



IRON GAME HISTORY



VOLUME 2 NUMBER 1

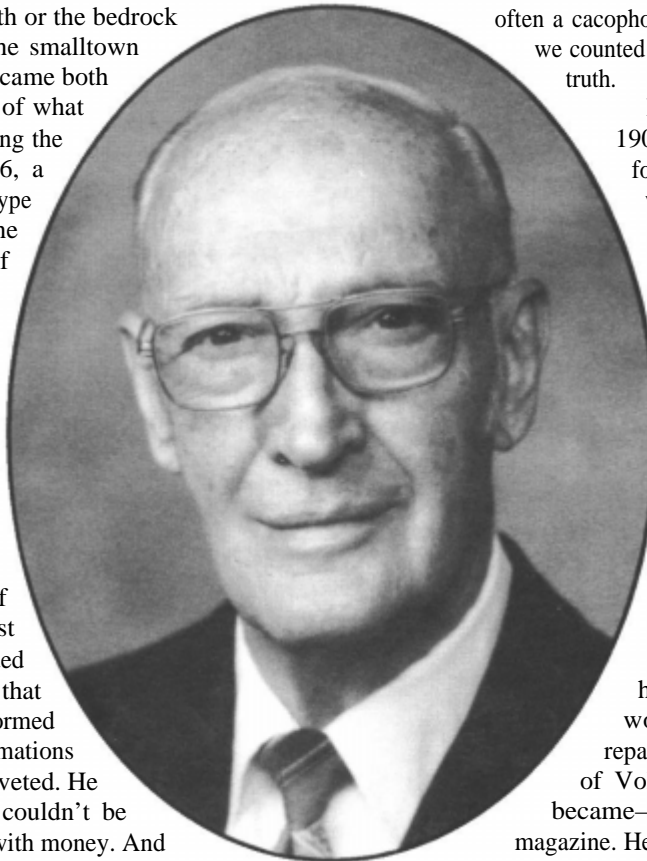
January 1992

Peary Rader (1909-1991)

Our Best Man Gone

In what sport historians of the future will no doubt consider an odd twist of fate, a quiet, modest mid-westerner who never left the area of his birth or the bedrock values he learned as a boy in the smalltown churches of western Nebraska became both the symbol and chief chronicler of what was best about the iron game during the half century from 1936 to 1986, a period in which hucksterism and hype played major roles in moving the game from the backwaters of culture to the mainstream. Although Peary Rader never had the impact of, or shared the limelight with, the other publishing giants of the 20th century—Bernarr Macfadden, Bob Hoffman or Joe Weider—he fulfilled a priceless function. He reminded us all—by his good work, his words and, most of all, by the way he lived his life—of what have always been the truest things about our game. He reminded us that there were no secrets, but that we could, nevertheless, be transformed by hard work into closer approximations of the size and strength we all coveted. He also reminded us that muscles couldn't be bought, and had very little to do, with money. And he reminded us that a well-lived—and not just a well-lifted—life is its own reward. Non-commercial in a completely natural way, Peary was the living manifestation of our own early, best days as lifters and bodybuilders, days when we did what we

did for the simple joy of doing it. His magazine—our beloved *Iron Man*—was the steady bass note of reason in what was often a cacophony of claims and counter-claims and we counted on him to sustain us by telling us the truth.



Peary Rader was born on October 17, 1909 in Peru, Nebraska, the oldest of four children. His family moved to the western part of the state, just outside Alliance, when he was four years old and he lived in that area the rest of his life. In 1936, he married Mabel Kirchner, who bore him two sons—Jack (1937), an actor living in Hollywood and Gene (1938), a publisher living in Alliance. By 1936 Peary had been an avid barbell man for several years, having fallen under the sway of the high rep squat as taught by Joseph Curtis Hise. Anxious to share the good news about the wonders of weight training, Peary took a broken copier home from the school where he worked as the maintenance man, repaired it, used it to ditto print 50 copies of Volume One, Number One of what became—and has remained—*Iron Man* magazine. He mailed the copies to his friends and the rest, as they say, is history.

Those who subscribed to the early version of *Iron Man* paid fifteen cents a copy, and the solid honesty of the man behind the magazine was such a strong selling point that it grew through the

late 30's and on through World War II, during which Peary worked for the railroad. Finally, when the war was over and Peary recovered from a serious attack of yellow jaundice, he and Mabel decided they could make a living with the magazine. One of their first acts was to buy an old barracks and move it to 512 Black Hills Avenue, home of *Iron Man* until it was sold to John Balik. The Raders, by themselves, built the concrete block walls for the basement under the barracks, with Peary laying the blocks and Mabel mixing the cement. Once completed, the basement served as a gym, an office for the magazine and a print shop; the barracks themselves were gradually turned into living quarters for the Rader family as money became available.

As the magazine increased in size and readership, Peary and Mabel began to sell their own brand of exercise equipment, books, training courses, and even printing equipment. Eventually, the magazine grew to the point that it had over 40,000 subscribers and was read around the world. Peary and Mabel also printed magazines for other groups, and, in time, a 12,000 square foot

building was erected on the lot behind their home to accommodate the various aspects of their business. Not bad for two kids from rural Nebraska who began with nothing but a broken copier and a dream.

As to the impact Peary and Mabel had on the game to which they dedicated their lives, I'd like to draw now from some of the many comments solicited in 1986 on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of *Iron Man*. I gathered these comments, with help from Vic Boff and Jeff Everson, as I prepared an article for the anniversary issue of the magazine. I should add that I had to convince Peary to give me, and, by extension, his many other friends, the space to publish our comments. Because of our own limitations of space in *IGH*, I'll draw only a sentence or two from each of the contributions we assembled in 1986. Read the comments and judge for yourselves the sort of impact Peary and Mabel had on the field they loved.

"I remember the magazine from its inception, and the great potential it showed with its inspiring pictures and interesting

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articles. Though it was quite small by current comparisons, it still packed a strong wallop because of its direct approach." John Grimek—A.A.U. Mr. America, U.S. weightlifting champion and record holder, and former managing editor of *Muscular Development*.

"It is impossible to measure the truly great contributions that Mr. and Mrs. Peary Rader have made to America and the world." Bruce Randall—1959 Mr. Universe, a title he won after having yoayed his bodyweight from 200 to 400 to 187 to 223.

"In a field where commercialism and hype are the order of the day, [Peary and Mabel] have continually been more democratic in their publishing ventures, always allowing all to express their views, opinions and philosophies of physical training." Bill Starr—former managing editor of *Strength & Health*, now strength coach for the John Hopkins lacrosse team.

"More than any other magazine, *Iron Man* has been the foundation of communications for the physical culture community for 50 years." Tom Minichiello, former owner of New York's famous Mid City Gym.

"When I went to work for Arthur Jones and Nautilus in 1973, Arthur sent me to Alliance, Nebraska for six weeks, to learn all I could about publishing from Mabel and Peary Rader...I'll always be grateful...and I appreciate their multiple contributions to the iron game." Dr. Ellington Darden, former Director of Research for Nautilus Sports-Medical Industries and author of many books on weight training.

"Over the years, *Iron Man* has been an encyclopedia of enlightenment. It truly represents our field at its best." Vic Boff—author of many books and articles, member of Brooklyn's famed Iceberg Club and founder and president of the Oldtime Barbell & Strongmen Association.

"[Peary's] a true blue American from your nation's heartland and he has those attributes—honesty, hard work, concern for others, modesty—which you used to see a lot in America but now are becoming rare...It always seemed to me that he just wanted to help people." Doug Hepburn—former world weightlifting champion.

"With *Iron Man*, we always get the best of bodybuilding, powerlifting and Olympic lifting." Jeff and Cory Everson—Cory is the former, five time Ms Olympia and Jeff is a writer and former editor of *Flex*.

"Each issue [of *Iron Man*] is like a diamond in my library. The magazine represents the iron game with dignity." Milo Steinborn—the late Milo Steinborn was America's strongest man in the 1920's and was also successful as a pm wrestler, wrestling promoter and gym owner.

"What I will always remember about the Raders, and what I, and many other powerlifters will always honor, was the tough stand that both Peary and Mabel took on the steroid issue in powerlifting...And every woman who's involved in weight

training...should be grateful to the Raders for another thing—the fact that *Iron Man* was not afraid to publicize strong women [and treat our] pioneers with seriousness and respect." Jan Todd—former record holder in powerlifting, former head of the USPF and IPF women's committees.

"*Iron Man* is and always has been an informative, balanced and pleasant journal to read." Bill Reynolds—managing editor, *Muscle & Fitness*.

"Two of the finest devotees of the iron game—Peary and Mabel Rader—have devoted their lives for the betterment of our sports and their Christian philosophies are most appreciated in this age of greed, deception and dissension." Herb Glossbrenner—managing editor, *International Olympic Lifter*.

"*Iron Man* has always been a forum in which all opinions could be expressed." Charles A. Smith—the late Charles A. Smith was a writer and editor for the Weider publications during the 1950s.

"No one cares more about the good of the weight sports and no one has contributed more than Peary and Mabel Rader." Clarence Bass—successful master's level bodybuilder, attorney and author.

"What separated it from all the other magazines is that it wasn't so aggressive and pushy about selling products." Frank Stranahan—former U.S. amateur golf champion and pioneer in weight training for athletes.

"Everything stopped when I received it in the mail." Chris Lund—photographer and editor of *Bodybuilding Monthly*.

"The Raders deserve thundering applause on the 50th anniversary of their wonderful publication." Sieg Klein—the late Sieg Klein was a record-holding lifter and pioneering bodybuilder and gym owner.

"Their unselfish contributions have stimulated the growth of the strength sports and have inspired countless young people to embark on healthier lives—a legacy of enduring value." Jim Murray—former managing editor of *Strength & Health* and author of numerous books.

"Peary was always good to put a lot of information in his magazine about [powerlifting]...Some of the people at York didn't really get behind powerlifting until they saw it was going to be popular, but Peary was a long-time squatter himself and he was our salvation." Jim Witt—first chairman of the U.S. Powerlifting Federation.

"I always thought *Iron Man* was the thinking man's magazine...Peary prints things just as he gets them and then lets the readers make up their own minds." Bruce Klemens—author and photographer specializing in weightlifting.

"Whenever I've been asked which physique publication is the best on the market, I've never hesitated, saying, '*Iron Man* magazine of Alliance, Nebraska.'" Bill Pearl—former Mr. America, Mr. Universe and author of several books on weight training.

"Their unbiased and non-political views in reporting and



promoting the sport of bodybuilding are appreciated by everyone who knows the sport well.” Doris Barrilleaux—pioneer in women’s bodybuilding and first national chairperson of the AFWB.

“Together with Joe Weider’s magazines, *Iron Man* has always been my favorite.” Lou Ferrigno—bodybuilder and actor.

“The watchwords at *Iron Man* always seem to have been integrity and modesty.” Leo Gaudreau—the late Leo Gaudreau was an authority on the history of the strength sports.

“*Iron Man* is as close to unopinionated reporting as we can get.” Steve Wennerstmm—editor-in-chief, *Women’s Physique World*.

“In my early days I read, read and read some more (still do) and your magazine gave me countless hours of enjoyment and left me with images that still influence the way I report on bodybuilding.” Rick Wayne—former editor-in-chief, *Flex*.

“Throughout the last 30 years of my life, *Iron Man* has been a beacon of great spiritual as well as physical light showing the way through clean, sensible, health-promoting high standards.” Dr. Ken Rosa—author, chiropractor, jazz pianist and former competitive bodybuilder.

“I think what makes Peary different from other people in his position is that he never seemed to be politically motivated to become any sort of a mogul.” Ken Patera—former national superheavyweight weightlifting champion.

“I think what made *Iron Man* important many of us through the years is that felt Peary kept his magazine above the sometimes petty feuds between the other groups. Because of this, we thought *Iron Man* was more trustworthy.” Tommy Suggs—former editor of *Strength & Health* and former national weightlifting champion.

“I know their help meant everything to me and I honestly believe that had it not been for their example, I wouldn’t be doing what I am today.” Ken Kontor—executive director, National Strength and Conditioning Association.

“The one thing that stands out about Peary and Mabel is that they give everyone a voice.” Fred Howell—author of many physical culture articles.

“Your inspiring magazine is still up to date in our ever-changing weight, exercise and health world.” Ed Jubinville—bodybuilding, powerlifting and armwrestling official and exercise equipment manufacturer.

“Kids are at the mercy of the muscle magazines, and it was a lucky thing for me that *Iron Man* was on the newsstand of the Ideal Pharmacy in Eastman, Georgia in those days. It was my salvation.” John Coffee—coach of the winning team at the U.S. women’s weightlifting championships for nine years.

“Although there were many promises from other strength magazines, only the *Raders* extended advertising to Jackson all down through the many years, even though I was in competition with *Iron Man*’s own line of weight equipment.” Andy Jackson—

barbell manufacturer for almost 50 years.

“Honesty and integrity have been the keywords of the publishers of the excellent magazine.” Bruce Page—author.

“I appreciate the fact that you have taken an outstanding Christian attitude that would show everyone just where you stand spiritually.” Paul Anderson—former world and Olympic superheavyweight weightlifting champion.

“Thanks, Peary and Mabel, for all the years of quality reporting without compromise.” George Redpath—author and gym owner.

“To me the magazine has been openminded and honest in dealing with every phase of weight training.” Leo Stern—former bodybuilding champion and pioneer gym owner.

“I salute you, Peary, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the publishing of the finest and most informative as well the most honest magazine in the business.” Tony Ditillo—author of books and articles on weight training.

“Mabel and Peary created a magazine that was never the mouthpiece for one narrow set of editorial biases or just another glorified catalogue for a given brand name of equipment and health foods. Without compromising their Christian principles, they have quietly led the game for a half century by permitting every ‘voice of reason’ to make its case before the jury of *Iron Man*’s discriminating readers.” Dr. Al Thomas—college professor and author of many articles about weight training.

Please understand that these remarks were gladly given and that not a single person was approached who was reluctant to join in saluting the *Raders* and *Iron Man*. Please understand as well that hundreds more luminaries of our game would have been proud to add their names and words to the salute, had we only had the time to contact everyone. The people above are meant to be representative, not inclusive.

Perhaps Peary’s reputation resulted from the breadth of his interests as well as his capacity for honesty and hard work. He was vitally interested in all aspects of the game and no one, with the exception of Bob Hoffman, travelled to more bodybuilding, weightlifting and powerlifting meets than Peary did during the 50 years they shared the stage in America. For some years, Peary was the national chairman of the A.A.U. Physique Committee, and he judged at dozens of national championships in all three of the weight sports. He was also voted, along with Mabel, into the hall of fame in all three sports, and he was honored in 1989 by the Association of Oldtime Barbell & Strongmen for his outstanding contributions to physical culture through the years.

