

THE STARK CENTER

The Stanley Rothwell Papers

The H.J. Lutcher Stark Center for Physical
Culture & Sports

The University of Texas at Austin

Finding Aid

Stanley Rothwell Papers: 6 Boxes: 115 Folders, 4 Map Case Items, 1899-1998

Abstract

Stanley Rothwell was a British physical culturist and educator best known as a writer, fitness model, bodybuilder, boxer, and wrestler. Rothwell wrote extensively about health and fitness, mining, war, philosophy, politics, and himself. The collection focuses on physical culture in British society from the mid-1920s to the 1950s through records documenting Rothwell's personal art and writing, and physical culture careers. This collection comprises writings and notes, newspaper clippings, photographs, personal correspondence, and other printed material and ephemera.

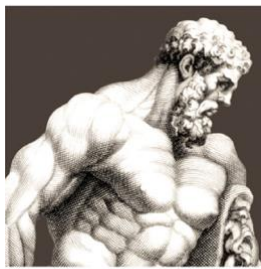
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Processing Information:



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Collection processed in 2014 by Emma Martin and Megan Carey, under the supervision of Brent Sipes. For information about the content of the collection, please write info@starkcenter.org or call 512-471-0991.

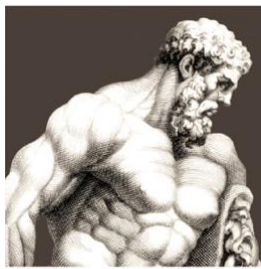
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Preferred Citation



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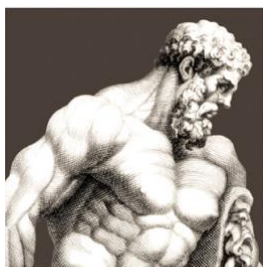
The Stanley Rothwell Papers, H.J. Lutchter Stark Center for Physical Culture & Sports, The University of Texas at Austin. *[There is no space between H.&J.]*

Subject Index

Key Terms	Reeves, Henry	Strength & Health
	Rothwell, Stanley	Superman
England	Smith, Charles	Wrestling World
Health	Van Cleef, Ray	Your Physique
Mining		
Physical Culture	Magazines	Sports
Physical Fitness	The Bodybuilder	Acrobatism
War	Health & Efficiency	Bodybuilding
Wellness	Health & Strength	Boxing
Key Names	Muscle Power	Wrestling
Quo Vadis Bros	The Sporting Arena	
	Strength	

Biographical Note

Stanley Hallum Rothwell was born on December 28th, 1904 in Wigan, Lancashire, England to William Henry and Sarah Jane Rothwell. He had two brothers, Bill and Charlie. Rothwell spent his early years in the mining towns of Wigan and Ashton-in-



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Makersfield. As a child, a mistreated ear infection caused him to lose hearing in one ear. In his personal writings, Rothwell lists this disability as a central cause for his poor school performance and eventual interest in physical fitness. He worked as a miner in Wigan, England for ten years before moving to London in 1928 with his brother, Charlie. In London, he initially became a manual laborer, which helped him to cultivate the strength and fitness that would lead him to bodybuilding. Rothwell became a model for fitness magazines, photographers, and artists, and was sought-after by sculptors such as C. Sargeant Jagger and Josephina de Vasconcellos. During this time, Rothwell also performed in the Quo Vadis Brothers vaudeville fitness act with his brother Charlie.

In the years after his career as a fitness model, Rothwell worked as a physical education instructor at various institutions such as the LCC College of Physical Education (1941-1943), as well as with a number of camps, including London Federation of Boy's Clubs, The Knights' Club for Boys, and The Christ Camp United Club. He kept extensive notes and drawings on and of the exercises he choreographed for his pupils. In late 1938, after being approached by Neville O'Brien, Rothwell attached his name to The Rothwell Chest Expander, a piece of fitness exercise equipment.

Though Rothwell was unable to fight in World War II because of his hearing disability, he served in the British Civil Defence Light Rescue, in addition to training fighter pilots in physical fitness in Lambeth, England from 1939 to 1945. During his time in London, and later in the Civil Defence, Rothwell became a painter. He worked as a visual artist throughout his life.

Rothwell was also an aspiring writer, and, most notably, wrote two books, *The Roads That Lead From Wigan Pier*, about miners in his hometown of Wigan, and *Lambeth at War*, about his experience in the Civil Defence. Rothwell continued to study the plight of miners and laborers in England throughout his life. *The Roads that Lead From Wigan Pier* remains unpublished but exists in both handwritten and typed manuscript form in this collection. He began his second book, *Lambeth at War*, during the 1940s, but it was not published until shortly before his death in the mid-1980s.



