



# IRON GAME HISTORY



VOLUME 4 NUMBER 4

September 1996

## A Gala Evening: The 1996 Heidenstam Dinner

### Dr. Ken "Leo" Rosa

Those who didn't attend the fifth annual Oscar Heidenstam Foundation Hall of Fame Awards dinner really missed an evening of first rate Las Vegas entertainment. Many who did attend said that they thought it was by far the most engaging of the annual events so far. Every time I fly to England on Virgin Atlantic to attend this great function I'm always very glad that I did. March 16, 1996 turned out to be even more entertaining than I could have anticipated.

Our main guest of honor proved himself to be a marvelously amusing stand-up comedian. It was an evening filled with hearty laughter. I'm sorry for those who missed it. It was indeed a gala to be remembered. David Prowse, who was the person in the Darth Vader outfit in the Star Wars movies, was present. When I competed in the 1965 NABBA Mr. Universe, Dave Prowse was referred to as the tallest bodybuilder in the world as well as the British super-heavyweight lifting champion. John Citrone was also with us and when he removed his suit jacket to get more comfortable his stunning muscular development was revealed. This guy is in fantastic shape for any age.

The dais in the Commonwealth Suite of the Hotel Marriott Heathrow/Slough was occupied by Heidenstam Trustees and Directors plus the main guest of honor, former Mr. America and Mr. Universe, George Eiferman. The ambiance at these Heidenstam functions is one of British and European cordiality and friendliness, which makes it a wonderful physical culture vacation experience. The evening program began with Malcolm Whyatt, who expressed his appreciation for the generosity of everyone in their support of the Oscar Heidenstam Foundation.

A special award was then presented to Mike MacDonald-Taylor, a talented gymnast and coach. Mike had a tragic motorcycle accident and after several operations he now coaches youngsters in gymnastics even though he's in a wheelchair. Colin Gilham was next to receive a special award. He developed polio at age nine and yet grew up to win many competitive bodybuilding awards.

Oscar Heidenstam President Ian MacQueen, MD. was then introduced to present an award to another laudable person in the world of physical culture. Ian said, "it is indeed a pleasure to speak about Don Dorans. Before I do so, I would like to apologize for those bloody

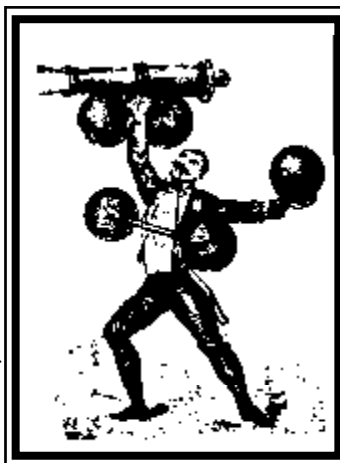
poor members of my profession who tell people like Colin Gilham that they are never going to walk again. They ought to have more sense." Ian continued in his fiery no nonsense style, "if some of them could come to these Oscar Heidenstam Foundation occasions they might have a different idea about the whole thing." Ian continued "Don Dorans, like a lot of the old time greats, started with a good foundation and interest in all kinds of sports. He was a racing cyclist

and broke a course record in Scotland and all that with one kidney. In 1942 he won Mr. Britain. In 1943 he came second in his height class for Mr. Universe at a time when John Grimek won the overall title. In 1950 he won his height class in the Mr. Universe. Don Dorans has also made many contributions to exercise techniques and he designed two pieces of apparatus which are commonplace today."

As we were preparing to start the introduction of the main bodybuilding Hall of Fame honoree I thought back through the decades and remembered how the classical standards of development were established by Mr. America and Mr. Universe winners and competitors from 1940 through 1962 or so. George Eiferman was part of that classical era—the pre-anabolic steroiders. It was an era when bodybuilders were interested in health as well as in strength. In the present era when steroid monsters are dropping dead in what should be their prime

years, we can look back to the pre-steroid years with great nostalgia.

Tom Temperley reminisced about the years immediately after World War II. *Health & Strength* and *Vigor* magazines in England as well as American publications *Strength & Health*, *Your Physique* and *Muscle Power* featured a bodybuilder with possibly the most incredible chest development we had seen. His name was George Eiferman. While Tom spoke, George, ever the comedian kept interjecting humorous quips invoking almost constant laughter from the audience. During World War II George joined the U.S. Navy where he was introduced to weight training. Later, when he won the Mr. Philadelphia contest, he was training in John Fritsche's gym. After the War he moved to California where he won the Mr. California contest and then the Mr. America title. In 1949 George placed fourth in the Mr. U.S.A. contest behind John Grimek, Clarence Ross, and Steve Reeves. In 1950 he placed second to Armand Tanny



for Mr. U.S.A. In 1962, at the age of 36 years, he became the IFBB Mr. Universe. During his successful career as a physical educator George Eiferman joined Armand Tanny, Lou Degni, Joe Gold and other bodybuilders as part of the Mae West Las Vegas show at the Sahara Hotel in 1954. Eiferman was well known for playing the trumpet while pressing a weight with his other arm. George is a talented musician and show business person. He has lectured on the benefits of healthful living in schools in an effort to steer youngsters down the right path. The audience applauded.

Now the real show was about to start as the microphone was passed to Mr. Personality from Scotland, Dave Webster, who is never at a loss for words and who makes sure that his every word is heard no matter where anybody sits. Dave, always magnificent in his kilts, delighted the audience with his whimsical recounting of George Eiferman's adventures and feats of strength in the United Kingdom following his Mr. Universe win. There were howls of laughter. Finally, he introduced George Eiferman as a great ambassador for bodybuilding and physical culture.

I think that we in the United States might tend to think of the English as being rather stoic and keeping a stiff upper lip and all

that stuff. Well, that was not the case this evening. Just try to imagine one great physical culture comedian introducing another. That is exactly what Dave Webster did and then George Eiferman, in a totally different style of comedy, almost had the audience falling out of their seats in unrestrained glee. It really appeared to me as though we would actually see people rolling around on the floor trying to keep from bursting with laughter. It was amazing. George Eiferman still looks physically impressive at age seventy and is a surprisingly good stand-up comic. He is still youthful which, in part, might be attributed to his great sense of humor and zest for life. There was no doubt that everyone who attended that evening was glad to be there. At the end of George's wonderful routine he sat for autographs and I have not seen so many people line up to converse with any previous honoree. George obviously enjoys people and people enjoy George Eiferman.

Afterwards, we finally gathered around the grand piano where, as usual, I lovingly caressed the keys playing requests from George for Ragtime tunes. Indeed, it was an evening of great merriment, good memories, and wonderful stories. I am sorry for those who missed it.

**IRON GAME HISTORY VOL. 4 NO. 4**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS September 1996**

Page  
 1. Heidenstam Dinner . . . . . Ken Rosa  
 3. Charles Atlas . . . . . Sam Danna  
 5. Fugitive Books . . . . . David Chapman  
 7. Oasis in Manhattan . . . . . Tom Minichiello  
 12. The Superior Physique . . . . . Grover Porter  
 14. Hippolyte Triat. . . . . Desbonnet & Chapman  
 19. Jewish Physical Training. . . . . Samuel Kotteck  
 21. Grapevine . . . . . Staff

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*Iron Game History* is published by the McLean Sport History Fellowship at the University of Texas at Austin. Address: Terry and Jan Todd, the Todd-McLean Collection, Room 217, Gregory Gymnasium, The University of Texas at Austin, 78712. Telephone: 512-471-4890. Fax: 512-443-0381.

U.S. Subscription rate: \$20.00\* per six issues, \$35.00\* for twelve issues, \$50.00 for twelve issue McLean Fellowship membership, \$100.00 per twelve issue McLean Fellowship Patron's subscription. (Additional information can be found on page 24.) Address all subscription requests to: *IGH* Subscriptions, Anna Hiss Gym 107, The University of Texas, Austin, Texas. 78712.

\*Canada and other foreign subscriptions add \$5.00 (U.S.) per six issue subscription. Back issues: \$4.00 each.

*Iron Game History* is a non profit enterprise. **Postmaster:** Please send address corrections to: *Iron Game History*, Room 217, Gregory Gymnasium, The University of Texas, Austin, Texas 78712. (ISSN 1069-7276)

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**Sam Danna, Ph.D.**  
**Loyola University**

One summer day in 1909, a skinny, 16-year old Italian immigrant boy took his girlfriend to the Coney Island beach. Without warning, a big, muscular lifeguard kicked sand in their faces. The youth felt helpless to react while his girlfriend became disturbed and embarrassed. The boy was Angelo Siciliano, and he later became known as Charles Atlas, one of the most famous bodybuilders in history.

In countless comic book advertisements, this bully-experience has been recounted with virtually the same theme. Charles Atlas—posing in his bikini-style leopard skin shorts while standing on white-hot sand—generally accompanied these multi-frame comic book pitches. The dramatic stories contained elements of defeat, determination, sympathy/empathy, and finally, heroic triumph. The advertisements became one of the longest running, best remembered and most successful campaigns of their kind in American marketing history. In fact, today, the cartoon stories are considered a major popular culture artifact.

Atlas ads in magazines—often in adventure, science, and sports publications—were usually not of the cartoon type. Instead, they generally contained detailed prose pitches with Atlas, pictured in muscle poses, appealing to older boys and young men. The ads promised healthier, more muscular bodies, and a better mental attitude, e.g., increased confidence.

The most famous of the cartoon advertisements included seven frames, depicting a skinny, defenseless young man and his girlfriend. The two are at the beach where a lifeguard is running by and kicking sand into their faces. The main dialogue goes like this: “Hey, quit kicking that sand in our faces,” the skinny male victim pleads. His girlfriend likely adds this about the well-built bully: “That man is the worst nuisance on the beach.” Then, after a face-to-face confrontation with the lifeguard, our thin hero decides to enroll in the Charles Atlas “Dynamic-Tension” course. Soon, the formerly skinny, weak boy ends up adding layers of new muscles. This gives him the ability to defend himself against future bullies crossing his path.

Incidentally, the sand-kicking scenario is not quite the way it was in real life, i.e., Charles Atlas actually did not return to seek revenge upon the bully lifeguard. Nevertheless, in those times, bullies picking on young immigrants was not uncommon. Once, when Atlas was 15 years old and on his way home from work, he was badly beaten by a neighborhood tough. As if this were not enough, when the boy arrived home, his uncle also beat him for getting into fights.

Such painful experiences so strongly impressed the sensitive youth that he swore nothing like that would ever again happen to him. In essence, he got quite a different type of revenge—that of really becoming strong and “looking good.” Such were the results of having vigorously worked out to change his skinny 97-pound weakling image to one of pleasing-looking muscle and strength.

Initially, Angelo faithfully worked out in a gym, but little change seemed to occur. Finally, one day while visiting Brooklyn’s Prospect Zoo, he noticed a lion undergoing its elaborate stretching maneuvers. Siciliano became impressed with how this accentuated the big cat’s massive muscles. Did the lion lift weights? His obvious response was “no.” The answer finally came to the young man, via the lion “pitching one muscle against another.” This led him to formulate his world-famous exercise program, later named “Dynamic Tension.” [Ed. Note: **This version of how Atlas developed Dynamic Tension and how Dynamic Tension developed him is at odds with iron gamers who knew that he developed most of his muscle size and strength with barbells and dumbbells.**]

After about a year of intensive workouts, the once puny Angelo had gained a new layer of rippling muscles. Finally, when he felt he had sufficiently developed his body, he was ready for a “public unveiling.” One day in 1912, the 19 year old Siciliano went to the Coney Island beach. There, he took off his shirt, exposing his “new” physique for a group of friends. They responded in amazement, and one exclaimed that Angelo looked like Atlas, for they were familiar with the statue of Atlas, atop the Atlas Hotel and a familiar neighborhood bank.

Now, what does this Atlas-like young man do with a great looking body? Could it help him make a living? For a while, Siciliano earned five dollars per week, bending into “U-shapes” 100-pennyweight steel spikes in front of a Coney Island sideshow. In addition, he tore thick Manhattan telephone books apart—and swept floors for a living.

The improved Angelo—also nick-named “Charlie”—became transformed into “Charles Atlas.” Soon, he was making \$100 per week as New York’s most coveted male model. He posed for numerous sculptures, including historic figures like Alexander Hamilton and Abraham Lincoln. Then, in 1921, Charles got his first big break, winning a major national bodybuilding contest. Flamboyant fitness enthusiast Bernarr Macfadden, and his *Physical Culture* magazine sponsored this “World’s Most Beautiful Man Contest” It required photographs for judging, rather than the contestants appearing in person. Not only did Atlas win in 1921, but also in 1922.

However, the second contest required competitors to appear in person at Madison Square Garden with Atlas winning against 750 contestants. After presenting him with his second straight \$1,000 prize, Macfadden called off further contests. He explained: “What’s the use, Atlas will win every time.” Incidentally, the name on the official winning certificate read: “Charles Siciliano Atlas.”

Thereafter, mainly as a result of these contests, the name “Charles Atlas” solely would identify the muscle-man, once named Angelo Siciliano. At last, he became nationally famous with a well-deserved good reputation. At the urging of friends, he opened a gym and offered his exercise course by mail. However, by 1928 the gym had failed, and the mail-order busi-

ness was in trouble. Then Atlas met a marketing genius, Charles P. Roman. The two complemented one another, for, while Atlas knew how to build muscles, Roman knew how to sell the exercise courses.

Roman ran the business while Atlas promoted it with numerous appearances, during which he occasionally performed stunts. One of the best known took place in 1938—towing a 145,000-pound railroad observation car of Broadway Limited for 112 feet at the Pennsylvania Railroad’s Sunnyside Yards. Over time, Atlas became an advertising and public relations figure, not only touting his “Dynamic-Tension” course, but physical fitness in general.

Essentially, his theme was “Manhood” the chance to become mentally and physically healthier as well as to increase strength and muscle. Signing up for an Atlas course not only entitled a man to fitness training, but also offered courage, self-reliance and self-confidence lessons. However, make no mistake about it, increasing muscular appearance was the main attraction of the course.

Charles Atlas’s biographer, Charles Gaines, asserts that the bodybuilder’s claims are basically legitimate: “I’ve had no problem in locating the specific virtue in any of them.” “Dynamic-Tension” lay at the heart of the Charles Atlas method. Although Atlas’s course was diligent and perhaps difficult, it was certainly honest. Joseph Gustaitis relates in an article in *American History Illustrated* (September 1986): “It had to be. It was a reflection of the man.”

Atlas did become a wealthy celebrity, enjoying one of nature’s finest bodies. However, he was also a quiet, modest family man. Although he did take off his shirt at the slightest prompting, this was not so much to show off his enviable physique, but to tout how well his exercise course worked.

He married Margaret Cassano in 1918, had two children—Hercules (Charles, Jr.) and Diana—and the family lived modestly in a simple, peaceful Brooklyn neighborhood. “Live clean think clean and don’t go to burlesque shows” was Charles Atlas’s advice to young men. He, himself, followed his advice faithfully. During most of his life, Atlas seemed to be a very contented man, and he often claimed that he had no worries. However, after his wife died in 1965, he never really seemed very happy. For 35 years, however—between 1930 and 1965—he essentially knew nothing but prosperous times and enjoyed numerous successes.

In 1970, Atlas sold his share of the “Dynamic-Tension” business to Roman who continued selling the mail-order courses into the 1990s. Atlas had a profound effect in inspiring youth to physical fitness. His ad man, Charles Roman, feels that it was Atlas’s influence which was indirectly responsible for today’s great fitness interest. In 1972, just before he died of a heart attack, Charles Atlas was informed that, over the years, three million skinny guys had answered his call to better bodily health, looks and mental attitude.

Even well into his sixties, Atlas could be seen exercising on Florida beaches. He claimed that he kept his same weight of 180 pounds in check, and that his body measurements—47-inch chest in normal position and 32-inch waist—varied little until his death on December 23, 1972 at 79 years of age. He was born on October 20, 1893, near Acri, Italy, and emigrated to America in 1903 at the age of 10.