In my view, very few people in this century have led lives of such unwavering coherence. Early in life Peary was called to preach the gospel of physical and spiritual strength and for over 50 years he heeded the call with quiet dedication. Now that he is gone and we reckon what he meant to us all, we see that he was the best of us. The very best.



Jan Todd
University of Texas



THE LEGACY OF *PUDGY STOCKTON*

In much the same way that John Grimek ushered in the Modern era of men's bodybuilding, Santa Monica's Abbye ("Pudgy") Eville Stockton is a pivotal figure in the history of women's exercise. Before Stockton there were a few professional strongwomen who trained with weights—large, often massive women such as Minerva and Sandwina who helped perpetuate the myth that weights would make a woman large, unattractive and, perhaps, a trifle coarse. In the late 1920s and throughout the 1930s, photographs of England's amateur strongwoman, Ivy Russell, appeared frequently in *Health and Strength*, and her unusual muscularity and strength created interest and wonder but failed to establish her as a feminine role model.

At the end of the Depression, however, petite Pudgy Stockton with her glowing skin, shining hair, miraculous curves and amazing strength appeared on the golden sands of Muscle Beach and became emblematic of the new type of woman America needed to win the War. Competent, feminine, strong, yet sexy, Pudgy made America's young men pant with desire, and also pant in their gyms as they tried to prove themselves worthy of her.

As bodybuilding author Al Thomas put it, Stockton's influence was enormous:

"The boys who drifted into the iron game in the 40s and 50s are now its chairmen of the board and chief executive officers. And somewhere, tucked away in these graying sensibilities resides a vision of the golden creature who bestrode that auroral patch of sand, the very name of which (Pudgy) still clangs a fire bell in the hearts of many a grizzled sometime iron pusher...She was sexy—let's get that one out of the way up front. If she provided an aesthetic, almost moral focus for her sisters, she was also as her counterparts today, a delight to the opposite sex. However, unlike her counterparts today, who have become almost indistinguishable units in an ever growing parade of physique women, Mrs. Stockton was unique, a nonpareil, the standard meter against which the centimeters and inches of her peers' athletic femininity

was measured. There hasn't been anybody since her who has dominated the field so completely and there won't be anybody who ever will again...There are so many luminaries today that none can dominate the bodybuilding firmament as Abbye once did."¹

Though Pudgy undoubtedly influenced thousands of men, she had an even greater impact on the history of women and exercise. In America, in the 1930s, Bob Hoffman's had been the lone voice calling for women to participate in regular weight training.² In *Strength & Health*, Hoffman used photographs of female gymnasts, acrobats and adagio dancers who did barbell training with their husbands or fathers, and these images helped to break down some of the old prejudices about weights making women large, mannish and inflexible. For instance, two photos of Pudgy Eville appeared in the September 1940 issue of *Strength & Health* with a caption that read, "This small lady has strength equal to a much heavier man, yet retains a small, symmetrical and most attractive physique. . . Further proof that heavy exercise, weightlifting, hand balancing and acrobatics will produce the ideal development for the ladies too."²

But Hoffman's magazine reached only those few already converted to the magic of iron, and it was, in fact, Pudgy's appearance in such mainstream publications as *Life*, *Pic*, and *Laff* that caused women across the country to take stock of themselves and begin to wonder if they, too, shouldn't lift weights.

Abbye Eville was born August 11, 1917 and moved to Santa Monica in 1924 where she remembers spending her free time on the beaches near her home. Her mother taught her to swim in the Pacific Ocean using a pair of water-wings and Pudgy now credits this act, plus her later reading of Bernarr Macfadden's *Physical Culture* magazine as the earliest influences which led her to a life in physical culture. By the time Abbye graduated from high school in 1935 she was known by the childhood name, "Pudgy," given to her by her father, even though, at 112 pounds,



she was hardly pudgy. After graduation, she began work as a telephone operator, later becoming a supervisor for the phone company in its Ocean Park office. She had begun dating her husband-to-be, UCLA student Les Stockton, during her senior year in high school and it was Les who inadvertently started her on her career in physical culture: "After I'd worked for a couple years for the phone company, my weight had gotten up to about 140 pounds, Pudgy recalls, and I was concerned about it. Les persuaded me to start exercising. He brought me some dumbbells and a York training course. I used the dumbbells some, and also did calisthenics, but I quickly discovered that the acrobatic work was a lot more fun to do."³

As Pudgy remembers it, it was in the summer of 1939 that her career as a handbalancer truly began. The WPA had recently erected a low platform on the beach in Santa Monica and it was there that she spent her afternoons learning how to perform "perfect" handstands. "I worked a split shift at that time for the phone company and so I had my afternoons free. Les and I and Bruce Conner, a friend of Les' from UCLA, would all gather there and practice in the sand. The summer that I learned to do handstands was the first time that I was able to hold Johnny Komoff in a low handstand while Don Brown did a handstand on my knees."⁴

As "Muscle Beach" exploded in the early 1940s Pudgy, Les, and Bruce Conner worked on increasingly complicated gymnastic feats and began making public appearances. "We called ourselves The Three Aces, and when Les was called to active duty in the Air Force, Bruce Conner and I did some appearances together. We did a lot of football game halftime shows, including some with Glenn Sundby and Wayne Long."⁵ In the fall of 1939, the foursome appeared at halftime at the UCLA vs USC football game where they were introduced as "Pudgy and her boys."⁶

Pudgy Stockton's unusual combination of strength, athletic ability and shapeliness made her a great favorite with photographers for both weightlifting and regular magazines. In 1939, *Pic* magazine visited the UCLA campus to take photos of the gymnastic team. Cece Hollingsworth, who coached the UCLA team, invited Pudgy to be there for the photo session, which turned into a large pictorial spread and a cover shot of her flying through the air between Les and Bruce Connor.⁷ That same year, a photo of Pudgy and Les was used by the Ritamine Vitamin Company to help market its new vitamin and mineral supplement and on August 7, 1939, the Universal Camera Company ran an ad in *Life* magazine which once again featured Pudgy flying through the air to land in Les' arms.⁸ As her professional appearances increased, and Muscle Beach's fame spread, other magazines and newspapers were also drawn to the Southern California coast to take photos. In 1939, for instance, Pudgy was featured by *Look*, *Pic*, and *Physical Culture* and appeared in all of the Los Angeles and Santa Monica papers. Two newsreels of that era also featured her—"Whatta Build" and "Muscle Town, USA."⁹ By the end of the 1940s Pudgy's figure had graced 42 magazine covers from around the world.¹⁰ All of this exposure gave her a national reputation and, in 1944, she began writing a regular column for *Strength & Health*, called "Barbells"; it appeared for just under a decade.¹¹

Though Pudgy's place in the history of women's bodybuilding is secure simply on the merits of her own career, her *S&H* columns are also extremely important. Writing in what was then the largest magazine of its kind in the country, Stockton featured strong, attractive women who were also good athletes. She featured her friends from Muscle Beach—women like Edna Rivers, Evalynne Smith and Relna Brewer Macrae—all of whom were also featured in such pictorial magazines as *Pic*, *Laff* and *Hit*. Relna Macrae, who then worked as a nurse and now makes her home in San Diego, was an excellent all-around athlete who was accomplished in adagio dance, jiu jitsu, handbalancing, aerial work and wrestling; she could also tear a Los Angeles phone book apart with her hands. Other "*Barbelle*" columns featured competitive athletes such as Walt Disney studio artist Pat King, who began weight training to gain weight and increase her endurance for running. In 1945, King, who trained with bodybuilder Gene Jantzen (and later married him), was performing barbell pullovers, overhead presses, barbell rowing motions and bench presses. These exercises helped her, according to Stockton, to run a mile in six minutes and 50 seconds, five miles in 47 minutes, to swim a mile in 38 minutes and to perform 900 squats (deep knee bends) in 53 minutes.¹²

Edith Roeder, a competitor in track and field as well as basketball, was another barbell devotee profiled by Pudgy. A former beauty contest winner, and trained by Stockton at her health club, Roeder worked hard at the Olympic lifts and, in 1955, she cleaned and jerked 170 pounds in a special exhibition held at the Junior National Weightlifting Championships.¹³

Stockton should also be credited for introducing her readers to the nascent California bodybuilding scene, which was centered then, as it is today, in Santa Monica. Following World War II, as America's servicemen returned home, many men and women interested in weight training and acrobatics gravitated to Santa Monica to watch and participate in the "Muscle Beach" extravaganzas. As Les Stockton recalled recently, "At first, all there really was at Muscle Beach were just some kids who'd go down to the beach to practice doing acrobatics at the Del Mar Beach Club. But under the direction of Deforest Most, or "Moe" as we all called him, who became the director of the Santa Monica playground, things became more organized. A few professional handbalancers began coming down to the beach to train, people like Betsy and Kitty Knight and Johnny Collins, who worked as a movie stunt man. Gradually, it evolved that regular exhibitions were held in the afternoons on the weekends. All kinds of folks participated in the shows—amateurs, professionals, children, weightlifters, bodybuilders, and handbalancers. The crowds were enormous. A large, raised platform like a stage was eventually built. It was just south of where the Santa Monica pier is now."¹⁴

It was during the War, according to Pudgy, that her interest in competitive weightlifting began. She and Les, who married on July 14, 1941, were stationed at Victorville Army Air Base in the early days of their marriage, and they trained in their backyard in Oro Grande, California. During this era, Pudgy was invited to give an exhibition of the three Olympic lifts at the Los Angeles YMCA.¹⁵ As usual, Pudgy was well received by the audience and it sparked her to continue working on the "Olympic three." In early 1947, with encouragement from Les and after eliciting support from some of the other regular women trainers at

Muscle Beach, she was instrumental in organizing the first weightlifting contest for women in the United States. Held at the Southwest Arena in Los Angeles on February 28, 1947, the contest featured nine women competing in three bodyweight divisions; it was called the "Pacific Coast Weightlifting Championships." As far as can be determined from existing records, this was the first women's weightlifting contest in the United States to be sanctioned by the AAU. Stockton's lifts at that meet were 100 pounds in the press; 105 pounds in the snatch, and 135 pounds in the clean and jerk. She weighed 118 pounds. Two other lifting contests were held in the Los Angeles area over the next two years, and, in 1950, the AAU sanctioned a National Championships.¹⁶

In 1948, Pudgy and Les entered the gym business, opening a women's gym on Sunset Boulevard next door to Walter Marcy's men's gym. Two years later, the Stocktons opened side-by-side men's and women's gyms on Pico Boulevard in the Beverly Hills area and in 1952 expanded into another gym in the Pasadena area in a partnership with John Farbotnik. Pudgy and Les gradually retired from their Sundays on the Santa Monica Beach as Muscle Beach, itself, wound down. Their daughter, Laura, was born in 1953 and the following year

Pudgy gave up her *S&H* column. Three years later she retired from the gym business in order to spend more time with her pre-school daughter. In 1960, with Laura safely in first grade, Pudgy returned to the gym business, working for Bruce Connor and his wife, Deloryce, at their gym, first on a part-time basis and then full-time until her retirement in 1980. Les, who retired as a Colonel from the United States Air Force, also retired from the gym business in 1980.

The Stocktons still live close to their beloved beach in Santa Monica. Three times a week (or more) they go to the beach for their exercise, which these days generally consists of 10 trips up and down the 200 stairs that go from the promenade along the Santa Monica cliff down to the shore. Their days are also filled with their other passion—collecting. Because of their daughter's childhood interest in insects, the Stocktons began collecting beetles and butterflies in the mid-fifties. Today, they have one of the largest private collections of such insects in the world and are actively involved in trading and collecting.

Though Pudgy held only one "bodybuilding" title—she was selected by Bernarr Macfadden as "Miss Physical Culture Venus" in 1948 at the age of 31—her influence on women's weight training has been enormous. When I began lifting weights in 1973, I turned to pictures of Pudgy for reassurance that I was on the right path. And Lisa Lyon, who it may be argued was the first "modern" woman bodybuilder, was inspired by Pudgy in the late seventies when she became a member at the gym where Pudgy then worked. Every woman bodybuilder who puts on a swimsuit and steps up on the posing dais, every woman weightlifter who strains under a clean and jerk, and every woman powerlifter who fights through the pull of a heavy deadlift owes a

debt of gratitude to Abbye "Pudgy" Stockton, who helped make these Modern sports possible.

It should be added that while this is a profile of Pudgy, it would not be complete without taking notice that her career—and her "impact" on men and women—would not have been possible were it not for her husband, Les. For it was Les who was man enough to encourage her—man enough to share her with the slack-jawed youths of Muscle Beach, the cameras, and life in the public eye—and who has been man enough to continue to share her with us all.

If Pudgy had power over men, she had equal, perhaps greater, influence on women. When she and Les Stockton began working out on Santa Monica's beaches in the late 1930s, she almost immediately attracted major media attention. And, as the photos and stories about Pudgy and Muscle Beach appeared in *Pic* and *Laff and Life* and *Strength & Health*, other women began to see that muscles could be feminine, strength an asset, and working out fun. This was her great and enduring gift to the game.

¹ Al Thomas. "Out of the Past...A Fond Remembrance: Abbye 'Pudgy' Stockton." *Body & Power*. 2(March 1981): 12.

²Todd Jan. "The History of Strength Training for Female Athletes." Paper presented to North America Society for Sport History. May 24, 1989, Banff, Alberta.

³*Strength & Health*, (September, 1940), 23.

⁴Pudgy Stockton, personal interview, Downtown Athletic Club, New York City, September 28, 1991.

⁵Stockton, "MBAA Members Pudgy and Les Stockton," *Santa Monica Muscle Beach Newsletter*, 4(Fall 1990): 2 p2.

⁶Stockton, interview October 28, 1991.

⁷Stockton, MBAA Members," p. 2

⁸Stockton, "MBAA Members," p. 3.

⁹*Life*, (August 7, 1939): 22.

¹⁰According to Al Thomas, the two newsreels were made by Universal International in the late 1940s and lasted approximately 10 minutes each. Clips of "Whatta Build," seen by the author, showed Stockton doing a variety of acrobatic stunts with her husband, Les, including holding him over head bad with one hand. (Stockton newsreel clips, on file, Todd-McLean Sports History Collection, University of Texas at Austin) Pudgy Stockton, herself, does not have a copy of either newsreel, nor does she remember exactly when they were issued.

¹¹Stockton, Les, Personal Interview, Downtown Athletic Club, New York City, September 28, 1991.

