



IRON GAME HISTORY



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A Pioneer of Physical Training

C.H. McCloy

Any people have contributed through the years to the growth of resistance training. Some have concentrated on competitive lifting of one sort or another, some have concentrated on bodybuilding, some have concentrated on the physical fitness aspects of weight training and some have concentrated on strength training for athletes. Charles Harold McCloy fits primarily into the last category, and even though his name is not too well known in the iron game these days, since he was never a famous lifter or physique star, he played a pivotal role in the debunking of the tenacious myth of the musclebound lifter.

McCloy was a giant in the field of physical education, serving from 1930 to 1954 as a Professor of Physical Education at the University of Iowa, and influencing in many ways the direction of his profession. In the days when most physical educators concentrated their efforts on competitive sports, McCloy's passion and preference was purposive exercise. Himself an almost obsessive exerciser, McCloy taught his students as much by personal example as by his lectures. A 1968 dissertation about McCloy's career by James R. Little features this aspect of his life.

"McCloy set an example of personal physical fitness that was widely acclaimed as being one of his most remarkable characteristics. Throughout his adult life, he maintained his body weight very close to 145 pounds. His height was five feet, eight inches. He was famous for his regular participation in personal exercise programs of a strenuous nature. His faculty colleagues...recalled that he routinely stopped whatever he was doing at about 3:30 P.M. and would have a cup of tea, relaxing for about thirty minutes. Then he went for his daily workout...He frequently exercised with the gymnastic team members. On other occasions he would play handball, tennis or badminton. He included calisthenics in his daily exercise routine in which he emphasized pull-ups. Annually on his birthday he would

demonstrate his ability to maintain a high level of muscular strength and endurance by doing as many pull-ups as possible. Students in his classes were invited to witness the demonstration and to count the number of pull-ups that he could do. McCloy stated that his record performance came on his fiftieth birthday when he was able to do forty-three consecutive pull-ups."

Besides the influence of his personal commitment to physical strength and endurance, McCloy made significant contributions to the fields of tests and measurements, the scientific analysis of sports skills, fitness for the armed forces, professional physical education and strength training for athletes. McCloy was a staunch enemy of the firmly entrenched idea, held by almost all of his professional colleagues as well as by the leading coaches in the United States, that the lifting of weights would cause an athlete to become slow, ill-coordinated and inflexible, in short, musclebound. McCloy believed strongly in the sort of physical activity a person could do in the privacy of the home, arguing that "Perhaps we should introduce our educational offspring to home rowing machines, rope skipping, weight lifting with the barbells, and to other available home exercise devices."



McCloy's fascination with all aspects of fitness drew him as the years passed to an examination of the myth of musclebinding. He had begun a personal program of weight training in 1942, at the age of 56, and his own experiences led him to challenge, through scientific investigations, this pervasive myth. Two of his students, Edward F. Chui and Edward Capen, were among the many who joined McCloy in his weight workouts, and out of their personal observations and desire to find the truth, they each conducted research for their Master's theses (Chui in 1948 and Capen in 1949) which helped dispel the belief that weight training should be avoided by athletes. These first research studies by McCloy's students were followed by others through the years, all of

which chipped away at the wrongheaded belief in the danger to athletes of weight training.

According to Little, three former varsity coaches at the University of Iowa told him that McCloy had urged them to use strength training for their athletes long before it became acceptable to do so. David Armbruster, the former coach of swimming, said, "I remember how McCloy tried to sell me on weight training for my swimmers. I absolutely refused, thinking it would make them muscle bound. Now look at the training programs!" And Otto Vogel, Iowa's former baseball coach, said of McCloy, "He was a pioneer in the scientific aspects of weight training and athletics. He was ten years ahead of others."

Near the end of his teaching career, McCloy helped one of his graduate students, Richard L. Garth, establish a weight training regimen for the University of Iowa's basketball team, whose members increased their vertical jump by an average of two and a half inches and became nationally ranked, thus helping to spread the gospel of resistance training for athletes. McCloy lectured widely about the Iowa program and wrote about it in an article published in the November, 1957 issue of *Strength & Health*, one of many joint

ventures between the famous physical educator and Bob Hoffman, publisher of *Strength & Health* and a long-time advocate of weight training as a way to improve a man in his "chosen sport."

These days, when even such hard-core muscle magazines as *Muscle & Fitness* feature articles such as the recent one about the training program of Nolan Ryan, when every broadcast of a professional football game has at least one reference to how much a certain player can bench press, and when the television coverage of Grand Slam events such as Wimbledon or the Masters in Augusta can be counted on to discuss the weight training programs of such athletes as Andre Agassi, Steffi Graf, Tom Kite or Ray Floyd, it's easy to forget that not too long ago anyone who maintained that a systematic program of progressive resistance would improve athletic performance would be looked at as either a fool or a charlatan. C.H. McCloy was neither a fool nor a charlatan and the cause of weight training for athletes was given a truly significant push when the power of his worldwide reputation and the research he supervised began to force the profession of physical education, which had been wrong for many decades, to put the myth of musclebinding to the test of objective scientific investigation —Terry Todd

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TALKING WITH THE: WORLD'S STRONGEST WOMAN

From time to time, we will reprint articles of one sort or the other. The following article-interview with Katie Sandwina appeared in a German newspaper, the *Woven Man Spricht*, on December 8, 1910.

The orchestra starts to play. The curtain is going up and a woman with a golden coat of mail appears. She is of colossal build, a German, a Brunhilde. She is the Iron-Queen Katie Sandwina, the world's most powerful woman, currently amazing the audience in the Schuhmann-Theater in Frankfurt.

Experts and physicians call this "weak woman" an "incomprehensible phenomenon." Within a few minutes she makes a spiral out of a two meter-long, flat wrought-iron bar, thick as a finger. She does this with just her bare hands.

Out of an iron bar, thick as a thumb, she bends a horseshoe and tears apart the heaviest chains as if they were made of paper. She forms the pillar of a bridge on which fifty people from the audience have a walk.

What kind of strange woman is she? What made her what she is? How does she live? I pluck up my courage, arrange to meet this woman in her hotel. As a precautionary measure I am carrying some carbolic acid and bandages. Better safe than sorry...a woman who breaks iron like a pretzel!

"Oh, you journalists, it's impossible to escape you! The first thing you probably want to know is my age, right?"

I blush like a youth and timidly answer in the affirmative. Again she is smiling.

"If I tell you my actual age you wouldn't believe it. And if I add some years I would cheat myself."

"Honestly, I guess you to be thirty."

"Well, write it so."

"Have you been in this profession for a long time now?"

"Since my childhood, I come from an old, famous family of athletes and I've been trained from my early days on to get strong."

"I assume you have to eat a lot?"

"I wouldn't say a lot, but well. Above all, nourishing food like meat, eggs and vegetables."

"Do you have any objections to alcohol?"

"Me? Heaven forbid! There's nothing to beat a good glass of beer or a fine bottle of wine. I think it's nonsense when athletes avoid these things. Beer and wine are part of a good digestion.

"A very discreet question, my dear madam! Are you married?"

"No, I'm not married. I'm still single but nobody dares to end this situation."

"Are you interested in men, anyway?"

"What shall I say? Men are like air to me, you can't live without them. Every now and then I breathe good fresh air, you know. I'm just a 'weak woman', after all."

"You must have travelled all around the world, right?"

"Yes, with the exception of China and Africa you can say that. My next destination is America where I stay most of the time, although it's also quite beautiful in Germany.

"How long will you still be able to practice this 'heavy' profession?"

"If all goes well - three years. Sometimes I regret that I'm working too honestly. People always question my abilities, although at every show I allow someone to see for himself that my act isn't a fake."

"What do you think of today's women?"

"Women should do more for their personal hygiene and exercise more often, so that the new generations become a better kind of people."

"My dear madam, I'm now going to ask a most indiscreet question: Do you wear corsets, and what do you think of them?"

"No, I don't wear them. And what do I think of them? From the point of view of health, it is a most foolish thing to wear them. And, besides, a man who is embracing a woman wants to hold a supple and warm body in his hands - not a lobster!"

Keep that in mind dear ladies! I say good-bye and shake hands with the world's strongest woman. It was a very tight grip, appropriate for a Brunhilde.



George Hackenschmidt

— on —

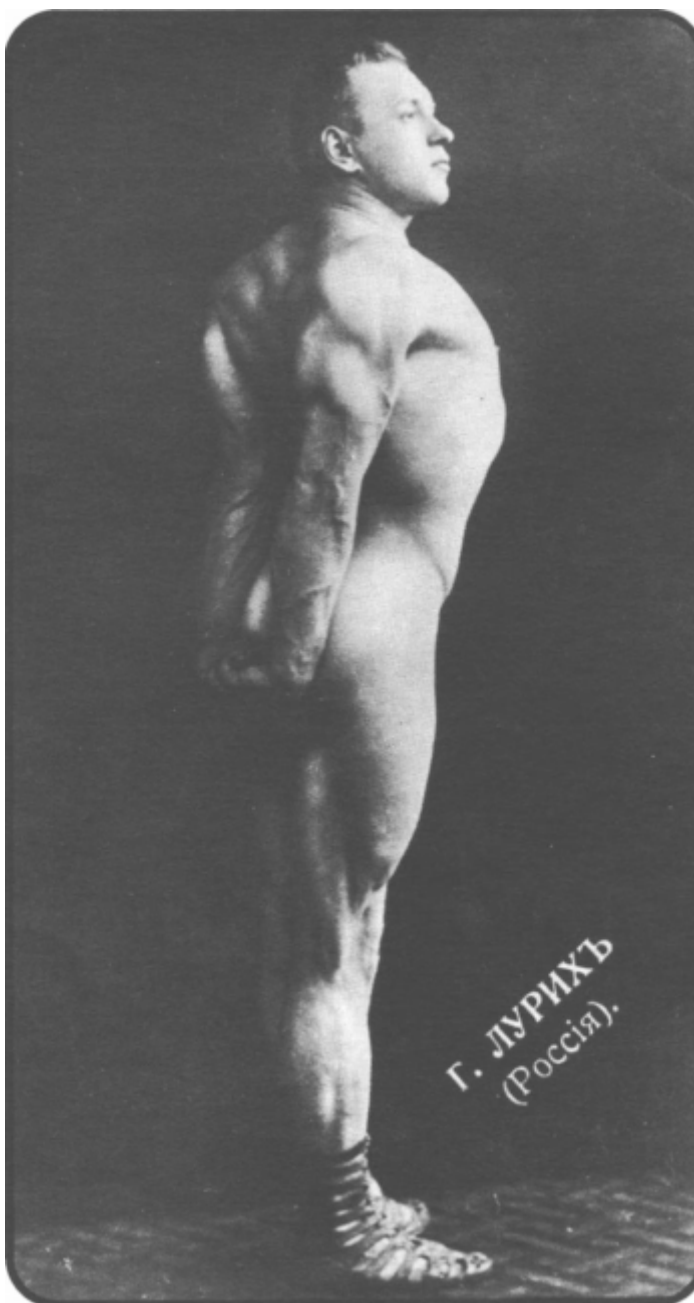
GEORGE LURICH

We have a group of George Hackenschmidt's private papers and manuscripts in the Physical Culture Collection here at the University of Texas, and some of those manuscripts have not, to our knowledge, been published for many years, if ever. One such manuscript, written by Hackenschmidt himself, involves the career of another famous Russian strongman-wrestler, George Lurich.