#### Suggestions for additional reading:

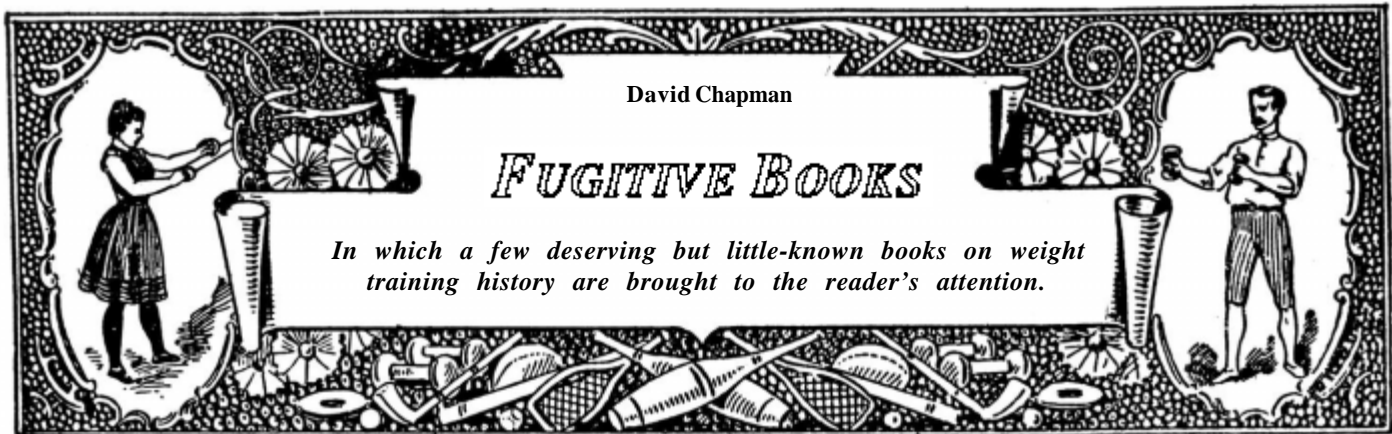
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“Charles Atlas, The Body-Builder and Weightlifter, Is Dead at 79,” *New York Times* (24 December 1972): Sect. 4, p. 40.

Gustaitis, Joseph, “Charles Atlas: ‘The World’s Most Perfectly Developed Man’” *American History Illustrated* 21(September, 1986): 16-17.

Gaines, Charles, *Yours in Perfect Manhood, Charles Atlas* (New York: Fireside Books, Simon and Schuster, 1982).

Webster, David *Bodybuilding: An Illustrated History* (New York Arco Inc., 1982), 59-61).



I suppose it's inevitable that most of us operate in vacuums of one sort or another. Those of us who are interested in sport history often resemble suburban tract dwellers who don't even know their next-door neighbors, but the truth is you can't know everyone or everything. This is especially true when the neighbors don't speak English. All of this is by way of saying that there are a number of books on the market today on the history of physical culture that are interesting and well written, but that would almost certainly pass unnoticed for one reason or another.

In the course of my research on the life and times of Edmond Desbonnet, France's leading physical culturist, I came across a number of wonderful volumes that deserve to have more attention than they currently receive. One of the most striking revelations that I have had is that English-speakers have a rich but far from complete library of materials at their service. Without a doubt, the French have done much more work in this field than we have, but how many of these excellent books are familiar to the average reader: Very few I would suspect.

The three books that I am going to report on are all in print (at least they were within the last year), but it is highly unlikely that they will ever show up on the shelves of most bookstores in this country. There are some hidden gems here written by scholars who are pursuing some fascinating topics in interesting ways.

**Bernd Wedemeyer, *Starke Männer Starke Frauen: Eine Kulturdichte des Bodybuildings* [Strong Men, Strong Women: A Cultural History of Bodybuilding] (Munich: Beck, 1996) ISBN: 3 406 39246 2.**

Western weight training has its roots firmly planted in Germany, but there has been a dearth of modern scholarship on the subject. Lothar Groth attempted to put together a history of circus strongmen in his noble effort *Die Starken Männer: Eine Geschichte der Kraftakrobatik* [Strong Men: A History of Strength Acrobatics], published in East Berlin in 1985 (with a second edition in 1988) both before the fall of the wall, but he was hampered by the inability to research his subject sufficiently. There the subject languished for a long time, but recently the history of German weight training has received a new champion in the form of Bernd Wedemeyer. This intelligent, perceptive, and energetic historian has produced one of the best sport histories to come out of Germany in many years—perhaps ever. His newest book, *Starke Männer Starke Frauen*, goes a considerable way toward closing the gap in scholarship that has long plagued German physical culture history.

Despite being only in his mid-thirties, Wedemeyer has already done some extremely interesting work based at the ancient University of Göttingen where he teaches at the prestigious Sports Science Institute. Several of his works have appeared in English journals, most notably in *The International Journal of Sport History*, but readers of *Iron Game History* might recognize the author from the fine history which he published in August of 1994. His current work, however, is the best he has so far produced.

Although the author is a thorough academic in his scholar-

ship, the principal virtue of this book is that it is written in a smooth, interesting, and readable style. The endnotes and bibliography make it very clear that Wedemeyer has based his work firmly and accurately in research, but he never lets this affect his narrative.

The book is organized along thematic lines rather than following a traditional chronological structure. The first section is on "The Principle of Narcissism," dealing with the various methods of muscular display from circus and music hall strongmen to women physique athletes. The second part is titled "The Race of Life" and covers the inspirational figures that have guided bodybuilding on its long course; these include Theodor Siebert, Eugen Sandow, Lou Ferrigno, and Arnold Schwarzenegger. Next is "The Veiled Religion: Bodybuilding as Panacea," dealing with the health claims that have been put forth throughout the sport's history. Finally, there is the last part, "Cultural Struggle: Bodybuilding as a Political Factor," dealing with the way strong physiques have been exploited by various political regimes from the Nazis to the Communists. This final section would get my vote as containing the greatest number of interesting revelations.

Wedemeyer begins each of his sections with brief anecdotes that reinforce the author's contentions. This attention to detail and the attempt to engage the reader are some of the many things that set this book apart from other works. Another interesting factor is that women's bodybuilding is given such an important place in the work. There is some discussion of the prejudices and difficulties that women bodybuilders have had to overcome and of the gender-identity problems which muscular women seem to evoke in many of us.

The author also gives prominent place to the three "Big S's" of early German bodybuilding: Sandow, Siebert, and Strongfort. To them he has also added the inevitable fourth (although an Austrian): Schwarzenegger. There is much biography and analysis of the Austrian Oak's career in both bodybuilding and the movies. Neither has Wedemeyer shrunk from attacking the problem of steroid use: he discusses the implications of drug usage at some length.

As excellent as the book is, there are a few things I wished were different. There is no index, although the long and interesting bibliography nearly makes up for this deficiency. The small paperback format hardly does the subject justice, and the publisher was very stingy with the pictures (there are only seventeen). Finally, to call this book a "history of bodybuilding" when it is actually a personal and sometimes highly individualized interpretation of the subject is a bit of a misnomer, but this is a very minor quibble. Conversely, this somewhat quirky approach to the subject gives the book a large portion of its winning charm.

The bottom line is if you can read German and find the history of weight training to be interesting, then this is a book that you should seek out. It is the best work on the history of German bodybuilding that I have read in a long, long time—in fact, ever.

**Gilbert Adrieu, *L'homme et la force: Des marchands de la force au culte de la form (XIXe et XXe siècles)* [Man and Strength: From the Merchants of Strength to the Cult of the Body (19th**

and 20th centuries)] (Joinville-le-Pont: Éditions Actio, 1988)  
ISBN: 2 906411 02 7.

The French have taken up the history of physical culture and bodybuilding with a rigorous dedication and thoroughness that would be the pride of any national literature. There are more works that have been produced by the French on this subject than in any other country—at least that is the impression I get when I consider the many volumes that have been produced by Gallic writers. Georges Vigarello, Pierre Arnaud, and Jacques Ulmann are only a few of the historians who have attacked the subject with a brilliance and incisiveness that Anglophiles might find surprising. Among the best is *L'homme et la force [Man and Strength]*. This volume examines man's changing attitudes toward the acquisition of strength and what constitutes a strong man.

The author is a very well known figure in European sport history. He is a professor of physical education history, and according to the blurb on the back of the book, he is also the president of the French Society for the History of Sport. His work has appeared in many journals and his books are some of the best ever written on the history of physical education.

Andrieu has taken physical strength in its many forms and traced it from its beginnings. To do this, the author has divided the book into two sections, the first is entitled "To Be Strong," and it reviews the various methods for attaining or celebrating physical strength. Beginning with the fairs of the Middle Ages, this section of the book continues with the history of equestrianism as a means of attaining strength and vigor; in the chapter called "A virile nudity" Andrieu covers the history of swimming from its early days and of the gradual acceptance of bathing drawers. This has significance for physique building since he points out that nude bathing was the first chance most nineteenth century men had of seeing and comparing unclothed physiques.

For most fans of strength literature, the best part of the book is "The Conquest of a Market," which deals with the evolution of professional gyms and their attempt to turn physical culture into an enterprise capable of supporting its entrepreneurs in appropriate style. There is much here on the great "gymnasiarch" Hippolyte Triat and of his pioneering (and ultimately unsuccessful) struggles to turn bodybuilding into a commercially viable profession. Following this, there is a section on the growth of spas and hydrotherapy resorts.

The second half of the book is titled "To Be Healthy" and it turns to the curative side of gymnastics and weight training. The author examines the way exercise has evolved as a health-giving regimen down to the present. The first chapter in this section deals with a physiological analysis of exercise and an examination of the various techniques that were used. There follows analyses of various methods including the Swedish cure. After this comes a disquisition on the value of fencing as a health restorative. The final section concerns various medical or therapeutic methods for regaining health, such as taking cod liver oil, the sunlight cure, and other more radical ideas that were popular at the turn of the century.

Andrieu has done some fascinating and original research into the field of physical culture and its implications for both history and the present day. It would not be an overstatement to say that this is one of books that every serious scholar of the subject should read. Even so, there are a few drawbacks to this extremely important volume. It is unrelentingly Franco-centric in its outlook. The author has not looked very far beyond the borders of France to find examples, so those hoping to find references to the work of English, American, or German scholars will search in vain. There are very few illustrations that might otherwise enrich a volume such as this. Perhaps the most serious quibble I have with this book, however, is the author's overly academic approach to the subject. Andrieu's knowledge of his field is virtually encyclopedic, but the book would have been so much better had he chosen to use narrative or humor a little more. Despite these very minor drawbacks, this book is one of the most important contributions to the field of sport history that has come along in many years. If you can't read French it's almost

worth learning it so that you can read this and other books like it!

**Kenneth Dutton, *The Perfectible Body: The Western Ideal of Physical Development* (London: Cassell, 1995)  
ISBN: 0 304 33230 5.**

Why has a muscular male body been honored and sought after in Western culture, but virtually ignored in others? Why have we come to accept the Greek ideal as our model rather than some other form of human representation? Why do we strive to have "perfect" bodies in an era when all other absolutes have fallen into disfavor? These are some of the extremely interesting questions which scholar, Ken Dutton, attempts to answer in his ambitious new book, *The Perfectible Body*.

Dutton is professor of French at the University of Newcastle in Australia, but his academic background belies a well-founded knowledge in both the physical and cerebral aspects of bodybuilding. This is clear from his impressive list of publications: in addition to penning a shelf of books on French language and literature, he has also found time to co-write, with partner Ron Laura, seven books on muscular training.

Dutton's current work is a welcome addition to the understanding of weight training, bodybuilding history, and gender studies. The author first traces the history of what he called "the developed body" from its earliest appearance in ancient Greece down to the present; he then pauses to examine the various meanings that have been attributed to the muscular physique.

There are three major divisions in the book. The first section, "The Evolving Body," concerns the history of bodybuilding, its admirers, and its stars down to the early twentieth century. The second section is entitled "The Legible Body," and it deals with the various ways the developed body has been used and interpreted throughout history. Dutton discusses the ways the muscular physique can be "read" and then put to use as a political, sexual, or individualistic statement. This is probably the most interesting part of the book from a theoretical point of view, and it contains many interesting observations about the physique and its significance. The final part of the book, "The Contemporary Body," covers the modern interpretations of the developed body, dealing with topics such as female reactions to male physique display and the ways in which gay sensibilities have molded bodybuilding and physique photography. I found this part to be both the provocative and controversial.

In addition to the well-written text, the book is aided by literally hundreds of beautiful photographs. Many of these pictures were taken expressly for this book, and they include some of Australia's (and the world's) best physiques. If nothing else, the pictures are worth the price of the volume.

There are better reasons for all serious lovers of body culture to read *The Perfectible Body*, however, not the least of which is the vast amount of scholarship that went into its production. The book is really a vast compendium of theories and ideas that Dutton has either devised or collected and which help us understand what building the body really means. In order to do this author uses a bewildering array of sources, from histories and sociological studies to popular culture including such diverse elements as movies, underwear ads, Chippendale's male bump-and-grind displays, and other sources.

Although others have dealt with the philosophical aspects of muscle building, Dutton is the first to make a serious book-length attempt to come to grips with the implications of bodybuilders on society at large. The author has put together an impressive body of scholarship to prove his points, and there is enough in the work to ignite any number of heated discussions. Although the author claims that the book was "written for the intelligent general reader rather than the academic specialist," most readers will find it heavy going. If you can't bring yourself to agree with one of the ideas in this piquant gumbo of theories, another one will swim along in a line or two that will have you nodding your head in agreement.

Watch for other works by Dutton. If they bubble with the same spicy intensity as this one, they will be well worth digesting.

# Oasis in Manhattan

## Part Two

*Excerpts from an Account of the "Golden Years" of Bodybuilding*

Tom Minichiello

**Ed. Note:** Part One of Tom Minichiello's memoir appeared in Volume 4, Number 1 of *Iron Game History*. Back Issues are available for \$4.00.

In the early 1960s the world of bodybuilding as we had known it in previous days was starting to undergo a dramatic change. The reason? The use of anabolic steroids. I myself wasn't aware of this until almost the end of the sixties, and I believe that any member in my own club who might have been on the steroids would have said nothing to me about it. I knew we were making advances in the nutrition field but I was starting to see gains in some members that were puzzling. Even at my own show, competitors I hadn't seen in several months were now making the gains that normally would have taken a much longer period of time. I knew machines that were now being used had nothing to do with this phenomenon. In spite of what the manufacturers said about their new equipment, it was only another way to perform the movement. But then I learned about this new drug many were taking. It seemed to me that bodybuilding was going in a very different direction, and from what I understood about drugs, the wrong direction. I thought about all the wonderful articles I had read in all of the magazines (*Physical Culture, Your Physique, Iron Man, Strength & Health*) What would their great writers think? Good food, sleep, exercise, a healthy lifestyle was their formula for good health and a strong body. It must be done by natural means.

But something else was also happening; bodybuilding would soon reach more people than ever before. One reason was that Charles Gaines and George Butler were putting together a book, *Pumping Iron*. They were a great team, Gaines with his writing and Butler with his outstanding photography. The book was a winner from the very beginning. But it was only the start. It was after the release of the semi-documentary film based on the book that bodybuilding really took off. Looking back, it was Gaines and Butler who started the ball rolling by bringing the world of bodybuilding into the mainstream. But there was a young man on a quest for stardom--Arnold Schwarzenegger--who starred in both the book and the film and went on to revolutionize bodybuilding. Arnold possessed the energy, forcefulness of character, and personality that was needed to educate the public about bodybuilding. As far as the market was concerned, bodybuilding made a complete turnaround. More people took up the activity, and manufacturers of equipment flocked to the business. Soon, there was an overwhelming amount of health food products just for the new bodybuilders. And the ingredient that had been missing, the one component that all sports need to get out into that larger marketplace was beginning to come to bodybuilding. MONEY. Many of the manufacturers began to sponsor shows, and the prize money started to take off. However, because of the big money that was now involved, the bodybuilders not only trained harder, they would now do anything to get bigger and better. This attitude led to the taking of steroids as a central part of their training.

In 1970, Ben Weider's International Federation of Bodybuilders applied for membership in the prestigious General Assembly of International Sports, the international coordinating body for many sports. The IFBB really had no national affiliation within the United States at that time. Until then, all of their competitions in the U.S. were under the IFBB banner. At that time, the AAU (Amateur Athletic Union) was the older and, because of its scope, the more credible of the two. However, the Physique Committee of the AAU was then part of the Weightlifting Committee, which was under the control of Bob Hoffman's York organization, a competitor of Joe and Ben Weider. For years, these two groups were the Hatfields and McCoys of bodybuilding, although once in a while a punch came from Dan Lurie, another manufacturer of barbells.