¹²Rivas, featured in "Biceps on the beach." *Hit*, (April 1947).

could hold a "flag" (body extended horizontally in space while supported only by the hands gripping a pole), was a competitive swimmer and first rate tumbler. Evalynne Smith was Los Angeles all-city diving champion in 1937, 1938 and 1939, and was 100 meter swimming champion for 1937 and 1938. She began weight training to rehabilitate a childhood leg injury. ["Evalynne Smith: The Blond Bomber." *Strength & Health*, (November 1942): 22-23. Rivers is featured in "Barbells" in June, 1944.

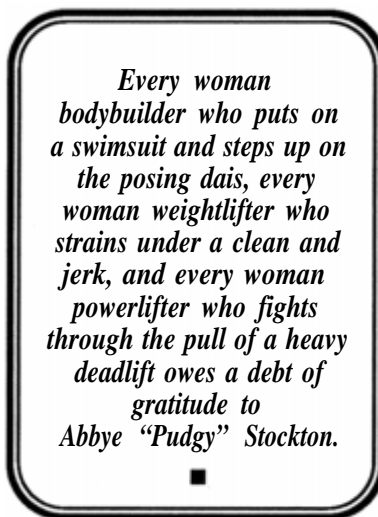
¹³Pudgy Stockton, "Barbells," *Strenght & Health*, (May, 1945): 20-21.

¹⁴L. Arnold Pike, "Roeder taps women lifters", *Strength & Health*, (March, 1950). 19. Roeder is mentioned again in Stockton's Barbelle column for May/June 1950. Roeder was also featured in a Fox-Movietone newsreel of the first AAU national weightlifting meet for women held in 1950.

¹⁷Les Stockton, personal interview, Downtown Athletic Club, New York City, October 28, 1991.

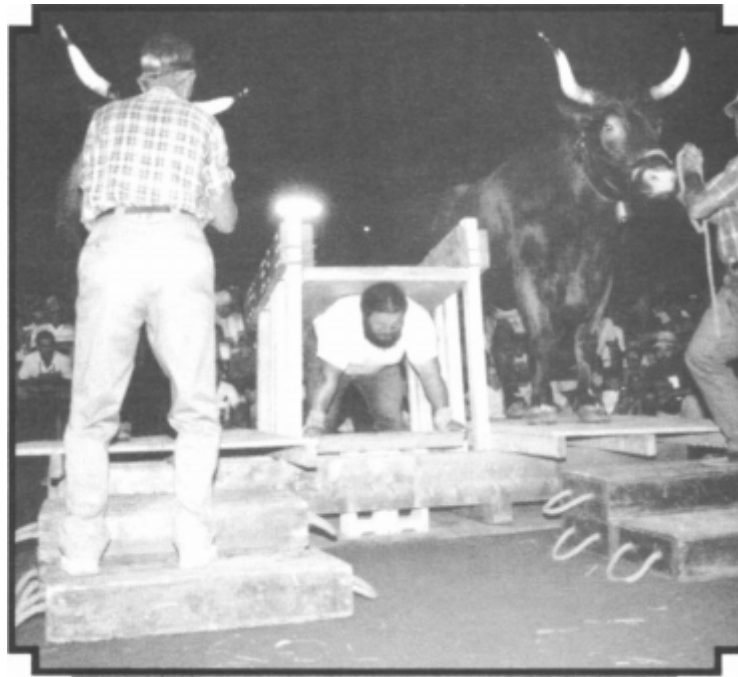
¹⁸Unpublished letter, Pudgy Stockton to Jan Todd. October 1991

¹⁹Pudgy Stockton, "Barbells," (August 1944). 11, contains the first discussion of organized Olympic weightlifting competitions for women and a list of the best lifts done by women to that time. The April, 1947 issue contains a report of the first contest. The second competition is reported in her August, 1948 column. In a recent letter from Stockton, she gives the dates of the second contest as January 18, 1948. It was called the Southern California Open Championships and was held in Long Beach, California. Five women competed. Six women competed on April 2, 1949 in a contest held at Marcy's Gym in Los Angeles and in 1950, the MU sanctioned a national championship.



THE ROARK REPORT

BACKLIFTING



Greg Ernst backlifted a pair of oxen and a platform last summer in Nova Scotia. The total weight was 4420 pounds.

The back lift allows a person to lift more weight than can be raised in any other manner. Indeed, a current powerlifter could, with training, backlift more weight than he or she can total in the three standard power lifts. David P. Willoughby estimated that an athlete should be able to backlift approximately 13.1 times the amount of weight he or she could do in the Olympic-style press, basing his estimate on many athletes who practiced both lifts and whose abilities were well known. Nonetheless, through the years, some claims have been ridiculous, causing Willoughby to write in *Iron Man* magazine (December 1959, p. 29),

“How such ‘records’ ever got into publication can be explained only by assuming complete ignorance of weight lifting possibilities on the part of those who give credence to them.” He was referring to the claims of Peter James McCarthy, who in April 1898 during a lifting contest against Warren Lincoln Travis, at the Brooklyn Athletic Club was able to lift only 2400 pounds, but who is given credit five months later for a backlift of 6,373 pounds.

One suspects, after the dust of confusion blown about by ignorant writers has settled, that Travis may have been accurate—at least to the point in time when he said it—that the three greatest backlifters were Louis Cyr, Henry Holtgrewe, and himself.

New followers of iron history may need to be informed about the backlift. Usually, and in the more reliable instances, dead weight is lifted—that is, iron or stone, which has been weighed and placed on a platform, or very strong table. The lifter assumes a position under the platform, a position wherein knees and elbows are slightly bent so that when arms, hips, and legs lift in unison, the table or platform is elevated an inch or more and supported on the back of the lifter. Hence, backlift.

What follows is an alphabetized listing of the various claims in the backlift. I present these claims as I have located them through the years. Your knowledge of lifting will help determine which of these lifts have merit and which fit into the category disdained by Willoughby. “*S&H*” refers, of course, to

Strength & Health magazine. To my knowledge, no such list has ever been composed, but your additions or corrections are welcome. Please notice my new address: P. O. Box 320, St. Joseph, IL 61873.

Barre, Horace

(March, 1872-1918). 5’9”; 275-320 pounds bodyweight **3,500 pounds**—This was iron and was mentioned by Warren Lincoln Travis in *S&H* (Dec. 1927, p. 19). **3,890 pounds**—Willoughby credits Barre with this in *Your Physique* (May 1949, p. 40).

Cabana, Wilfred J.—This man from Montreal is credited with **3,300 pounds** by Warren Lincoln

Travis (*S&H*, Dec. 1937, p. 38).

Kennedy, James W.—**4500 pounds**—At Madison Square Garden, on October 10, 1893. Kennedy lifted three horses with three cavalry men sitting on them plus a platform. “Each horse weighed around 1200 pounds, while the average weight of the cavalrymen was 130 pounds each, and the platform must have weighed nearly 500 pounds.” (*Police Gazette*, Oct. 28, 1893, p. 10).

Cyr, Louis—(1863-1912). The following is a list of all the various poundages I was able to locate for Cyr throughout his career. Please notice that the date given for the same lift can vary by the same writer (even Willoughby gives three dates for the same 4,300 pound backlift, and Venables misses the mark by a decade). 4,400 pounds-Boston. This is the lift which most writers refer to as 4,300 pounds. David Webster lists the lift at 4,400 pounds on May 27, 1896. (*The Iron Game*, p. 37). **4,330 pounds**—This is the same event as above, but is the poundage given by Leo Gaudreau. It was also listed by Gaudreau as 4,337 pounds done on May 27, 1895 (*Anvils, Horseshoes and Cannons*, p. 193). **4,330 pounds**—This is the same event, reported by Ben Weider, in his Cyr biography, in which he also uses 4,337 pounds and a date of May 27, 1895. (*The Strongest Man in the World*, p. 81). **4,300 pounds**—In the York Barbell Company publication, *Mighty Men of Old*, text provided by Gord Venables. The date is May 27, 1885. **4,300 pounds**—Oscar Matthes attributes this to Cyr in “1895” (*Anvils, Horseshoes and Cannons*, p.

197). **4,300 pounds**—Dean Camenares credits this in “1895”. (*Muscle & Bodybuilder*, July 1980, p. 11). **4,300 pounds**—W. L. Travis mentions this as having happened on May 27, 1896, and that he asked Cyr two months later, that is, in September of 1896, if the weight had been weighed. Cyr said no, and Cyr never claimed a lift of 4,300. It was claimed by others for him. (*S&H*, Dec. 1937, p. 19). **4,300 pounds**—Willoughby attributes this feat to three separate dates. He mentions May 17, 1895 in *Iron Man* (Dec. 1960, p. 27) and *The Super Athletes* (p. 570). But he gives May 26, 1896 in *The Super Athletes* (p. 154), and May 27, 1896 in *Your Physique* (May 1947, p. 19). **4,133 pounds**—Vic Boff refers to “Cyr’s 1896 record of 4133,” but says that “usually 4,300 is considered Cyr’s record.” (*Muscle-Up*, April 1981, p. 41). **3,900 pounds**—Travis’ opinion of Cyr’s best (*Your Physique*, May 1949, p. 40). **3,900—4,000 pounds**—Barre’s opinion of Cyr’s best (*Your Physique*, May 1949, p. 40). **3,641 pounds**—Willoughby says this was Cyr’s best official backlift. Iron was weighed. (*Your Physique*, May 1947, p. 19). **3,626 pounds**—Sixteen men plus platform, Royal Aquarium, London, January 19, 1892. (*S&H*, Nov. 1943, p. 34). **3,556 pounds**—Willoughby. (*Iron Man*, Jan. 1961, p. 30). **3,536 pounds**—This was apparently done while in training at Berthierville, Canada for the match with Sebastian Miller. (*S&H*, Sept. 1935, p. 68). **3,533 pounds**—Listed as Cyr’s “record” by Richard K. Fox in a challenge letter to Sandow and Romulus. (*Police Gazette*, July 28, 1894). **3,369 pounds**—October 19, 1892 at Joliette (*Your Physique* Nov. 1947, p. 44). **3,192 pounds**—July 2, 1891. Cyr stopped at this amount in his contest with Sebastian Miller since Miller had backlifted only 2,400 pounds (*S&H*, Sept. 1935, p. 89). **3,133 pounds**—Fourteen men, platform of 388 pounds, Royal Aquarium, London (*S&H*, Oct. 1943, p. 45). **3,300 pounds**—W.A. Pullum in *Health & Strength* (Aug. 4, 1955 p. 33) writes “...made the aggregate load sometimes a little under 3,000 lb, sometimes over. Two or three hundred pounds one way or the other didn’t trouble Cyr where this particular feat was concerned.” **2,920 pounds**—Also at Royal Aquarium during February 1892. (*Your Physique*, Nov. 1947, p. 29). **2,908 pounds**—At age of 20 lifted stone and iron, according to Charles Collins (*S&H*, Aug. 1935, p. 68). **2,879 pounds**—Done at age 44 on February 27, 1906 against Decarie.

Minerva (Josephine Blatt)—(1869-1923) 5”8” tall; 230 pounds bodyweight. **3000 pounds**—Minerva lifted 18 men and a platform at the Bijou Theater, Hoboken, New Jersey (*Police Gazette*, May 4, 1895, p. 10). **3564 pounds**—Reported by Rosetta Hoffman for the same date (*S&H*, July 1937, p. 38). Hoffman claims Minerva lifted 23 men and the platform. This latter weight appeared in *The Guinness Book of World Records* for many years as the greatest lift ever made by a woman. It is disputed by Willoughby (*The Super Athletes*, p. 577).

Ernst, Greg—5’10”; 315 pounds bodyweight. **4420 pounds**—Done last summer on July 24, 1991 in front of several thousand people at the Lunenburg County Fair in Bridgewater, Nova Scotia. The weight consisted of a platform and a pair of oxen. The oxen were weighed at the fair, as was the platform. Terry Todd served as one of the side judges and reports that the lift was done with strength to spare. Ernst is a dairyman and recently won the title of Strongest Man in Canada. His platform is slightly angled, giving him a better position for maximum leverage.

Franks, F.B.—5’8”; 175 pounds bodyweight. **3,788**

pounds—New Orleans, 1924.

Holtgrewe, Henry—(1872 -Jan. 1, 1917). 5’9”; 275 pounds bodyweight. **4,000 pounds**—Travis’ estimate (*S&H*, Oct. 1937, p. 32). **4,103 pounds**—Done in 1904 at Redland’s Field in Cincinnati. (*Your Physique*, May 1949, p. 41) but Willoughby estimates 3,704 is a more accurate poundage for this date.

Jackson, Thomas Jefferson “Stout”—(January 22, 1889-January 6, 1976). 5’9”; 185-205 Rounds bodyweight. **6,472 lbs**—Jackson was a professional strongman and made this lift on March 19, 1924, lifting, supposedly, 12 bales of cotton (cotton bales usually weigh around 500 pounds). *The Houston Chronicle* (April 1959) reported, ‘The peak of his career came in March 1924, at Bob Holmes Gin in Lubbock, [Texas], a 34 (sic) year old Stout Jackson crouched under a platform that stood on sawhorses and was stacked with twelve regular-sized bales of cotton.’ A photo of the lift makes it appear that the platform was several inches off the supports. At the time of the lift, Jackson weighed 188, so his claimed backlift was 34.4 times bodyweight. David Willoughby did not consider Jackson’s lift to have been legitimate, but *Ripley’s Believe It Or Not* received documents from several citizens of Lubbock who attested to the poundage claimed.

Levasseur—?? pounds—Twenty circus workmen on a platform circa 1935. **3,500 pounds**—An elephant on a platform while with Ringling’s circus in 1907. There is a drawing of this in *S&H* (June 1938, p. 18) and photos in *S&H* (Dec. 1934, p. 23 and Aug. 1962, p. 23). The photo appears to have been “fixed.” Notice his “straight” finger. **3,000 pounds**—He was said to be able to lift this much even after age 50 (*S&H*, Dec. 1934, p. 23).

Little, George—(Dan McLeod?)—**3,000 pounds**—This was witnessed by Travis, which puzzles me, as Little’s bodyweight was only 136 pounds. (*S&H*, Oct. 1937; *Your Physique*, Nov. 1947, p. 44).

Miller, Sebastian—**2,400 pounds**—Done on July 2, 1891, in a match with Cyr.

McCarthy, Patrick J—**6,373 pounds**—Done September 17, 1896 (*Muscle-Up*, April 1981, p. 41) and John Kern’s *Vigorous Manhood* (p. 52) and Willoughby (*Iron Man*, Dec. 1959, p. 29). Willoughby estimated McCarthy did a backlift in 1898 of approximately 2,400 pounds.