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Rothwell wrote screenplays, autobiographical sketches, and essays on subjects ranging from physical strength to philosophy, many of which he sent to media outlets for their consideration. He was consulted for television and movie documentaries, particularly on the subject of Civil Defence.

Stanley Rothwell married Cecilia Eliza Rothwell (nee Hart), a shop assistant, and together they had three children, including Bill Rothwell, the eventual donor of his collection. Throughout his later life, Rothwell corresponded with a number of close friends he knew from fitness modeling, including Joe Assirati, Harry Reeves, Charles Smith, and Raymond Van Cleef. Henry Reeves and Rothwell had been friends since the 1940s and their correspondence spanned decades. Topics of discussion range from their shared past and former friends to philosophical thoughts and ideas. Raymond Van Cleef was the managing editor of *Health & Strength* during the 40s, which Rothwell contributed to often in the form of reader comments and articles. Van Cleef and Rothwell maintained a personal relationship, and Van Cleef wrote to Rothwell about his family and included photos of his family in many of his letters. He also reconnected with Charles Smith and Joe Assirati in 1986. Smith, once a model, had become a researcher at the University of Texas at Austin and encouraged Rothwell to donate his materials to the University.

Rothwell remained in London, where he wrote and continued to be active in the Labour Party and with various political issues, until his death in 1986, months after the loss of his wife. He was survived by his son, Bill Rothwell.

Scope and Content

Stanley Rothwell Collection: 6 Boxes: 115 Folders, 4 Map Case Items

This collection includes materials pertaining to Stanley Rothwell's professional career as a bodybuilder, fitness model, and physical educator; his personal correspondence with fellow models; professional photographs of Rothwell and his peers; personal photographs; extensive writings on health, fitness, philosophy, and his



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personal history; and his collection of press clippings and ephemera on physical culture, mining, politics, and entertainment. The materials date from his wife's, Celia Rothwell, birth certificate from 1899, to posthumous material from Bill Rothwell in 1998.

Throughout the collection, professional correspondence for his physical education and fitness modeling careers are housed separately from his personal correspondence between friends Joe Assirati, Henry Reeves, Raymond Van Cleef, Charles Smith; assorted acquaintances; members of government; and members of the media. Rothwell corresponded about health and fitness, memories of Pre-War London, and daily life with his personal correspondents, and was an outspoken member of the Labour Party.

Rothwell's professional career is particularly well-documented in photographs; advertisements for his vaudeville act and chest expander; in correspondence and photographs related to his work as an artist's model; and in correspondence and hand-written exercises created by Rothwell for boys' camps and recreational courses.

Rothwell's photograph collection includes professional and candid photographs of Rothwell and his peers in their 20s and 30s, in addition to later family photographs, photographs documenting Rothwell's time as a miner, Civil Defence member, and painter. The photographs also include unidentified group shots and candid shots. Photographs date from 1933 until 1981, though many are undated.

Rothwell's collection of writings includes essays on physical prowess, war, philosophical ideals, and religion. The collection also contains unfinished notes on the same subjects, including quotations from literature, and songs. In addition to Rothwell's manuscripts for his two completed books, *The Roads that Lead From Wigan Pier* and *Lambeth at War*, respectively based on his personal history as a miner and Civil Defence worker, the collection contains several unfinished manuscripts: "Living in an Hostile World," "Man in the Moon," "Searching for an Ideal in an Hostile World," and a thesis related to Dr. Cecil Hamilton.



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A short series of miscellanea contains ephemera, unidentified personal documents and correspondence, currency, business cards, and art.