During this period Ben Weider called me from the IFBB headquarters in Montreal. He told me that he'd been communicating with a Ralph Johnson in Philadelphia. It seems that Johnson was a fan of bodybuilding, and he suggested to Ben that he could form an American affiliate for the IFBB. What made this appealing, I'm sure, to Ben was that Ralph Johnson was influential in the world of politics (at least in Philadelphia), and that he was friendly with Jack Kelly, (Grace Kelly's brother), the current chairman of the AAU.

The AAU governed bodybuilding and weightlifting, and both sports were controlled inside the AAU by the York organization. The AAU, for instance, had total ownership of the "Mr. America" title. Through his longtime financial influence in weightlifting, Bob Hoffman had developed firm control over the Mr. America competition. It's clear that Ben Weider realized the tremendous worldwide exposure of all AAU sports. He also realized that if the AAU divided weightlifting and bodybuilding, and if the AAU Physique Committee became the American affiliate for the IFBB, it would certainly give the IFBB what it needed to forge ahead to Ben's ultimate goal, Olympic recognition. The AAU would give the IFBB instant credibility. And the genius of Joe Weider would put the rings of the Olympic logo throughout his many publications. In any event, Ralph Johnson arranged a dinner in Philadelphia. Jack Kelly was invited, along with Ben Weider and myself.

The dinner was to take place in a tavern which was in the district that Ralph Johnson represented. I was early, so I took a seat in a booth where I could see everyone coming in. When the waiter came over to me, I told him I was with the party that was having the dinner with Ralph Johnson. The waiter introduced himself to me, saying, "I'm Ralph Johnson." Unfortunately, Johnson seemed to be well on his way to being intoxicated, and for the next few years, this was the way he would always present himself.

It was not what I had expected, and I'm sure it was a total disappointment to Ben Weider. Being the great diplomat that he is, however, Ben certainly made the best of things. After dinner, he presented the IFBB's "Award of Merit" to Jack Kelly, and just as soon as Kelly accepted the plaque from Ben, flashbulbs went off. In the next issue of the Weider magazine, there was Ben, the IFBB Presi-



dent, awarding this plaque to the Chairman of the AAU. It was great public relations for the IFBB. Ben knew how to make the best use of a situation. That was one of the reasons he was able to organize over one hundred countries into the IFBB.

Unfortunately, there was to be no AAU affiliation with the IFBB. With Ralph Johnson running the American affiliate, things got really impossible. After Ralph resigned, Ben asked me to form an American Federation for the IFBB. This new federation, of course, would be the IFBB affiliate here in the U.S. Ben said that many U.S. bodybuilders were joining the IFBB and sending in their three dollar fee, and that this money would now go to the new federation to help in the cost of the administration.

I gave it some thought, and agreed to start the new amateur bodybuilding organization. I have always been very fortunate in having good people willing to give me a hand. My close friend, Ed Jubinville, became my right-hand man and was the director for the New England area for our newly formed American Federation of Amateur Bodybuilders (A.F.A.B.). Until this day, in many of the older photographs of competitions held in the United States, you'll see the AFAB logo in the background. In producing the competitions in New York for many years, I had become friendly with other promoters and gym owners throughout the country. So in time the AFAB started to build a network of state directors. And this, of course, looked good for the IFBB. They now had their own legitimate affiliate within the United States.

Dick Tyler had been for some time the Vice President of North America for the IFBB. He also wrote articles in Joe's magazine for a number of years. A child movie star, he had become a doctor of chiropractic and he was building quite a successful practice in Los Angeles, having as one of his patients Burt Reynolds. Dick wrote to me saying that his own practice was now all he could handle, and that he had recommended to Ben Weider that I fill his position as Vice President. Again Ben was on the phone to me from Montreal. "Well, Tom, will you be my next Vice President?" I told him that this was one step I'd have to give a lot of thought to. Every year the IFBB held its congress in a different country, and this position would really throw me into the politics of International Sports. I really didn't know if I was ready for this, or indeed if I wanted it. Up to that point, I had enjoyed myself in the iron game. I had a good gym membership, was getting great exposure in the magazines and on local TV with the wrestlers, and still had some time to myself. I thought then that I had everything.

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When I finally told Ben I would be his next vice president, he said, "Mr. Minichiello, you will not regret it, I assure you."

I immediately started receiving all kinds of paperwork from the Montreal office of the IFBB. Among them, the "Report To All National Federations." It consisted of about sixteen pages and had news of the coming congress that was going to be held in Baghdad, Iraq. The very first congress had been held in Belgrade, Yugoslavia in 1970; in 1971 it was in Paris, France. The one item that stood out about the report was that Ben's picture was on almost every page, and sometimes three and four times on the same page. What the hell, I thought, it's his game and I guess it's also his rules.

I was excited about my coming trip to Baghdad. All I thought of was flying carpets. My own national championships were held in September, and the three winners would represent the United States and come with me to Baghdad to compete in the Mr. Universe competitions, which were being held in conjunction with the IFBB Congress.

Ken Waller, Mike Katz, and Ed Corney made up the American team that would accompany me to Baghdad in November. Unfortunately, Waller pulled a muscle and had to drop out at the last moment. It was just too late to replace him, but with the likes of Cor-

ney and Katz, I felt the U.S. still had a very strong team.

At that time Professor Lawrence Golding from Kent State University was Chairman of the IFBB Medical Committee. Ben had arranged for us to all rendezvous, fly over together, and meet several other nations in Geneva. Golding was doing research on the effects of anabolic steroids, and would give an outline of his progress at the congress. Needless to say, my flight over to Geneva with him was very enlightening indeed. We would be staying in Geneva for three days waiting for other nations to join us. The Iraqi government would be sending their own jet to Geneva for everyone.

On the jet plane headed for Baghdad, Serge Jacobs (Mr. Belgium) was sitting right behind Mike Katz and said, very loudly, "You know, in Iraq they shoot you if you are Jewish." Well, Mike just slumped down and seemed to disappear in his seat. Actually, the people of Baghdad had the greatest respect for both Mike Katz and Ben Weider, who is also Jewish. Once we were there, Big Mike was interviewed on local television, and followed all over the city by the press and bodybuilding fans. During our stay, Ben was presented with an honorary degree in Physical Education. There is no question about it, Ben Weider is a master at foreign relations; he would make a great Secretary of State. When it came time for him to open the ceremonies before the competitions started, he gave his opening statement in Arabic. The audience went wild, and this made him an instant hero in Baghdad. They kept on cheering for him. The event was carried on television throughout Iraq.

Charles Gaines and George Butler were also on the plane (This was pre-*Pumping Iron*), there to cover the events for *Life Magazine*. Larry Kramer, a screen writer and author, came along and was my roommate for those seven days.

When we arrived at the Baghdad airport we were greeted by many of the government officials. They certainly gave us a VIP reception. They didn't check any of our passports and there was no customs examination. Every nation had its own car and driver, with the flag of that particular nation. Thirty IFBB nations made the trip to Baghdad. This being only the third IFBB Congress, I thought the turnout was exceptional. The Iraqi federation took us on a tour of the ancient civilization of Babylon. The Iraqi government really went way out for this special occasion. They authorized the printing of the first two bodybuilding stamps ever issued. The name of the federation was also printed on the stamps. As for Ben Weider, he had a guard of military men near him at all times during his travels in Iraq.

One night Katz and some other bodybuilders and I went to a local nightclub. All of a sudden there was a big commotion in the club. Military men came in and cleared people out of an area. It looked like they were making room for some "big shot." Military guards were stationed around this one table that had been cleared, and in walked Ben Weider, followed by more military men. He walked over to the table, looked around the hall like he was looking over his own personal domain, and sat down. With him was Najim Al-Sahrawardei, the dean of the University of Baghdad. I was impressed at the caution the government had taken.

The next day I received a message from Ben. It was an extremely important matter to be discussed immediately, and to please come to his room. I couldn't imagine what this was all about. It seemed to me that everything was going smoothly and all the various committees had been getting along just great. With all thirty different countries taking part in setting down rules and regulations, we were having no problems. When I went into Ben's room, he immediately said, "Ed Corney has been taking some whore into his hotel room. This is showing total disrespect for this country and it must stop. You, Mr. Minichiello, are the captain for the American team. It's your problem. Take care of it, NOW!" I wanted to burst out laughing at him, but he was dead serious. Anything to do with his IFBB was sacred to him, as it should have been.

Although I certainly would be the last person in the world to tell a man who he can take into his bedroom, I told Ed Corney just what Ben had said. Ed laughed and told me not to worry about anything, that he would be cool. This same thing happened again the following year when we had our congress in Geneva. One of the American athletes went wild over some female delegate from Italy, and this time Ben was hotter than ever. "Well, Mr. Minichiello, the Americans are up to it again, however this time your athlete is married and carrying on with another married person. It's your problem. Settle it now!" If he had only known that I was waiting for one of the women from the Swiss federation to come to my room, he would have had kittens.

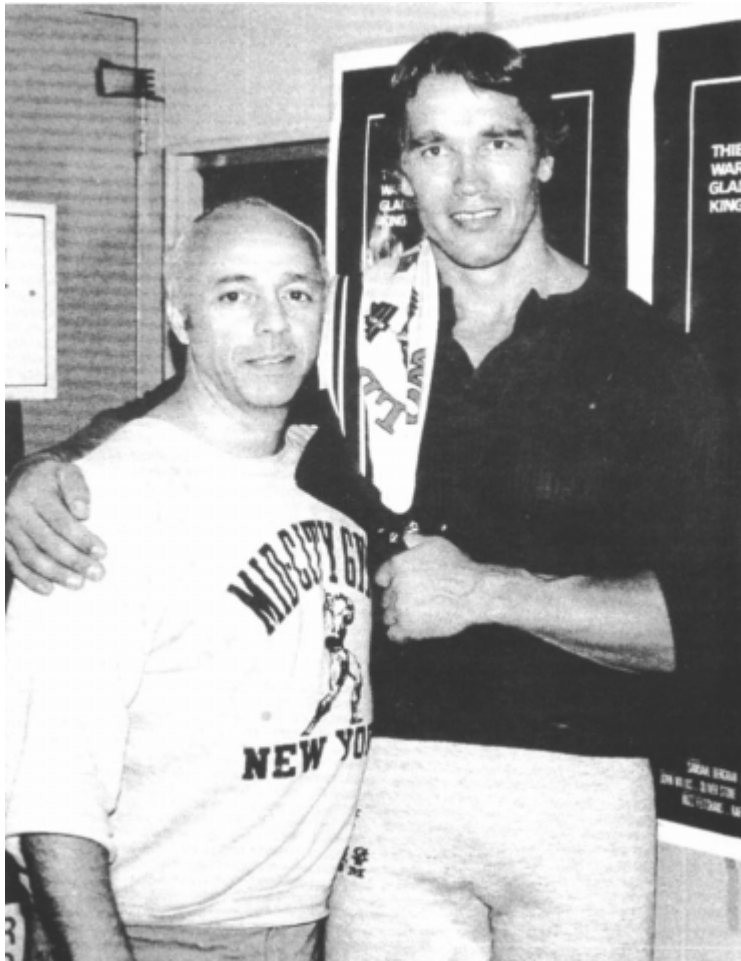
It was in Baghdad that I met Serge Nubret and his wife, Jackie. They were from Paris and came with their friend Paco Arce. Paco was one of the wealthiest men in Spain. He was bald, heavy-set, and had a very pleasant personality. He was very friendly, and very gay. Whenever I had shows in New York, it was Paco who paid all the expenses for both the French and Spanish teams.

He really spent his money and enjoyed himself. He had an apartment in Monaco, a place in the Canary Islands, and a mansion in Madrid..

I read about Serge Nubret for years in the magazines, and there was no question about it, he was one of the best built men ever. He had a very pleasing physique. His wife, Jackie, was a coporate lawyer in Paris, and also did bodybuilding and had won many titles, including Ms. Europe.

Finally, the congress in Baghdad was over and we had completed all the work in the various committee meetings. All went along extremely well. Now it was the night of the Mr. Universe competitions. When I entered the theater, I saw that it was packed. There were, I'm sure, three thousand people in that audience. For the first time in Baghdad, I saw something that made me feel very uncomfortable. There was a banner on the side of the wall of the theater, about 150 feet long, and it read, "Americans—Leave Arab Oil With The Arabs." I took my seat just under the American flag, in our section looked around and felt a bit uneasy. However, the audience just wanted to see the show start. The Iraqi federation gave us boxes of dates and I received three small crafted palm trees, about six inches high, cut out of sterling silver.

Ed Corney won the title of Mr. Universe, Mike Katz was second, and in third place was Kenichi Suemitsue from Japan. And because the American team had the most points, as team captain I was awarded the team trophy. The trophy was all brass, cone-shaped



ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER TAKES A SECOND TO POSE WITH HIS FRIEND, TOM MINICHIELLO, FOLLOWING A WORKOUT AT TOM'S MID-CITY GYM.

—PHOTO COURTESY TOM MINICHIELLO

and all handcrafted. It was almost five feet tall. It was a work of art. I was lucky, as the Swiss Air flight from Geneva was almost empty.

The Baghdad trip was over and I sat on the plane thinking of the past ten days, the people I had met and places I had been. Ben Weider was right; I didn't regret being part of the IFBB.

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I had been so impressed with the hospitality shown to us by the Iraqi bodybuilding federation that I had a plaque made up for them. I inscribed all the names of the American team on it. Several months later, in a phone conversation with Ben, he told me that many of the officials we had met in Baghdad had disagreements with the government and had been executed. I found it hard to believe, but it happened. This was later confirmed in an article in the *New York Times* about the multiple executions.

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By that time, Joe Weider had moved his headquarters from New Jersey to California. When he lived in an apartment down near Sutton Place, he said to me, "Tommy, when I open the window here in the city, I can't breathe, I'm going to the coast."

Every year after that, Joe always came back for my big show and brought with him four or five of the top bodybuilders from the coast. Like his brother Ben, Joe was very serious in his business.

Joe was also very serious when he told me one day, "It's not what you put out, but what comes back to you that counts." He then pulled out some papers from his briefcase. "Look, I spent \$150,000 advertising this item, but I got orders for over \$500,000! If you get a better location, where there are no whores, junkies and bums around, pay a higher rent, you'll get more traffic and more enrollments; your business will do better. Remember, it's not what you pay out, but what comes in."

Joe meant what he said, and I know he was sincerely concerned that I do well with my club. What he said stayed in my mind and after thinking about the fact that a lot of younger boys were afraid to come to the club because of the elements on the street, I made up my mind I wouldn't renew my lease. Joe was right; if I'd stayed up on that third floor, my gym would have died there.

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One of my friends from those days, Gene Dubuque, was a "Mr. New York City" winner in the forties, but he had moved to California. One day he came by for a visit and told me life was going great for him. He had made good money wrestling and had

purchased several rental units in Santa Monica; they were doing very well. He had also recently signed with a new agent on the coast and was being sent out for more auditions on film work. While he and I were sitting in my office, he was telling me all the news from World's Gym, where he trained. He put in a call to his agent and when he hung up, he looked over at me and smiled.

"Well, I got a part in a documentary, something to do about primal man. I'll be playing the part of an ape." "Yeah," I said, "they won't have to do any makeup on you" Soon Gene had to leave for Los Angeles. He really wanted to make it in films. He called me and told me he had been signed for two movies—feature films, good parts. He was overjoyed. This was what he wanted.

One morning Mark Tendler came into the gym. He looked at me and said, "Tom, I have to talk to you." He had this terrible expression on his face. I knew something awful had happened, and then he told me, "Gene was killed yesterday. He was in the mountains filming the documentary. They finished and the entire crew took off to come back to Los Angeles. The plane crashed into the side of the mountain Everyone was killed, I think 28 in all."

I remember putting my head down. I couldn't bear to look directly at Mark. Gene's life had just turned in the direction he wanted, and now this. I couldn't bear it. To know him was to love him, and we did. Sometime later his mom sent me a plaque that the Japanese Wrestling Federation had given him. She said Gene would have wanted me to have it. It hangs in my den, and will always be with me.

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When the gym moved to a new location, many friends came down to wish me well, one of whom was Tom Sansone. Tom had won the AAU Mr. America competition in 1958, and after that he started working for the Vic Tanny chain. Harry Schwartz first sent him to the Vic Tanny gym in White Plains, where I was managing at the time. We became good friends. We had seen each other when we both trained at the American Health Studio on Sixth Avenue, but had never really gotten to know one another. Sansone really projected a healthy appearance. We worked well together. We had very similar personalities. Neither of us was overly aggressive. Maybe that was why Schwartz soon transferred Sansone to a new location in Manhattan. Schwartz always tried to have opposites working with one another. The theory was that each would push the other. He also had one or two stoolies at every gym to report to him.