Steinborn, Milo—**800 pounds**—Milo, in a sport coat, lifted a young elephant; no platform was used. (*Iron Man*, Feb. 1952, p. 15).

Travis, Warren Lincoln—**4,140 pounds**—This was iron, lifted at the Brooklyn Athletic Club on Nov 1, 1907, bodyweight 185 pounds. **4,240 pounds**—Twenty-five men and platform. Willoughby mentions this was done “on another occasion.”

Walsh, Jack—?? pounds—A baby elephant of unknown weight (*S&H*, Dec. 1958, p. 26). ?? pounds—Two elephants (1,800 and 2100 pounds) plus a 450 pound platform. No lift, elephant panicked. (*S&H*, April 1952, p. 32). **4,235 pounds**—July 7, 1950, bodyweight 178 pounds. Walsh used 76, 50 pound plates plus a platform. Reported by Ray Van Cleef (*S&H*, Sept. 1950, p. 23). **4,638 pounds**—Made on November 13, 1950, bodyweight 178, using 84 plates (84X50) plus platform. **4,668 pounds**—This is Walsh’s highest claim. (*Iron Man*, Sept. 1951, p. 42).

The backlift claims of **Paul Anderson** are a story in themselves and will be examined in a later issue.

--Joe Roark

Al Thomas, Ph.D.
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WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Mike Mungioli

Mike Mungioli started lifting weights in 1926 after seeing Siegmund Klein (his “idol, then and now”) in an exhibition at the old Bryant Hall on 42nd Street in New York City. Wondering aloud, “What nerve I had back then,” his very first competition as a lifter was in the old 126-pound class at no less prestigious a meet than the 1933 Junior Nationals, in which he took a third with a total of 484 (first place going to a lifter from the famous German-American Club, Al Lemay).¹ Mike vindicated himself the following year, winning the 126-pound class at the Juniors with a five lift total of 803 1/2 pounds. He went on to garner 10 Senior Metropolitan titles and four state championships, and in 1937 and 1938 Mike won the Senior National 126-pound championship, making him the strongest man his size in the nation. He held national records in the right-arm snatch (152), the left-arm snatch (138), the two-arm snatch (195), and the left arm clean and jerk (156). He had also posted a two-arm clean and jerk of 240 (Art Levan had the record at 242), a two-arm press of 175 (Joe Mills had the record at 180), a squat of 410, and a deadlift of 500 (these last two lifts, of course, were not contested in those years.)²

And now, dear reader, we cut to 1991, more than a half century after all this lifting excellence of the 1930’s, and we find that our hero, “the mighty mite”, is now 83 years of age but still up to his old tricks, in this case rep squatting 200 pounds (10 reps to be exact), with a best squat of 305 at this incredible age—and all at a bodyweight of only 135. It’s an understatement to venture the guess that Mike has to be the strongest 135-pound 83-year-old on the planet. Indeed, it seems likely that, if he could legitimately be called the strongest 126-pounder in the nation back in the late 30’s, he must surely be in legitimate running for the title of our planet’s strongest 83-year-old, pound for pound at least.

When asked about his present-day training regimen and to what he attributed his continued high level of strength and fitness at an age when many lifting greats have long since retired to token poundages—even some who may have eclipsed his wonderful records in the 30’s—Mike replied: “I have no special dietary program, but I do enjoy German beer. Someone once asked a 92-year-old what he had done to reach his remarkable age. He answered, ‘My heart keeps beating.’ In my case, it might be my training methods, my diet, or just good genes. I like to think it’s a bit of everything, but after a good workout, a warm shower, and fresh clothes, I feel twenty years younger than I am. I work out three days a week with weights appropriate to my age and bodyweight.” (An “appropriateness” that has to be unique to the amazing 83-year-old.) “My training is for flexibility, strength increases, and general good health, and it seems to be working. I don’t have aches and pains, the usual ‘old man’s problems,’ so I guess what I’m doing must be correct. I’ve kept the deep knee bend. I don’t feel that my squatting ability is unusual. I’ve done them for over 60 years, and at one time I trained under Charles Ramsey, who didn’t permit any cheating on any lift or exercise. In fact, he said that cheating would produce aches and pains later in life. He taught that squats had to be the rock bottom, sitting-on-your-heels variety, and I still do them that way. I also do hang snatches, hang cleans, jerks, bench presses, and some powerlifts, but not all in the same training day, of course. My

workout takes about 45 minutes. I generally scale about 135 and try to stay in that area.

“I enjoy reading everything printed about the weights and strength feats. The lifter that I admired the most was John Davis, the great heavyweight champion of the 30s, 40s and 50s. He was an inspiration to all of us. In fact he often trained with us during the summer months. I remember, when he finally made the decision to become a full-fledged heavyweight, he began doing 3 sets of 20 reps with 400 pounds in the deep knee bend, and went from 210 to 235 in one summer’s training.

“Someone, probably a few thousand years ago, said, ‘There’s nothing new under the sun.’ I sometimes think of this in reference to today’s Olympic lifting. The Bulgarian lifters go right to their limits each training day. Of course, the American lifters of the 30s and 40s used the same technique.”³

Leo Murdock once observed that anybody who planned a piece of any length on Mike Mungioli had better study-up on his dentistry texts because getting biographical information from modest Mike would be “like the proverbial bare-handed pulling of teeth.” But, though Mike did not mention it, Leo and Walter Ressler in his good 1950 *Strength & Health* article recount a strength feat that amazed me as a youngster. Back in 1938, when Mike was 30, Ripley’s “Believe It or Not” featured a squib about a powerful W.P.A. worker who, angered at not being paid on time, seized a 100-pound bag of flour and announced that he would take it in place of his check. This remarkable chap carried the weighty sack the whole five miles back to his home with only one rest stop along the way. Soon after the publication of this account, some fellows in a downtown Manhattan office building, who knew something of “the herculean strength” needed to transport a 100-pound sack of anything from the car trunk to the kitchen table, were standing about reverently discussing the W.P.A. chap’s feat. Mike, however, ventured that a man who could rep squat 300 pounds shouldn’t have much trouble duplicating this portage. In Walter Ressler’s words, “Wallets were yanked, and folding money, clenched in fists, rose above the arguing voices. Over a thousand dollars was laid on the line. A route was planned from “...downtown Manhattan to Mike’s home in Long Island, a distance of eight miles,” three miles longer than the course in Ripley’s column. Needless to say—it’s part of our Game’s lore—little Mike (20 pounds smaller than the mighty W.P.A. employee shouldered his 100-pound sack of flour at 6:00 after a full day’s work. Followed by a noisy band of rooters from his Maspeth Club and, of course, a far less encouraging band from his firm (intent upon insuring the integrity of their wager), Mike trudged 2 1/2 hours, non-stop, the whole eight miles to his Maspeth home, waiting patiently with his shouldered burden at every red light between Manhattan and Maspeth: one thousand dollars richer at the end of this wearying day than he had been at its start in that bleak deep-Depression year. A wonderful feat for a large, endurance-type strength athlete, an amazing one for a 126-pound weightlifting champion who weighed very little more than the sack he toted.”⁴

In a similar vein, in the early days of his Army sojourn Mike shouldered three G.I.’s, totaling over 400 pounds (well over three times his bodyweight), and carried them 100 yards. Done

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

casually and without any preparation, these feats call up interesting speculations about what this little dynamo's limits might have been in feats of bearing and supporting. From those same War years comes another tale—again from other lips and pens—that tells us something about the moxie that undergirded some of these feats that dramatize refusal-to-cave-in (intestinal fortitude, “guts”) as much as brute power.

Hankering to see some action and half-ashamed to be consigned to a desk job as World War II was blazing all around him, the 34-year-old strongman (at 34, “properly” desk-bound, one imagines, in the Army's view of him) was fit to get some real action as an aerial gunner, and (the end justifying the means) told a white lie that subtracted six years from his thirty-four in order to just-qualify “as a twenty-eight-year-old” for aerial gunnery school (getting complimented in the process for being in such “excellent physical condition”). Surviving a crash landing, while training State-side, he was soon a full-fledged gunner in a B-26 Marauder Medium Bomber with the 9th Air Force, assigned to Europe where, among other chores, he flew with the “bridge-busters,” bombing ahead of Patton's ground troops.

After his 20th combat mission, however, his C.O. discovered the “fib” that had gotten the overage Mungioli into this dangerous business, but seeing that the champion's heart had been in the right place (and weighing the warm recommendation of the B-26's captain), the C.O. ordered Mike back to combat with an admiring shake of the head at the feistiness of the little strongman-warrior. Mike went on to fly, all told, 50 combat missions.⁵

Writing about this remarkable man, Walter Ressler captures another side of a complicated nature: “I thought [of all these things] as I heard the . . . firm rap of the gavel on the shiny conference table of the A.A.U. . . . On some faces there was a look of bewilderment on this momentous occasion . . . [because] the chairman's face was that of a boy, and his voice was friendly and informal . . . yet [with] an edge of authority to [it]. [But this] bewilderment was only in the faces of those officials who did not know this former champion too well. [This] was the first time that the gavel was being rapped by anyone other than Mr. Dietrich Wortmann, Chairman of the A.A.U. since weightlifting as a sport was born in old New York. Because of Wortmann's duties as President of the Metropolitan A.A.U., he had been forced to relinquish this favored and honored post of Chairman of the Weightlifting Committee.” In choosing Mike, Wortmann showed his usual sagacity because, as Ressler observed, the lifting champion's “contagious enthusiasm” soon had the committee “pulling with him 100 per cent.”⁶

In Mike's rather too modest recounting, “I started the Maspeth Weightlifting Club around 1928 and trained hundreds of boys and men for about 25 years. We were one of the best clubs in the New York area.” It was, indeed and of course, one of the best clubs in America, boasting some of the best names, not only in New York and East Coast lifting, but in the history of the sport: John Davis, Dave Sheppard, Lou Radjieski, Joe McDonald, Wesley Cochrane, Tim Machaur, Julian Levy, Jim Pappas, Frank Lisarelli, Frank Milano—in Leo Murdock's words, “all coached for free, produced courtesy Mike Mungioli.”⁷

Leo reminds us that Mike corresponded with the legendary Joe C. Hise for years and that much valuable training information was traded back and forth between them. In the 1950 *Strength & Health* article, Mike observes that his favorite exercises were hang snatches (“In this exercise, all the muscles are used vigorously in developing speed, timing, strength, and muscle control. This movement tends to knit the muscles of the body into one unit.”) His favorite exercise for the lower body was the deep knee bend, “for strengthening the legs, hips, and spinal muscles.” He also recommended straight leg deadlifts on “hoppers,” as a “back massager and quick energy builder.” In the same piece, Mike decried the tendency of lifters to enter competition with too little training, “endangering themselves and the reputation of lifting.”

In Mike's view, “organically sound” newcomers to the sport should work for speed, timing, and form with an empty bar. “With squats, deadlifts, and presses for power, and the fast lifts for form, they should be ready for competition (within) twelve to eighteen months.... Lifters use weights too near their limit for training. Eighty per cent of limit is enough on the fast lifts.”⁸

Mike retired at 76, but the spirit is still a young man's and the body, just a few pounds over what it was when Mike was the best 126-pounder in the land. “I still wish for more leisure time. The days should have 30 hours and the week, about 10 days at least. I like to keep busy. I'm married to a grand lady, Gloria, and though we weren't blessed with children, we take care of each other.”

Born in 1908, Mike turned 83 in October, 1991. How many men in their 84th year can squat with 305? Then, among the tiny circle of 83-year-olds who can squat with this most impressive poundage, how many scale less than 135 pounds? Precious few—in my most optimistic guess: and these are not just weightlifting monuments, but national monuments, indeed human monuments of a real and important sort. They are reminders, not just about the triumphs possible to muscle and strength, even in advanced age, but more importantly, about the triumphs of the spirit and the will. Such a reminder is the “mighty mite” Mike Mungioli, a “mite,” however, only in his powerful body; seen otherwise and in the more important sense: a man of significant stature, important for his contributions to our dear game, as well as for his enduring spirit and will.

Notes:

Leo Murdock is a popular historian of our Games with very few equals: I am in debt to him, here for sharing parts of his vast storehouse of anecdotes, through me, with *IGH's* readers.

¹Wahn Ressler, “Mike the Mighty Mite.” *Strength & Health*, (December 1950): 56.

²Letter from Mike Mungioli to Al Thomas, dated 2 June 1990.

³Letter from Mike Mungioli to Al Thomas dated 2 July 1990.

⁴Ressler, p. 44.

⁵Ibid., p. 55.

⁶Ibid., pp. 44, 55.

⁷Letter from Leo Murdock to Al Thomas, dated 30 June 1990;

and later from Mike Mungioli to Al Thomas, dated 23 August 1990.

⁸Ressler, p. 56.

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Al Roy: Mythbreaker

For reasons which will be examined in a later article, the coaches and physical educators of the early part of this century in the United States were almost unanimous in their belief that heavy lifting would somehow “bind” the muscles of an athlete, making them stiff and slow to contract. Furthermore, narcissism, in both principle and practice, was far less acceptable in those naturalistic days than it is now. In football, for instance, it was thought almost unmanly to do too much preparation for fall practice. “Hell, fall practice was preparation,” was the way the late Bully Gilstrap, a former college player and coach, put it in an interview several years ago. “It was all we got and more than we wanted. What we wanted was to play.”¹

Gilstrap died in 1989 but he was a football man nearly all his life. He came to The University of Texas as a freshman in 1920 and he was an outstanding athlete during his college career, lettering several times in basketball and track as well as in football. He returned to coach at U.T. in 1937 and remained on the staff for 20 years. In an interview at his home in Rosebud, Texas, he reported, “All we did to warm up and all [for football] was a few jumping jacks...then we’d run plays or scrimmage.” He added: “It was pretty much the same in basketball and track, too...The boys scrimmaged in basketball and they practiced their events in track. That was it. I don’t know what they done in baseball”²

As far as baseball is concerned, the words of Bibb Falk, now in his early 90’s, are instructive. Falk played at Texas for years, beginning in 1917, then went straight to the major leagues where he played for 12 seasons. He returned to Austin in 1932, served as assistant coach until 1940, then coached the Texas team until 1968.