George Lurich was probably one of the most remarkable personalities developed by weight-lifting and wrestling, in both of which he was a top class man. He was well educated, having passed his college entrance exams before he left school at Reval. As a boy he showed no sign of becoming abnormally strong, but extra-strenuous training earned him an enviable place amongst the foremost athletes of the world.

When I say that he didn't appear to be endowed with unusual strength, yet had become a great athlete, I am differentiating between the terms "strong man" and "athlete": a "strong man" is simply a matter of physiology, whereas the term "athlete" ought to be applied only to one who has by training acquired the ability to perform outstanding feats of strength, endurance, speed and so on. It is well to recognize that the difference exists; a strong man is not always an athlete.

Lurich was entirely "self made"; I never met any weightlifter or wrestler who trained more strenuously and consistently than he did. His methods were built up mostly in accordance with his own ideas and experiences, and partly by the advice he gained from Dr.



Von Krajewsky. One example of Lurich's training philosophy is that he refused to attempt maximum lifts unless he had gone through what most of us would consider a more-than-thorough preparation. He wouldn't even try to jerk, press or snatch a weight of 100 pounds until he had proved that he could do a similar feat five times on end with a 90 pound weight; then, or so he reasoned, the 100 pounds could be tackled with a reasonable certainty of success.

This personal outlook permeated his preparation as well as his actual contests; having decided beforehand to throw his opponent with, say, a "flying mare", he would concentrate on it time and again, no matter how long it took, until he had achieved his object. Anyone else who knew the ropes could have told him that this might be a super-heroic undertaking under certain circumstances. I myself tried it out once when I was tackling Jess Petersen of Denmark, one of the national champions during the first decade of this century. I persisted with it for 20 minutes—which was 20 minutes wasted so far as my object (throwing Petersen) was concerned. Never again! for me, anyhow: by that time Petersen was so wet and slippery

from perspiration that I was unable to handle him properly and had to be content ultimately with a draw. Yet the principle itself has much to recommend it when circumstances permit—for example, if Lurich were out for a specified run he would not under any conditions relax his efforts until he had reached his goal and gone even a few yards beyond it—a sure indication of persistence and determination.

Up to the age of about 30 he neither smoked nor drank, disliking both tobacco and alcohol. But after that, and I think it was brought about by insomnia and loneliness, he started drinking heavily. At night he would order several bottles of champagne and, if none of his friends was handy, he would invite the waiter to sit down and share the champagne with him.

During the earlier part of his career he used to travel alone, but after a time he met Alexander Aberg, another very good wrestler of Estonian descent, and from then on the two joined forces and remained together for the rest of their lives; ultimately both of them died in Armenia within a fortnight of each other. Everybody thought they were brothers, but this was not so. Lurich had a brother who was a cripple and who always drank to excess, for which George used to reprimand him severely, though without any effect.

Lurich and I were attracted to each other by our enthusiasm for the same sport. Wherever we met, be it in Estonia, Germany or England, we supped together and then walked the streets till 4 or 5 a.m. talking “shop” interminably. But although we were close friends, if we had to meet in competition we contested the outcome as seriously and decisively as possible.

You must remember that I am talking of the era when athletics, as we now know them, were in their early stage, even though competitions were fought out as desperately as ever; when the weights we lifted were discouragingly clumsy and when, through lack of means to order or buy barbells, we used broomsticks, to each end of which we tied sacks of sand. In those days—I am speaking of midsummer—each evening I would walk briskly to the club. You know how the prospect of a good work-out boosts your

enthusiasm so much that you almost expect to increase your neck, arms, chest and calf measurements in half an hour or so—I measured mine many times a day always hoping to find I had put on an inch or part of one somewhere! My walk would be gradually accelerated until I had almost reached running pace in my anxiety to get to those ill-shaped, clumsy weights.

I remember clearly one such evening, leaving the street through a wide doorway, into a biggish yard, then going up two flights of stairs in a three-storied house. I came to the clubroom, gave a hearty “Good evening” to the President, Mr. A.A. Andrushkewitsch, and hurried to get stripped, cursing every minute was kept from handling those awkward weights all neatly placed in line at the far end of the room. But training was cut short on this particular evening: through the open door strode the very large figure of a man. It was George Lurich, “The World’s Champion Athlete and Prize Wrestler” as he described himself on the printed bills advertising his forthcoming engagement at Reval. As he was born and bred in Estonia—Weike Maria was his birthplace—it is no wonder that all Estonians idolized him.

He did indeed seem to me to be a huge specimen, immensely broad and tall, but still supple and graceful in his movements. He made a great impression on us youngsters and for the rest of the evening we could hardly take our eyes off him.

Presently he stripped, and I could hardly believe I was looking at the same being; in his enormous overcoat he had looked twice his natural size. One of the youngsters started us off giggling by holding up three fingers close together and then folding two out of the way leaving a single one—signifying Lurich in his overcoat and jacket, which were many sizes too large for him, and the same figure with the exaggerated camouflage removed. This gesture caused a lot of furtive fun and took quite a bit of the edge off our admiration for the man himself. Yet there was no denying that he had a magnificent physique. His chest in particular was formidable and impressive, losing nothing by a great scar running across the right side of it. But his arms and legs were not quite in the same street, being somewhat less developed than his

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torso. Time and again I took his measurements; here are some of the figures:

Height	5' 9 1/2"
Neck	17 1/2"
Chest	47 1/2"
Round the shoulders	50 1/2"
Waist	34 3/4"
Biceps (contracted) 16"	
Forearm	12 1/2,"
Wrists	8"
Thighs	23 1/4"
Calf	15 1/2"
Ankles	9 1/2"

As mere figures they may not be big enough to stagger humanity, but when he began lifting he certainly astonished us, achieving more than we had thought possible. His right arm jerks were stupendous; the leg work to assist the lifts—he already had world records to his credit—being admirable. The entire performance was, as it seemed to us, matchless. When one sees really extraordinary performances and relates them to body measurements—in this case Lurich's—you are apt to wonder how on earth the man ever executed them. Yet if ever there existed a man who was absorbed by weightlifting, a man who lived, thought and dreamed his hobby, that man was George Lurich. All his conversation ranged around the subject; when any other cropped up he became listless and lost all interest in it.

He took no notice of me at first, for I was then only in my 18th year and not fully grown. Besides, I didn't really know anything about the sciences of weightlifting and wrestling. But later he began to be interested in me and even asked if I would wrestle with him at two open-air theaters in Reval. I was more than mighty pleased to get such a chance and was determined to do my very utmost. The first bout must have been a surprise to him, for it lasted more than an hour. I defended myself for all I was worth and Lurich was unable to get me from a standing position to my knees. The second affair was again by no means to his liking, though he managed to get the decision of the judges in spite of prolonged protestations from the audience. I might tell you these two bouts surprised me as much as they did Lurich, for, rightly or wrongly, I got the impression that I was distinctly the stronger man. Naturally this encouraged me to pay more attention to wrestling.

Still more encouragement was to come. Lurich invited me to train with him at Weike Maria, where his father had a grocery store. I couldn't have asked for anything better and accepted the invitation right away. When we started work I got him down to his knees without much effort, but found it impossible to throw him with the holds then in ordinary use. Evidently I should have to devise something out of the common. I did, and when next we had a bout

it seemed to upset the applectart. It was on the second day that I succeeded in throwing him with a hold that forced him onto his shoulders, and I applied it with plenty of strength and insistence. I treated him to it twice. Then, still on our knees, Lurich asked me to swear never to use this hold on any occasion whenever or wherever we met in competition. He told me to lift two fingers up and repeat the words of the oath he dictated. I did so, though I knew full well how silly it all was. I am convinced that these defeats at Weike Maria were the cause of his refusing to wrestle with me in later years.

In February 1897 a new wrestler turned up at Reval, a widely known man with a European reputation—Wladislaw Pytlasinsky. He challenged Lurich, and a match between the two champions was fixed for February 22nd. Pytlasinsky won. It was a grand struggle though it didn't last long, and I watched every move intensely. The loss so upset Lurich that he left town immediately.

He remained in Estonia quite a long time, lifting and wrestling in towns and villages, whilst I made a move to St. Petersburg (Leningrad). From there I traveled as an amateur all over Europe, winning one championship contest after another. During all that time Lurich and I challenged and counter-challenged each other, yet never managed to come to grips, and it wasn't till four years afterwards that we met again. On September 18th, 1900, I was in a German train travelling from Dresden to Chemnitz, a town with a quarter of a million inhabitants. I thought of all the opponents I had met in past competitions and made plans for dispatching the tougher ones; those who were weaker and less experienced I didn't have to worry about. Presently I got out at Chemnitz to find placards all over the town staring me in the face, billing "George Lurich: Strongest Man in the World" and "Invincible Wrestler." He was challenging all comers. As was often the case, the manager of another theater in the town, so as not to be outdone by my advent at his rival's house, had engaged Lurich and a number of inferior wrestlers to appear. Soon I was told that Lurich had been boasting loudly that he had more than once defeated me with ease, and of course I didn't fancy letting him get away with that.