The next time I saw Tom Sansone was when I had been transferred to a hot new location we had just opened on Nassau Street in Lower Manhattan. There were three managers there already, and I was the fourth. The wrestler, Buddy Rogers, was training there and the ex-wrestler Walter Podalak, known on the mat as the "Golden Superman," was one of the instructors. Interestingly enough, I met Joe Weider's first wife, Diane, training there. In talking with her, she impressed me as being one fine lady. She came from a very wealthy family, owners of Ross Jewelry in New Jersey.

Now, some fifteen years later, Tony and I recalled those days at Nassau Street and had a good laugh. Sansone had become the general manager for the Jack LaLanne gyms in New York, which were owned by Harry Schwartz at the time. Sansone was then a chain smoker and obviously a bundle of nerves. He told me he was salaried at \$50,000 a year and had to push like hell for Schwartz. It didn't seem that long ago we were working at the Nassau Gym, but that was in 1960, and this was 1974.

Sansone had changed completely from the person I knew. From the time he came into my gym, I saw that he was uneasy. As we talked, he was jittery as could be. I knew that in the big gym chains, the pressure was great, and no one applied it better than Schwartz.

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My new gym had a lot of the selectorized equipment that had become so popular. Unlike what I had at the three previous locations, the gym floor was carpeted. However, the really outstanding feature—one that was totally new to the members—was the central air conditioning unit. We had gone 15 years without it. Times were changing and we were now attracting more and more of the office workers who just wanted to shape up. Many of them came in on their lunch hour. Going from an air conditioned work place to a hot gym, working out, then going back to work, wasn't such a great attraction. Most of the really hardcore bodybuilders complained about the air conditioning, but in time, they accepted it.

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"Tommy, what the fuck is this? I spend this much every week just on vitamins." It was Saturday night, September 8, 1973, on the stage of the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Arnold had just won the Mr. Olympia competition, the highest title in professional bodybuilding. I handed Arnold a check for \$1,000. And that was what he said to me with one of his patented grins.

And he was absolutely right: for all the work that goes into training and the dedication that's required, and to be voted the best in your sport, the money was a joke. However, it was 1973, and the tide had not yet turned. We couldn't get any big sponsors. The prize money came from the sale of tickets. The top ticket was \$10. Today it's \$100 or \$150, and there are many sponsors.

Actually, on our poster we advertised the first place money to be \$750, second place, \$500, and \$250 for third place, but tickets went well and we increased the first place to \$1,000. Financially, in the previous seventy years bodybuilding had gone nowhere.

In January of 1904, on the stage of Madison Square Garden in New York, Al Treloar won the title of "The Most Perfectly Developed Man in the World," a competition staged by Bernard MacFadden and his magazine. The prize—\$1,000.

In talking with Arnold later, he said, "We've got to get money into bodybuilding." I saw the seriousness in his eyes and facial expression. For seconds it was almost frightening. But then he came back to Arnold, the fun-loving person we knew, always ribbing someone.

I had met Arnold a few years before. It was just prior to one of the Mr. Olympia competitions and he and Franco Columbo came to New York. They both came to the gym to say hello. I said hello to Franco, and Arnold introduced himself to me. He gave me this look, the one eye almost closed and the other eyebrow stretched so high it almost met his hairline. That eye looked like it was ready to explode. I think I saw George Sanders do that in "The Count of Monte Cristo."

He said, theatrically, "Yes, I'm Arnold." He seemed to be constantly on stage. One time I heard him talking in our locker room before going in for a workout. "Watch what I'm going to make these guys do." After he had been in the gym for a few minutes, I heard this tremendous roar . . . "AH, AH, AH, AH, AH" . . . just as loud as could be. Every time he did repetitions, he would roar like a lion. When he left the workout area, he and Ed Corney headed for the showers. In a few minutes from the workout area came the roars, "AH, AH, AH, AH" . . . Hearing the groans from the gym, Arnold laughed and said, "See how my children follow me."

Gene DuBouque and Arnold were the only people I have ever known who could do the things they did and get away with them, and even be admired for them. No one ever seemed to be offended by their talk or actions. I believe Arnold's accent was in his favor. I think it attracted people to him, along with his tremendous physique. He was certainly different. He was determined to get more. He would

focus on his target, and damn the torpedoes straight ahead!

When Arnold said he would bring big money into bodybuilding he meant it...and he did it. After winning the 1975 Olympia in South Africa, he announced his retirement from competition. He then won the bid from the IFBB to produce the Olympia in 1976. He had chosen Columbus, Ohio, for the event, and was kind enough to send me an invitation to his show. For the very first time, I saw the big change that was coming into our sport. He held the contest in the Veterans Auditorium. I would guess it held close to 4,000 spectators. Arnold had sold out the auditorium for both the pre-judging show (which took place in the late morning to early afternoon), and the finals at night. Immediately after the pre-judging was over, he had various concessions in the lobby of the auditorium. There were garments, photos, vitamins, banners, key chains and hundreds of other items. Arnold circulated through the crowd, entertaining everyone with his remarks, flexing his pecs, and pulling that one eyebrow up to his hairline. When it was all over, all that remained were empty boxes. It was a total success.

The night show was presented professionally, not a second of dead time, which was unusual for a bodybuilding competition. Arnold was able to get local merchants to sponsor awards for the competition. He appeared on local TV, plugging the coming event, and Joe had given him full-page ads in the Weider Publications. That night \$50,000 was to be distributed to ten finalists, and half of it to the overall winner. It was the beginning of the big money.

Arnold became the spokesman for our sport on television programs and through his movie roles. Bodybuilding was now gaining in popularity. There was no question about it, Arnold was the catalyst for this movement. Yes, he has become a mega-millionaire himself, but in doing this, he opened the door for thousands of others. Anyone connected with bodybuilding and the fitness community, in my opinion, is indebted to Arnold. At his most recent show in Ohio, he distributed several hundred thousand dollars to the winners!

Arnold's career was going great guns. Having won the Olympia for the sixth time, he turned to much more lucrative work in the movies. "Stay Hungry" was released in 1976, and he received a Golden Globe Award. But the major turning point for Arnold was the release of "Pumping Iron" the following year. Before its release, Arnold had called me and told me he would pick me up that night and take me to a private screening of the film. Magna Sound, the studio where the screening was to take place, was only a few blocks from the gym. We sat in the front row. As I recall, the studio sat 50 or 60 at most.

I felt as though I was 14 again, making fun in the movie. All through the showing, Arnold kept coming out with remarks: "Look at poor Louie (referring to Lou Ferrigno), he looks tiny. Now he has to eat more spaghetti and meatballs to beat me." His remarks had me and everyone else there laughing. He was very fast with his remarks, and very funny. The movie, I thought, was great. Arnold just played himself. It had to be a winner.

About a week before the 1980 Mr. Olympia competition, which was being held in Sydney, Australia, friends of mine from Europe told me they heard that Arnold was going to compete. This didn't sound right; he had retired from competition about five years before and had been doing a lot of film work, although he never stopped training. For most men, competing in the Olympia involved months of hard training and, of course, getting help from the best doctors for the best drugs. I called a friend of mine in Los Angeles. He said all he knew was that Arnold went to Australia to see the competition. But Arnold was something else. I knew that. So just a few days before the Olympia, I placed a notice on our bulletin board "If Arnold competes this weekend at the Olympia competition, *he will*

*be the winner!* This is my prediction. —Tom"

All the members were asking me, "Come on, you know something!" "All I know," I insisted, "is if he competes, he *has to be the winner*. And, I might add, *no matter what shape he's in, he'll win*. Listen, in the movie "Pumping Iron" he was the winner, and he retired a winner. He's got a TV movie coming out soon. In a few months, he's starting on a big movie—'Conan.' Don't you see, he's got to be a winner; *he can't be a loser*. Arnold would not compete if he didn't know he was going to *win*."

The day after the competition in Australia, I called the Weider office in Los Angeles for the results. Arnold had entered and was the *winner!* Never in the previous 15 years of Mr. Olympia competition had there been such an uproar of disappointment from all of the competitors, and the audience as well.

Arnold always had tickets sent down to our gym for the opening of all his films, and even if he wasn't training at our club, he always came in to say hello and have a protein drink mixed up by the late "ZaZu." It was a pleasure and a delight when one day he came down and introduced me to Maria Shriver. I thought she was very attractive and personable. Her green eyes seemed to have lights in them. This time, I said to myself, "Arnold, you've really outdone yourself." They both did a little training and I saw her two or three times after that.

Their wedding took place in 1986. I thought at the time that the only obstacle keeping Arnold from winning the White House was his place of birth.

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All of the changes in bodybuilding were not for the better. Competition was drastically changing. Most all of the competitors were using drugs in their training. It was a sad day when from my own locker room I heard a young member say, "I don't care about health. I want to get big, really huge." I have always believed in live and let live, but whenever I heard the young member talking like that, I tried to change his direction.

One such member left my gym to train at a downtown club, where I knew the owner was actually selling some of the growth drugs to his members. About two years later, this same member paid me a visit, I didn't recognize him. He had to tell me who he was. He had to have gained at least 50 pounds. His body looked like a balloon. What was astounding to me was that his head had changed. The bones of his skull, just above his eyes, were now pronounced. He was a good looking boy, who now appeared to me as a monster.

After decades of being involved in bodybuilding, I was now seeing and hearing about young men in their twenties having massive heart attacks, kidney and liver problems. *Folks, this isn't bodybuilding; it's madness*. It's madness that will keep competitive bodybuilding as a relatively unimportant sport, forever out of the Olympics. It's not easy for me to make a statement like that. Bodybuilding, for me, has been a way of life these many years—a healthy way of life. Nonetheless, look at the growth of most other sports. It's been phenomenal. Bodybuilding, in comparison, has made little progress. Mind you, I'm speaking of "competitive" bodybuilding. The growth of bodybuilding as a way to build health or to enhance an athlete for a particular sport has been tremendous. The sale of fitness equipment is now a multi-billion dollar business, and bodybuilding has really been the seed for this growth industry. But competitive bodybuilding has not reaped its just rewards because it is headed down a dead-end street.

Fortunately, the natural bodybuilding movement is alive and well. I believe that in the very near future, more and more bodybuilding competitions should and will be drug tested.

# THE SUPERIOR PHYSIQUE

Grover L. Porter, Ph.D.  
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IT IS JUST, A GOOD RULE, THAT EVERY MAN SHOULD MEASURE HIMSELF BY HIS OWN  
MODEL AND STANDARD.—HORACE

The fascinating problem of what the superior human figure should be is one which has held the interest of humankind from the very beginning of civilization. The early civilizations (Egypt, Greece, Rome) admired athletes with well-developed physiques. The statues from these early civilizations clearly document that this love for “A sound mind in a sound body” dates to antiquity. And, the immense popularity of weightlifting magazines suggests that the modern public continues to be mesmerized today by those physiques that present the best mix of proportion, symmetry, and muscularity.<sup>1</sup>

A great deal of research has been published regarding the physical-mental-spiritual characteristics of the “Homo Sapiens” species. This article, however, examines the concept of the superior male physique. Weightlifting historian and amateur physical anthropologist David Willoughby “spent a large part of his life trying to honestly assess the physical power and muscular development of strength athletes of both the past and the present and to produce a trustworthy formula which allowed him to compare men of different periods, bodyweights and lifting styles.”<sup>2</sup> This article examines Willoughby’s theories on assessing the superior male physique by comparing physiques of the pre-steroid era.<sup>3</sup> As Willoughby himself put it, “I have no way to evaluate the modern competitors” in the post-steroid era.<sup>4</sup>

## *The Superior Male Physique*

Anthropologist William Sheldon’s historic study of physical diversity argued that there are three general body types: ectomorphic, mesomorphic, and endomorphic.<sup>5</sup> Willoughby took Sheldon’s idea a step further and developed a standard that could be used to determine physical perfection for the different body types: slender, medium, and stocky.<sup>6</sup> His standard was based on this premise: “The *shape* and the *appearance* of the various parts of the body are of equal importance to their size.”<sup>7</sup> Physique men from the early part of the twentieth century generally agreed with Willoughby’s dicta. Earle Liederman, for instance wrote “It’s a shame to spoil a physique by going all out for size.”<sup>8</sup> Lifting expert George Jowett contributed “We masters of sculptural art classified the perfection of masculine manhood into three general classifications: the Apollo Belvedere, the Theseus Olympus, and the Farnese Hercules.”<sup>9</sup>

The world’s leading authority on anthropometric statistics, Willoughby was a lifelong student of the “architecture” of the human body.<sup>10</sup> He wrote in 1933, “The precise amount that each muscular part of the body should measure in relation to the other parts and to the general size of the bony framework, [can only be] ascertained after long research and countless measurements. [My] standard is correctly applicable to *any* man, whatever his height, weight and build. It assigns to him a definite goal in harmony with his own structural or physiologic make-up—a goal that *he* can reach.”<sup>11</sup>

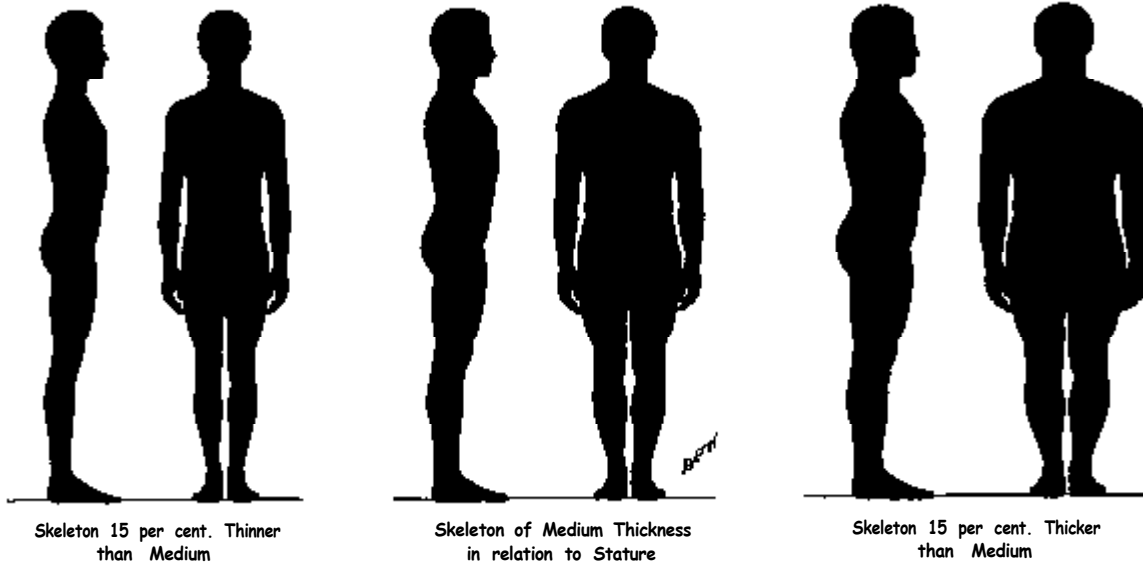
Willoughby believed that his standards represented “a theoretically perfect ideal of symmetry, which it is not to be expected [a] human being could attain in all details.”<sup>12</sup> He tested this standard mathematically to determine the “optimal” and “maximum” mus-

cular measurements of the male physique.<sup>13</sup> His standard ratios are presented in Table I.<sup>14</sup>

David Willoughby used his standards to calculate certain “vital statistics” for the “Mr. America” winners for the period 1939-1951.<sup>15</sup> This article uses a computer system to compare the muscular measurements of the “Mr. America” winners during the entire pre-steroid era (1939-1959) with the standard for physical perfection developed by David Willoughby.<sup>16</sup> These calculations produced a model of the superior physique for each of the three general body types, Apollo, Olympus, Hercules.