“We did a little of what we called P.T. in the early days, but only when it rained. Other than that the boys ran and threw and played. We wanted long, loose muscles and the word back then was that lifting would tie you up. To be honest I never even heard of a ballplayer using weights. Not in college and not in the bigs. Now Hack Wilson and Babe and some of the others did a lot of lifting, all right, but it was done a glass of beer at a time. The key to baseball is power and power comes from speed and we were leery of anything that might slow us up. When I played and for most of my coaching career we always believed that if a man ran enough and threw enough he’d be strong enough.”³ That this attitude prevailed in other sports as well, and at other schools than Texas, is made clear by a survey of mainstream sports and training books published during the first 60 years of this century. Almost every one either denigrated weight training

or ignored it altogether. Over two hundred such books were examined for this article, but the partial list provided should suffice to make the point.³

All too often, even well into the second half of this century, the attitude in such books concerning conditioning in sports like football was summed up by a line from a book written in 1958 by the coach of the Yale freshman squad. “The pros say that conditioning is just running, running, running.”⁵

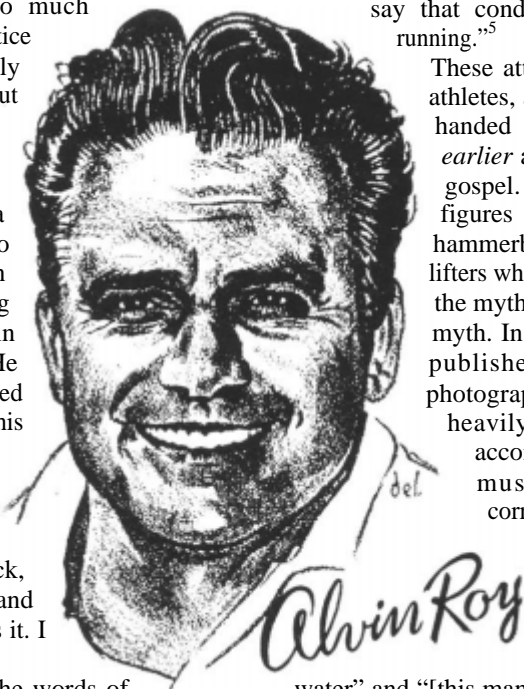
These attitudes among the leading coaches, athletes, and physical educators were simply handed down as “received wisdom” from earlier authorities, of course, and treated as gospel. Early books by such important figures as Dr. R. Tait McKenzie fell like hammerblows against the honest claims of lifters who knew from personal experience that the myth of musclebinding was only that—a myth. In 1907, for example, McKenzie first published a book which included the photograph of man who, for those days, was heavily muscled. The photograph was accompanied by this caption: “Extreme muscular development without a corresponding increase in heart and lung power. This man could not float in sea water and died prematurely.”⁶

This caption bears close examination, as the two statements, “This man could not float in sea water” and “[this man] died prematurely”, imply a causal relationship, though one may not have existed. Neither, for that matter, is the cause of death given.

Even Bernarr Macfadden, a champion of the muscular body, was held in the sway of the myth of muscle-binding, as evidenced by his 1912 statement that: “In taking up weight lifting, it would always be well to take some exercise for speed and flexibility to counteract the tendency to become slow...Weightlifting alone has a tendency to make the muscles slow.”⁷

Naturally, such early sentiments found their way into the belief system of well-respected college coaches—such as Dean Cromwell, the UCLA track coach, who wrote in 1941 that, “The athlete...should not be a glutton for muscular development...If one goes too far... he can defeat his purpose by becoming muscle-bound and consequently a tense, tied-up athlete in competition.” And again, late in the same book and speaking of shot putters, Cromwell said, “Weightlifting is not advisable. Although it develops sinew, it tends to destroy muscle elasticity.”⁸

Even the great Knute Rockne was not immune.



Referring to exercise apparatus for football, he wrote, "...nor do I believe in any other artificial apparatus."⁹ It seems that all coaches feared the condition they referred to by the term "muscle-bound." But what exactly is it, this state of being "muscle-bound"?

That was the question John Capretta, a young physical education student at Ohio State, attempted to answer 60 years ago when he mailed a questionnaire to 45 leading physiologists, all of whom were asked to define the term, "muscle-bound". Capretta justified the question by pointing out that, "Physical educators today [1932] agree that we have very little, if any, scientific information upon the condition called muscle-bound...Authors of our text-books of physiology seem to have avoided the issue and have left the subject without discussion."¹⁰

Of the 45 questionnaires, 22 were returned, but only seven of those who responded ventured a definition and those seven were in considerable disagreement, coming together as a majority only through the rather obvious observation that: "The condition of muscle-bound is associated with hypertrophy." But, because the leading physiologists of the day were at odds over the definition of the term did not mean that they questioned either the reality or the harmfulness of the condition or wavered in their belief that being "muscle-bound" was primarily a product of resistance exercise, especially standard weight training. The author of the questionnaire, in fact, reports no challenges to his premise, only a general puzzlement. Nor did the next 20 years provide much in the way of clarification. As Edward Chui wrote in 1950, "Very frequently, in the classroom, on the gymnasium floor, and on the athletic field, the term 'weight training' is associated with 'muscle-boundness', a condition supposedly resulting in a general slowing down of the contraction speed of the muscular system. No scientific evidence, however, has been advanced to support these beliefs."¹¹

Chui himself published an important study in 1950 in *The Research Quarterly* offering evidence that lifting did not cause muscleboundness.¹² And Chui was only the first of a number of sport scientists who began to specifically dispel the myth of musclebinding. Two others joined in a year later—Professors Peter Karpovich and William Zorbas—whose research, also published in *The Research Quarterly*, concluded that weightlifting seemed to *increase* rotary arm speed rather than decrease it.¹³ Two other studies—one by B.M. Wilkins in 1952 and the other by J. W. Masley in 1953—supported and expanded the conclusions of Chui, Karpovich and Zorbas, arguing that weight training produced an increase in coordination, an increase in flexibility and an increase in speed of movement.¹⁴ It should be stressed, however, that this ground-breaking research would have had far less effect had it not been for the continuous and constant battle waged by weightlifters themselves on behalf of the benefits to athletes of weight training. Those few hardy souls who championed weight training for athletes in the first half of this century were often laughed at and mocked for their beliefs, but they soldiered on and, in the end, they prevailed. Sometimes the victories they won were small and personal, but sometimes they were dramatic and far-reaching in their effects. One of the

most dramatic of these victories took place in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Alvin Roy was born in 1921 in Baton Rouge, and although he never grew very large in size, he was a man of large enthusiasms. He went through the public schools of Baton Rouge, graduating from Istrouma High in 1938. He then moved on to Louisiana State University and studied there until he joined the Army. He served in the European Theater and it was there, in 1946, that he had an experience that changed his life and, in the years that followed, the lives of many others.

What happened was that Roy was assigned by serendipity and the service to be the aide de camp for the United States weightlifting team during their stay in Paris for the first post-war world championships. Paris, of course, was still in a state of devastation after being liberated in 1945 and Bob Hoffman, the coach of the U.S. team, was worried about food and accommodations, a worry that led him to travel to the Pentagon and request help. Thus it was that when the team arrived in Paris, they were met by Captain Roy, with his jeep, his uncanny knack of procuring whatever was needed and his boundless energy. Writing the following year about this assistance, Bob Hoffman argued that "if [Captain Roy] had not devoted himself...absolutely, devotedly every minute, if we had not had his jeep, and he had not obtained cots from the hospital, rubdown oil, blankets and many other things, if he had not been with the team to help Stanczyk make weight, and help with other details, it could have represented the loss of the team championship."¹⁵

In return for all this help, which extended over the full five weeks the lifters and coaches stayed in Paris, Roy learned a secret. The secret was that the lifting of heavy weights not only did not cause a person to become slow and musclebound, it actually helped a person become faster and more flexible. Some of the Americans, primarily the perpetual public relations man, Bob Hoffman, shouted the secret at every opportune moment (and at many not so opportune moments), but most of the Americans taught by example--by the blinding speed of their leg movements as they lifted, by their ability to run and jump so well and by the tumbling and acrobatics with which they sometimes amused themselves. Roy, of course, was like most young men of that era; he believed an athlete could do nothing worse than lift weights, and he believed it for all the reasons outlined above. But one thing about Al Roy was that he always had his eyes open for the angle, for the main chance. He was no fool, and if he saw the 5'9", 210 pound John Davis do a back flip holding a 50 pound dumbbell in each hand and then do a standing broad jump of over eleven feet, or if he saw Stan Stanczyk and the other men on the team casually perform balances and stunts that were beyond all but the best gymnasts, he believed his eyes and not what he had been told growing up about the dangers of becoming muscle-bound. In short, and in the words of John Terpak, one of the Americans who won a world championship that year, Al Roy was "bitten by the barbell bug." And he never recovered.¹⁶

The infection led him, upon his return to the states, to visit his weightlifting friends, most of whom lived in York, Pennsylvania, home of Bob Hoffman's York Barbell Company.

And after Roy learned what he could from the York people and others in the gym business, he decided to return to his hometown of Baton Rouge, open a health club and make that his life's work. So he went back home to Louisiana and began to spread the gospel of weight training as the key to good health and success in sports, even though he could find few who would listen.

In 1951, after continued contact with Hoffman and Terpak and other top men in the iron game who advocated weight training for athletes, Roy made his first real effort to start a serious program of lifting in the local schools. He had already helped to train one of LSU's rare All-Americans, Piggy Barnes, who had to lie to his coaches and go off-campus to lift.¹⁷ But Roy realized that he needed a whole team of some sort to really "prove" his point about weight training, and this realization finally led him to approach the two men who controlled the athletic program at his old high school alma mater, Istrouma High—Coach James and Principal Ellis Brown. The Browns were twins known to everyone, respectively, as "Big Fuzzy" and "Little Fuzzy", and they knew young Roy, and liked him. But they had deep roots in the traditions of coaching and they both subscribed so completely to the theory of musclebinding that they refused Roy's offer of help.¹⁸

That was 1951, however, three years before Istrouma suffered the embarrassment of a thrashing administered by their cross-town rival, Baton Rouge High, in the biggest game of the 1954 season. It is also important to note that by that time Roy had received a great deal of local publicity from having served as the official trainer to the U.S. weightlifting team at the Olympic Games in Helsinki.¹⁹ In any case, three days after the bitter loss to Baton Rouge High, Roy sensed that the ideal time to once again approach Big Fuzzy and Little Fuzzy had come. At the meeting, he bolstered his case by telling stories of the small but growing number of top athletes in many sports who trained with weights, and stories of the test done at the Helsinki Olympics which revealed that the American lifter, Stan Stanczyk, moved with greater speed over a short distance than any athlete in any sport.²⁰ Finally, after Roy offered to personally set up and supervise the weight training program at no charge to the school, the Browns agreed to flout one of the most sacred traditions in their sport and train their boys with barbells. "Little Fuzzy" recalled that, "Al was such a salesman and he believed so much in what he was doing that we decided to take a chance. He was relentless. But let me tell you, we were worried. We knew what it could mean if we got a bunch of boys hurt or if we had a real bad season. It could mean our jobs. Some of our friends in the business told us we were crazy. But the way Al told it, it sounded good and once we decided to do it, we went all the way. We bought the weights and we told the team we believed in it and that they had to do it just like Al told them to."²¹

The way the team first learned of the new program, according to one who was there, was that, "one fine morning in February this big old truck pulled up alongside the gym and they started unloading all these crates filled with barbell plates, thousands of pounds of them. I mean that truck probably had

more weights on it than there were in the whole Southeast. And then Big Fuzz told us we were going to lift all Spring. And sure enough, Al Roy came out a few days later, and he kept on coming. And he really sold it hard. He made believers out of us. And course it didn't hurt that we were all so scared of the coach."²²

The program Roy chose was a basic one, made up of power cleans, bench presses, rowing motions, deadlifts, dumbbell presses and squats—low repetitions and lots of sets, just like the competitive lifters trained—but it worked all the major muscle groups and he drove the boys to lift as much as they could and to always push for that extra repetition or that extra five pounds. And as boys that age in that sort of competitive weight training atmosphere are wont to do, even without steroids, they made great gains in both strength and lean body weight. And as they gained in power and size, they gained in confidence and the Browns began to breathe again.

But as this scene was being played out, a young man was watching who also played basketball and ran track and was thus exempt from the lifting, and he was watching with both concern and fascination. His name was Billy Cannon, and he had something no training program can produce—true sprinter's speed. Cannon was also unusually bright and he was aware that the prevailing wisdom of the day was that weights would slow a man down. And since he only weighed 168 pounds in the spring before his senior year, he knew his best chance for a ticket to a major college scholarship was his speed. He was to risk his future on an unproven program. But in the end he was won over by the gains his friends were making and by the salesmanship of Al Roy, who saw in Cannon a horse that could either make the program or break it.²³

Cannon recalls, "Late that Spring, after the track season was over, me and about 20 of the boys on the team went over to Al's gym and I began to train. I think I ran a 9.8 that spring and years later, after we got to be good friends, Al told me he was scared to death when I walked in that door. He said he knew I could kill the program because if I came back at the end of the summer and ran a 10.2 or something, that would be it for the weights. But he brought us along at our own pace and he kept telling us that all this was going to do was make us stronger than the guy we'd be facing across the line next fall."²⁴

What happened by the fall is that only one of the 40 boys who had trained during the spring, during the summer or both failed to gain at least nine pounds of body weight. Some gained as much as 30. Cannon, for instance, grew from 168 to 1%. And on the field they were literally unstoppable. Not only did they win all of their 13 games, but they scored 432 points in the process, more than had ever been scored in a season by a high school team in Louisiana, and four of their players made All-State. As for Cannon, he amassed a state record 229 points, averaged 10 yards per carry and was the most highly rated high school back in the United States. And in the spring of that year he ran a 9.7 100 yard dash and won the state meet in the 100, the 200 and, with virtually no training, the shot put.²⁵

The secret was that the lifting of heavy weights not only did not cause a person to become slow and musclebound, it actually helped a person become faster and more flexible.