As a rule I had no great liking for impromptu challenges, yet in view of Lurich's continuous and brazen puffing I could not refrain from challenging him to a match. Accordingly, I strolled round to his theater and offered to take him on. That very evening it was announced from the stage that Herr Lurich had accepted Herr Hackenschmidt's challenge and that the two would meet on the following Wednesday. I'll quote the Chemnitz newspaper *Allgemeine Zeitung* of September 21st, 1900 to describe the event.

"As our readers are aware. Georg Lurich, who describes himself as the 'Champion Athlete of the World' and 'Strongest Man in the World', has for some days past been appearing at the Mosella Saal. In addition to a somewhat glowing advertisement of his powers, he issued on his bills a challenge to all wrestlers, whether

amateurs or professionals. On Monday evening George Hackenschmidt, who is taking part in a wrestling competition at the Kaufmannische Vereinshaus, challenged him to a wrestling bout on Wednesday evening. News of this spread very quickly among all the sporting elements of Chemnitz with the result that the Mosella Saal was packed from floor to ceiling on the evening in question. Everyone looked forward with impatience for the beginning of the wrestling match. The disappointment of the spectators can therefore be imagined when Herr Lurich appeared on the stage in the company of Herr Gleissner of Berna, and another gentleman of whose identity we are ignorant. The latter retired in favour of Herr Hackenschmidt, whose challenge had been given on Monday evening, and who therefore had the prior claim. Hereupon the curtain was abruptly lowered amid stormy scenes on the part of the indignant audience. Cries of 'Come out', 'Shame', 'Swindle' were quickly heard mingled with whistling and cat-calls enough to make one's flesh creep. All this was directed against the 'invincible' Herr Lurich who, we are informed, has caused similar scandals in other towns, such as Elberfeld, where the competitors in the International Wrestling contests were unfortunately prevented by the terms of their engagement from exposing the Russian in the manner adopted on Wednesday. Even the management of the Mosella Saal failed to persuade Lurich to meet Hackenschmidt. Presumably Lurich will not be allowed to appear again until he has wrestled with Herr Hackenschmidt, who is ready to meet him on any evening."

Lurich left Chemnitz the same night. What struck me was that, when he saw me coming through the audience to the stage, he went as white as a sheet, took two long steps to the wing, and was gone. What happened afterward was told to me by those who had helped him; he made the same sort of hurried flight that had followed his defeat by Pytlasinsky. I suspect that his action was due to an innate mental instability such as underlies some men's make-up. You can't always judge a man by his outward appearance and attitude, for these have been affected by learning, training, material possessions, tailors, certificates, medals and so on. Fellows with a distinct, though hidden, inferiority complex can at times prove to be brilliantly courageous and persevering as Lurich on more than one occasion was. In Hamburg he was an absolute champion, really excelling in wrestling and winning every one of his matches in faultless style. I watched him closely all the way through and to his honor I must say every single bout was perfectly executed and irreproachably won. He defeated such masters as the Belgian

Fellows with a distinct, though hidden, inferiority complex can at times prove to be brilliantly courageous and persevering as Lurich on more than one occasion was.

Constant Le Boucher, Michael Hitzler the Bavarian, the Frenchman Lassartesse, Heinrich Weber of Germany, Raicevichi of Italy and many others; defeated them cleanly and neatly without displaying the slightest vestige of fear. Yet only four months later his innate instability appeared on the surface once more. It was at the International Wrestling Contests in Berlin when—after he wrestled a bout lasting an hour and twenty-two minutes with John Piening, the American Graeco-Roman champion, which ended in a draw—he asked Koch, the German champion at the time, and me to accompany him to his lodgings. We went. On the way there he spoke never a word. No sooner did he get there than he pulled a big old-fashioned trunk into the middle of the room and proceeded to throw into it in indescribable disorder clean and soiled shirts, collars, underwear, clothes, boots, a harmonica etc. etc. He was obsessed with one purpose only—to get away from Berlin as quickly as

possible. He just abandoned another meeting with Piening! When he had locked the trunk he gave the key to Koch, begging him to settle the landlord's account and to forward the trunk as soon as he was able to give him an address. Then he was off post-haste for Switzerland.

Years later he and Aberg turned up in London. He issued a challenge to me and put up some money with a newspaper to guarantee his appearance. I was then working in the provinces in England but, hearing of the challenge, wrote to the editor of the paper in question to say that I would be in town as soon as I was free to undertake further engagements. When I did get there eventually, I was told that Lurich, evidently having heard that I was due, had called the same morning and withdrawn his stake-money.

There's no doubt that he was sometimes half-crazed with fear. The first time I ever noticed this characteristic was in 1896 in Reval. The two of us had hired a cab. We had nearly got home when the cab stopped abruptly, the horse having overstepped one of the shafts with a hind leg. Lurich, literally terror-stricken, jumped out and with out-stretched arms ran for the nearest house, looking for all the world as though he were about to collapse. The cabby, of course, soon put the thing right, and without ever having moved from my seat I called to Lurich to come back. White as a ghost he turned to look and then, apparently assured that there was no longer any danger, returned to his seat. He never offered an explanation, but the incident taught me that he suffered from occasional terrors which no medicine would cure.

Yet for all that the man was, as I have shown you, a really great figure in the athletic world of his time; so much so that his name is still noteworthy in Continental history. *Ave atque vale* to him!

Where Are They Now?

SAM LOPRINZI

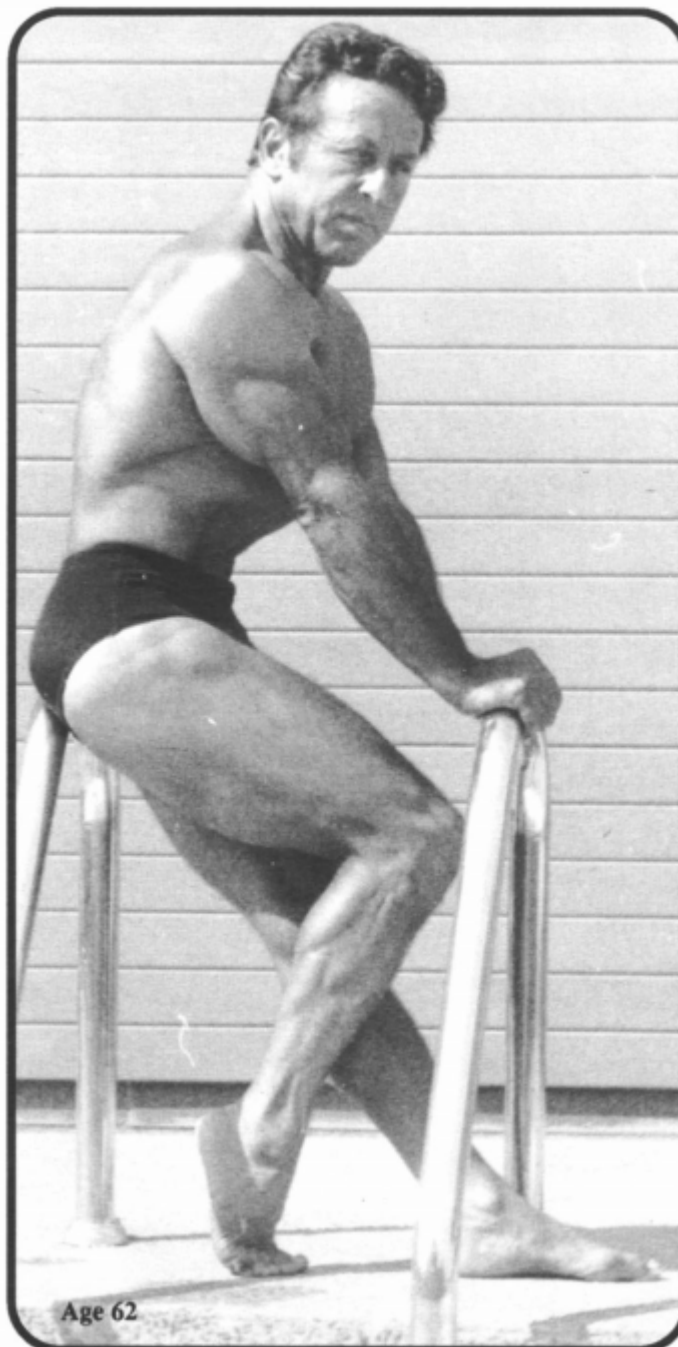
Anybody who has been around since the mid-forties knows that, back then, John Grimek and Joe Weider agreed with each other on just about nothing, except perhaps that weight training was the best way to get big and strong. There was, however, another subject, in response to which their words of praise were similar enough to sound like echoes. About Sam Loprinzi, these two spokesmen for warring muscle-building empires spoke as one; they admired his magnificence as a man, no less than as a bodybuilder: Weider in his December-January, 1945-'46 *Your Physique* article; and a few months later, Grimek in his September, 1946 *Strength & Health* article.

Retired from the health club business, this ex-owner of one of America's best-loved gyms still lives with Helen, his wife, in Portland, Oregon, and still trains in his well-equipped basement gym with George Pavlich, his training partner since he was sixteen years old. (Famous for their elusiveness, training partners rarely last six months, much less six decades — surely a world record.) According to Sam, he and Helen “walk briskly for 45 minutes, two or three times a week and swim for 30 minutes twice a week.” Sam and his partner “use mostly dumbbells with a few barbells” and still do chins, dips, and push-ups: “There is nothing I have not done in the ‘Iron Game,’ the three Olympic lifts, the five International Lifts, and powerlifting, but my best love was, and still is, bodybuilding.” Sam “tries to do stretching exercises every day” and sees

fitness and good health as the reasons for an exercise program at this point in his life and training. He and Helen “eat fresh fruit in season, after our exercises in the morning, with toast or cereal. We generally skip lunch and have our evening meal around 5:30, which includes fresh vegetables and salad with fish or chicken. Rarely do we eat red meat. Once in awhile we eat ‘junk food,’ but I am a great believer in moderation.”

Often referred to, back in the mid-forties, as the most muscular man in America, next to John Grimek, Sam's big-time debut was the memorable “Most Muscular Physique in America” contest, held before a wild audience that jammed the Philadelphia Turner's Hall on May 4, 1946, probably the most controversial contest in the history of American bodybuilding. The outcome of a challenge thrown-down to John Grimek by Dan Lurie (after the two men's posing exhibitions at the 1945 Junior Nationals in Pittsburgh), this challenge eventually grew into a “real ‘open’ contest, ‘open’, that is, to any qualified A.A.U. athlete.” In the parlance of the Philadelphia sports writing fraternity, which soon caught the wild spirit of the affair: “The Battle of the Bulges” (Smith 13-15).