TABLE I  
PERFECT MALE SYMMETRY

Forearm should be .833 times biceps
Forearms (average of both) should be .300 times chest
Biceps should be 1.200 times forearm
Biceps (average of both) should be .360 times chest
Biceps (average of both) should equal calf
Straight upper arm should be .962 times Biceps, minus .81
Neck should be .383 times chest
Chest should be 1.333 times waist
Chest should be 1.111 times hips
Waist should be .750 times chest
Waist should be .833 times hips
Hips should be .900 times chest
Hips should be 1.200 times waist
Hips should be 1.667 time thigh
Thigh should be .600 times hips
Thigh should be 1.500 times calf
Calf should be .667 times thigh
Calf (average of both) should equal biceps



**The Apollo Physique**

The Apollo physique is characterized by a slender bone and muscle structure. At the time he won the “Mr. America-1943” contest, Jules Bacon has the best mix of proportions-symmetry-muscularity in this class. His muscular measurements at that time were as follows: Height 67”, Weight 178 lbs., Neck 16.50”, Chest 46.10”, Biceps 16.60”, Forearm 12.70”, Wrist 7.00”, Waist 29.90”, Thigh 25.00”, Calf 15.70”, Ankle 8.60.”<sup>17</sup>

**The Olympus Physique**

The Olympus physique is characterized by a medium bone and muscle structure. At the time he won the “Mr. America-1947” contest, Steve Reeves has the best mix of proportions-symmetry-muscularity in this class. His muscular measurements at that time were as follows: Height 73”, Weight 213 lbs., Neck 17.50”, Chest 49.50”, Biceps 18.00”, Forearm 14.50”, Wrist 7.50”, Waist 29.00”, Thigh 25.50”, Calf 17.75”, Ankle 9.30.”<sup>18</sup>

**The Hercules Physique**

The Hercules physique is characterized by a large bone and muscle structure. At the time he won the “Mr. America-1940/41” contests, John Grimek had the best mix of proportions-symmetry-muscularity in this class. His muscular measurements at that time were as follows: Height 68.5”, Weight 195 lbs., Neck 18.00”, Chest 49.70”, Biceps 18.70”, Forearm 14.50”, Wrist 7.70”, Waist 31.00”, Thigh 27.00”, Calf 17.70”, Ankle 10.00.”<sup>19</sup>

**Conclusion**

All bodybuilders can be winners. While most people will never win a major physique contest, everyone can improve their health, strength and muscular development through progressive weight training. Few men have the genetic potential for the muscular development required to be a champion like Jules Bacon, Steve Reeves or John Grimek, but everyone can strive to achieve their genetic potential whether it is to become an Apollo, an Olympus or a Hercules.

**Notes**

\*I am grateful to Jan and Terry Todd for allowing me to use the Todd-McLean Collection and for their research assistance during the preparation of this article. Primary reference: David P. Willoughby and George R. Weaver, *The Complete Guide To Muscular Measurements* (Montreal: Weider Publications Company, 1947), 39.

<sup>1</sup>George Gallup, “Shape Is In, Mass Is Out,” *American Health* (July-August 1988).

<sup>2</sup>Terry Todd, “Steroids: An Historical Perspective,” *Iron Game History* (April 1990).

<sup>3</sup>This list includes other published and unpublished manuscripts that the author included in his research Program but did not quote in this article: John C. Grimek, “What are Your Ideal Measurements?,” *Muscular Development* (January 1964); Grover L. Porter, “The Future of Bodybuilding,” *Muscular Development* (August 1993); Grover L. Porter, “Have it All,” *Iron Man* (August 1991); Grover L. Porter, “Bodybuilding: Quo Vadis?,” *Muscle & Fitness* (January 1990); Grover L. Porter, “The Ideal Physique,” *Iron Man* (May 1989); Grover L. Porter, “In Search of the Perfect Man,” *Muscular Development* (June 1983); David P. Willoughby, “What the Champions Measured,” *Muscle Builder* (January 1954); David P. Willoughby, “What is the Ideal Physique?,” *Your Physique* (August, September, October, November, December 1950, March 1951); David P. Willoughby, “How to Measure Your Body,” *Your Physique* (July 1948); David P. Willoughby, “What is the Ideal Physique?,” (Austin: The Todd-McLean Collection, Unpublished manuscript that may have been intended as a continuation of the series published in *Your Physique* in 1950-51); David P. Willoughby, “Building A Perfect Body—Your Possibilities,” (Austin: The Todd-McLean Collection, Unpublished manuscript).

<sup>4</sup>Todd, “Steroids.”

<sup>5</sup>William H. Sheldon, *The Varieties of Human Physique* (Darien, CT: Hafner Publishing Company, 1940/1970).

<sup>6</sup>David P. Willoughby, “What Is The Perfect Physique?,” *Physical Culture* (September 1929).

<sup>7</sup>David P. Willoughby, *What Is Physical Perfection?* (Austin: The Todd-McLean Collection, Unpublished brochure promoting the Willoughby Method of Physical Training, 1933).

<sup>8</sup>Earle E. Liederman, “Muscle Shape vs. Muscle Size,” *Muscle Power* (December 1949).

<sup>9</sup>George F. Jowett, “Sculpture Form,” *Your Physique* (February 1950).

<sup>10</sup>David P. Willoughby, “The Human Figure: Ideal and Real,” *The Illustrator* (Winter 1962).

<sup>11</sup>Willoughby, “Physical Perfection.”

<sup>12</sup>David P. Willoughby and George R. Weaver, *The Complete Guide To Muscular Measurements* (Montreal: Weider Publications Company, 1947).

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>David P. Willoughby, “The Mr. America Physique,” *Your Physique* (June 1952).

<sup>16</sup>The muscular measurements used in my comparisons were published in Philip I. Rasch, *Weight Training* (Dubuque, Iowa: William C. Brown Company, 1982).

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

# HIPPOLYTE TRIAT

From: Edmond Desbonnet's

*Les Rois de la Force*

[*The Kings of Strength*]

Paris: Librairie Berger-Levrault, 1911

Translated by David Chapman

**Ed. Note:** David Chapman, the Seattle-based strength historian who recently authored *Sandow the Magnificent*, has been working for the past year on a translation of Edmond Desbonnet's *Les Rois de la Force* [*The Kings of Strength*]. This rare book has never before been translated into English. In it, Desbonnet not only compiled biographies of all the major male and female strength athletes of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, he also reprinted many materials related to these professionals' lives and work. In Desbonnet's chapter on French weightlifting pioneer Hippolyte Triat, three brochures related to Triat's gymnasiums are included. Due to space limitations, we can only reprint parts of these brochures here. However, Desbonnet's commentary and his closing remarks about Triat's physical abilities are, we believe, fascinating. For Part One of Triat, see *Iron Game History*, Volume 4, Number 1.



By way of documentation and in order to prove that Triat had very correct ideas on physical culture (still unknown to the public in 1855), we reproduce the following brochures that he produced in order to advertise his gymnasium and to spread his philanthropic ideas.

The first three pages are dedicated to his gymnasium at 55 and 57 Avenue Montaigne. Next is a reproduction of the 100 franc certificate issued by Triat in 1855 just after he had moved his gymnasium to 36 Avenue Montaigne. This establishment was founded and operated by the Gymnasium Society of France in order to propagate the gospel of health. The other two pages concern Triat's gymnasium at 22 Rue du Bouloi.

In order that there be no doubt about the authenticity of these documents, they have been reproduced photographically, and not a single word has been changed. These originals were lent to us by Mr. Christmann who was both a student and a friend of Triat. We are happy to testify here to our gratitude for his having put these documents at our disposal. Mr. Christmann, in fact, realized that it was up to us to honor the memory of the man for whom he has retained a profound admiration.

By reading these several excerpts, one can see how regrettable it was for the French people that Triat's method was not adopted by the French government.

## THE TRIAT GYMNASIUM EDUCATION-HYGIENE-REGENERATION

It is impossible to plumb the mysteries of organic life without arriving at the conclusion that movement is its primordial and most essential law.

According to first principles, everything in nature is in a state of flux. Nothing—save God alone is stable in the universe. Immobility, we assume, is tantamount to absolute nothingness.

The material life of both humans and animals manifests and fulfills itself by one of several ways. Either by the molecular movement of composition or decomposition common to all organisms: by

the movements unique to each individual organ and its functions; by the sympathetic movements which the organs perform in concert with one or another; or finally, by the organic movements performed in synchrony with the entire body.

Not a single physiological function can operate without movement. Neither aspiration, respiration, absorption, digestion, circulation, transpiration, secretion, locomotion, nor calorification can be understood without knowledge of the displacements of matter which affect them through the medium of the specialized organs, the systems themselves, or by the complete action of the entire organism.

If one considers that no single movement of a system's part can take place without a proportional reaction on the whole, then one is forced to conclude that exercise or voluntary movement applied to the body must modify the functions and by consequence, life itself.

However, human life is twofold. It is both corporal and spiritual, physical and moral. Although the two natures which form this duality are profoundly distinct in their attributes, yet they are linked so intimately that the action of one reacts on the other. While admitting freely that the spirit is the guiding principle of the body, it is impossible to negate the reciprocal and permanent influence of the body on the spirit. It therefore follows that bodily exercise is of immediate importance to the whole man—body and soul, flesh and spirit.

Building upon this, it is easy to understand that rationally applied exercise constitutes the gymnastic art. If it is seriously developed, this art can form an important part of man's physical, intellectual, and moral education. It can preserve health, cure a great number of maladies, and lead to the physical perfection of the individual and the species.

This, then, is the sophisticated point of view from which gymnastics can be viewed in the nineteenth century. Briefly and in just a few words, this is the theoretical basis upon which we have based our studies of this art and which we have long practiced by instinct. Now we have carried gymnastics to a hitherto unknown degree of perfection by a life of meditation and experience.

The institution of gymnasia as we know them from antiquity were part of a society that worshiped strength since it was needed for conquest or defense, and it is known that ancient lawmakers supported the gymnasium most particularly as a place that could turn out soldiers and athletes rather than as a means of producing healthy, strong, and intelligent human beings. Military and Olympic gymnastics occupied such a place of honor simply because they allowed for victories and triumphs to accrue to the state. This system deteriorated when it began turning out little more than dull-witted titans or gladiators fit only for the blood soaked arena of the circus.

It is true that at the same time curative gymnastics were highly recognized by the greatest geniuses in the curative arts—men like Herodicus, Hippocrates, Galen, Celsius, Oribasius, Diocles, and Asclepiades. But since they were not able to find a way to apply the system easily, it remained in its infancy, and eventually, curative gymnastics was tarred with the same brush that discredited athletic gymnastics. Thanks to extreme abuses in its application, this latter

came to be seen as an impediment to intellectual development and the cultivation of proper morality. Clearly, this disastrous outcome proved only that gymnastics was as dangerous when poorly used as it was effective and beneficial when handled in a contrary manner. Nonetheless, it created a reaction against the art that was too powerful and too vigorous to resist.

Between the extinction of gymnastics at the end of the ancient world and its rebirth in the eighteenth century, the sport was removed from civilization for sixty successive generations. During this long interval, physical exercise did not appear outside of everyday life. The only exceptions were some vestiges of ancient Roman sports that survived in the form of the jousts, tournaments, cavalades, and tilting matches of the Middle Ages, but even these disappeared when firearms were substituted for chivalric weaponry.

It was only toward the end of the last century that the educational theories of Jean Jacques Rousseau encouraged writers in both France and Germany to praise gymnastics. The names of Guthsmuths, Basedow, Salzmann, Campe, Jahn, Pestalozzi, and Ling recall the first impulses shortly after being revived beyond the Rhine and in Switzerland. The names of the Frenchmen Clais and Amoros can be added to this list since they also made admirable efforts for the introduction of gymnastics in regular instruction.

We have visited the principal countries of Europe and carefully examined the methods which are used there, and we have also considered long and hard the effects which have been produced both by ourselves and our students. We have come to the conclusion that gymnastics as they have been taught for the last two decades or even as they are still taught are singularly defective, irrational, unoriginal, and incapable of furnishing the results which one might hope for.

The need to devise a complete system of exercise has led us to study the diverse types of bodily and organic movements, and we have established on this basis a new art. We have thus arrived at an entirely new method of gymnastics that is rational, complete, and utterly distinct from all those which have been published until now. We have been aided in this by numerous instruments and machines which are indispensable in performing the specific, partial or grouped movements. The greater part of our mechanisms and apparatuses did not even exist, so it was necessary to devise and construct them ourselves.

*Dumbbells, Indian clubs, and barbells* which we have invented are already distributed everywhere, and medical experts particularly recommend them. But even this is nothing in comparison with our entire system of specialized machines for our *curative gymnastics*. Even then, these devices themselves are nothing without the knowledge to use them. A tool is one thing, but using it without proper understanding is quite another. We might also hope that others would not be content with merely copying our devices. Finally, after numberless experiments with different human races and more than fifteen years in public practice in Paris, our results have been immense. We have the right to say that as a result of our efforts we have attained a triple goal; we can boast of the practical application of gymnastics in *education, hygiene, and the regeneration of Man*.

Our gymnasium is an instrument of education. Its goal is not to produce a heavily muscled Hercules. Rather, it strives to turn out men who are harmonious in appearance, healthy of body, and strong of spirit. Our system is particularly effective and marvelous when it is applied to children or adolescents. It contributes to the correction of their organs, the improvement of form and action, and the accrual of strength. It helps create stability and mental vigor and produces in its turn beauty, grace, elegance, agility, resolution, courage, goodness, sensitivity, sweetness of character, and morality. In a word, our system contributes to the fullness of life's supreme reward: Health. The same effects will be obtained for adults (although to a lesser degree).

A learned professor of medicine, Mr. Michel Levy [1809-?], has written in his *Treatise on Hygiene* these remarkable words: "The problem with education is the imbalance between physical strength and the intellectual faculties. Education simply cannot take place without the assistance of obligatory gymnastics. They must be varied, appropriate to the child's age, interspersed by intervals of intellectual exercises, and rewarded in annual contests equal to those given for literary excellence. Since the invention of firearms we have become too unfamiliar with the powerful effects of exercise that is regular, habitual, and energetic. The most efficient means to avoid the vicious leanings which have produced such terrible ravages among the children and adolescents of both sexes include varied recreations, physical fatigue, cultivation of the intelligence, and moral and religious teachings."

What would Mr. Michel Levy say if he could see all those who have been miraculously restored by the benefits of our gymnastic system? He would be amazed at our work with the frail, debilitated, emaciated constitutions, the inept and mined brains that have been withered to the point of cretinism. Truly, ours is a system that reforms both the body and the soul.

From a hygienic or sanitary point of view, we have avoided the outset of a great many debilities by the practice of regular gymnastics that are moderate or energetic as the case warrants. Medical science considers, for example, the lack of exercise to be one of the most powerful causes of pulmonary phthisis. We have often dealt with patients who have been sent to us by their doctors in order to fight this dread disease. These subjects have visibly improved their lymphatic or scrofulous disorders after only a few months of directed exercise.

It is equally clear that a lack of exercise leads to organic inertia, circulatory sluggishness, an enlarged spleen, swelling, chronic catarrh of the bladder, stones, apoplexy, etc. These and all the other disorders that accompany the sedentary professions can be prevented by our gymnasium. If need be, our carefully applied exercises can even counteract the results of vicious habits and the specialized movements of certain professions. Thus our system can be considered as a powerful aid to public hygiene and one which can open the door of health to all classes of the population according to their needs.

The current population born in the bosom of the great cities is the inheritor of all the infirmities which previous generations experienced and of all the physical troubles caused by the unwholesome lives these generations have lived. That is, as one might say, a heavy patrimony of maladies, and these have the effect of continually worsening the health and making one ever weaker and less robust. It is a situation that threatens modern man and that threatens the disappearance of every mark of health until the latter fades away like a lamp that has run out of oil.

Today's population needs to subsist and to renew itself by the life forces that are found in such abundance in the country. The large centers of population can be named, without exaggeration, as the great destroyers of human life. But our gymnastic procedures prove that not only can this urban degeneration be stopped in its tracks, but that the sickly city dwellers can be completely regenerated by a short term of exercise. We are able to restore their muscularity, strength, and longevity. Finally, the gymnasium has the power to heal the moral infirmities that afflict the subject. While restoring the body, exercise draws out the vices which are inherent in certain pathological states. We declare in all sincerity that our system of exercise is the best remedy for madness and suicidal urges.

It is because of these potent reasons that we have sought to open up gymnastics to a new era. It has been our wish to establish a gymnasium in which the purpose and composition have been in response to the philosophy outlined above. We have made it as vast as possible, and it is with a true sentiment of humanity that we invite the public to visit it. Although we have often suggested it,



yet we regret that the government has not yet been sufficiently receptive to accept the idea of public regeneration on an even grander scale.

