



IRON GAME HISTORY



THE JOURNAL OF PHYSICAL CULTURE

Volume 8 Number 3

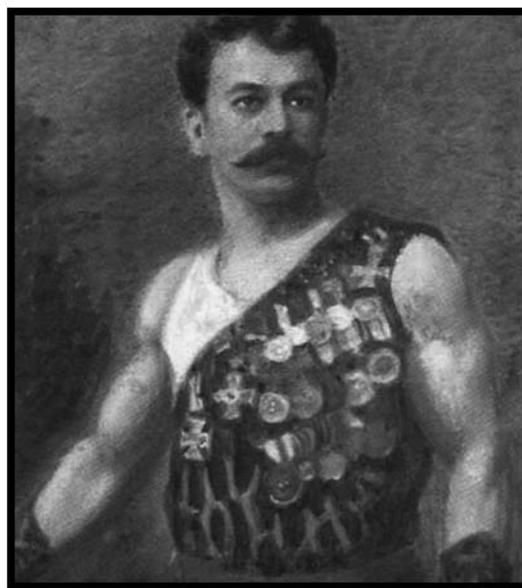
May/June 2004

Attila Enters the Cyber World

In the future, the sort of information we now get from books and libraries will be gotten primarily from computers—most of which will be in our private homes. This is a profound change, and one we are trying to grapple with here at the University of Texas. One of the primary advantages of this "website" technology is that it allows people to have access to rare materials that they would otherwise have to travel hundreds or even thousands of miles to see and use. In our efforts to use this technology to make some of the holdings in our collection more widely available, we recently submitted a grant proposal to the Utopia Project, a new initiative on campus that aims to share some of the treasures of the university with the public.

The Utopia Project envisions a series of websites that will be linked through the Utopia "portal," thus making them accessible to people around the nation and world. The grant proposal we submitted was called "Strongmen and Strongwomen: An Illustrated History of the World's Greatest Strength Athletes," and we just got word that the proposal has been funded with a grant of approximately \$25,000. We wanted to share the good news with

the readers of *Iron Game History* because next winter, when we have finished building the website, those of you who have computers or friends with computers will be able to visit the Utopia Website. There, you'll be able to see the photos and read the biographical information about the 30 men and 15 women we will have chosen to represent the world of physical strength.



The website "Strongmen and Strongwomen" is designed to showcase some of the materials in our collection, and it will allow us to share some of our many photographs. We are in the process of choosing the 45 strength athletes for the website, and we invite your suggestions. We will, of course, include icons such as Louis Cyr, Apollon, Vasily Alexeyev, John Davis, Tommy Kono, Lamar Gant, Bill Kazmaier, Nairn

Suleymanoglu, Dennis Rogers, Zydrunas Savickas, Katie Sandwina, Minerva, Ivy Russell, Beverly Francis, and Jill Mills but we are still in the process of making our final decisions.

The grant will allow us to support several of our graduate students so they can help us assemble photographs and biographical information for the final writ-

ing, which will be done by either Jan or me. One of the things we're most pleased about is that the grant will provide the several thousand dollars it will cost to fully "digitize" Professor Attila's personal scrapbook, which is one of the most significant artifacts in the history of physical culture. Louis Durlacher (Professor Attila) was famous throughout Europe for his performances as a strongman, for his work as a "personal trainer" at Queen Victoria's court in England, for his mentoring of the strongman Eugen Sandow, and for the gym he opened in the 1890s in New York City where he introduced the idea of using resistance exercise to improve athletic performance. Attila's scrapbook will be scanned and "digitized" by the same machine that was used to digitize UT's Gutenberg Bible. Digitization involves scanning images from each page of the scrapbook, and then storing and sorting those images so that, for example, a person in London will be able to go to the Utopia Website and then read every page of the Professor's scrapbook. Think of what access to this and other digitized rarities will mean for fans and researchers in the iron game. Our goal when we established the Physical Culture Collection here at U.T. over 20 years ago was to share the Collection as widely as possible with those who loved the game as we do. Over time, we hope to digitize the most significant holdings in our collection, and to make them available to the world. The Utopia Project is the first step.

—Terry Todd