To Wilbur Smith, veteran strength aficionado, this was the “greatest muscle show ever staged in this or any other country” and was spawned by “Letters and words, some of them rather harsh, [that] went back and forth, printed in the *S. & H.* and other magazines.” To complicate matters even more, at showtime, Lurie was



Al Thomas Kutztown University

found sitting in the audience, having refused, after all his challenges, to compete in a contest that he claimed did not have fair officials and was not properly sanctioned (Smith 36). Later on, toward the end of the show, in response to Lurie's charge and in deference to his being a professional, an impromptu contest was rigged-up between him and professional Walter Podolak (the professional wrestler who had been recruited from the audience) and the great Sieg Klein (who was presenting his novelty, strength, and muscle control acts between posing rounds). When the smoke from this unscheduled set-to had finally cleared, Klein emerged as the winner; with Lurie, second; and Podolak, third: at best, a frenetic moment in American bodybuilding, one without precedent and never since duplicated (Smith 35-36).

In a calmer vein, the rest of the contest had gone off on cue, bringing together the best physiques ever seen to that date in one show. Class B (5'4" to 5'6 1/2") was won by Sam Loprinzi with a near-perfect score of 49. This was the very class in which Lurie was scheduled to compete (with special dispensations from the A.A.U., along with an A.A.U.-approved time lapse between him and the amateur contestants). In Wilbur Smith's account, "The audience instantly recognized that Sam Loprinzi possesses one of the finest physiques in the world and a wonderful personality. Photos do not . . . flatter his truly magnificent physique" (35). Had Lurie—whom I, as a teenage onlooker, recall being surprisingly smooth—gone up against the magnificently muscled Loprinzi in this class as scheduled, he would have been lucky to take a second place, which I thought at the time would have gone to the man who did, ultimately, take second place: the heavily muscled Dan "Ape" Bax. In any case, Sam would have been a shoo-in, whoever the competition. The final over-all posedown between winners of the five scheduled classes followed this unscheduled "sixth class," generated by Lurie's grievance: in the posedown, Grimek took first; Steve Stanko, second; Loprinzi, third; Kimon Voyages, fourth; and Dick Bachtell, fifth.

Surprises, however, were not yet over for the evening. Following his announced victory, Grimek "revealed that he had no desire to acquire this title and did not wish to retain the trophy he won." He went on to say that "he was not seeking any personal glory by taking part in this contest," and, having recently become a father, begged-off presenting his muscle control act, in the conjecture of Smith, to return, post haste, to Angela and his family in York (Smith 37).

Sam's class victory in this major event was a real feather in his cap, ensconcing him arguably as the most muscular short man in America. As I recall, many wondered whether, indeed, Steve

Stanko could have beaten Sam in muscularity if the discrepancy provided by advantage-conferring height had not been so profoundly in favor of the far bigger and taller Stanko. Inch-for-inch, it seemed to me, and to others, that the West Coast man was the more muscularly impressive of the two, if not in the impressiveness conferred by height, in the impressiveness conferred by muscular mass (stretched over a shorter frame), along with, in my view, greater separation and definition.

Sam's next competition was to take him to Detroit for the A.A.U. Mr. America Contest on June 2nd at the Boy's Club of Detroit gymnasium, but he spent the intervening weeks in York, where he trained with Grimek and Company. That he won the hearts and amazed even the blasé York crew is clear from Grimek's account of the impression that he made at the old Broad Street gym: "... after each workout, we would watch him go through . . . his poses to make sure he was assuming the proper stance. On each

of these occasions, he showed amazing muscularity and possessed sufficient bulk to satisfy even the most ardent body builder, and what's more, he had far more [muscular] delineation than some give him credit for. He could be matched with any man of his size and weight and still emerge the victor, for there isn't anyone in the world to compare pound for pound with him" (Grimek 17). A wonderful tribute from the nonpareil muscleman of his era, a man not given to cheap praise.

In the "special events" competition, held on Saturday night, June 1st, of Mr. America weekend, Sam lived-up to Grimek's praise, taking a second to John McWilliams in the "best chest" competition. Bob Hoffman's words were especially laudatory of Sam's performance in that year's crop, which Hoffman declared "the best ever to participate in this most outstanding physique contest. . . . It was tough for Sam Loprinzi to lose . . . these special divisions by such a narrow margin. I said at this point [in the contest] that Sam was having the same experience as a girl who is often a bridesmaid but never a bride. [I] also said that Sam was on a par with the best in each division. [I] continued by saying 'When Sam gets all of these extraordinary features together he would be hard to beat for the Most Muscular Man title.' Although any athlete would like to be selected for the 'Mr. America' title, Sam Loprinzi, who is 5 feet 6 inches tall, thought that his shorter than average stature would be a handicap for the honor. So he centered all his hopes and training upon winning the Most Muscular Man title" (Hoffman 30). And win this coveted title, he did—most impressively. After scoring second to Alan Stephan in the overall Mr. America Contest—Stephan scored 72 out of a possible 75 points to Sam's 69—Sam heard his name announced as the winner of the Most Muscular Physique title. (The

*"There isn't
anyone to
compare
pound for
pound with
him?"*

John Grimek 1946

just-crowned Mr. America, Alan Stephan. took second, with Joe Lauriano and Leo Stern tied for third.) In Grimek's summation of Sam's "Grand Tour" that summer, "Sam made numerous friends on his trip East and [those] who saw his in action will never forget him. In Philadelphia he was a sensation; in Detroit he was a supersensation" (Grimek 17).

Sam's quest for the perfect physique was triggered by the great Clevio Massimo, one of the best-built strength and hand-balancing showmen of Sam's youth, who amazed the Loprinzi brothers, and especially Sam, in their 1927 visit to the Hippodrome in Portland. Post-Massimo, Sam's training took on a new character, evolving from a chinning regimen to the Charles Atlas course when he was fourteen and then on to Siegmund Breitbart's course when he was fifteen — his equipment in those financially lean years consisting of nothing more than barbells made from cement and an iron pipe (Loprinzi).

World War II found Sam in the U.S. Navy, and his memorable accomplishment in those years was breaking down the Navy brass' stubborn resistance to his, and brother Joe's, request to set-up a weight training program for the Naval personnel at Treasure Island Navy Base in San Francisco. Since, in those days, the great fear was that the barbell trainer was doomed to becoming "musclebound," Sam's first order of business was to demonstrate that such worries were unnecessary by means of easily assumed splits, back-bends, and the suppleness of his muscle control (along with his and Joe's demonstrated athleticism in wrestling, swimming, boxing, handball, and hand-balancing (Weider 24). By the end of their enlistments, the Loprinzi brothers were putting "500 men a day through the Loprinzi workouts and, whereas in the beginning they were using makeshift equipment, they ended up with all of the best equipment needed for the job." To make their ideological victory over the Navy complete, by the time of their discharge, the boys "received a ... commendation from their superiors for their achievement in building such a wonderful program of physical training ..." (Grimek 1617).

As a teenager, Sam competed briefly in Olympic lifting, taking seconds in the Oregon State and the Northwest Championships, in meets which he now guesses to have been, respectively, 1930 and 1932 (Loprinzi). With his appetite for bodybuilding competition largely surfeited by his great successes two years earlier, Sam made his swan song appearance at the 1948 Mr. Pacific Coast contest, which he won convincingly. Asked whom he admired over the years, Sam mentioned Sandow and, more recently, Stanko and Kono among the lifters, and Tony

Sansone and John Grimek, among the physiquemen: "My most memorable moment [in the game] was when I met John Grimek, back in 1946."

Helen, Sam's wife of 45 years, has been exercising with weights for 47 years: "We used to meet at Walt Baptiste's Gym in San Francisco to go out on dates when I was stationed at Treasure Island during the last two years of the War." Helen and Sam have two daughters, Cathie (40, a "marathon runner and occasional weight trainer") and Rhonda (37, who "does weight training and Jazzercise"), and three granddaughters: Kristy and five-year-old twins, Theresa and Alexandra. "We also have one grandson. (Loprinzi).

As much as Sam resides, today, in our mind as a man of strength and incomparable muscle, he resides in our heart as a man with much heart: much kindness and love. His great gym was the much-loved institution that it became, over the many years,

because, in addition to knowing just about everything there was, and is, to know about building strength, health, and muscle, Sam loved everything about his gym and his work there. Today, one can still find some gym owners who understand the mysteries of building strength and muscle, although the task of finding them becomes more difficult with the proliferation of the gym chains. Finding a gym owner, however, who actually cares about his "pupils"—who loves them—always has been, if not quite impossible, very difficult. (Can you think of one such for each finger on one hand? Forget the other.) Sam was one such. Sam Loprinzi—the gym owner, the man of strength and muscle, but more than that, the *man*—leaves behind him a legacy, rich not just in the memory of what he accomplished, but even more so of what he is and the gracious spirit that he embodies.