—**Hippolyte TRIAT, gymnasium proprietor**

We also have before us the notices that Triat had printed for his civilian and military gymnastics school in Brussels where he had a special school for ladies and girls and another for young children.

In addition we have a letter remarkable for its good sense and its clarity dated November 1845 and addressed to the honorable members of the Senate and the Chamber of Representatives. Intelligence and truth ring from every line.

In my opinion this man was the greatest benefactor of the age, and I hope that the photographs of this work will one day revive Triat's memory. When the public recognizes the wrongs that the French people have committed in abandoning this apostle of physical culture, I hope that a golden statue of him will be erected in Paris.

Another document before us is addressed to the senators of France. It is the *Memorandum in support of the petition of the students of the Triat Gymnasium* which was made after the failure of the Triat Gymnasium located at 36 Avenue Montaigne. This was the same institution which was cruelly expropriated without indemnity by the city of Paris, an action which completely ruined this good man. The purpose of the petition was to ask the city of Paris to supply a new gymnasium as a replacement for that which it seized without payment.

The refusal to create Triat's proposed normal school at Billancourt has undoubtedly cost us several million francs in sheer waste since this institution could have relieved or fought many preventable maladies by using Triat's method. Thousands of human lives—flames of life that might have enlightened their own and others' existence—have been willfully snuffed out. But every possible financial resource was brought to bear in order to rescue these useless human ruins who were by then rickety, in the last stages of consumption, alcoholic, epileptic, and so forth. They become social rubbish which we keep alive at great expense rather than seeking ways to develop vigorous procreators, sowers of effective social life, and solid bodies to oppose invaders.

### TRIAM GYMNASIUM

22 Rue du Bouloi  
(1st arrondissement)  
Paris

#### Rational Gymnastics - Hydrotherapy

Gymnastics is the regular culture of the body. What study is for the spirit, gymnastics is for the body. The ancients obtained their constitutions that were so robust and so handsome owing to the practice of this art. It is an art that has been neglected too long in our time.

After having done a complete study of the systems used in all the countries of Europe, we have succeeded in devising a method that is entirely new, complete, and rational.

We have devised and created the greater part of the machines and instruments that we use. We are the inventor of the dumbbells, Indian clubs, and barbells which one sees in every gymnasium.

The *Floor exercise*, which is a logical series of graduated movements in which each exercise has its own special and predeter-

mined purpose, is *our invention*.

We are pleased to see practiced (however incompletely) in the principal gymnasiums of the city *our method* thus proving that it is convenient for both sexes, appropriate for all ages from infancy to old age, and conducive to good health. Our system is the best way to prevent the disastrous consequences of a sedentary life and of employment which uses the intellectual faculties exclusively.

Our rational and hygienic gymnastics is equally curative in purpose. For more than forty years we have effected (especially in our individual treatments) the cure of numerous invalids who have been afflicted with the gravest and most chronic illnesses.

We have moved our establishment from the Avenue Montaigne to the very center of Paris at 22 Rue du Bouloi (1st arrondissement) in a vast and perfectly ventilated location. It is well lighted and adequately heated during the cold season.

Two rooms are used for Hydrotherapy. They are placed under the supervision of special, highly trained doctors.

### H. TRIAT

H. Triat possessed a superb musculature. He was very elegant in form and had extremities of the most incredible delicacy. Here follow his measurements taken on July 18, 1854 by Dr. Castel: height: 1 meter 79, neck: 45 cm., chest: 1 m. 24, biceps: 41 cm., fist: 17 cm., waist: 83 cm., hips: 1 m. 05, thigh: 73 cm., calf: 44 cm., knee: 22 cm., hand length: 17 cm., foot length: 27 cm., weight: 95 kilos.

Here are the feats which Triat performed with his barbells and his weights. He lifted a barbell weighing 101 kilos a single time with two hands. He correctly curled a 32-kilo dumbbell while with his left shoulder rested against a wall and his left foot was 45 centimeters from the wall. Triat also lifted a weight of over 1,000 kilos on his back, his hands supported by a trestle. He was also a very good tumbler, and Triat was able to jump over an ordinary horse. He did three one-arm pushups. He lifted 150 kilos with his teeth, juggled admirably with medium sized balls, and was a distinguished balancer; balancing on a horizontal bar on one foot he performed an effortless lift of two 45-kilo dumbbells.

Triat also performed a remarkable feat which no other person has ever duplicated: using a little iron column, he assumed the flag position with his right hand below and his left hand above and his body extended horizontally. Triat then released his right hand and smoothly lowered his body while thus supporting his entire weight on the arm that was bent.

All of these deeds were performed in front of witnesses, and the latter feat was the object of an affidavit signed by the singer Darcier (a very strong man in his own right), by d'Elchingen, the Emperor's aide de camp (who died after becoming general of a division), by Prince Murat, Charette, Edmond Dam, Franconi, and many others.

Triat had a considerable grip strength, in fact one could say that Triat never released anything he seized until he wanted to. Here is an anecdote to prove that statement: Around 1856 or 1857 a troupe of wrestlers came to Paris (perhaps the first Rossignol-Rollin troupe).<sup>1</sup> In this group there were two brothers named Blas and Bonnet Lebeuf of Nantes. One day these two provoked the great strongman by saying that Triat had only gripped little sissy girls by the wrist, and that if he were to grab hold of a real man...and so on and so forth. In response, Triat offered to take both men by the hand one in each of his two fists. They accepted. Despite their contortions and their cries for help, these two men simply could not pry themselves loose

from Triat's grip, and it was only after they begged for mercy that their adversary released them. They later found that the skin of each of their wrists was swollen like a bracelet where Triat had gripped them.

Triat had a unique training method for developing his grip strength. He always had one or two rubber balls with him, and he pressed and kneaded these balls while he walked, read, or did other things.

Triat's training techniques were very complex since he had different exercises for each person. He had condensed a bit of everything in his floor exercises for he had to deal with many different types of people, from children and ladies to young men and the elderly. These floor exercises are the ones he used for men:

**FREE HAND EXERCISES** — arm rotation, leg lunges, knee bends etc.

**SIX-KILO GLOBE BARBELLS** — putting the bar behind the neck and the back, twists, exercises on the balance beam, etc.

**RUNNING** — gymnastic walking, hopping, side stepping, jumping

**LIGHT DUMBELLS** — Thrusts in all directions, always alternating,

body bends, etc.

**LIGHT BARBELLS** — walking with resistance, lifting the arms with a half twist etc.

**HEAVY DUMBELLS AND BARBELLS** — snatching, swing-lifting, pressing, cleaning, etc.

**PHYSIQUE POSES** — among which is that of "The Gladiator;" lifting of one gymnast by another.

Each student in these lessons does only those exercises which Triat tells him to do (at least at the beginning). Later the student does them all. We can assure our readers that when one did a complete lesson, finishing with the 15-kilo dumbbells, especially on the days when Triat took command, one would have had quite enough. In less than half an hour the student would be drenched in an abundant perspiration and ready to head off to the showers at the end. Triat was very partial to these obligatory showers, and he even included rubdowns with a horsehair glove. The exercises were less strenuous for women and children.<sup>2</sup>

When Triat directed the lesson, he was attired in tights and a costume from the time of King François 1st which emphasized his male beauty and his gentle, Christlike appearance in long hair that floated freely on his Herculean shoulders. His students also wore tights dyed the color of ox blood.

Triat's precursors were Colonel Amoros (1770-1848), Clia (1782-1854), Dally (1795-1862), Laisne' (1811-May 1896), and D'Argy (1803-1870). These men, however, used only the balance beam, trapeze, rings, and other gymnastic apparatuses: they had no use for dumbbells except those of the lightest weight.

Triat encouraged the use of dumbbells and invented the two-handed barbell. He devised many exercises for his students using 6-kilo globe barbells. On the subject of heavy and medium weights, Triat never wanted to see a weight simply dropped after it had been lifted. He demanded that the weight be brought down slowly, teaching that the descent of a weight did just as much good as the ascent.

It was Triat who had introduced to France dumbbells, globe barbells and especially (we particularly insist on this) pulley apparatuses with every sort of combination. He had in a special room in his gymnasium at least 150 sorts of pulleys in order to work every part of the body and to deal with all cases of orthopedic and curative gymnastics. Several unscrupulous people have claimed these ideas as their own and have taken out patents under their own names as the

inventors without giving credit to Triat. Triat is also the inventor of a wealth of extremely ingenious apparatuses all of which mark him as a master.

Later Triat opened all other gymnasium at 22 Rue du Bouloi, but no matter where he went, dumbbells were always of the utmost importance in his method. Triat himself had unforgettable strength, for he twice lifted a 91-kilo dumbbell in his right hand and an 84-kilo bell in his left.

Triat has left practically nothing in writing. Even so, he had written a great deal, but disheartened by human ingratitude, he destroyed everything—plans, studies, notes, observations—a little before his death. It is most unfortunate that this should be the case. He had, however, published a book in 1857 in collaboration with Napoleon Dally.<sup>3</sup>

Triat did not use trained gymnasts as instructors, instead he educated them himself from start to finish. These included his nephew Laplanche (who died at Montpellier where he was director of the Grand Gymnasium), Solérol (who passed away at Paris in 1896), and Leon Martin (died in Paris).

Triat loved to repeat certain maxims, for example:

"Exercise is not exhaustion."

"Working out is not working to death."

"The body's strength, carefully directed, is a source of moral as well as physical beauty."

Triat had founded his gymnasium in Brussels in order to train educators of both sexes. In his gymnasium on the Avenue Montaigne, he had two teachers for ladies: Misses Allix (Augustine) [1838-1901] and Mathilde who loved her teacher, and in turn was loved by him.

Eugene Paz had been a student of Triat.<sup>4</sup>

The recently deceased Nicolas (1838-1901) who owned the gymnasium in the Rue de Rome in Paris was also one of Triat's students.

At the world's fair of 1878 Triat exhibited a model of his gymnasium. This was a miniature of his huge establishment in the Avenue Montaigne. He had it made by the cabinet maker, Burlot, on the Rue Saint-Lazare.

Triat's finest project was the idea of founding a teaching college of rational gymnastics on the island of Billancourt just a short distance from Paris. Triat had plans drawn up as well as an engraved illustration of this model establishment before submitting the proposal to the government. Unfortunately, the officials preferred to construct a military armory on the island of Billancourt rather than creating a school that would turn out students who would go out into France and spread the good news about Triat's excellent system. If this project had succeeded, thousands of invalids would never have encumbered our hospitals, millions of francs would not have had to be spent to cure them, and much suffering could have been averted.

The island of Billancourt would have had paths for running and for cycling, the river for swimming and canoeing, a school for gymnastics and physical culture, and all this at the very gates of Paris. The plan was simply too easy to accomplish, and that is why the project came to nothing. It was a concept of vast implications, but Triat had not counted on the hostility of the powers that be and with the criminal indifference of those who *should* have put betterment of the nation above everything else.

Triat was among the first who understood that it is far preferable to prevent disorders at an early age than to cure them at a later time. He believed that by establishing model gymnasiums (rather than constructing new hospitals) he could improve the physical state

of his contemporaries by exercise and hygiene. In this way he could combat the unhealthy or unsanitary conditions which had been caused by modern life.

What a fortune in time and money has been spent trying to cure the rickety and to heal the consumptive! Even when medical science does manage to save a few of these unfortunates, they are burdened with weakness, degeneration, and ulcerous lesions for the rest of their lives. Who can say how many of these victims could have been rescued from their sorry lot if from childhood they had had the advantage of physical education (and by physical education we mean hygiene and exercise)? How many of these victims, I ask, could have been saved from infirmity if they had had more fresh air and more light? Their bodies could have profited by a few simple rules of hygiene and by the application of that which is both a panacea for all physical degeneration and a supreme antidote to all morbid dispositions: Physical Culture!

Unfortunately, the myopic opponents who greeted Triat and his plans were always ready to rise up against anyone who advocated building a teaching college for physical culture since they feared this would make additional hospitals completely useless! Although it is true that Triat's plans were aborted, at a distance of nearly fifty years his concepts are all the more noteworthy. Triat devised his theories in one fell swoop at a time when the sporting ideal had not yet been accepted as it is in our days; his pioneering efforts have thus become an important part of modern life.

Triat's project has lately been revived in a form that is more in line with the progress that has come about in sport. This latest incarnation will take the form of a Palace of Sport constructed in the Champ-de-Mars where it will offer the best possible equipment and the finest technical conditions.

Hippolyte Mayon was one of those who knew Triat. He was born in 1852 and is the director and proprietor of the gymnasium on the Rue de Rome in Paris. Mayon has retained a profound respect for the good man who was Triat, and he continues to speak of his departed friend with the tenderest of emotions. Mr. Mayon purchased the various weights from the great man's gymnasium, and all of these are stamped with Triat's name. Most notable are the two huge dumbbells which one can see on the left in the engraving of Triat's gymnasium. These are the same weights which Triat would lift when he had a distinguished visitor to his premises. These two dumbbells are the only remaining proof of Triat's abilities. Here was a man who was one of the precursors of the sporting movement and who guided future generations toward a better and more comely existence. We will no longer allow the names of those who contributed to making life easier remain in oblivion, for with his athletic physique, Triat imparted to all the tranquil goodness which is the endowment of the real strongman. Just as we give credit to the wise men who have formed society's fabric, we must also render justice to the artisans of physical health and beauty for they have created the greatest good without which there would be no enjoyment of life.

At the death of the master, Mayon bought Triat's library, papers, receipts, and other materials. Mayon can thus give witness to the numberless difficulties recounted by Triat in order to overcome the apathy of his contemporaries. It was while consulting these papers that Mayon gained a true appreciation for the creator of scientific gymnastics, for Triat had always worked for the ideal and not for himself. As soon as he had the means, he invented pulley machines and counterweight devices which the two cabinet makers, Viot and Burlot, made for him. These devices for improving the human race were very expensive, and toward the end, this good man ran up a colossal bill and was reduced to living in a state of near misery.

Mayon still has the clock which stood in Triat's great gymnasium, and he showed it to us. We could not help considering with sincere melancholy, that this timepiece had at one time sounded the hours triumphantly as it witnessed the members invading the gymnasium in order to build up their muscles. But the clock had also rung

out the sad, fateful hours when Triat saw his dreams of glory take flight in a lowering sky without ever having his great plans for the regeneration of all mankind come to fruition.

Somber and bitter were the final hours of this great man. His haggard face mirrored the cruel blows of fate that had descended upon him. He had known the liveliest earthly emotions and the most energetic passions, the most ardent joys, satisfied ambition, and ecstatic love (for Triat had been a handsome man) only to have them bartered by Fate for a run of dismal luck and torments aplenty. And after having sacrificed the best years of his life in order to reform his fellow human beings, he came at last to his end. Triat passed away in a barren attic, alone and abandoned by all, without even the hand of a friend to close his eyes.

Triat died a pauper, but the father of the two Allix sisters who had been female instructors at Triat's Gymnasium took his corpse and laid it in their family's crypt in the Cimetière du Nord. Unfortunately, the great man's name was not even inscribed on the tombstone. Since he was, alas, penniless, everything leads us to believe that the great pioneer's body would otherwise have been thrown into a common grave with the beggars, vagabonds, and other anonymous derelicts of life.

Poor great Triat! From on high you might see today's systems of physical education floundering about, and you might hear the worthless advice of the self-proclaimed professors of physical culture. If so, you might well regret the time that you wasted here below attempting to give happiness to your pupils and trying to turn your fellow citizens into a strong, energetic, and healthy nation.

Ours is a country where numerous well-formed children should be able to look across the border quite fearlessly at the Kaiser's 60 million vigorous subjects (double that of our own) who wait impatiently for the time when they can take advantage of their numbers. It is this advantage that will allow our nearby adversaries to put an end to our political quarrels, our silly amusements, and our frivolous occupations once and for all. Ours is currently a land where fashion, theater, and horse racing take precedence over questions of national vitality. We might therefore soon find our neighbors taking possession of our beautiful country in the name of the only earthly law that they understand: the law of the jungle.

