.
49. Money Order Books and Book Sales Records, 1953-58, Hoffman Papers.
50. See Peary Rader, "Editorial," *Lifting News* 2 (December 1955): 6; "Readers' Round-Up," *Iron Man* 15 (March 1956): 43 and 51; Peary Rader, "National Teen Age Lifting Tournament," *Lifting News* 2 (April 1956): 1; and Peary Rader, "New National Records Set at Teen-Age Nationals," *Lifting News* 4 (July 1957): 2.
51. "Now It's Your Turn to Choose the Winner," *Tomorrow's Man* 3 (September 1955): 17. *Muscular Development*, the sister magazine to *Strength & Health* that was launched in 1964, covered mainly bodybuilding and powerlifting and was virtually mum on the subject of youth training.
52. Roger Rizzo, "I Gained 41 Pounds of He Man Muscle following The Weider System," *Muscle Power* 19 (June 1956): 9.
53. Joe Weider, "I Want to Make You an All-American He-Man," *Junior Mr. America* 1 (December 1955): 3.
54. "Strength and Health Boys Club," *Strength & Health* 26 (December 1957): 41.
55. Terry Todd interview with Paul Dietzel, May 1987, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, cited in Todd, "Alvin Roy," 15.
56. Ken Leistner and Sandy McLeod, "Alvin Roy—Fitness for Football," *Strength & Health* 37 (November 1969): 51; and Alvin Roy, *Weight Training for Football* (York, PA: York Barbell Company, 1959): 11, cited in Todd, "Al Roy," 15.
57. John Fair interview with Ray Roy.
58. Ace Higgins, "Billy Cannon," *Strength & Health* 27 (November 1959): 34-35.
59. Ibid.; Mike Nettles, "Billy Cannon, LSU's All-American," *Sports Illustrated* 9 (October 17 1958): cited in Todd, "Al Roy," 15; and Terry Todd interview with Billy Cannon, December 1985, Shreveport, Louisiana, cited in Todd, "Al Roy," 15.
60. Bob Hoffman, Martin Broussard, Alvin Roy, and Francis Drury, *Functional Isometric Contraction, Advanced Course* (York, PA: The Bob Hoffman Foundation, 1962), 14.
61. In a resume, circa 1963, Alvin Roy notes that he had been conducting a public service program "without pay, on WBRZ-TV for three years in conjunction with President Kennedy's Proclamation on Physical Fitness for Youth." The show was titled, *Alvin Roy's Family Physical Fitness Program*. By this time he also claims to have "coached, trained and help develop 200 boys, ages 8-14, daily for the past 17 years. J. Alvin Roy, Physical Education Instructor, Baton Rouge, Louisiana," Scrapbook, Alvin Roy Papers in possession of Alvin Roy, Jr., Baton Rouge, Louisiana.
62. Interview with Ray Roy. "The interesting thing," says Boyer Coe, "is Ray [Roy] sends me just a tear of loose leaf paper and says, 'Boyer, the Mr. Louisiana contest is next weekend, if you want to enter.' I didn't even have an entry blank, and I just wrote out something and sent it in, and I guess they accepted it. I didn't have a pair of posing trunks. I just used a swimsuit. I kind of rolled it up, but anyway I was good enough to come out third, and I won several body parts. I was tickled to death. And I remember John Gourgott and Dr. Craig Whitehead were judges. And I was in the restroom taking a pee, and Dr. Whitehead came up and said, 'you know, you're pretty good for a kid.'" John Fair interview with Boyer Coe, June 3, 2011, Huntington Beach, California.
63. Interview with Ray Roy. The Roys also had a role in the successful basketball career of Baton Rouge native Bob Pettit, though not until he became a professional with the Milwaukee Hawks in 1954. "Here he is 6' 9", and when he came back home he weighed about 210 pounds, and he'd been beaten up so bad, he said, 'Man, they're beating the hell out of me.' He came to us and talked to Alvin, wondering if the weights would help him. And so, we started working with him." In 1958 Pettit, a regular trainer with weights, led the Hawks (then at St. Louis) to an NBA championship.
64. "Strength and Health Boys Club," *Strength & Health* 24 (August 1956): 36.
65. "Strength and Health Boys Club," *Strength & Health* 26 (May 1958): 40-41.
66. "The Iron Grapevine," *Strength & Health* 27 (November 1959): 26; and George Cohen, "Gary Gubner, Teen-Age Super Athlete," *Strength & Health* 31 (June 1962): 35, 52-53.
67. Bob Hoffman, "It Was a Sad Day," *Strength & Health* 26 (February 1958): 10.
68. "The Iron Grapevine," *Strength & Health* 26 (March 1958): 25.
69. John C. Grimek, "They're Never Too Young," *Strength & Health* 27 (January 1959): 36-37, 51-53.
70. "The Iron Grapevine," *Strength & Health* 29 (April 1961): 63; "Strength and Health Boys Club," *Strength & Health* 28 (October 1960): 40; and "The Iron Grapevine," *Strength & Health* 28 (November 1960): 27.