It was, as “Little Fuzzy” recalled, an “unbelievable season. We not only killed everybody we played, but we had fewer injuries than we’d ever had since I came to the school in 1935. Al made believers out of me and Big Fuzz and we not only kept the program for the football players, we added programs for our other sports and for all our junior high athletes.”²⁶

The scene now shifts to the following Fall, and across town to the campus of Louisiana State University, the college where Cannon’s brother played, where his father worked and where Billy had always dreamed of playing.²⁷ He had, of course, been heavily recruited by Paul Dietzel, the new coach who had come to Baton Rouge in 1955. And bolstered by another summer in the gym under the proud, watchful eye of Al Roy, Cannon had an outstanding freshman year.²⁸ But there was no organized program of lifting at the college and only Cannon and the other Istrouma boys who had scholarships did much training. And in his sophomore year, even though Cannon had an excellent year individually, the team finished with a disappointing record of five and five. By then Istrouma had won another state title and Paul Dietzel was paid a visit by the same person who had visited the Big Fuzzy and Little Fuzzy two years before, when they were in a similar slough of despond—Alvin Roy.²⁹

As Dietzel recalls, “Al came by after the season and told me he thought he could help us. He explained his ideas and how it had made such a difference at Istrouma and with Billy and all that. Of course you have to remember that Jimmy Taylor had been a senior for us that year and I knew he’d been going to Al’s Gym for a year or two, and he was as good a testimonial for the weights as you’d ever care to see. Not only was Taylor bullstrong and hard as a rock, but he had great hands, soft hands. He could catch anything. But even with all that, I have to be honest and say that I really feared the weights. Back when I was in school, we always laughed whenever we saw anyone with muscles because we’d been taught that big muscles made you slow, and what Jimmy and Billy were doing and what they were doing over at Istrouma was absolutely opposed to everything I’d always believed. Lifting was strictly verboten and we actually believed that anyone who lifted seriously couldn’t scratch the back of his head. All I can say is that after seeing what Taylor and Cannon could do and after listening to Al, I was sold.”³⁰

Thus it was that once again a heavily laden truck rolled into Baton Rouge bearing thousands of pounds of weights, and thus it was that Al Roy came at least three days each week, during the spring semester, to the newly established weight room at LSU and put the college boys through their paces, once again placing them on a program patterned after the routines of competitive weightlifters.³¹ Roy believed in going to the ultimate sources for his training philosophy. As he wrote some years later, “Every year in some country in the world a group of men gather for combat. They meet to determine the strongest men in the world at the...World Weightlifting Championships. I point this out for the simple reason that until football coaches from both high schools and universities in America start thinking along the line that these strength coaches do and until the football coaches start training their football players like these Weightlifters are trained, they will always be following a second-best program. These weightlifters are the strongest men in the world. It is our

belief that you must train your football players the same way.”³²

In any case, Roy brought this simple concept to LSU and delivered it with his customary evangelical zeal and the players reacted in much the same way as had the players at Istrouma. They got bigger, faster and stronger. And armed with what amounted on the college level to a secret weapon, they stood *Sports Illustrated’s* prediction of a poor season on its head³³ and laid waste to all who faced them in the fall of 1958, winning every game, earning LSU its first national championship and boosting Paul Dietzel to Coach of the Year.³⁴

Cannon by this time had reached a weight of 208 pounds and he was devastating on defense as well as offense. He was, of course, everyone’s All-American, winning every honor available, including the Heisman Trophy, and making several runs that are still among the ah-time replay favorites of football afficianadoes. And the following spring he ran a 9.4 hundred and won the SEC in the 100, 200 and, again, the shot put.³⁵ Blessed with great natural explosiveness and wielding like a bludgeon the strength he built with the weights, Cannon seemed at times to be a man playing with boys. He could press and snatch almost 300 pounds and deadlift 600, poundages which caused Al Roy to make the reasonable claim that Cannon was the strongest college player, regardless of size or position, in the country.³⁶

As might be imagined, there was more than a little interest in the coaching and sportswriting communities as to how a team that was picked to finish ninth in the Southeastern Conference³⁷ managed to go undefeated. As for the sportswriters, the fact that they missed for so long what was a major story serves as an odd sort of testimony to the fact that they lacked any contextual understanding of what strength training was and what it could do. A feature story in *Sports Illustrated*, for instance, in late November of the championship season, said that “[Cannon] was unable to make the Istrouma Junior High team because he was so small...[but that]by the time [he] finished high school [he had] grown up to 195 pounds.”³⁸ Not a word was mentioned about how this size and what *Sports Illustrated* called his “rockhard...magnificent physique” had been developed.³⁹ The assumption, of course, was that he, like Topsy, “just grew”.

But among the coaches the word was out that it might be time to scrap the notion of the musclebinding effects of weight training, and everyone wanted to hear Paul Dietzel speak. “I was asked to go more places than I ever had before,” he recently recalled, “and I had to turn down lots of requests. But I went to dozens of clinics and I always explained how Al Roy sold me on the program and how I’d watched Billy Cannon get bigger and faster at the same time and that our whole team did heavy lifting. You see, at that time there were no such programs in the country on the college level but after we had that great year, lots of other schools began to change. Lots of schools did a little light lifting, but because of fear and plain old prejudice against the weights, no one was doing the heavy, major muscle group work that we did, and our success triggered what we’ve seen in the years since.”⁴⁰

And although the story is too long for elaboration here, soon after the great year at LSU, Al Roy was asked by Sid Gillman, coach of the San Diego Chargers, to come out and install the first comprehensive, year round program for a pro football team.⁴¹ So the little salesman went west and worked his

sweaty magic by convincing a group of untrained, natural giants to go against all they had ever been taught; and the following year, as had happened twice before, his team went all the way, and won the Super Bowl.⁴²

¹Interview with H.E. "Bully" Gilstrap, Rosebud, Texas, August 1983.

²Ibid.

³Interview with Bibb Falk, Austin Texas, August 1984.

⁴Following is a partial list of training guides examined for this article: Ethan Allen, *Winning Baseball* (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1956.); George H. Allen, *Encyclopedia of Football Drills* (New York: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1954); Robert J. Antonacci and Jene Barr, *Baseball for Young Champions* (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, Inc., 1956); Lloyd Budge, *Tennis Techniques Illustrated* (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1945); Don Canham, *Field Techniques Illustrated* (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1952); Maureen Connolly, *Power Tennis* (New York: A.S. Barnes and Co., 1954); Bobbie Dodd, *Bobbie Dodd on Football* (Englewood Cliffs: N.J., Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1954); Pancho Gonzalez, *Tennis* (New York: Fleet Press Corporation, 1962); Thomas J. Hamilton *Track and Field* (Annapolis: The U.S. Naval Institute, 1943); William T. "Buck" Lai, *Championship Baseball* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1954); Holger Christian Langmack, *Football Conditioning* (New York: A.S. Barnes and Co., 1926); Frank Leahy, *Notre Dame Football* (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1949); Connie Mack, *Connie Mack's Baseball Book* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1950); Darrell Royal, *Darrell Royal Talks Football* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963); William T. Tilden. *The Art of Lawn Tennis* (Garden City, New York: Garden City Publishing, 1921); William T. Tilden, *Match Play and the Spin of the Ball*, 2nd Edition (Port Washington, New York: Kennit Press, 1969); Charles (Bud) Wilkinson, *Oklahoma Split Football* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1952); and Helen Wills *Tennis* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929).

⁵ James "Gib" Holgate, *Fundamental Football* (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1958). 7.

⁶ R. Tait McKenzie, *Exercise in Education and Medicine* (Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders Co., 1924), 22.

⁷ Bernarr MacFadden, *MacFadden's Encyclopedia of Physical Culture* (New York Physical Culture Publishing, 1912), 847.

⁸Dean B. Cromwell, *Championship Technique in Track and Field* (New York, McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1941), 236. Reference to shotputters is on page 260.

⁹ Knute K. Rockne, *Couching* (NYC:Devin-Adair, 1931), 10-11.

¹⁰John Capretta, "The Condition Called Muscle-Bound." *The Journal of Health and Physical Education*, 3:2 (February, 1932): 43 and 54.

¹¹ Edward Chui, "The Effect of Systematic Weight Training on Athletic Power," *The Research Quarterly*, 21:3 (October 1950):

188.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Peter Karpovich and William Zorbas, "Rotary Arm Speed in Weight Trained Athletes," *The Research Quarterly*, (Fall, 1951): 228-230.

¹⁴ B.M. Wilkins, "The Effect of Weight Training on Speed of Movement," *The Research Quarterly*, 23(October 1952): 361; and John Masley, "Weight Training in Relation to Strength, Speed and Co-ordination," *Research Quarterly*. 24(October 1953): 308

¹⁵ Bob Hoffman, "Details of the World Championships," *Strength & Health* (January 1947). 11.

¹⁶Telephone interview with John Terpak, General Manager of the York Barbell Club and member of the US team at the 1946 World Championships in Weightlifting, 29 November 1984.

¹⁷Al Roy, "Weight Training for Football," *Strength & Health* (August 1947): 21-22.

¹⁸ Interview with Dale Meridian, Shreveport, Louisiana, December 1985.

¹⁹ John Terpak interview.

²⁰ Bob Hoffman, "Stan Stanczyk: Fastest Man in Sports," *Strength & Health* (September 1950): 47-49.

²¹ Interview with Ellis "Fuzzy" Brown, Shreveport, Louisiana, 23 December 1984.

²² Dale Meridian interview.

²³ Interview with Billy Cannon, Shreveport, Louisiana, December 1985. Other material on Cannon is contained in Bill William's "Barbells Build Winning Football Team," in the May, 1956 issue of *Strength & Health*, pp. 39-40

²⁴ Cannon interview.

²⁵ Williams, "Barbells," 39.

²⁶ Ellis Brown interview.

²⁷ Billy Cannon interview.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹Ellis Brown interview.

³⁰Interview with Paul Dietzel, May 1987.

³¹ Ace Higgins, "Billy Cannon," *Strength & Health* (November 1959): 34-35.

³² Alvin Roy, *Weight Training for Football*, (York, PA: York Barbell Company, 1959), 11.

³³Mike Nettles, "Billy Cannon: LSU's All American," *Sports Illustrated*, 9(17 October 1958): 67.

³⁴ Paul Dietzel interview; and Roy, "Billy Cannon: Weight Trained Footballer, 25.

³⁵Nettles, "Billy Cannon: LSU's All-American," 66-69 and Billy Cannon interview.

³⁶Roy, "Billy Cannon: Weight Trained Footballer," 24.

³⁷ Billy Cannon interview.

³⁸ Nettles, "Billy Cannon," 68.

³⁹ Ibid., 66-69.

⁴⁰ Paul Dietzel interview.

⁴¹Billy Cannon interview.

⁴²Jim Thompson, "The Chargers Take to Weight Training," *Strength & Health* (February 1960): 34-37.

David P. Webster

THE EUROPEAN CORNER

Monte Saldo

One of the most underestimated British performers of the Golden Age of Strength was Alfred Montague Woollaston, better known by his 'nom de theatre'—Monte Saldo. He was the leading half of the Ronco & Monte duo and was also one of the Montague Brothers, other partners being his brothers Frank and Dewin, sometimes billed as 'The Montes'. Pictures in *Health and Strength* circa 1902 showed Monte Senior and Monte Junior (Frank).

Monte Saldo was born 1879, son of a Methodist preacher and faith healer in Highgate, London. A severe looking Victorian, 5'2" in height, father Woollaston was also a shoe manufacturer. He was a great linguist as was his wife, who had been educated in a convent school. The Woollastons were from a greatly respected and noble family, one of their ancestors being Sir John Woollaston, a benefactor who bequeathed funds financing the almshouses in Highgate's Southwood Lane.

In the cellar of the Woolaston abode was a 56 pound weight which acted as a challenge to young Monte, and he first got this overhead with a mighty struggle when he was just ten years years of age. When Samson's act took London by storm the lad decided that he too would one day be a strongman.

Monte had an uncle who was a police inspector and as such wielded considerable influence. Amongst his contacts were many in the theatrical profession, and in 1897, with his uncle's help, Monte became apprenticed to Eugen Sandow. At Sandow's gym and rooms at 32 St. James Street, Monte joined well known personalities like Jim Pedley, Meredith Cleave, Jimmy Young, Wally Jones, Jim Collard and Ronco. With these men, Monte worked out with the excellent equipment there and studied exercise physiology and anatomy. Sandow, being a perfectionist, provided good training for his staff and in return demanded unstinted support.

Monte's first public appearance was at the Coliseum in Leeds as a demonstrator of the Sandow Exerciser, along with Jimmy Young (who later became leader of 'The Golden Athlones), and the Continental strongman Ronco, later Woolaston's partner in his first vaudeville act. For a time Jimmy, Ronco and Monte, dressed as Roman gladiators, assisted Sandow in his act. Monte said he thought they looked more like Turkish bath attendants about to give Sandow a shampoo!

Monte had a great sense of humor, and told many funny stories about the time spent with Sandow and life in the theatre.

Sandow's instructors had to do a lot of the gym cleaning, even scrubbing the floors, and while on tour they had to get a bath ready for Sandow after his performance, a tin lined trunk being transported with them for this purpose. On one occasion Woollaston forgot to put in the plug before turning on the hose and this led to some hilarity although a tenant downstairs was far from amused. The three assistants slept in the baggage van with Sandow's props and one night as they dismantled the set and loaded up the van in the rain the red stage curtains got a bit wet. Even

so, they made a comfortable bed for the lads, who spent the night sleeping on top of the curtains. Next morning on emerging from the dark exterior of the van they found that they had unwittingly transferred much of the crimson dye from the curtains to their persons. "Our appearance for some time would have made a beetroot-red Red Indian look like an anaemic snowball by contrast."

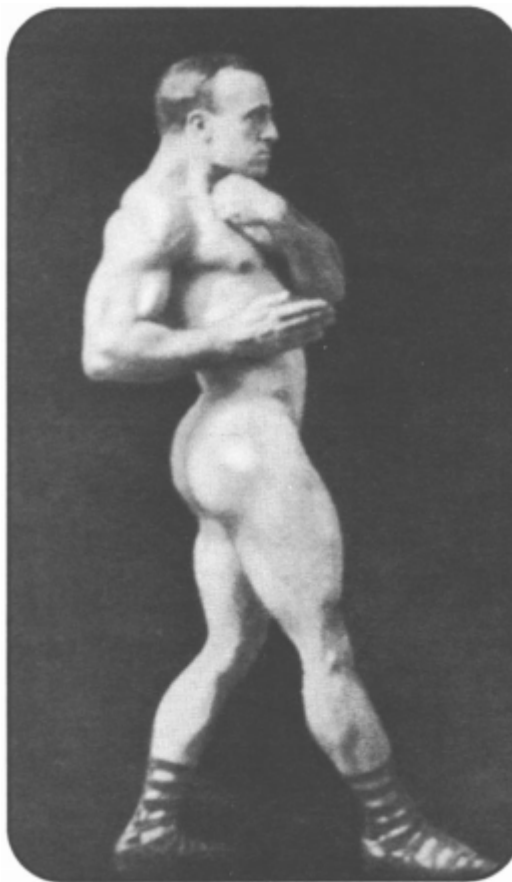
The tour gave them the stage experience they needed and soon after this Saldo (not yet known by that name) and Ronco formed their first act. Pictures show that in just three years using Sandow's training methods Monte Saldo built a wonderful physique and tremendous strength. He was a very stylish and talented weightlifter, an outstanding poseur and had mastered enough good strength feats to produce an act worthy of the professional stage. Before opening in Britain he spent a year in France and six months in Italy and confessed how impressed he had been with the sculptural art of these countries and the fine deportment of French artistes and strength athletes. He also gave credit to his colleagues for the part they played, "A great deal of our success was doubtless due to the beautiful physique of

my partner Ronco, an Italian, and the fact

that the poses and the act were produced entirely under the direction of the famous Italian, Santini, who afterwards staged 'The Sculptor's Dream,' in which my brother Frank so ably cooperated." The Italian influence was again very much in evidence.