"My most memorable moment was when I met John Grimek, back in 1946"

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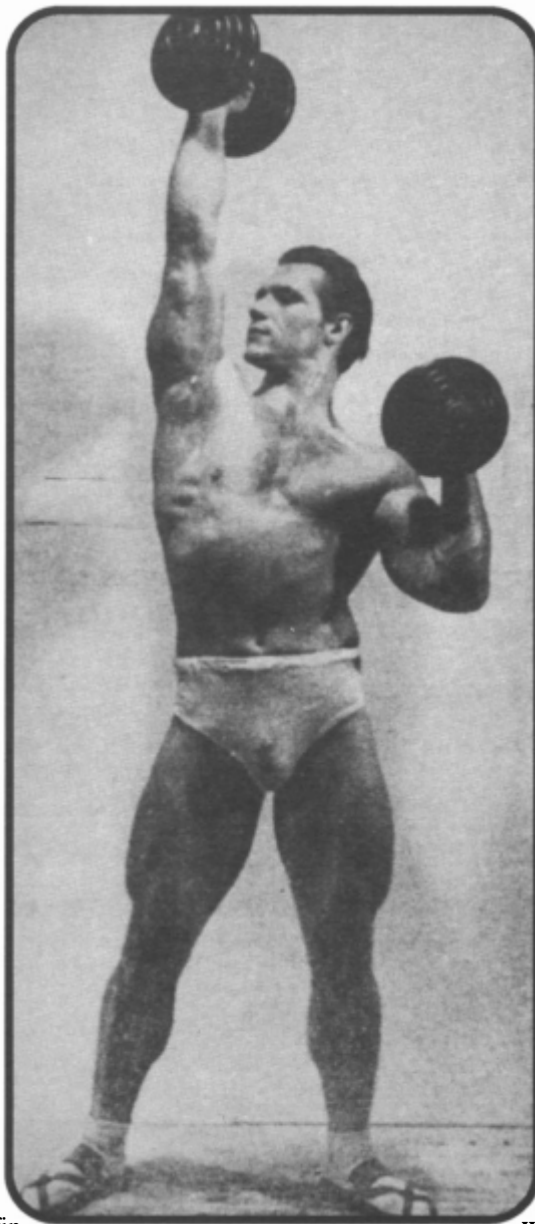
The President's Report

The Golden Grimeks

The career of John Grimek reached a high point on Saturday evening, April 13, when this happy, dedicated family man shared with his lovely wife, Angela, their Golden Wedding Anniversary. All six of their children were there, along with eight grandchildren, many other family members and approximately 300 guests from the United States and Europe. So loved is this living legend that his friends from around the world wanted to pay their respects to John and Angela on the occasion of their celebration of 50 years together.

It was a glorious evening and the dinner party and dance was held at the Windows on the Green in York, a town John helped to make famous. John and Angela spent much of the evening on the dance floor, showing the kids how to do the polka, and the nostalgia flowed like good wine. And to top off the wonderful meal, a proclamation was read to John and Angela from the governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

As one might have expected, the crowd was peppered with various "greats" in the iron game, and I'll mention a few names knowing that I'll no doubt leave a few out. Among those in attendance were Bill Pearl, Leo Stern, Ed Jubinville, Jules Bacon, Joe Marino, Johnny Mandel, Jim Murray, Bill Starr, Joe Abbenda, Al Thomas, Fred Howell, Glen Sunby, Cy Masarski, Dave Mayor, Dr. Charles Simkovich, Biagio Filazola (all the way from Italy), Julian Levy, Dr. Serafin Izquierdo, Dr. Charles Moss, John Terlazzo, Mike D'Angelo, Dave Collier, Val Vasilef, John DiCola, Bill St. John, Jan Dellinger, Reg Ireland, Dr. Ken Rosa, George Coates, Frank Ficara, Dick Smith, Dr. Jerry Weisfogel, and Len Bosland.



This meeting brought together many of the same people who come every year to our annual meeting of the Association of Oldtime Barbell and Strongmen in New York City, and it reminded me that our meeting for 1991 is just around the corner. It will be held again at the Downtown Athletic Club, on the 28th of September. We hope to have an even larger celebration than the one we had in 1990 and I urge those of you who enjoy talking about the golden age of the iron game to come to New York and share the nostalgia with us. Everyone is welcome and if you're a dyed in the wool fan of the game, you'll feel right at home and get to mingle for hours with dozens of the legends in our field. We'll have special presentations, films, slide shows, live performances of strength and muscular development and a fine meal to go with it all. To secure either a ticket to the banquet or to get information about reservations at the Downtown Athletic Club, contact me at 2218 86th Street, Brooklyn, New York, 11214 or call me. My number is 718-648-5254.

[Ed. note: We were unable to attend the Grimek's Golden night because of commitments at the university and we are envious of those who shared what must have been a particularly memorable night. We only hope—and we know this hope is shared by everyone who knows them—that the Grimeks have many more rich and active years to add to the ones they've already shared with each other and with us. John was always larger than life and as he continues to live with such strength, vigor and obvious enjoyment, he has grown even larger as the years pass and he abides. He is an inspiration to us all, as is the wonderful relationship he has with his Angela.]

THE ROARK REPORT

THE ROLANDOW DUMBBELL

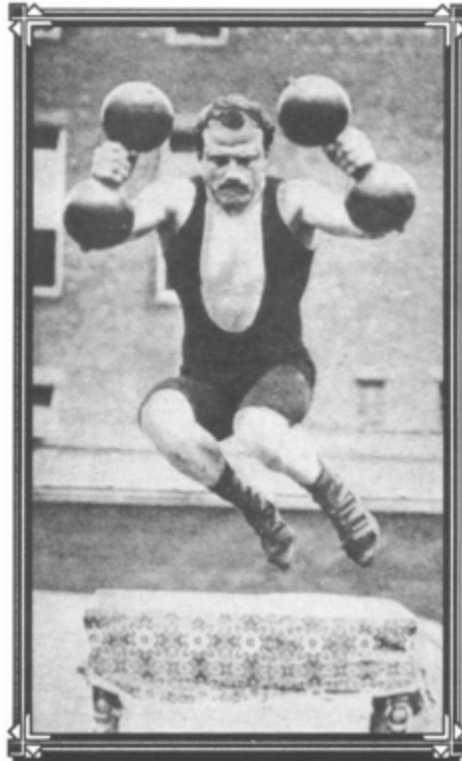
Eighteen ninety-six was a year of interest for iron game followers. Mark Berry was born that year, as was Joseph Moquin, who would later own, then trade, the Cyr dumbbell to the York Barbell Company in exchange for one of their revolving barbell sets. April Fool's Day was the setting for the strength match-up between Louis Cyr and August Johnson. Nearly two months later Cyr would perform a backlift with 4300 pounds, and, a couple days following that, Hans Beck would continental, then jerk 347 1/2. In the autumn, Max Dauthage squatted 220 1/2 for 50 consecutive reps.

Eighteen ninety-six was important for another reason: in that year the Rolandow dumbbell was born. Birthweight was anticipated to be 200 pounds when its father, Warren Lincoln Travis, gave the specifications to the McLaughlin Iron Foundry in Brooklyn New York; but the bell cast was a solid sphere dumbbell weighing in at 209. Birth length was 23" and the 5" long handle was just over one and a quarter inches in diameter.

Travis used the bell, which never bore his name, in his strongman demonstrations. At the turn of the century he sold the bell to Gottfried Wuthrich, better known by his professional name, G.W. Rolandow, and the tale of that sale, though difficult to accept if considered thoughtfully, is that Travis carried the weight "several blocks to the nearest street car line," then made two transfers involving, of course, stepping down and then up onto street cars. After one hour and thirty-three minutes he arrived at the 79th Street trolley stop. Supposedly, Travis toted the bell two more blocks, climbed two flights of stairs to Rolandow's office, and plopped the hunk of iron onto G.W.'s carpet and nonpolitely asked to be paid.

Rolandow indicated that unless he could hoist the dumbbell there would be no sale. One imagines what went through Warren's mind at that moment, and what non tea-room words came to his lips at that news. Anyway, Rolandow, who probably never weighed more than 180 pounds, grasped the weight, cleaned it, then bent pressed it for seven reps. Then, Rolandow handed Travis two dollars, according to David Webster, or twenty dollars, according to *Strength & Health* magazine.

The Rolandow dumbbell was never known as the Travis



Rolando performing a "standing" jump over a table 36" high and 25" wide with 75 pounds in each hand.

dumbbell because it was merely one of a stable of weights Travis used in his demonstrations, and he was not known for overhead lifting so much as for ponderously heavy hip and supporting lifts.

The whereabouts of the Rolandow dumbbell can be ascertained until 1956. Sieg Klein met Rolandow in 1924 at the latter's Health Studio at the corner of Broadway and 81st Street in New York City. (This is the address usually found in magazine accounts, but the *New York Times* obituary on Rolandow listed Broadway and 82nd Street). Rolandow transferred the bell to Klein as part of a package of weights Rolandow was relinquishing upon closing his gym. Sieg sold the weight to Rocco Signorille on August 8, 1956. Rocco weighed only 135 pounds but could deadlift the dumbbell with one hand—essentially 150% of his bodyweight.

Unfortunately, the Rolandow dumbbell is missing. Has it been melted down in a foundry, or stored these long years in a basement? The oldtimers in our sport-

veterans who keep watch on the artifacts of our history—are unaware of the bell's fate or location. Now, keep in mind that the Rolandow *barbell* has been displayed at the York Barbell Hall of Fame Museum since it was given to York by Robert I. Howard. (The barbell's handle is 2.1" in diameter and 6 5/8" circumference and not—as Gord Venables indicated in *S&H*, December, 1974—2. diameter, which would mean a circumference of 7.85". Jan Dellinger, who is employed at York Barbell, measured the handle for me and discovered that where the handle swells on either side of the center gripping space, the circumference is 8 7/8".)

Back to the dumbbell. Remember that Travis had another dumbbell manufactured for Rolandow, the weight of which has been reported as 135 pounds (by Travis and David Willoughby), 137 pounds by Ray Van Cleef, and 138 by Earle Liederman. All these men tell the story of Rolandow being able to bent press this dumbbell for 18 consecutive reps (He probably lowered the weight after each rep using both hands.)

Rolandow was very proficient in the bent press, and perhaps he really could perform 18 reps with 135; but in his contest with August Johnson at the Grand Palace in New York City, which

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Rolandow lost on poundage but won on number of events, he bent pressed “only” 150 pounds for eleven reps.

The larger Rolandow dumbbell was not easy to handle. John Grimek recalls that the 209 pound bell with its relatively thin handle felt as though “a line was being cut through the lifting hand” during the bent press. John says the Cyr dumbbell was easier to lift because the thicker handle fit the palm better. Indeed, when Klein acquired the Rolandow bell he tried “...for several years” to lift it overhead with one hand. “I couldn’t do it,” he wrote in *S&H*, November, 1956, wherein he traces the history of the bell and lists the names of those on the Rolandow Dumbbell Honor Roll. A rare photo of the weight is shown.

Here is the list Sieg presented, along with my additions of birth and death dates: (the date following the name is the year the bell was first lifted)

1. G.W. Rolandow--1900	born 5- 6-1874	died 12- 6-1940
2. John Grimek--1934	born 6- - 1910	
3. Bob Hoffman--1936	born 11- 9-1898	died 7-18-1985
4. Wally Zagurski--1936	born 1- 12-1911	died 1959
5. John Davis--1936	born 1-12-1921	died 7-13-1984
6. Jack Kent--1936	born 1912	died 1- 27-1965
7. Frank Bates--1936	born 1911	died 10-24-1988
8. Bob Harley--1937	born 1913	?
9. Sieg Klein--1937	born 4-10-1902	died 5- 24-1987
10. Aurele Velleux--1939	?	?
11. George Hobby--1940	?	?
12. Elwood Holbrook--1941	born 1912	?