71. "Strength and Health Boys Club," *Strength & Health* 27 (January 1959): 40.
72. Bob Hoffman, "The Most Important Article I Ever Wrote," *Strength & Health* 29 (November 1961): 30-33.
73. See Hoffman, et. al., *Functional Isometric Contraction*, 5-8, 11. The Detroit Lions were one of the first professional teams to use isometrics. See Jim Lycett, "Lions Tap New Well of Strength," *The Detroit News Pictorial Magazine*, July 22, 1962. Bob Pettit, whose scoring average was 31 points during the first portion of the 1961-62 season, was so convinced of its efficacy that he had substituted isometrics for his weightlifting regimen. Pat Harmon, "Pettit Drops the Weights," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, December 1961, newspaper clipping in possession of John Fair.
74. Norm Olson letter to Bob Hoffman, July 16, 1962; and Jim Goosetree letter to Bob Hoffman, January 29, 1962, Hoffman Papers.
75. Bill Blodgett, "Isometric Contraction Builds Champions," *The Tampa Times*, September 1, 1962; and Vince Reedy, "Easy as ABC, and Economical," *The Victoria Advocate*, May 20, 1962.
76. "Power Rack Sales to High Schools and Colleges-1962," Hoffman Papers. Joe Weider, on the other hand, refused to join "the isometric craze" and to jump "on the gravy train to sell 'isometric torture

- racks," claiming that he had already discovered isometrics and incorporated it in his principles "which have been used by body-builders the world over for years." Joe Weider, "The Isometric Body-building Racket," *Muscle Builder* 12 (July 1962): 14-15.
77. John Fair interview with Louis Riecke, April 29, 1989, Harahan, Louisiana. For the story of Ziegler's experiments with Riecke and York lifter Bill March see John D. Fair, *Muscle town USA, Bob Hoffman and the Manly Culture of York Barbell* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999): 199-200.
78. Interview with Ray Roy; and Hoffman et. al., *Functional Isometric Contraction*, 32.
79. Interview with Coe.
80. Vera Christensen, "Exercise and the Small Child," *Strength & Health* 29 (March 1961): 38. See also Christensen's "Exercise for the Young Teenager," *Strength & Health* 38 (May 1970): 32; and "Teenage Training," *Strength & Health* 41 (January 1973): 60.
81. Vic Westphall, "Summer High School Weight Program for Athletics," *Strength & Health* 29 (January 1961): 41; "Strength and Health Boys Club," *Strength & Health* 30 (July 1962): 41; "Strength and Health Boys Club," *Strength & Health* 30 (September 1962): 41; Paul Uram, "A New Outlook on School Fitness," *Strength & Health* 30 (October 1962): 40; Ray Van Cleef, "Making Huskies Out of Softies," *Strength & Health* 30 (November 1962): 40; and "Strength and Health Boys Club," *Strength & Health* 31 (May 1963): 41.
82. James P. Tuppeny, "Weight Training for Track and Field Men at Villanova," *Strength & Health* 27 (March 1959): 28; and George W. Ritchey, "L.S.U., Weight Training at Louisiana State University has many facets," *Strength & Health* 28 (July 1960): 36.
83. "Strength and Health Boys Club," *Strength & Health* 29 (September 1961): 40.
84. "Strength and Health Boys Club," *Strength & Health* 30 (August 1962): 41; "Strength and Health Boys Club," *Strength & Health* 31 (November 1963): 26; "Strength and Health Boys Club," *Strength & Health* 30 (April 1962): 41; and "Strength and Health Boys Club," *Strength & Health* 28 (June 1960): 41.
85. "Strength and Health Boys Club," *Strength & Health* 30 (May 1962): 40-41.
86. "Self-Improvement Contest," *Strength & Health* 31 (June 1963): 16-17, 60-62; "1963 Boys' Self-Improvement Contest Winners," *Strength & Health* 31 (October 1963): 38-39. See also Bill Reynolds, "Military Weight Training Facilities," *Muscular Development* 5 (May 1968): 19, 45.
87. Tommy Suggs, "Isometrics," *Strength & Health* 35 (September 1967): 28.
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89. "The Iron Grapevine," *Strength & Health* 31 (January 1963): 65. Pat Grimek Stover recalls that her brother Steve continued training in later life and "did enter a contest." As to whether the son of her sister Bonnie, Timothy Day, who "still lifts weights," ever entered a contest she is not so sure, but iron game author David Gentle remembers an enquiry from him. "Isn't it weird. I'm getting Grimek's grandson asking me for info on John—strange family." Interview with Stover; and David Gentle letter to John Fair, November 2, 2006, letter in Fair's possession.
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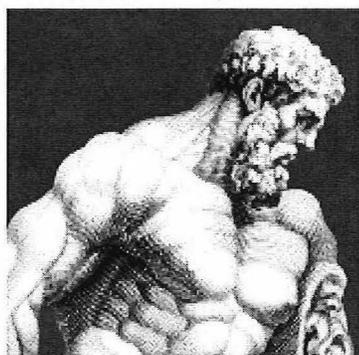
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