'Ronco & Monte' opened at the Cafe Chantant, Crystal Palace in 1900 and as a result of the favorable reception they were accorded, bookings came fast and they were contracted for an overseas tour. While on the Continent they were seen by an English agent who offered them six months at the Royal Aquarium, Westminster, if they would present a totally genuine strength act with challenges to the public.

They could not resist the opportunity to play this theatre, the scene of many stirring strength episodes, and they appeared there



for six months. Sandow was a hard act to follow and, with the acknowledged master still active, no athlete had dared venture on the Royal Aquarium stage since Eugen's appearance there. Ronco and Monte's turn, however, continued into the next year and was a great success.

They had a large revolving pedestal for their statuary presentation and the whole stage was draped in black velvet. On one side of the stage was a nickel-plated Roman column with gun metal fittings and in the center was their well-sprung, shock-absorbing lifting platform on which they dropped their weights with loud thumps. Sundry strength equipment was spread around the remainder of the stage.

Ronco opened by lifting two 56 pound block weights, the bars being apart, making a grip of around 3", which required considerable gripping power. Using one hand only he lifted the weights to the shoulder and then pressed them slowly overhead. Next was some strandpulling with Ronco doing a front chest pull with a very strong set of strands, claiming this to be a record. Monte's single handed barbell lift, pressing 203 pounds, came next and L20 was offered to anybody of their bodyweight who could duplicate these feats. Their money remained intact although a lot of amateurs and lesser known strongmen made attempts. Mr. Ritchie, the manager of the Royal Aquarium, became very enthusiastic and confident, offering the money to any man of any weight who could accomplish any one of the feats. Woolaston warned him that a number of British athletes could press 203 pounds, but their performances continued to termination without anybody taking the money.

There was an amazing unwritten code of conduct amongst the elite professionals who, unless they were directly challenged or their own records broken, would seldom jump the stage of a genuine strongman. They were keen to unmask those claiming bogus records, and there were some personal rivalries; but Monte escaped such treatment. He said Caswell was often in the hall and would lead the applause; Pevier, Pedley and Bankier came on stage as a 'committee' on several occasions to inspect the apparatus and Apollo gave similar support. The only known lifters mentioned by name as going for the money were Slade Jones, the British 140 pound amateur champion of 1889, and Charles Russell, the champion of the day and *Health and Strength* coveman in 1901.

There was a much more civilized approach than stage jumping, and they had several sporting weightlifting matches in addition to the nightly challenges. Ronco and Monte won all but one of these competitions, being bettered by Russell who had twice been beaten in their stage challenges.

A match with Professor E. Quartermaine of Derby, Midland Counties Champion and Sandow medalist, was well reported in *The Standard* of February 18, 1901. In this contest, Quartermaine lifted a 147 1/2 pound man overhead with one hand. Ronco pulled a chest expander with 12 powerful strands, Monte did a one hand snatch of 125 pounds and both Woollaston and Quartermaine lifted two 100 pound dumbbells. There were other tests, but in the end the challenger admitted himself defeated. I was surprised to discover that Saldo weighed in at only 134; in his photographs he looks about double this weight! The competition was refereed by Launceston Elliot, the Olympic Gold Medalist.

There were at least two shows a day at the Royal Aquarium and Monte was proud of the fact that he lifted the 203 pound weight with one hand every time without a single failure being registered. He could do the lift with either arm and it remained a left hand record for a very long time, as he did this at very light bodyweights. During the run he was never above 147 pounds, and

throughout his whole life he was always under 154.

His athleticism was never better demonstrated when, at the Aquarium, one of Permane's bears escaped while Ronco and Monte were practising balancing one morning. "We scattered in all directions, the stately gladiatorial demeanor giving place to an exhibition of sprinting and hurdling indicative of great promise."

At the end of the season the pair split up on good terms, Ronco taking all but the heaviest weights, which he could not lift. Monte had spent most of his time working on new feats and saving to buy apparatus for a new show but Ronco swore he didn't have any money to invest on equipment, although he was certainly not a big spender. He did not want to invest time or money to develop the act so they parted company and he was not heard of again. Monte thought he went back to Italy to play the fairs. "He was not a man to rise, but the reverse, and as such had no affinity with myself."

With the assistance of his brother Frank, Saldo produced a brand new act and after three months of preparation they opened at a matinee performance in the London Hippodrome. A number of agents saw and liked the act and a number of good offers resulted.

Like the other Woolastons, Monte loved foreign languages, Italian being his favorite, but he became fluent in French and German and had a smattering of Latin and Greek. Lucrative overseas contracts lured him abroad, where he was given double the money he made at the Aquarium and double what he could get in Britain. Germany in particular welcomed good strongmen, and he spent most of 1902 in Germany and Austria.

The tour with his brother Frank actually opened at the Rembrandt Theater in Amsterdam, which was a very damp building and their clothing was soaked. Mr. Israels, a noted Dutch artist, was painting Saldo's picture and watched in amusement as the strongman tried to get into wet and shrunken tights, suggesting laughingly that bare legs would look much better. Saldo took the suggestion seriously, which was considered a very daring thing to do, but the press reported on his beautiful leg development and the fleshings were discarded.

The brothers also had some time in France and while in Paris they worked out twice weekly at the Gymnase Pascaud in Rue de Baugirard and once a week at Professor Desbonnet's gym, gaining a great deal of weight-lifting knowledge at these places. The pair also appeared in Prague (Bohemia in those days) and Dresden, Saxony.

While appearing in Hamburg, the pair was spotted by Frank Glenister of the London Pavilion who immediately booked the Montes for a season; the agent was amazed to find they were English.

Card tearing had now become part of Saldo's repertoire and he worked up to tearing three packs at the same time, claiming to be the only person taking size 7 3/4 gloves to accomplish such a feat. He used the same medium quality cards as Sandow did, but it was still a very costly feat and for this reason he did not always include it.

It was around this time that he devised his greatest feat, that of supporting a modern motor car while in the Tomb of Hercules position. This entailed getting lifting, loading and supporting gear so a leading engineer was brought in to construct the apparatus. They then purchased an open topped Darracq in which at least four people sat and Woollaston supported the lot on his torso.

It was at this stage that, on the suggestion of Pavilion manager Glenister, he changed his name to Monte Saldo, and it was under this name that he commenced another overseas tour. To make his car-supporting finale more thrilling, he introduced a high platform on which he performed the feat nearly eight feet above the stage; audiences were ecstatic when the little platform began to

revolve while Monte supported the car for a considerable time. The supporting platform and pads alone were very heavy but they were necessary to absorb the engine vibrations. At first they got the car into place without the engine running but it was decided to show that the car was perfectly normal and had an engine, so they had a rehearsal to try gunning the engine and revving up the car and Saldo almost lost his eyesight when the exhaust was blown directly into his face. His vision was impaired and the rest of the engagement was carried out in discomfort and sometimes pain.

Never one to let grass grow under his feet, Monte fully utilized his brothers Frank and Edwin, and along with the Italian producer they presented what was one of the most artistic acts of its genre. It broke completely new ground; for the first time athletes appeared in brief slips, instead of leotards, 'fleshings' or tights which had been deemed almost compulsory in Britain during super strict Victorian times. It was also the first time that complete body make-up was used in a theatrical act. [Ed. Note: Sandow is said to have used white powder in the 1890's to give his body the look of marble when he posed in a lighted cabinet.] These factors would have been enough to make them a box office attraction but better still they had a special presentation device to make their act totally different from those of other strength performers. It has often been copied since then but the Montague brothers originated what they called "A Sculptor's Dream."

In 1906 theatergoers watched the curtains rise to reveal a sculptor finishing off work on a gleaming white statue of a finely built athlete. He wiped his hands then lifted a glass of wine to toast his masterpiece, both sides of which could be seen because the work of art was on a platform behind which was mirror reflecting the muscular back of the statue. Muttering in French or English, depending on the audience, the sculptor contemplated his work and having drunk his wine, yawned and sunk to a chair falling asleep as the lights dimmed and curtains by the statue closed slowly and then opened again to reveal the statue in a new pose. It was a surprise to many in the stalls for they imagined it to be a real statue, few men possessing such heroic proportions. As the screens continued to close and open a succession fine poses was revealed, each being greeted by fresh applause from the audience.

The final pose was of a wrestler, when suddenly to the sound of breaking glass the 'reflection' pounced out of the mirror grabbing the statue and there developed a spectacular wrestling act. Most of the audience were taken by surprise for a second time, the timing being so perfect it was impossible to deduct that there were two men and not one and a reflection. Their wrestling merged into equally entertaining handbalancing and human lifting, demonstrating tremendous versatility. Then, as the sculptor stirred, Monte and Frank jumped back on their pedestals and were in their original pose when the artist, Edwin awoke.

When appearing in Scotland the wrestling climax in 'The Sculptor's Dream' was interrupted when an excited bull terrier ran on the stage and joined in the fray. Before the artistes' knew what was happening the animal had taken a huge chunk off the seat of Monte's brief trunks and as the embarrassed strongman later explained, "My efforts to hide behind a tuft of wool while the curtain was being rushed down were worthy of the highest praise but totally ineffectual."

Monte Saldo's artistry was recognized by a commission to write the first ever book on posing, and later he combined with Maxick to make further history by instructing in muscle control.

One Christmas, circa 1900, Saldo was topping the bill at the Ludwig Concert Hall, Hamburg. On the first night after donning his fleshings, as they called tights in those days, he pulled on his

trousers, slipped into his overcoat and wandered into the wings to quietly await his turn. There was something amiss backstage and the manager was ranting and raving. At the end of the turn preceding Monte's act, the manager announce that there had been a delay in the arrival of the strongman. And when Monte timidly approached the enraged manager and explained that he was quite ready, the manager said incredulously, "We have a baby at home as big as you." Hurriedly Monte divested himself of his outer garments and the impresario's mouth opened still more when he saw the muscular development of his star turn. The problem was quickly rectified and Saldo got his usual splendid ovation.

Monte loved a joke and on one occasion the cast of the show was being entertained privately by one of the world's best card manipulators. Monte offered to cut the cards in a way the conjurer could not duplicate and a wager was placed. The strongman then ripped the cards in two and before the rest got over their astonishment and amusement he had ordered drinks all round with the staked money,

After teaming up with William Bankier, the Apollo Saldo School was opened, and this gymnasium became a Mecca for international strength athletes including Hackenschmidt, Lemm, Gotch, Deriaz, Yukio Tani and all the other wrestlers promoted by Bankier. Arthur Saxon's greatest record was made in this building and the Bavarian 'Maxick' made his British debut here in 1909.

Monte Saldo and Max Sick also formed a long-lasting and successful association, producing a unique postal course first called MAXSALDO, combining their names, and later adapting to call it MAXALDING. It was largely based on muscle control, which had been developed to a tremendous degree by the little German. The pair between them published four fine books, now quite rare, which were very much before their time; they were almost certainly the first of their kind. Maxick's *Muscle Control* broke new ground, and his *Great Strength by Muscle Control* is probably the only one ever published on the subject. Saldo's posing book was quite unique and his *How to Excel at Games and Athletics* showed a commonsense approach to the subject.

Frank Woolaston died in 1939; his daughter, a doctor, married a Member of Parliament. Much, perhaps most, of Saldo's belongings were destroyed in the blitz and incendiary bombs burned an invaluable collection of photographs of his act, himself and contemporaries. Only a few were saved and most of these were badly water damaged by the hoses of the brave fireman who saved London from being burned to the ground. World War II took its toll on the Woollastons, Monte losing his wife in an air-raid which devastated their lives. Monte's daughter Theresa was seriously injured during one of the raids and Charles, a younger son, was killed in action on the Continent. When Monte Saldo passed away in 1949, aged 70, it was due less to his age than to back and internal injuries sustained during the blitzkrieg.

Maxalding and the name of Saldo lived on through his son F.H.C. Woolaston, Court (Courtland), a personal friend of the author for many years. Court had an excellent physique at 6' in height, He did his first muscle control act at the age of 16 in the Royal Horticultural Hall, London. Court kept the mail order business going until his death in Dover on March 13, 1983 at the age of 72. He was fat and well until shortly before he died.

(Monte Saldo profile: Height 5'5". A generous 5'6" was sometimes listed. Measurements at 147 pounds: chest, 45 1/2"; neck, 17"; upper Arm 16"; thigh 23"; calf 15". Lifting records: bent press, 230; one hand jerk, 200. His greatest official lift was a dumbbell swing with 150 pounds while only 143 pounds in bodyweight.)



We regret to inform our readers of the passing of two iron game luminaries, Bert Goodrich and Alyce Yarick. Details will be provided later.



Subscription News: As of the end of 1991, we now have approximately 500 subscribers to Iron Game History. Those of you who took out a one year subscription following our introductory issue will find a stamp indicating that this is the last issue to which you are entitled based on your original subscription. We earnestly hope you'll renew. We have, admittedly, had several setbacks in our production schedule this past year, including the deaths last year of the director of the University of Texas Publications Division and of B.C. Todd, Terry's father. However, we're over the rough spots now and intend to adhere in the future to a publication schedule which will produce six issues per year and be approximately bi-monthly. We thank you very much for your patience and support and we hope you enjoy this longer-than-normal issue.



We've been getting a number of requests for back issues of IGH and decided to establish a policy regarding these requests. Beginning in January of 1992, back issues of IGH will cost \$4.00 each, except for Volume 1, Numbers 4 and 5, which is a double issue priced at \$8.00. At the present time, we no longer have available Volume 1, Number 1 or Volume 1, Number 3. To order other back issues, please make your check payable to "Iron Game History."* Please understand that only limited numbers of these back issues are available.



As usual, a good time was had by everyone who attended the ninth annual Association of Oldtime Barbell and Strongmen dinner-awards ceremony. This year's honorees were Pudgy Stockton, whose story can be found on page five; George Eiferman, the multi-talented Mr. America and gym owner; and Gene Jantzen, the bodybuilder who specialized in feats of endurance. The dinner was held in the historic Downtown Athletic Club in New York City and many legends were there to share stories and visit with old, and new, friends. The association's founder, president and

chief workhorse, Vic Boff, is moving to Florida in late January and so the plans for future dinners are somewhat unsettled. Those of you who are interested in seeing the dinners continue should contact Vic by mail at his new address: 4959 Viceroy Street, Cape Coral, Florida, 33904.