Collection Arrangement

6 Boxes: 115 Folders, 4 Map Case Items

Series: Athletic Career, 1933-1980, undated (9 folders)

Subseries: Fitness Ventures, 1938, undated

MMap Case, Drawer 2: Chest Expander advertisement, undated

Box 1, Folder 1: Chest Expander related Documents, 1938

MMap Case, Drawer 2: Chalton Street Ring Boxing advertisement, undated

MMap Case, Drawer 2: The Quo Vadis Bros. advertisements, undated (2 items)

Subseries: Physical Education, 1928-1980, undated

Box 1, Folder 2: Correspondence - Boys' Clubs & Camps, 1937-1957

Box 1, Folder 3: Correspondence - Other physical education, 1933-1957, undated

Box 1, Folder 4: Educational materials, 1943-1948, undated

Box 1, Folder 5: Exercises by Rothwell, undated

Box 1, Folder 6: Exercise Documents, 1938-1941, undated

Box 1, Folder 7: Exercise Documents, 1938-1941, undated

Box 1, Folder 8: Fitness-related clippings, circa 1960-1980

Box 1, Folder 9: Memberships - Athletic clubs, 1928-1958



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Series: Magazines, 1931-1960, undated (13 folders)

Box 1, Folder 10: The Bodybuilder, Mar. 1953

Box 1, Folder 11: Fragments, 1936, undated

Box 1, Folder 12: Health & Efficiency, Feb. 1935

Box 1, Folder 13: Health & Strength, 1933-1948

Box 1, Folder 14: Muscle Power, 1950

Box 1, Folder 15: The Sporting Arena, 1935-1936

Box 1, Folder 16: Strength, 1927-1928

Box 1, Folder 17: Strength & Health, 1940-1943

Box 1, Folder 18: Superman, 1931-1932

Box 1, Folder 19: Superman, 1932-1933

Box 1, Folder 20: Superman, 1933-1937

Box 1, Folder 21: Wrestling World, circa 1961

Box 1, Folder 22: Your Physique, Nov. 1950

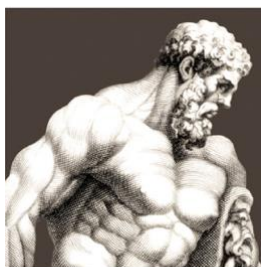
Series: Modeling career, 1933-1985, undated (7 folders)

Subseries: Clippings, undated

Box 2, Folder 23: Clippings (copies), undated

Subseries: Correspondence, 1934-1945

Box 2, Folder 24: Incoming, 1934-1945



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Subseries: C. Sargeant and David Jagger (sculptors), 1947, undated

Box 2, Folder 25: Book - Modeling and Sculpture, 1947

Box 2, Folder 26: Correspondence, 1933, undated

Box 2, Folder 27: Publicity, 1976-1985, undated

Subseries: Memberships, 1933-1970

Box 2, Folder 28: Fine art and modeling clubs, 1933-1970

Subseries: Josephina de Vasconcellos (Banner), 1938-1985, undated

Box 2, Folder 29: Correspondence, 1938-1985, undated

Series: Personal Correspondence, 1930-1986, undated (19 folders)

Subseries: In-letters, 1930-1986, undated

Box 2, Folder 30: Assirati, Joe, 1986

Box 2, Folder 31: Health & Strength, 1946-1952

Box 2, Folder 32: Parliament, 1957-1984

Box 2, Folder 33: Reeves, Henry, 1952-1960

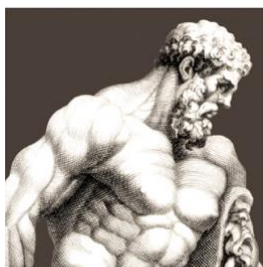
Box 2, Folder 34: Reeves, Henry, 1980-1981

Box 2, Folder 35: Reeves, Henry, 1982

Box 2, Folder 36: Reeves, Henry, 1983

Box 2, Folder 37: Reeves, Henry, 1984

Box 2, Folder 38: Reeves, Henry, 1985



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Box 2, Folder 39: Reeves, Henry, 1986

Box 2, Folder 40: Reeves, Henry, undated

Box 2, Folder 41: Smith, Charles, 1986

Box 2, Folder 42: Van Cleef, Ray, 1947-1964

Box 2, Folder 43: Wheeler, Charles, 1966-1974, undated

Box 2, Folder 44: Miscellaneous, 1930-1949

Box 2, Folder 45: Miscellaneous, 1950-1969

Box 2, Folder 46: Miscellaneous, 1970-1986

Box 2, Folder 47: Miscellaneous, undated

Subseries: Out-letters, 1944-1986

Box 2, Folder 48: Out-letters, 1944-1986

Series: Photographs, 1933-1981, undated (20 folders)

Box 3, Folder 49: Artist's Modeling, 1933-1979

Box 3, Folder 50: Artist's Modeling, undated

Box 3, Folder 51: Artist's Modeling, undated

Box 3, Folder 52: Assorted photos of Rothwell, 1948, undated

Box 3, Folder 53: Assorted photos of Rothwell, undated

Box 3, Folder 54: Candid, undated

Box 3, Folder 54a: Candid, undated



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Box 3, Folder 55: Candida, undated