#### Notes

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<sup>1</sup>Rossignol-Rollin [1821-1873] was a talented and much-loved theatrical manager who traveled around Europe in the early decades of the Nineteenth Century with a troupe of performing strongmen and wrestlers. It was largely thanks to this golden-tongued manager that professional strongmen developed a wide audience in France. Rossignol-Rollin was a quintessential impresario, as Desbonnet confirmed in *The Kings of Strength*. "His impressive volubility and his daring originality surprised Paris, the provinces, and foreign lands." p. 93

<sup>2</sup>Triat was careful about training the different groups of students in separate classes. He eventually had separate classes even for thin and obese pupils. According to Desbonnet in *Comment On Devient Athlète*, "Triat was particularly energetic with his overweight pupils. The lesson which he gave them was terribly hard. Working with their torsos covered in thick woolen jerseys, they left the floor literally drenched in sweat. . . The prosperous Second Empire bellies that he thereby reduced were numberless!" p. 6.

<sup>3</sup>Desbonnet: *Kinesiology or the Science of Movement* explains in simple terms the exact solution to one of physical culture's most complex problems.

<sup>4</sup>Eugène Paz established his gymnasium on the Rue des Martyrs in 1866. It was a conscious (and apparently unacknowledged) imitation of the Triat establishment. Paz marked the opening of his gymnasium with a magnificent display of wrestling, but when that had been done, he abandoned pugilism to devote himself to his real interest: curative gymnastics. Desbonnet, *Kings of Strength*, 43-45.

# Physical Exercise and Training In Ancient Jewish Lore

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Hygiene was in ancient times much more developed than people imagine. Physicians, philosophers, and even theologians admonished their audience (or patients) to adopt a healthy way of life. The Jewish medieval authority Maimonides (twelfth century), who was a trained physician, included detailed suggestions on how to live a healthy life in his theological masterpiece *Mishneh Thora*. Maimonides warns against loss of strength that may result from living a sedentary life and from lack of physical exercise. Even in the Bible, the book Ecclesiastes puts sedentary scholars on their guard: "Much study is a weariness of the flesh" [Eccl. 12: 12]. A talmudic statement seemingly suggests that the physical strength of scholars had diminished from generation to generation: "From the time of Moses till the generation of Rabban Gamliel the students stood up while learning the law. After the death of R. Gamliel disease (or weakness) came down on the world, and they learned while being seated" [b. Megillah 21a]. Rabbi Yohanan gave the following advice: "Do not sit too much, it provokes hemorrhoids; do not stand too much, this is harmful to the heart; do not walk too much, this is injurious to the eyes." He accordingly advised to sit one third, stand one third, and walk one third of the way [b. Kethubot 111a]. Rabbi Judah remarked that people and animals who live in a town where there are many ascents and descents (acclivity) die in half their days. At second thought, he says, no, they do not really die, they age prematurely [b. Erubin 56a]. Other sages stated: "Whoever eats and does not walk thereafter at least four cubits, the food he ate will rot (i.e. will not be digested), which will bring forth foul odor from the mouth" [b. Shabbat 41a]. Not only digestion, sleep as well is influenced by activity, as is stated in Ecclesiastes: "Sweet is the sleep of a working (i.e., physically active) man, whether he eats little or much: but the repletion of the rich (i.e., idle) will prevent him from sleeping" [Eccl. 5: 11].

After this data on the place of physical exercise in hygiene, let us consider physical training and fitness in ancient Jewish lore. Obviously, Jews pertaining to the Pharisaic sect did not visit Roman (or Herodian) amphitheaters and the Sages several times insisted that a Jew should not visit the heathen theaters and circuses.<sup>1</sup> The context in the Talmud is more in the modern sense of entertainment (illusion, magic, etc.) than in the Greco-Roman sense of gymnastics, or gladiators, or fighting animals. If the Jews were in principle rather encouraged to study the law than to indulge in physical exercise, keeping the body in good shape was not neglected, or even considered inferior to intellectual activity.

Wherefrom do we know that the Almighty feels honored by the presence of people of high (impressive) stature (ba 'alei gomah)? From a statement of the prophet Amos (2:0): "Yet I destroyed the Emorite before them, whose height was like the height of the cedars, and he was strong as the oaks." The talmudic text does not elaborate, but it seems clear that the author of this statement had in mind what Amos added further in the same chapter while foretelling that the Lord would spare none of his unfaithful people: ". . . The strong shall not retain his force, nor shall the mighty man deliver himself; not shall he who handles the bow stand; and he who is swift in foot shall not deliver himself; nor shall he who rides the horse deliver himself. . ." (Amos, 14:15). There are in this quote quite a number of references to physical exercise, to running, riding, drawing the bow, and to physical strength which of course is of no avail against the Lord's wrath, but nonetheless "honor the Lord."

"The glory of young men is strength" says Proverb 20:29, adding "and the beauty of old men is their white hair." Another

proverb (which may be variously interpreted) says: "A wise man is strong, and a man of knowledge increases strength" (Proverbs, 24:5).

Turning now to sports and physical training, there are in the Bible a number of references to running and racing. For instance, Samuel, explaining to the people the practices of kings, warns them that the king will take their sons to be his horsemen, and "some shall run before his chariot" (I Sam. 8: 11). Indeed, when Absalom usurped the throne of his father David, he had chariots and horses prepared, "and fifty men to run before him" (II Sam. 15:1). At the court of king Assuerus (Artaxerxes) there were also runners who conveyed letters to remote provinces (cf. Esther 3: 15.). In the times of Ezechias there were as well such postal runners who brought letters from the king "from city to city" (II Chron. 30: 6: 10). Some warriors of the tribe of Gad were particularly "apt for battle" among David's small army, and were "as swift as staggards [stags] upon the mountains" (I Chron. 12:9).

It is stated in the Talmud that "the runners are allowed to go out on the Sabbath day with their special dress over their shoulder. Eyen people who are not professional runners are allowed to do so."<sup>2</sup> Another sage recalls a saying of the prophet Jeremiah: "If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses?" This parable is expanded in the Talmud into the following story: "A man affirmed: 'I am able to run three Persian miles before a bunch of horses in a marshy region;' there came forward a footman who ran before him for three (shorter) miles on dry land and he was exhausted."<sup>3</sup> So they said to him: 'If this was the result when you ran before a footman, what would it have been before horses! If on a distance of three ordinary miles, what on a distance of three Persian miles? If on dry land, what would have happened on marshy ground!'"<sup>4</sup> Another story is told in tractate Niddah about a sage who ran after a deer but was unable to catch up with it.<sup>5</sup> In Hellenistic times, Jews of Judaea were involved in running competitions and in chariot races. For instance, an inscription found at Aphrodisias in Caria, and dating back to the times of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, tells us that among the names of victorious competitors to a race, there were several names of sportsmen coming from Palestinian cities.<sup>6</sup>

From Flavius Josephus we learn that Herodes-the-Great built theaters and a hippodrome. He established athletic contests every fifth year in honor of Caesar (Ant. XV, 268). Josephus states that "the use of such buildings and the exhibition of such performances have not been traditional with the Jews" (Ant. XV, 268). Herod also organized races of two-horse and four-horse chariots, as well as mounted horse-races (Ant. XV, 270). King Herod had two bodyguards who were esteemed for their athletic skills, and after having been dismissed from the guard they became instructors in gymnastics and received gold and other gifts (Ant. XVI, 314).<sup>7</sup>

The Jewish people, from the first moment they set foot on the Holy Land, were exposed to constant wars; martial arts and exercise were therefore practiced no less than in neighboring cultures. We are informed that David was an expert in throwing stones with his sling (I Sam. 17:40). Spear-throwing was also widely practiced. There was near Jerusalem a place called Goren Kidon which may have been a training ground for spearlancers.<sup>8</sup> The practice of bow and arrows was perhaps the most popular martial art. David's friend Jonathan, in order to warn him off from his own father, King Saul's, wrath, devised a special way of throwing the arrows "at a mark" (I Sam. 20:20). A skilled archer is a symbol of power and strength, as featured in Psalms: "As arrows in the hands of a mighty

man, so are the children of one's youth: happy is the man who has his quiver full of them: they shall not be put to shame, they shall speak with their enemies at the gate" (Ps. 127:34-5). Josephus informs us about a Jewish soldier in the army of Alexander named Meshullam (Mosollamos) who was "a very intelligent man, robust, and, by common consent, the very best of bowmen, whether Greek or barbarian" (Ag. Apion 1,201).<sup>10</sup>

Fencing is also documented in biblical times. There happened once a frightening passage of arms between twelve youths of the house of Ish-boshet (Saul's son) and twelve servants of David. This was supposed to be 'play,' but it became a slaughter. "They caught everyone his fellow by the head, and thrust his sword in his fellow's side; so they fell down together" (II Sam. 2:16). The weapon used was the sword (herev), but lances were used as well.<sup>11</sup>

Leaving wars and battles, let us consider other physical activities, such as dancing, swimming, rowing, the ball-game and gymnastics. "Let Israel rejoice in Him who made him. . . Let them praise his name in the dance. . ." writes the Psalmist (Ps. 149:2-3).<sup>12</sup> But the Children of Israel also danced around the Golden Calf (Ex. 32:19). Young girls particularly enjoy dancing (Jer. 31:3). Eighty varieties of dancing were known to Pharaoh's daughter, according to the Midrash (Levit, Rabba 12:4).

There may be found in the Bible several references to swimming, as in Isaiah: When Moab will be trodden down as straw in the dunghill, "he shall spread out his hands in the midst of it, as he that swims spreads out his hands to swim" (Isa. 25:10-11).<sup>13</sup> It is stated in the Talmud that a father should teach his son to swim (b. Kidushin 29a, 30b).<sup>14</sup> People used a kind of barrel (havith) while learning to swim (Makkoth 36b).

No actual mention of rowing as an entertainment can be found in the Bible. Isaiah, refers to 'galleys with oars,' although nothing proves that they were owned by Israelites (Isa. 33:21).

Ball games were seemingly popular in talmudic times. The Tosefta describes those who play with a ball (kaddur) and their ball escapes to the open space (reshuth ha-rabim) on the Sabbath-day (Tos. Shabbat X (XI): 10; also IX(X): 6).<sup>15</sup>

Gymnastics includes a number of physical exercises, although it is ridiculous to consider the patriarch Jacob a trained weightlifter owing to the fact that he lifted (alone), or rather rolled the heavy stone from over the well, in order to water the flock of Rachel (Gen. 29:8-10). Or to present him as a successful wrestler, as he fought a man (or an angel?) throughout the night, and prevailed (Gen. 32:25-26). More interesting is a remark of Jerome (based on Zach. 12:3), which indicates that there was an old custom in the towns of Palestine to use heavy round stones in order to try one's force in lifting them up.<sup>16</sup> High jumping is alluded to in Psalms: "For by thee I run through a troop, and by the lord's help I leap over a wall" (Ps. 18:30)<sup>17</sup> It was customary to enjoy some physical exercise after a (warm) although the term "mit' amelin" is sometimes interpreted as having massages performed, rather than doing exercise (b. Shabbat 147b). The eleventh-century commentator R. Hananel explains: people used to extend and bend their arms and legs, thus warming themselves up and sweating, which was a kind of medical nostrum.<sup>18</sup>

To sum up, the ancient Hebrews and the Jews in the classical and Byzantine period indeed shunned on the one side the cult of bodily beauty and strength (as pertaining to the Greco-Roman culture). On the other hand, they encouraged attaining bodily fitness. Even Tacitus, who can hardly be considered a philosemite, remarked: "Their males have healthy bodies, able to cope with hardships."<sup>19</sup>

Mainonides also provides additional stimulating data that are relevant to our topic. From his medical work, *The Aphorisms of Moses (Pirkei Moshe)* come a few statements contained in Chapter Eighteen which deal mainly with physical exercise:

**18.2** *The best kind of physical exercise is one which tires the body while straightening the soul and making it happy, as for instance hunting, or playing with the ball. Such psychological effects may even cure diseases.*

**18.4** *The best and most successful exercise is the one which*

*evacuates what is stored deep into the body (fat? humors?).*

**18.9** *Too violent exercises dry up and harden the body; they diminish sensitivity and intelligence. Thus wrestlers, weight lifters or those carrying heavy burdens are of low intelligence.*

**18.13** *The time most suitable for physical exercise is after complete digestion of the evening meal*

**18.11** *Old people need exercise as they need to warm up their body. Neither should they remain motionless nor too active. Too much exercise would cause their frail warmth to cool down to extinction.*

The first quote is particularly enlightening. Physical exercise should be practiced not just in order to tire the body, but it should also make the soul happy. This is how sports should be practiced, and we know only too well that in modern times this ideal situation has sadly deteriorated. As it seems, exercise is perhaps in a sense "too violent" and therefore "diminishes sensitivity and intelligence."

From Maimonides' theological (halakhic) work *Mishneh Thora*, we shall pick out a striking text on 'walking'. Maimonides holds that a man should be in full control of his life, and walking is one manifestation of one's way of life. Maimonides therefore writes:

"A wise man should not walk with a proud posture and outstretched neck [cf. Isa. 3:16]. He should not walk with mannerism bringing heel to toe, as do women and haughty people. Neither should he run about in the street as do lunatics. One should not droop while walking, looking like hunchbacks, but look downwards like being in prayer. His gait in the street should be that of someone who is occupied with his affairs. From the way one walks in the street it may be recognized whether he is wise and thoughtful or stupid and foolish." [Hilkhot De'ot, Ch. 4(15)].

Paraphrasing and expanding talmudic lore, Maimonides warned the scholars quite clearly: "Whoever is always seated and does no physical exercise—even if he eats only healthy food and follows medical advice—will always be sickly and weak."<sup>20</sup> Should we not even today listen to the voice of our great medieval scholar?

**Reprinted from: Israel Journal of Sports Medicine (October 1994): 147-150.**

<sup>1</sup>See B. Abodah Zara 18B; Tos. Avodah Zarah 2: 5-7.

<sup>2</sup>See b. Shabbat 147a and Tos. Shabbat V (VI): 11.

<sup>3</sup>A Persian mile was four times longer than the ordinary mile (= 2000 cubits).

<sup>4</sup>Sanchdrin 96a.

<sup>5</sup>Niddah 24b.

<sup>6</sup>Quoted in Emil Schuerer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* rev. ed., (Edinburgh: Clark, 1973), I:45ff. Schuerer also quotes a work entitled *Expositio totius mundi*, by an unknown author of the fourth century in which a variety of sports and contests that were practised in the most important cities of Syria are listed.

<sup>7</sup>See my *Medicine and Hygiene in the Works of Flavius Josephus* (Brill: Leiden, 1994), 65.

<sup>8</sup>See 1. Chron. 13:9. "Kidon" is the Hebrew word for spear.

<sup>9</sup>The word "hez" (arrow) appears more than fifty times in the Hebrew Bible. For the mark for arrow-throwing see also Lam. 3:12.

<sup>10</sup>This supposed to be a quote from a work of Hecataeus of Abdera (4th-3rd cent. B.C.E.), a contemporary of King Alexander and Ptolemaeus.

<sup>11</sup>See in the same chapter (11 Sam. 2:23) how Abner smote Asa'el with a lance (hanith).

<sup>12</sup>See also Ps. 30:12, and the opposite in Lam. 5:15.

<sup>13</sup>See also Ez. 47:5; I Macc. 9:48.

<sup>14</sup>Also Tos. Kidushin 1:11; Midrash Kohelet Rabba to 9:9.

<sup>15</sup>There are several references to ball-playing in the Midrash, even to a ball-game among girls (Kohelet Rahha to 12:11).

<sup>16</sup>See also commentary of Rashi (Rabbi Solomon Yizhaqi, eleventh century) on I Kings 1:9 where the text speaks of a place called 'stone of Zohelath'.

<sup>17</sup>Repeated in 11 Sam. 22:30. See also Zeph. 1:9 (jumping over the threshold).

<sup>18</sup>Rabbi Hananel relates to b. Shabbat 147b.

<sup>19</sup>Tacitus, *Histories* V:6; (London: Heinemann, 1969), 185.

<sup>20</sup>Maimonides adds: "As lone as a man does some physical exercise and is active physically, as long as he is not overeating, and his bowel-movements are easy, he will not get sick and his strength will increase" (Mishneh Thora, Hilkhot De'ot, 4: 14-15).



**Ed Note: Leo Stern’s San Diego gym celebrated its fiftieth anniversary this past summer. The following report is excerpted from Jeannie Brooks’ article in the San Diego Union-Tribune.**

In the 1980s, Leo Stern made a huge concession to modern expectations of climate control at his second-floor walk-up gym in North Park. He did so after 40 years of hot-as-blazes summers and nothing but windows shoved up for air.

New fitness centers that had sprung up around the city boasted central air conditioning. They pumped waves of coolness over their members, men and women in color-coordinated Spandex.

Stern bought a few electric fans.