It should be noted that the inclusion of John Davis on this list, at least for 1936, cannot be correct. He was born in January of 1921, and he had been training only about a year by 1936. By 1939, John placed 3rd in the 181 pound class at the National AAU Bent Press Championships with a lift of 200 pounds. So, when Davis *did* bent press the Rolandow dumbbell, it was not as early as age 15.

Holbrook’s lifting of the bell is described by Klein in *S&H*, in March of 1956. Holbrook was about age 28 when, after a trip from the Pacific coast, he bounded up the stairs leading to Klein’s gym, hastily greeted Sieg, asked where the bell was, spotted it before his question could be answered, rolled it to the lifting area, “...grasped it firmly, heaved it to the shoulder, and began to push it aloft”, via bent press. Klein adds, “He was the first man I had ever seen lift this rather awkward dumbbell at the first attempt, and without a warm-up”.

Sieg remembers that seven years later, on November 8, 1948,

“A few moments before I closed the gym for the evening, I noticed a group of men standing outside the door.” These were the Baillargeon brothers, and if all of them were present the list would include: Jean, Paul, Adrien, Lionel, Charles, and Antonio. Their six sisters were not among the group. A photo of the six brothers appears in *Muscle Power*, January, 1951 issue, on page 14, and on page 22 of the December 1948 *S&H*.

In any case, soon the brothers came in and introduced themselves; and “several” of them performed a one hand deadlift with the heavy bell. Paul then bent pressed the Rolandow dumbbell on his first attempt, thus becoming the second man in Klein’s memory who required only one try.

After 1956 the bell is not mentioned, to my knowledge, in the muscle literature. It is my guess that Rocco would not have allowed the bell to pass to someone who was unappreciative of its history. Perhaps the bell now resides in a private home. If any reader has any leads on the famed weight please contact me at P.O. Box J, St. Joseph, IL 61783.

Suggested reading:
Strength & Health

- Nov. 1934, p 15 paragraph by Ray Van Cleef
- Aug. 1937, p 39 paragraph by W. L. Travis
- Aug. 1941, p 23 Rolandow by Ray Van Cleef
- Jan. 1949, p 8 & 45 Klein’s story of Baillargeon brothers with the Rolandow bells.
- Feb. 1949, p 19 paragraph by Van Cleef about Rolandow bent pressing 209 for seven reps
- Mar. 1956, p 58 six paragraphs by Klein
- June 1956, p 13 G. W. Rolandow by Klein
- Oct. 1961, p 58 tale of Howard giving barbell to York
- June 1976, p 43 photo of Klein with Rolandow barbell

Muscular Development

- Oct. 1967, p 19 Rolandow by Earle Liederman
- Mar. 1972, p 23 paragraph by Klein about the 135(137) pound nickel plated dumbbell
- Mar. 1972, p 49 when Rolandow retired, sold some weights to Klein

Iron Man

- Oct. 1959, p 26 G.W. Rolandow by David Willoughby
- Jan. 1975, p 63 Andy Jackson was a witness when Klein bent pressed the Rolandow dumbbell.

Your Physique

- June 1949, p 24 several paragraphs by Willoughby

New York Times

- Dec. 7, 1940 p. 17 obituary for Rolandow

Bodybuilding: An Illustrated History - book by David P. Webster see pages 22, 52, and 67.

EUROPEAN CORNER

OSCAR HEIDENSTAM

A cold wind blew over British bodybuilding on the blustery day of March 21, 1991, when, as he left his Kensington home, Oscar Heidenstam collapsed and died.

For the past year he had been suffering circulatory problems but it did not interfere with his activities and just days before he had attended a bodybuilding show. He was 80 years of age. Nobody has done more for European bodybuilding than this man; indeed, it can be said that Oscar Heidenstam made British bodybuilding. He took the activity from its physical culture roots and, over 50 years ago, turned it into a specialist activity in its own right. In my perception, Heidenstam was largely instrumental in giving Britain a lead over the rest of the world at that time, for young Joe Weider was still in Canada and Bob Hoffman, who was tops in America, saw bodybuilding as being of secondary importance to weightlifting and devoted most of his time and finances to the Olympic sport. On the other hand, first through his personal efforts and later through Link House Publications, Oscar concentrated his efforts on bodybuilding, the activity which dominated his life and which he loved until the day he died.

Oscar Heidenstam was born with a silver spoon in his mouth. He first saw the light of day on February 27, 1911 in Cyprus, where his father was in the Colonial Police. It was a well-to-do family with Scandinavian origins, his grandfather being a Swede who came to study in England and became a naturalized British citizen. With such a background Oscar was quite a linguist; as an adult he spoke four languages fluently. He returned to England at the age of nine and became interested in sport during his summer holidays in Jersey. He was a very small lad, being barely 5' in height at the age of 15. As a youth he was an accomplished gymnast and remained so until well into his forties. He also became a fine

athlete, a good swimmer and a capable diver, being 'County' level in the two former sports. He collected 11 medals and a similar

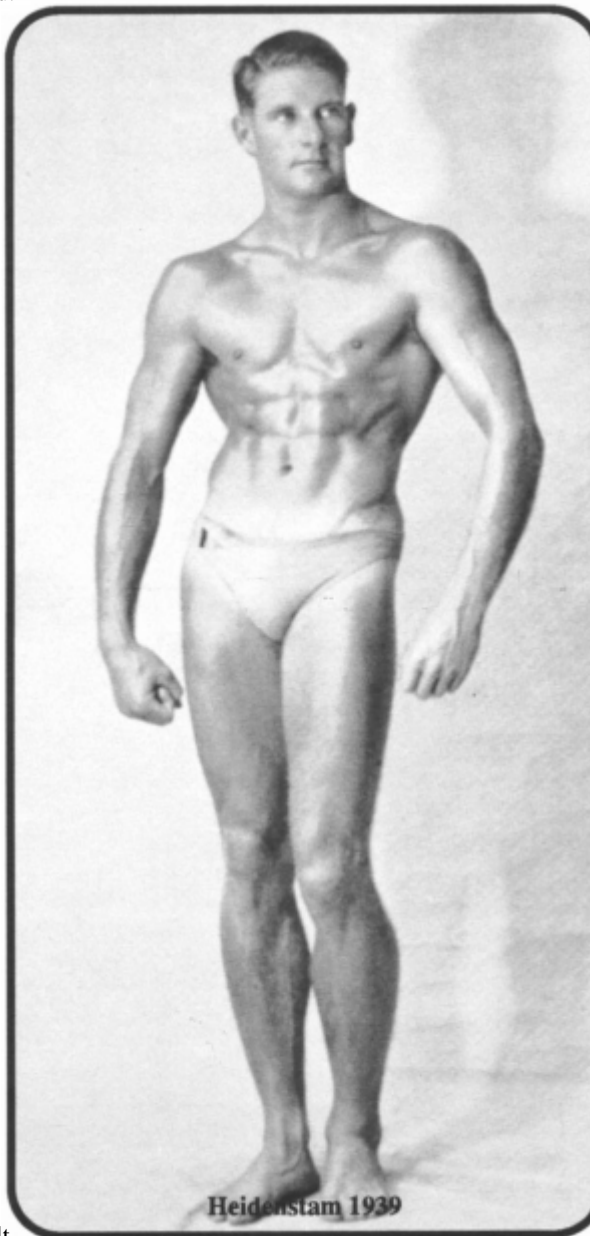
number of cups for these before leaving school. The next stage was to gain coaching certificates in these sports, after which he secured posts as a physical education teacher in private schools.

George Kirkley, his life-long friend, persuaded him to take up weight training, and Oscar made rapid improvements in spite of the fact that he had a couple of years abroad—something unheard of by ordinary mortals in those economically depressed 1930's.

Soon he was entering photographic 'posing' competitions and he became the most popular coverman in British physical culture journals. Those in *Superman*, a superior quality magazine, were particularly admired; and his most famous poses were classics of their time. In all he won 64 *Superman* awards, which made him quite well known, and his reputation was further enhanced when he won the *Health and Strength* Physical Excellence Competition 1937, the fore-runner to Mr. Britain. In those days the contest took much lower billing than other items at the annual *Health and Strength* League show. The ladies winner was awarded £100—more than a year's wages for most of the competitors. Oscar got a measly cup and the other men a simple medal.

For pre-war British physical culturists, the winning of a *Health and Strength* League final would be the pinnacle of their career—except in the case of the ambitious Mr.

Heidenstam. He had the drive and the finances to go further, and he became the first Briton ever to venture abroad in search of further physique honors. In that same year he went to Le Touquet, for the championships organized by the Federation Francaise de Culture Physique, and won a Grand Prix and Diploma of Honor. (This



DAVE WEBSTER

contest was later to become known as Mr. Europe.) At that time Oscar had the lean classical lines necessary for success on the Continent, but it must be said that the Gaulic champions would pass almost unnoticed in the modern hard-core gym, such has been the increase in standards since then, Symmetry, definition and proportion were all-important in those formative years, but now these factors seem to have little bearing on competition results, and maybe we have lost something, as well as gained, in the process of evolution. When war clouds loomed on the horizon, Heidenstam took a privately paid course at the Army School of Physical Training, a most unusual educational experience, and when war came he joined the elite Army Physical Training Corp. He reached the rank of Captain, seeing action in the Middle East, and when hostilities ceased he continued serving the forces through the Navy, Army and Air Force Institution. Oscar soon resumed his appearances in shows, not just competing in physique contests, but showing his versatility in other ways. Few people remember that he participated in an entertaining handbalancing act good enough to grace the stage of the famous London Palladium. In 1947 "The Art of Balance" by Heidenstam and Fred Conway was applauded by a packed house with many distinguished guests, including His Excellency Jonkheer F. Michiels van Verduynen, the Royal Netherlands Ambassador, and members of the Royal Netherlands Embassy. Fred and Oscar did some superb, advanced handbalancing with Oscar doing most of the bearing, but he also showed his own balancing ability.