Box 3, Folder 56: Candida, undated

Box 3, Folder 57: Candida, undated

Box 3, Folder 58: Candida - Scrapbook, undated

Box 3, Folder 59: Candida - Scrapbook, undated

Box 3, Folder 60: Josephina de Vasconcellos (Banner), 1955, undated

Box 3, Folder 61: C. Sargeant and David Jagger, 1976-1981, undated

Box 3, Folder 62: Military, 1927-1945

Box 3, Folder 63: Mining, undated

Box 3, Folder 64: Miscellaneous, undated

Box 3, Folder 65: Miscellaneous, undated

Box 3, Folder 66: Miscellaneous, undated

Box 3, Folder 67: Negatives, undated

Box 3, Folder 68: Professional Modeling, 1927-1946, undated

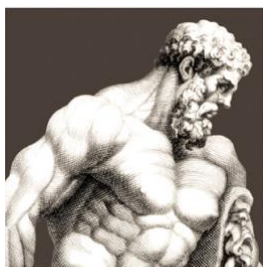
Series: Bill Rothwell, 1899-1998, undated (3 folders)

Box 3, Folder 69: In-letters, 1986-1987, undated

Box 3, Folder 70: Out-Letters, 1998

Box 3, Folder 71: Parents' Documents, 1899, 1905, undated

Series: Writings, 1927-1986, undated (37 folders)



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Subseries: Essays, 1927-1986

Box 4, Folder 72: 1927-1946

Box 4, Folder 73: 1950-1959

Box 4, Folder 74: 1960-1969

Box 4, Folder 75: 1971-1986

Subseries: Fitness and Health, 1950s-1970s, undated

Box 4, Folder 76: circa 1950s-1970s, undated

Subseries: Lambeth at War, 1940-1985, undated

Box 4, Folder 77: Civil Defence Correspondence and Documents, 1941-1952

Box 4, Folder 78: Correspondence - Incoming, 1981-1985

Box 4, Folder 79: Manuscripts, undated

Box 4, Folder 80: Manuscripts, The Gentle Touch, undated

Box 4, Folder 81: Newspaper clippings, 1959-1983, undated

Box 4, Folder 82: Notes, 1940-1942, 1981, undated

Subseries: Notes, undated

Box 4, Folder 83: Notebooks, undated

Box 4, Folder 84: Notebooks, undated

Box 4, Folder 85: Notebooks, undated

Box 4, Folder 86: Notebooks, undated



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Box 4, Folder 87: Songs and poems, undated

Box 4, Folder 88: Titled, undated

Box 4, Folder 89: Titled, undated

Box 5, Folder 90: Titled, undated

Box 5, Folder 91: Titled, undated

Box 5, Folder 92: Untitled, undated

Box 5, Folder 93: Untitled, undated

Box 5, Folder 94: Untitled, undated

Box 5, Folder 95: Untitled, undated

Box 5, Folder 96: Untitled, undated

Box 5, Folder 97: Untitled, undated

Subseries: The Roads That Lead from Wigan Pier, 1934-1979, undated

Box 5, Folder 98: Correspondence, 1936-1937

Box 5, Folder 99: Manuscripts, undated

Box 5, Folder 100: Manuscripts, undated

Box 5, Folder 101: Newspaper clippings, 1934, 1979

Box 5, Folder 102: Notes, undated

Subseries: Unfinished Manuscripts, 1940, undated

Box 5, Folder 103: "Living in an Hostile World," undated



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Box 5, Folder 104: "Living in an Hostile World," undated

Box 5, Folder 105: "Living in an Hostile World," undated

Box 5, Folder 106: "Man in the Moon," 1940

Box 6, Folder 107: "Searching for an Ideal in an Hostile World," undated

Box 6, Folder 108: Thesis on Dr. Cecil Hamilton [notes, clippings], undated

Series: Miscellaneous, 1940-1980s, undated (7 folders)

Box 6, Folder 109: Art, 1940-1949, undated

Box 6, Folder 110: Business cards, undated

Box 6, Folder 111: Clippings, 1960s- ca. 1980

Box 6, Folder 112: Correspondence, 1940

Box 6, Folder 113: Currency and receipts, undated

Box 6, Folder 114: Ephemera, undated

Box 6, Folder 115: Ephemera, undated