This is the kind of hew-to-the-course management style that, despite half a century of gusting trends, has preserved Stern’s Gym in a nearly pristine state—its decor what you might call *ambiance de iron*.

Stern first opened the gym for business May, 13, 1946, on Menlo Avenue near Hoover High School. “I worked ninety hours a week for the first month,” he recalled “and I made \$50.”

It would be an understatement to say weightlifting was not popular. In fact, Stern said, “it was frowned upon. People didn’t understand it. We were ridiculed for working out with weights.”

But Stern and a small group of friends persisted. “We did it because we enjoyed it. We believed in what we were doing.” And, in any case, “I didn’t give a damn what anybody else thought.”

To promote the gym and the sport, he arranged weightlifting demonstrations like “The Symphony of Strength,” performed at Hoover in 1947.

“You couldn’t just have a couple of strong guys come out and lift, Stern said “It would be too boring.” So the symphony included a professional hand-balancing act, a juggler, a concert pianist and a five-piece band.

At the end of its first year, Stern’s Gym needed more space. Stern leased the second floor of a building on Granada Avenue in North Park. Only the previous tenant refused to vacate the premises.

Stern and pals bided their time. When the ex-tenant left the building one day, they moved his bowling alley and pool hall out, and moved the gym in—where it has remained ever since.

Below the gym in those days was a kosher chicken slaughterhouse. “The odor was so bad in the summertime that people walked on the other side of the street,” Stern remembered. “But the rent was cheap.”

At five P.M. each day, when the rendering truck drove up, weightlifters rushed across the gym floor to shut the windows to the stink of it.

For about twenty years, Stern’s Gym had no heat. “It was so cold in the winter, sometimes the guys had to wear gloves,” Stern recalled.

“I had to put heat in about the ‘60s,” he said. “There were so many complaints, and the membership dropped.”

The ‘70s brought large mirrors to Stern’s Gym, a fashion that had begun in New York in the early 1900s.

The ‘80s brought music—for a while, until the aggrava-

tion got to be too much for Stern “I’d be walking down the street,” he explained, “and somebody’d come out on the fire escape and yell at me to change the music.”

He yanked the music out instead.

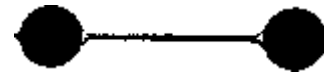
“They were up there to work out,” he said. “They weren’t up there for the music. I wasn’t running a music hall.”

Over the years, serious bodybuilders came through the doors of Stern’s Gym regularly. Lou Ferrigno, who once starred on television as “The Incredible Hulk,” has worked out there.

So has John Davis, a 1940s and ‘50s world champion weightlifter, and bodybuilder/movie star Arnold Schwarzenegger. And Bill Pearl, of course. And a lot of San Diego Chargers. And so did Sherman Brown, a 44-year-old former competitive weightlifter and member of the Detroit Lions, who bought the gym on April 15, 1994.

Brown was a kid in Jackson, Mississippi, when he first came across the name Leo Stern in a muscle magazine. Later, he lifted in Leo Stern-sponsored competitions. Stern’s Gym, Brown said, is “known across the country.”

Stern had sold the place in June 1989. The owner between him and Brown reintroduced music and allowed, for the first time, women to join. There are now 422 members, 75 of whom are women.



**Dear IGH:**

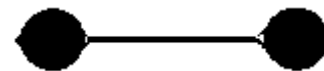
This fall I will give a lecture about the history of the training of bodybuilding, in Rome at the First Seminar of the European committee for the History of Sport (CESH).

Searching for sources on that subject I wondered about the discussion in popular bodybuilding books, that George Hackenschmidt “invented” the leg press Hackenschmidt-machine. Although many believe this to be fact, the books of Hackenschmidt himself, which I looked at, don’t mention it. The bodybuilders from about 1900 normally did not use machines but dumbbells and barbells.

Can you tell me anything about that?

**Bernd Wedemeyer  
Gottingen, Germany**

**Like you, Bernd, we have never seen any evidence to prove that Hackenschmidt invented the Hack Squat machine. Whether he was the first to perform the exercise which came to be known as the Hack Squat (a very erect squat done on the toes while holding a barbell behind the body and against the tops of the thighs) is hard to say with certainty, but it would seem that he has the best claim on the honor.**



**Dear IGH:**

You may remember that I told you I had an old Joe Bonomo book of free-hand exercises and that I would donate it to the Todd-McLean collection if I could find it. I looked several times without success, but today I was tossing out stuff from old files and lo-and-behold, there it was!

It is surprisingly difficult for me to part with this because as I look through it I get the nostalgic memories of what it was like when I first bought it—for 25 cents! I was 14 in 1940 and Jim Lorimer and I had just discovered barbell training. Actually, Jim made the discovery when we were still 13, when he saw some husky older guys lifting in a garage in Bristol, near his uncle’s home. He couldn’t wait to get back and tell me about it, because we had in mind to “get big

and strong” so we could make the football team. In the back of the Bonomo book you’ll see before-and-after measurements. I had taken the first measurements shortly after we started exercising. I think I might have been still 13, but I did weigh 165 while playing junior high football in ninth grade at age 14 and it was about that time that I visited the Trenton YMCA and found I could clean and jerk 125 pounds—a six-foot exercise bar with a pair of 50-pound plates and collars. I had begun to exercise crudely with a homemade “barbell” consisting of a wooden handle with a collection of sledge hammer heads on each end. My father had been a stone-cutter (as had my grandfather when he immigrated from Aberdeen, “The Granite City,” in Scotland) so he had quite a few big hammers. My parents had given me a pair of York 40-pound adjustable dumbbells for my 14th birthday and Jim’s parents gave him a York barbell. We often combined the plates so we could lift “heavy.”

We and several of our friends—who became the nucleus of a football team that won conference championships for two years, 1942 and ‘43—made fair progress in building strength, though our training was crude, based on reading *Strength & Health*, and consisted mostly of our version of the Olympic lifts. Jim was always a good presser, with natural pressing leverage, and he was the first of us to press body weight. I was the only one of our group to get 200+ overhead (jerk), but a couple of our backs jerked 180 (Reed Pratt, weighing 145) and 190 (Bob Neeld weighing 160). I lifted 250 as a 17-year old high school senior, weighing 190-195, continentalizing the weight to my shoulders. (Jerked 250 for the last time at 55—15 years ago!) Incidentally, Jim Lorimer and I were co-captains of the football team as seniors. I was a starter for three years and he for two. We weren’t scored on in our conference in our junior and senior years, though as seniors we dropped our opening game to Trenton High School by 0-6. Trenton graduated more than 1000 seniors that year; we had 68 in our graduating class.

Enough reminiscing. Hope you like the Bonomo book.

**Jim Murray**  
Morrisville, PA

**We liked the book very much but we liked the letter better. What an amazing coincidence that two boys who were best friends and football teammates in high school and who learned to lift weights together in the days when lifting weights was frowned upon, particularly in sports, would each go on to make such significant, if different, contributions to the iron game. Jim Murray, as most readers know, served admirably as the managing editor of *Strength & Health* during several of that magazine’s glory years. He also co-authored, with Dr. Peter Karpovich, the groundbreaking book, *Weight Training for Athletics*. The other Jim—Lorimer—distinguished himself in several ways in the game, most recently (and famously) as the ramrod and organizer since its inception of the hugely successful Arnold Classic.**



Dear IGH:

I thought I had better drop you a line. I’m enclosing a renewal for *Iron Game History*. I also am enclosing the picture of Andy Jackson, with me, in his living room. **Andy was 91 on August 27th and my 60th birthday was Sept. 1st. [The photo was taken in the summer of 1995].**

Like many of the Iron Game Fraternity I came to know Andy through his business. My first order was for a pair of Milo Duplex Globes, a five ft. steel bar, and special collars that Andy had designed to fit the globes. This was in the spring of 1970.

I soon became a regular visitor to Andy’s place. I would get some new globe equipment or buy some old books and magazines and we would usually spend two or three hours talking about old time strongmen and wrestlers, steamboats, railroads, and things in general.

Andy and I had both had brief flings at pro-wrestling. Andy tried his hand at it in the thirties. He weighed about 175 pounds at the time. Andy was a good wrestler but says that when they tried to match him with Man Mountain Dean, he felt he had better call it quits. His bouts were in Laurel Gardens in Newark, NJ. It turned out that I also had some bouts there in the fifties.

You know that Andy and John Grimek were friends. Andy told me that John wanted to work for Andy, but Andy didn’t have the kind of job John wanted—working in an office. For most of the 40 years Andy was in the barbell business, he had a one man operation. His plates were cast in the foundry in Hamburg, PA, and shipped to Springfield. Andy would carry the weights from his driveway downstairs to his basement machine shop, finish them and then bring them back outside and put the weights and finished bars together. He then took the sets to the freight agents to send to the customers.

Andy also wrote personal friendly letters to his customers. He built a lot of good will. At one time *Consumer Reports* rated Jackson’s Olympic barbell as the best on the market.

Andy’s best friend years ago was Jack Kent. Andy says Jack could one hand bent press 2.50 lbs. any time in street clothes with no warm-up. J.C. Hise visited Andy and deadlifted 700 lbs. Andy sold equipment to many famous strongmen including Warren Lincoln Travis, The Coney Island Strongman; Sig Klein, Bert Elliot; Joe Weider; Dan Lurie; Peary Rader; Doug Hepburn; Reg Park and Father Lange of Notre Dame.

Joe Roark now has the Jackson set that J.C. Hise once owned. Randy Strossen consulted Andy when writing his book *Super Squats*.

It was through Andy that I found out about The Association of Oldtime Barbell & Strongmen. Andy was reluctant to travel to New York City so I went as his representative.

I think Andy Jackson was a thorn in Bob Hoffman’s side. Andy said Bob wouldn’t hold back at an opportunity to knock Andy’s sets. Andy, however, had pictures of Grimek and John Davis (among others) using Jackson barbells.

I told you about Terpak and Tony Terlazzo showing Hoffman the Jackson barbell at the meet in New Jersey and asking why they had to lift on the “junk” Hoffman made.

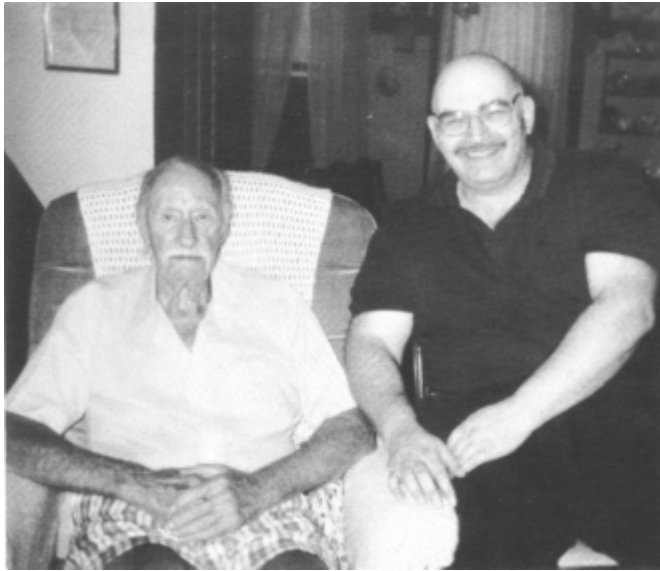
At another event in New Jersey, Andy was present when Walter Podolak (the Golden Superman) was to put on an exhibition of strength. Hoffman showed up with his crew and wanted to take over the show and upstage Podolak. Walter would have none of that, and Hoffman was so upset he wanted to fight Podolak. Luckily, cooler heads prevailed, and the show went as scheduled. Andy feels Hoffman would have received some lumps that night. Podolak was a good wrestler and strongman, and had deadlifted over six hundred pounds.

Andy always speaks highly of Peary and Mabel Rader. I’m sure much of Andy’s business came from his ads in *Iron Man*. Andy also had ads in *Physical Training Notes*, *The Ring*, *Physical Culture*, *The Newark News*, and *Mechanics Illustrated*. He also would place ads in programs of lifting and bodybuilding shows.

Although Andy isn’t as active as he was five years ago due to some health problems, he is still interested in what’s going on in the iron game. If any old timers and old customers wondered, Andy is still there.

I believe he played a very important part in iron game history. As John Grimek said to me, “He’s one of the real old timers.”

**Carl Linich**  
Poughkeepsie, NY



CARL LINICH POSES WITH ANDY JACKSON AT HIS HOME IN THE SUMMER OF 1995. JACKSON IS 90 IN THIS PHOTO.

**Dear IGH:**

We wondered if you knew about the book *Winning Ways* by Sue Macy? "A photo history of American Women in Sports" published by Henry Holt & Co. New York. Relna [Brewer McRae] received a call about it, because her friends noticed her picture on the cover. Sure enough it was on the front and back cover of the protective "jacket"—a pose Relna remembers being photographed in 1937 at Venice beach for a publicity photographic session connected with the New Years Parade in Pasadena. She was 19, and looks so healthy, in such good shape with a lovely smile on her face. She is in a flexed arms pose—front view on the front cover and back pose on the back cover—as well as one of the front pose inside the book. (It is classified as a children's book).

The city of Santa Monica is planning a great makeover of the beach area and of Palisades Park. We went to a planning commission session a couple of weeks ago, and it looks like they have actually approved installing another gymnastic and hand balancing platform similar to the one originally down there—near where it was in the past. I do not believe they will have any weightlifting; it wasn't mentioned. They looked at pictures of past activities on the platform and were seemingly impressed—they were a very alert and interested group of individuals and asked pertinent questions. We had a group of about eight individuals there including Steve Ford, who gave a nice presentation. He has been very helpful to the Alumni Muscle Beach group even though his interests also rest with the Venice group. At any rate he made a special trip from Santa Barbara where he lives and works.

Our best wishes to all of you—until later.

**Les and Pudgy Stockton**  
**Santa Monica, CA**



**Dear IGH:**

This letter is just a quick follow up to the phone conversation I had with Terry this past Wednesday. I just wanted to say thank you again for helping to clear up the difference between the "Kennedy lift" and the "Jefferson lift."

As I mentioned to Terry on the phone (and as I'm sure you guys already know), Charles G. Jefferson was born in Canaan, NH, which is only a few miles away from where I live and was born, so I would really like to know more about this fellow native New Hampshire strongman.

Thank you again.

**Chris Girard**  
**Ctr. Barnstead, NH**



**Dear IGH:**

I know you are busy so I will be brief. I collect photos of the old timers. Anyway, do you know the whereabouts of a former Mr. Universe, Leo Robert? If so, I would appreciate your help. Anyway, keep up the great work. I will continue to support your magazine for as long as you publish which I hope will be a long time. You should write a book!

**Lou Mezzanotte**  
**Laurel, MD**

**Leo Robert continues to live in the province of Quebec, as does his sister, Rejjane.**



**Dear IGH:**

Herewith is an article, written by Cliff Attenborrow, which included a description of Fritz Hannaner, instructor at Milo Brinn's Gym. I would like Fritz' name to be remembered in *Iron Game History*. We iron game men of the 1930s in London enjoyed Fritz's company whether it was at Milo's or at the open air pools such as the Serpentine Lake in Hyde Park where we dived, swam, handbalanced, tumbled, wrestled, and exercised. Fritz was also a good wrestler, handbalancer and acrobat. Fritz's parents were both Austrian although he was born in London. Fritz was a regular visitor to my brother Charlie's [called Tony in the art world] as he and Charles married sisters. He returned to Austria to live, but later came the sad news that he had died from food poisoning after having gathered some wild mushrooms and eaten them. He was a vegetarian.

As for Cliff Attenborrow, who wrote the article back in 1936; he was born in about 1904. I met him first at Pullum's Weightlifting Club where he broke a "one hand dead lift" record in the heavyweight class. He had recently retired from Guards regiment and had been known as the "Strongest Man in the British Army." He was 6'1" tall and weighed about 14 stone (196 pounds). His outstanding feature was his powerful, beautifully shaped neck. He was a goal handbalancer and I saw him do a one-hand handstand. He later became a professional all-in wrestler and, later still, worked at Morley College, Westminster where he did sculpture in stone, wood and clay. Some of his works were retained by the college for exhibition.

**Joe Assirati**  
**London, England**

**It's always a pleasure to hear from Joe Assirati one of our true iron game heroes, a man who continues to live the physical culture life into his ninth decade. The article mentioned above was: Cliff Attenborrow, "Around the Weightlifting Clubs, Sporting Arena (November: 1936), 31.**