Oscar Heidenstam was a vital force in international bodybuilding for more than half a century, although he came on the scene at a difficult time in pre-war Europe. After the war his international reputation grew; the big man took 5th in the Mr. World of 1948; in Mr. Universe competitions he was 3rd in Class 1 after Steve Reeves and Reub Martin in 1950, 2nd in Class 2 and in 1951 2nd equal with Robert Duraton of France, Reg Park being the winner. He had to miss the 1952 event as he was in hospital at the time. Over the years Oscar also did well in Mr. Britain; he won in 1937 and placed 3rd in 1951 when he was approaching 40 years of age. In 1952 he won the Senior Mr. Britain title. Oscar then joined *Health and Strength* magazine, which contrary to various rumors was first published in March of 1900. He cooperated with editor David G. Johnson to write *Modern Bodybuilding*, published on June 3, 1953; and the book became a standard text for many years. Heidenstam stayed with *Health and Strength* through many changes, his expertise being invaluable to various owners. In 1956 Link House sold out to W.A. Pullum, who published the magazine until his death in 1960. His son, W.S. Pullum, continued to run the journal until 1967 when it was bought by Gordon Grose, a trader in weightlifting equipment. By this time Oscar was well established as Editor and two years later he and George Greenwood took over the

magazine themselves. In a letter of June 18, 1979 Oscar wrote to me that George never had anything to do with the purchase of the magazine. "I borrowed the money to buy the mag and paid it back and all when I was 57!", Oscar maintained.

Greenwood left the partnership in 1974 to concentrate on his personal interests and now *Health and Strength* was solely Oscar's responsibility; he had achieved an ambition. It was one of the high points of his career but the change from physical culture to bodybuilding had played havoc with the magazine's circulation figures, which had greatly decreased. The main ingredient of *Health and Strength* was now show reports, a fact that Oscar recognized. In a letter to me on January 18, 1977, he wrote "...but all I seem to do is publish show reports, which I am sick of! If only we could afford to enlarge the mag so it is not a diary of shows, I for one would be very thankful." The worries of publishing became greater and finally he passed on the problems and the publishing to others, and there was a succession of owners—in 1981 Steven White and Street Printers of Worcester, then Edward Hankey and Terry Phillips and, most recently, Alex McKenna.

Oscar had withdrawn from the publishing side and he had also experienced a role of diminishing responsibility with the National Amateur Bodybuilders Association, better known as NABBA. In these days, when demands for self government affect even the super-powers of the world, it was not surprising that organizers, competitors and officials wanted a say in how their affairs were to be conducted. NABBA had faced increasing competition and had to become more 'democratic' in order to survive, but Oscar Heidenstam, too, was a survivor and his wealth of experience, knowledge, love of bodybuilding and sheer tenacity kept him an integral part of the bodybuilding scene until his dying day. He was still NABBA secretary at the time of his death.

I like to remember Oscar most in the early 1950's, when he was probably at his physical best. He would attend our Spartan Club shows, act as M.C., judge, pose and do an agility spot with landings light as a feather in spite of his size—6' and 210 pounds. He had no hesitation in accepting my invitation to appear in a TV show carrying one of the Dinnie Stones of Strength, always helpful and always ready to have a go—that was the Oscar who earned our respect and affection. He always gave American physique competitors a good welcome in Britain and I know from Mr. Universe contestants like Dr. Ken Rosa and John Grimek that Oscar Heidenstam's contribution to bodybuilding will not be forgotten.

PHYSIQUE PROFILE. At 205 pounds in competition condition he had the following measurements. Neck 17 1/2" Forearm 14", Wrists 7 1/2", Thigh 26 1/2", Calf 18 1/4", Ankle 10 1/2". He was a talented poseur having won 26 awards in magazine competitions and 64 *Superman* posing certificates.



Following our last issue, we received quite a bit of correspondence related to our attempt to compile a bibliography of the major journals in the field of physical culture. Our friend from Italy, Biagio Filizola, who recently visited the Physical Culture Collection here at the University of Texas, sent us the following information about Italy's bodybuilding magazines:

Dear *IGH*,

The first magazine published in Italy was *Cultura Fisica*. It started in 1957 and is still current. In 1959, *Sport & Salute* began publishing. It ended in 1965. In 1984, *Sport & Salute* resumed publication and is still current. *Ercole* magazine started in 1961 and lasted for 12 issues. *Vigor* magazine began in 1966 and remains current. *Sportman*, the Italian version of Weider's *Muscle Power* started in 1974 and is current. *Linea & Sport* started in 1978 and is current. *Body's Mag* began publishing in 1987 and remains current. In addition to these, there have been occasional issues of other Weider publications published in Italian. In 1960, there were three issues of *Mr. Universe* published. Eight issues of *Muscle Power* appeared on the newsstands in 1958. Five issues of *Flex* were published in 1988 and, since 1990, we can now get *Iron Man*.

Biagio Filizola
Sapri, Italy

Dear *IGH*,

I am a subscriber to *Iron Game History* and enjoy it very much.

In the combined #4 and #5 issue, you had an impressive list of publications relating to physical training and health. Several publications were not mentioned and I thought that you may be interested in them. They are: *East Coast Bodybuilder*, which had three issues published in 1976; *American Body Builder*, which published a number of issues circa 1976-1978 and *Mighty Men of Old, Biography of Outstanding Strongmen* from 1940.

I am enclosing the Spring 1977 issue of *American Body Builder* for your collection.

Please tell your wife that I enjoyed the Bernarr Macfadden article. I wrote an article on him for the premier issue of *Natural Physique*.

Robert J. Bryla, D.C., P.T.
Utica, New York

We'd like to thank Dr. Bryla for the information and the copy of *American Bodybuilder*. We *did* know of the *Mighty Men of Old* publication, but did not include it because it was not marketed as a serial publication.

On other matters our readers write:

Dear *IGH*,

Just a note to tell you that I thought the March issue of *Iron Game History* was wonderful. You really outdid yourselves on this double issue. There really is nothing else like your publication.

I had already read your tribute to Charles A. Smith in *Iron Man*, but I enjoyed reading it again with the additional detail. I am always interested in hearing about people who have contributed so much to the strength sports, especially from someone like you who has the intimate details of his life.

I was also delighted to find Al Thomas' piece on the Strength & Health picnics. I had just mentioned S&H picnics in *Lean for Life*, which I'm now in the process of writing. Al Thomas really is a good observer and eavesdropper, as he says. I only attended one picnic, I think it was in 1958, and I don't remember anywhere near the details that Thomas does. His nostalgic piece on Bob Hoffman's great picnics really serves to remind us how wonderful the golden era of weight training really was. Looking back, it's amazing how Uncle Bob made York the center of the weight world for so many years. That era is gone now, but obviously not forgotten.

Jan, your piece on Bernarr Macfadden was of special interest to me as well. I've just received a flyer on a Bernarr Macfadden biography by a professor back east somewhere. I've sent off for it. After reading your piece I look forward to receiving it even more.

Congratulations again on the March issue. Please keep up the good work. If you come through New Mexico again this year please allow time to stop in for a bite to eat and a good chat.

Clarence Bass
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Dear *IGH*,

In your response to my earlier recommendation that "both genders be represented on the *IGH* masthead," you said, "We basically agree...but have yet to find a suitable...female athlete...Any suggestions?"

In the current issue of *IGH* Jan states that the great Bernarr Macfadden, the Father of Physical Culture, "...harkens back to the Greeks by reminding his readers that the greatest beauty is seen in those (female) bodies where the muscles are fully developed, as in the statues of Venus, Juno, Diana and Minerva." While in Washington recently, I viewed and photographed several statues, including those of Venus and Hercules at the Smithsonian. My photos, of course, do not do justice to those statues. I'm not an Art Zeller with a camera.

Anyway, those statues are a beauty to behold. So, I would recommend that you use Hercules and Venus on the *IGH* masthead.

Grover L. Porter, Ph.D.
Huntsville, Alabama

***IGH* Art Director, Steve Bittick, has been looking for some time now for a suitable engraving of a “heroic” female who can hold her own with the Farnese Hercules we use on our front cover. All of us at *IGH* continue to agree with Dr. Porter’s philosophy of equity but we have yet to find the right artwork to make the shift.**

Dear *IGH*,

I particularly appreciated your tribute to Charles A. Smith. It covered Charles’ life very well and revealed some facets of his life of which I was unaware. For example, I did not know that he suffered from diabetes-having been under the impression that he lost his leg due to arthritis. In his letters to me he hardly ever referred to his physical condition.

I also appreciated the article about Bert Assirati written by Charles. I knew both Bert and Joe very well and had a long talk on the telephone with Joe when he was in his 84th year.

This is just a note of thanks for your fine tribute to one of my oldest friends in the world of weights.

John Dawe
Ottawa, Ontario

The “Joe” mentioned above is Joe Assirati, Bert Assirati’s cousin, who recently sent us the following:

Dear *IGH*,

David Gentle sent two cuttings to me from *Body Power* magazine. They contained David’s tribute to Charles A. Smith and he asked if I would send one on to you. It is good to know that Charles received some recognition in an English magazine.

I received a slight shock when I read on the reverse of the page that Oscar Heidenstam had died. It is many years since I spoke to him but I knew him as he was friendly with my brother-in-law, William T. Coggins, and I had planned to write Oscar and tell him of Bill’s death at age 82.

Bill won the first Mr. Britain contest, started in 1930 by *Health and Strength*, which offered 100 pounds to the winner. On an average, a man earned about 3 pounds a week in those days, so this was a very large sum. This offer was never repeated. Bill was the only man to win this contest twice (1930 and 1932). Oscar Heidenstam won it in 1937.

Joe Assirati
London, England

Dear *IGH*,

As historians of powerlifting, you might be able to provide me with an answer regarding records for older lifters. That is, in an upcoming powerlifting meet at the Lee Circle YMCA, it now looks probable that the great Bob Samuels will compete in the bench press event in the special master’s 75-80 year old class. Do you have a record of a listing in this age group?

Considering the fact that Bob did 375 pounds at age 73, he should be able to do close to 300 on the eve of his 80th birthday. He is in hard training right now, doing sets of five with 225.