A west coast version of the dinner was held in late November in Santa Monica. It was the brainchild of Leo Stern, the strongman-bodybuilder-photographer-gym owner, and he and photographer Russ Warner put it together. The format in California was completely different; no speeches were made, no one was honored, no posing or lifting was done and no videos were shown. Nevertheless, in most ways it was an enjoyable evening and everyone from Joe Weider to John Grimek to Jack Lalanne was there. One serious social and political blunder was made, however, when approximately 30 people were singled out to be photographed together. The problem was that quite a few people present who, by any objective standard, were more well-known and/or had contributed more to the game than most of the people in the photo were not asked to join the group. This unfortunate incident marred an otherwise fascinating night.



Those of you who were subscribers last winter will remember our mention of Mark Henry, the then nineteen year old, 400 pound Olympic lifter who was trying for a berth on the 1992 Olympic team. At a drug tested event held on December 8, 1991, Mark came closer to his dreams by setting eight Junior American Records in his last contest as a junior lifter. At a bodyweight of 363 pounds, he set three snatch records, ending with 358, two clean and jerk records, ending with 446 and three total records, finishing with 800. To the best of our knowledge, this constitutes the greatest number of American records ever set by a male weightlifter in a meet. Mark earned \$250 for each of these records as part of the United States Weightlifting Federation's incentive program, and the combination of the records and the money made Mark's Christmas merrier than usual. He is now living at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs and has his sights newly set on the Olympic trials scheduled for late March.



Dr. Jack Berryman of the University of Washington contacted us following our last issue to point out that in the 1930s C. H. McCloy authored an article in the Journal of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance entitled, "How About Some Muscle?" McCloy was concerned with the growing movement in physical education to teach only sports and games and to de-emphasize physical training.

LETTERS

Dear *IGH*,

I wonder if you could help me find a copy of a training course by Professor Frank S. Lewis? I have Professor Lewis' book on self-defense, published in 1906, and in it he advertises a physical training course made up of a chart and supplemented with letters of instruction. He also sold a second chart giving boxing instruction. I would like to obtain copies of these and am willing to pay any reasonable costs in obtaining this material.

David Kentner
Columbus, Ohio

If anyone has an original of these courses and is willing to sell or copy them, please write Mr. Kentner, c/o *IGH* and we will forward the letter.

Dear *IGH*,

I have enclosed a couple issues of *Sante et Force* magazine. You listed this magazine in your bibliography and I thought these issues might interest you. The last issue will be the one with Lenda Murray on the cover. As far as I know, Weider is ceasing to publish the magazine with this issue.

On another matter, I would like to see you publish something on Bruno Sammartino someday.

Gilbert Michaud
Montreal, Canada

We'd like to thank Gilbert, and all of you who took the time to help us fill in some of the blanks in our bibliography published in Volume 1, Numbers 4 & 5. As for an article on Bruno Sammartino, we agree; it's a good idea. If someone has current access to Bruno, please let us know and we will ask Al Thomas or one of our other writers to profile him for *IGH*.

Dear *IGH*,

I am interested in information about a British ah-round athlete, Percy Hunt (Great Mavello), who is believed to have had his photograph on the front cover of the American *Strength & Health* in the 1950s. Would you please look into this for me and let me know on which issue he appeared? I would also appreciate hearing from anyone who may have known him.

Colin Jones
West Glamorgan, South Wales

According to Joe Roark, the ultimate authority in such matters, Percy Hunt does not appear on any of the 4000 muscle mag covers in Roark's files. Anyone who has special knowledge about the Great Mavello may write Mr. Jones c/o *IGH* and we will forward the information.

Dear *IGH*,

I have just read through a copy of *Iron Game History* that Joe Roark was kind enough to send on to me, and enjoyed it

very much. History is the foundation of every endeavor, as your publication makes abundantly clear. I can only hope that the World Bodybuilding Federation will be recognized in years to come by historians like yourselves as the remarkable innovation it is.

Nancie S. Martin
Editor in Chief
WBF Bodybuilding Lifestyles

Dear *IGH*,

First off, I enjoy your magazine. I also enjoy the old pictures of strongmen and strongwomen of that era. I would like to know if you could offer framed prints of these people for hanging in my weight room. I've looked around and can't find any other possible source. I'd appreciate your help on this.

Tom Hengel
Hayward, California

It has not been our policy to sell copies of photos in our archives here at UT. However, there may be some private collectors among our readers who could help you out. If anyone has copies of old strongmen or strongwomen photos they'd be willing to sell, please write Mr. Hengel c/o of *IGH* and we will forward the information.

Dear *IGH*,

I am enclosing a number of letters from the late Charles Smith. If you consider it appropriate, you may include them in your collection. I am also searching for information on the series by the late David Willoughby on "What is the Ideal Physique?" I have the first six parts of this series but am missing the other parts, that is, if they were ever published. The first six parts were published in *Your Physique* with part six being in the March 1951 issue. Along about that time, I was sent overseas during the Korean War and missed getting most of the "muscle magazines" during the years 1951-1953. I would be willing to pay for copies of other parts of this great series. I am also sending in a renewal for my subscription to *Iron Game History*. It is an excellent publication! Keep up the good work.

Grover L. Porter
Huntsville, Alabama

The rest of the 1951 issues contain no more of the series.

Dear *IGH*,

I read with interest the *Iron Game History* article on C.H. McCloy and thought I should point out that the first reference to the Iowa weight training for basketball program was in the July 1955 issue of *Strength & Health*. (The first reference in *S&H*, that is). It was described in an article by Dr. McCloy entitled "Weight Training for Athletes?"

I had become acquainted with Dr. McCloy as a result of my friendship with Dr. Peter Karpovich and was able to persuade him (McCloy) to write for *S&H*. (The article, incidentally, was illustrated with photos of the Iowa team exercising with weights and also with pictures of such outstanding athletes as Mal Whitfield, then the world record

holder for the 800 meter run; Fortune Gordien, then the record-holder for the discus; Bob Richards, Olympic pole vault champion and the U.S. decathlon champion; and Walter Barnes, LSU football All-American and a professional with the Philadelphia Eagles.) I also referred to the Iowa basketball program in *Weight Training in Athletics*, co-authored with Dr. Karpovich and published by Prentice-Hall in 1956.

As I wrote of Bob Hoffman in *Weight Training in Athletics*, "...he became the first man to widely publicize his belief-weight training could help athletes in other sports of their choice." But Bob's preachings were not well accepted by coaches and physical educators. He cited himself as the prime example of how weight training built superior athletes, but Bob was really just a hacker who enjoyed participating in sports. The only sport in which I could verify that he was a champion was canoe racing. His claims of being a county quoit pitching champion, YMCA Heptathlon champion, and so on, were based on the fact that he occasionally won at quoits while pitching with the other York Barbell Company gang in the alley at lunch-time, and that he participated in three-legged races, sack races and similar amusements at YMCA picnics.

It was Ray Van Cleef, at my urging, who began to feature articles in S&H on outstanding athletes who trained with weights. Beginning while in college, I corresponded with Ray from the time I submitted an article on a weight trained friend at Rutgers—Frank Thropp, who was named to the All-North lacrosse team.

When I took over from Ray as managing editor of *S&H*, I formalized the approach and tried to have a weight trained athlete (other than a weight-lifter, of course!) featured every month. This was a crusade for me. It led to *the Weight Training in Athletics* book, which Prentice Hall requested.

Prentice-Hall asked me to recommend a co-author from the "respected" physical education/coaching field. I had wanted to include John Terpak, but Prentice-Hall insisted on someone from academia. They declined to include three authors, so the best I could do was to properly credit John for being the outstanding coach that he was. I mentioned Peter Karpovich, C.H. McCloy and Dick Ganslen, all of whom had done research on weight training. Prentice-Hall chose Karpovich and asked me to meet with him in New York.

Usually one finds some degree of clay in the feet of prominent people, but the longer I knew Dr. Karpovich, the more I liked and respected him. Initially, I didn't realize that he was sizing me up at our first meeting and that we weren't there to decide *how* to collaborate on the book but whether he would participate.

I will always believe—and I suppose I'm alone in the belief—that *Weight Training in Athletics*, with Dr. Karpovich's name as co-author, did more to give weight training respectability with and acceptance by physical educators and coaches than any other single publication. His specific studies debunking unfounded fears of injuries and slowed speed of muscular contraction were especially helpful in refuting criticism of weight training. My association with Dr. Karpovich gave me access to others in

academia, such as McCloy, and brought them into contact with the practical pioneers in weight training.

I'm ambivalent about having "dropped out" of the weight lifting/weight training field. I'm turned off by the pharmaceutically enhanced muscles of today's champions—especially the women—but when I get together with the old-timers, as at the Grimek's anniversary bash, the nostalgic experience is most enjoyable. It's a wonderful fraternity.

And, of course, as we get older—I'm 65 now—we hope we'll be remembered for our contributions. I guess that might have happened if I'd stayed active in the field, other than the personal fitness training that I do anonymously. Or maybe I should have tooted my own horn, which seems so essential today, but I always subscribed to the old adage, "Self-Praise Stinketh."

Having written that, I realize that I seem to have strayed from my own precept in writing this letter! So, in order not to be tempted further, I'll close with apologies and best wishes to you and Jan.

Jim Murray
Morrisville, Pennsylvania

In our view, Jim Murray's pride is amply justified. We share his assessment of the germinal importance of the book he co-authored with the fascinating Dr. Karpovich, who will be featured in a forthcoming issue of this journal.

Dear *IGH*,

Enclosed are a couple of letters from a chap I used to train with. We are both still active. If you will look at *Powerlifting USA* for October, 1991, there is a picture of John Gorton, aged 84, deadlifting 352 pounds for a master's national record. John Gorton weighed 165 pounds while making this lift. Enclosed is a copy of one of John Gorton's letters to me regarding something you wrote about my bench pressing in *Iron Game History* in the August 1991 issue. I am a new subscriber and I like the magazine very much.

Henri Soudieres
Yountville, California

Dear Henri,

I followed your career in the Master's program with great interest and kept a notebook on you and other 70+ lifters. I no longer do that but I still have the notebook. The paragraph in *Iron Game History* is inaccurate. You have lifted more than 215 in the 75-79 age group. According to my notebook, on February 7, 1982, at a bodyweight of 208 pounds, you bench pressed 231 pounds in the 75-79 age group. You also benched 225 3/4 pounds on December 12, 1981, and more than 220 pounds on eight other occasions according to my records. You also exceeded 400 in the deadlift on five occasions during these years. Although I've deadlifted over 400 pounds many times in the 75-79 age group, the last time at age 80; training lifts don't count.

Jack Gorton
Stamford, Connecticut

We thank Mr. Soudieres for sending along Mr. Gorton's letter to us. To clarify matters, the 215 pound weight we listed for Mr. Soudieres last issue was in response to a question regarding the American Master's Records. Often, because of the new drug testing policy which requires that all records be drug tested, and because three national level referees must be present to certify such records, lifts are made at contests which exceed the fisted American record but cannot be included in the list because the contest promoter did not made an effort to see that record breaking conditions were present. According to the USPF's list of American Records at the time we went to press last issue, 215 was the weight credited to Mr. Soudieres in the 75-79 age group for the 220 pound class. Regardless, both men are extraordinary athletes.

Dear *IGH*,

I would like to suggest the great Marvin Eder as a subject for one of your "Where Are They Now" series. He was definitely one of the pioneers of modern bodybuilding and strength training. Thank you for your consideration.

Tony Candelaria
Juneau, Alaska

A lengthy piece on Marvin Eder by Terry Todd will soon be published in *Muscle & Fitness*.

Dear *IGH*,

Enjoyed *IGH* as usual. It brings back so many memories. I will never forget the good times at Bob Hoffmans' picnics years ago, especially the time Terry Todd and I were on the program. Terry did some outstanding power lifting. At that time I chinned the bar 28 times, the best at that occasion. Now I am 80 years old and just returned from Hollywood where I made a commercial. Yes, bodybuilders can make money at our wonderful sport, even when they grow old. Keep up the good work at *IGH*.

Ted Keppler
Edgewater Beach, New Jersey

Ted Keppler has a new trophy to add to his many honors. At the Mr. America contest held some months back, he was awarded a Mr. America "Over Eighty" trophy. He is the first bodybuilder to enter competition at more than 80 years of age. Congratulations, Ted.

Dear *IGH*,

I understand you have on hand a collection of physical culture photos, etc. I am "Muscle-Bound-Frank." My photos have appeared in *Strength & Health* as well as *How to be Strong, Healthy and Happy* by Bob Hoffman. Bob Jones, formerly of Pine Bluff, Arkansas—then Philadelphia—took photos of me and Ginger Lawler. Then he wrote an article "What is Muscle-Bound?" Bob stood on his two thumbs. Featured by Bob Ripley. I am hoping you have either the magazines or some light on the subject. They appeared before World War II.

Benjamin F. Ebersole
"Muscle-Bound-Frank"
Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania

Jones' article was very important in switching people's ideas about musclebinding. For more information, read the article beginning on page 12 of this issue.

Dear *IGH*,

It was a pleasure meeting and visiting with the two of you at the Oldtimers Banquet in New York City. I have enclosed a pamphlet on Cannonball Richards, whom I am sure you knew of, if not personally. There is something that has perplexed me ever since Bob Hoffman died. I thought the announcement of his death and the eulogy in *Strength & Health* to be an absolutely disgraceful presentation. I expressed such feelings in a letter to John Terpak and asked for the reason of what I considered an ungrateful attitude. He turned it over to John Grimek for response, and excused himself by stating that he was in Europe at that time and if he had been here he would have seen that a more fitting memorial would have been printed. Of course I am well aware of Bob's indiscretions, having known him from his Gracie Bard days, but I am also aware that Terpak and the rest of the York boys were beholden to Bob for their livelihood and for this alone he deserved better. Just about every paper in the country had a more fitting obituary, including *The Wall Street Journal*. One cannot deny that Bob was more influential than any other person in the present status and utilization of weight training in sport conditioning.

Alton Eliason
Northford, Connecticut

Ed Note: We can only say that we shared Alton Eliason's dismay at the superficial treatment of Bob Hoffman's death in a magazine he created.

Dear *IGH*,

You wrote in Volume 1 Number 4&5 that *Health and Strength* ceased publication in 1984. This magazine resumed publication first in 1986 for three issues: October/November 1986, December/January 1987, and February/March 1987. Malcolm Whytt was the editor. In 1990 the magazine resumed for the second time and lasted five issues: June, July, September, October, December. Peter McGough was the editor. I'd also like to point out that Oscar Heidenstam was editor of *Health and Strength* from 1959 until 1983.

Biagio Filizola
Sapri, Italy