I think a story on Bob Samuels would be fascinating, as he has about the most colorful and interesting background of any lifter I can think of, including Milo Steinborn, his old close friend and training partner. Besides his strongman act, early lifting records, and pro wrestling career (he held Jim Londos to grueling draws on two occasions, introduced Georgeous George and Mike Mazurski, etc.), he was a stuntman in Hollywood and worked with stars ranging from Douglas Fairbanks, Sr. to the team of Laurel and Hardy. He was a transitional figure in the iron game, going from the old days of stage strongmen to modern Olympic and powerlifting. He placed second in an international Olympic style contest at age 55, when the man he was coaching, Gary Gubner, took ill.

Unfortunately, our old friend Paul Anderson will not be able to be with us at the contest. He is confined to a wheelchair, and he will probably never be mobile again. He just got out of the hospital after having cancerous patches removed from his skin, and his wife is now running things for him at his youth home.

Allen Smith
New Orleans, Louisiana

According to the latest USPF record list, and other sources we have on hand here at *IGH*, the best bench press made in the 75-79 age group belongs to Henri Soudieres, who benched 215 pounds in the 220 pound class.

Dear *IGH*,

Thanks so much for the complimentary issue of *Iron Game History*. I suspect you of being psychic. For decades I have considered Marvin Eder a ‘will-o-the-wisp’. With the exception of John Grimek, I know of no other athlete who combined such great strength with a truly outstanding physique. As for Jules Bacon, he and Jim Park were brought by Bob Hoffman to Washington, D.C. in the early 1950s. Bob presented a clinic at a sporting goods store and Jules Bacon and Jim Park demonstrated exercises. They were using an old 240 pound York Standard Barbell. When Bob asked Jules to demonstrate the deep knee bend, Jim Park quickly offered to help Jules get the bar into position. I will never forget the mingled look of surprise and contempt Jules shot him. Jules replied, “I can get it,” and proceeded to demonstrate a perfect

clean and jerk, lowered the bar behind his head and proceeded to do 10 perfect deep knee bends. He then jerked the bar to arms' length again and lowered it to the floor. I doubt if Jules Bacon weighed 170 pounds. Of course they both looked like Hercules to me, a six foot, 13 year old, who could not get his weight over 135 pounds.

Good luck with *Iron Game History*.

Pat Percy

Detroit, Michigan

Dear IGH,

You finally did it and it was worth waiting for. I really liked your latest issue. At last we are on the way back to common sense in health and strength. I know our game is in the right hands, like it was in the days of Peary and Mabel at *Iron Man*. I am enclosing \$20.00 to help insure your continued success.

I was born on April 25, 1912. On April 25, 1991 I did 28 chins. This makes over 60 years of chins!

By the way, how is Mark Henry?

Curd Edmunds

Glasgow, Kentucky

reminiscences, or anything else that seems pertinent regarding members of the iron game who have passed away. Do not assume that others have sent us the clippings or obituaries. We, along with Joe Roark, will then do our best to make sure that the major magazines are notified.



Correction: Volume 1, Number 2 of IGH credited Gene Jantzen with winning the 1941 Mr. California contest. The winner in 1941 was Harold Zinkin; Jantzen was second.



This issue concludes Joe Roark's listing of the dates on which various significant events occurred in the iron game. He makes no claim that the events listed are the most significant, only that they are as accurate as he was able to make them. They represent careful research and cross-checking. If you have any additions to make, please send them to him and, in time, if he accumulates enough, we will repeat this feature.

March

- 1: 1902 Hackenschmidt came to England.
- 1903 Charles A. Hise wed Amy Banta (Joe Hise's parents).
- 2: 1930 Rigoulot cleaned and jerked Apollon Bell.
- 5: 1881 Jacques Roumageon born.
- 1872 Prof. Adrian Schmidt born. Died Feb 28, 1944.
- 1913 Mary Willianson, 19, wed Bernarr Macfadden, 45.
- 1920 Armand Tanny born.
- 1949 Bob Peoples deadlifted 725 1/2 (or March 4th?).
- 6: 1894 Sandow performed for Edison's motion picture.
- 11: Kurt Saxon born. Died Sept 5, 1952 (Born 1884).
- 1896 Hans Beck won European lifting championships.
- 1950 Dinner held honoring John Davis.
- 12: 1920 Wilhelm Turk died. Born May 10, 1857.
- 1927 Keith Stephen born.
- 13: 1931 Lillian Leitzel(1) fell to her death.
- 14: 1865 Paul Pons born. Died relatively young by drowning.
- 1893 Milo Steinborn born. Died Feb 9, 1989.
- 1940 George Hobby bent pressed the Rolandow dumbbell.
- 1974 Gene Dubuque died.
- 15: 1866 Prof. Anthony Barker born: died 1973.
- 1924 Louis Attila died, or died March 24th. Born July 2, 1844.
- 1936 John Grimek gave a lifting demonstration at the Illinois State Championships in Chicago; bodyweight 188; press 242, snatch 225 1/2, C&J 302 1/2.

Ed note: Mark Henry continues to train on the Olympic Lifts and was featured in July in *Sports Illustrated* magazine. Mark is now living at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs. After winning the Collegiate Nationals and setting three American snatch records in the junior division, Mark went on to place a disappointing sixth in the Junior World championships. He has reduced his bodyweight to approximately 370, yet on a trip to Austin he recently cleaned 440, a personal record.



The recent passing of several major figures in the iron game--Oscar Heidenstam, William T. Coggins, Charles A. Smith, Joe Mills, Bert Assirati, etc—has impressed upon all of us here at *Iron Game History* the need for a “central clearinghouse” of information related to members of the iron fraternity. As Joe Roark wrote to us recently,

“Our sport is not one whose achievements are recorded in daily newspapers, or bi-weekly magazines, and so when someone in our sport passes away, it may well be three months or more before it is reported in the major magazines-if someone thinks to notify them.

“I'd like to see IGH become a clearinghouse for this sort of material. I'd like to see us make sure that the greats of our game get proper coverage.”

We think Joe's idea has considerable merit, but to make it work we need your help. Please send to us, or to Joe, any newspaper clippings, obituaries, photographs, if you have them, and any biographical information,

- 16: 1856 Duncan C. Ross born.
- 17: 1882 Herman Saxon born. Died 2, or 12th 1961.
1900 D. P. Willoughby born; died Jan 17, 1983.
- 20: 1918 W.L. Travis teeth-lifted 311 pounds.
1942 Ken Waller born.
- 21: 1879 Josef Steinbach born. Died Jan 15, 1937.
1918 Santo Leone born.
1953 Paul Anderson's second lifting contest: 300-250-325-won.
1974 Bob Jones died. Born Feb 20, 1904.
1974 Sergio Oliva on the "Tomorrow" show.
1988 Harold Ansorge died. Born 1917.
- 23: 1950 Oscar Matthes died. Born Sept 29, 1863.
- 24: 1933 Goemer—two arm front holdout, 121 pounds.
1934 Clevio Massimo, age 43, posed in Maryland.
- 25: 1872 Horace Barre born. Died 1918.
1938 Roger Eells' 14 futile attempts to bent press Cyr dumbbell.
- 26: 1966 Tony Terlazzo died. Born 1911.
1966 Vic Nicoletti died.
- 27: 1880 Hector Decarie born. Died June 30, 1954.
1883 Dowd's 1442 1/2 pound hand and thigh lift.
1912 Charles A. Smith born. Died Jan 29, 1991.
1953 Marvin Eder pressed 325 pounds.
1965 Tom Sansone performed muscle control at John Fritshe's show in Philadelphia.
- 28: 1891 First "world's" weightlifting competition; held in London. No "foreigners" competed.
1978 Joe Bonomo died. Born Dec 25, 1901.
- 31: 1909 "Paris" died. Born 1850.
1932 Lud Shusterich born.
- April**
1:1880 Stanislaus Zbyszko born. Died Sept 23, 1967.
1896 Louis Cyr won lifting contest with August Johnson.
1923 Dan Lurie born.
1946 Vince Gironda opened his Hollywood gym.
1978 Bill Reynolds began working for Joe Weider.
- 2:1867 Eugen Sandow born. Died Oct 14, 1925.
1916 Donald Dinnie died. Born July 8, 1837.
1946 Alan Stephan discharged from the Navy. Two months later won Mr. America.
- 4:1957 Paul Anderson's two week engagement at the Mapes Hotel began in Reno, Nevada.
- 5:1918 Juan Ferraro born. Died 1958.
1935 Hackenschmidt arrived in America from England.
1940 John Davis bent pressed Rolandow dumbbell.
- 1984 Tom Bruno died. Born July 27, 1914.
- 7:1880 Joe Lambert born.
1881 Dudley Sargent wed Ella Ledyard.
- 8:1888 W.A. Pullum born. Died Aug 29, 1960.
1903 Arthur Saxon's first public record in the bent press, 314 pounds.
- 9:1859 Franz Stahr (Stohr) born.
1937 Sieg Klein's first success bent pressing the Rolandow dumbbell; did it again the following day on his birthday.
1979 Gerard Nisivoccia died, age 73.
- 10: 1902 Sieg Klein born in Thom, W. Prussia, Germany.
1912 Bob Harley born.
12: 1961 Theodore Siebert died. Born Oct 25, 1866.
- 13: 1891 Hermann Goerner born. Died June 29, 1956.
- 14: 1873 Heinrich Eberle born.
1879 Jean Le Breton born.
- 15: 1926 Joe "Mighty Atom" and Leah Greenstein became American citizens.
- 16: 1859 Charles Sampson born.
- 17: 1946 Abe Boshes died.
1965 Pat Casey bench pressed 570.
1966 Bill Pearl appeared on Groucho Marx's show "Hollywood Palace."
- 18: 1915 George Redpath born.
- 19: 1927 Val Pasqua born.
1933 Karl Swoboda died. Born July 1882.
- 20: 1933 Arthur Gay, slow curl, 142 pounds.
- 21: 1840 Georges Jagandorfer born.
1912 Frank Leight born. Died 1990.
1927 Pepper Gomez born.
- 22: 1866 John Y. Smith born. Died 1956.
- 23: 1932 Vic Seipke born.
1973 Buster McShane died.
- 24: 1893 Roy L. Smith born. Died Aug 1, 1970.
1961 Joe Weider wed Betty.
1963 Floyd Page died, age 37.
- 26: 1911 Oscar State born. Died when?
- 27: 1909 George Kirkley born. Died June 30, 1989.
- 28: 1878 Arthur Saxon born. Died Aug 6, 1921.
1989 James Douglass died. Born May 12, 1911.