



IRON GAME HISTORY



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The Arnold Strength Summit

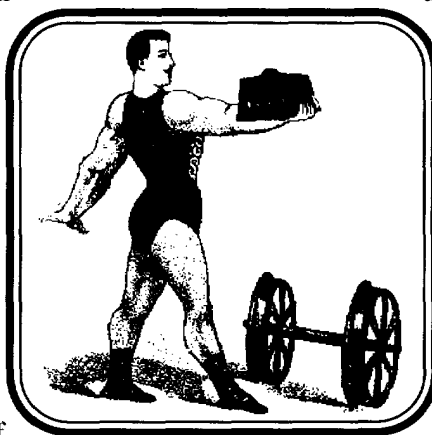
by Terry Todd

One of the principal reasons for the lateness of this edition of *Iron Game History* was the hundreds of hours I spent (and Jan spent many, too) thinking about, talking about, worrying about, and emailing people about the design and implementation of a “Summit of Strength” in Columbus, Ohio in conjunction with the Arnold Classic and Fitness Weekend. When I accepted an invitation from Arnold Schwarzenegger and Jim Lorimer to create and conduct such an event I failed to realize how difficult and time-consuming it would be, and how it would impact our ability to stay on any sort of schedule with *IGH*. But next year things should be much, much easier and less of a time sponge, and we should be able to adhere to a reasonably regular publication schedule. In any case, the Arnold Strength Classic wasn’t the only reason for the lateness of this issue; other problems included a heavy teaching and administrative load at the university (publishing *IGH* is not part of our “load”), the illness of two members of our family, a major fire that destroyed part of our home, and the shifting of part of our Physical Culture Collection from one place to another in our building because of renovations. But we hope to stay on track from now on and we greatly appreciate your patience and understanding during our hiatus. As a way of allowing all of you

to more completely understand the complexity of Arnold’s Strength Classic, we have deviated from our normal policy of staying away from traditional journalism and have provided the following detailed account of how this “Summit of Strength” was conceived and conducted.

In early March of 2001, Jan and I went to Columbus, Ohio to see and be a small part of the annual iron game extravaganza known as the Arnold Fitness Weekend. The 2001 event was the twenty-sixth year of a show conceived back in the middle ‘70s by Arnold Schwarzenegger and Jim Lorimer. Both Arnold and Jim are men of large imagination, but even those two could never have foreseen that what began as a bodybuilding show — albeit a major one — would have morphed through the years into a ten ring physical fitness circus featuring approximately ten thousand athletes in ten sports, a crowd of seventy thousand people, and a trade show with over six hundred booths selling equipment, magazines, clothing, food supplements, tapes, photos, and etc.

Jan and I had never attended the event, but in 2001 Jim and Arnold asked us to come and gave us a small booth where we could display and sell copies of *Iron Game History*. Once there, the scale of the thing



blew us away, particularly the trade show — called the Arnold Fitness Expo. Held in the huge Columbus Convention Center, the Expo opened on Friday and continued through Sunday, playing host to contests in arm wrestling, powerlifting, gymnastics, martial arts, military fitness, and, of course, bodybuilding. The cavernous room in which the trade show was set up featured a 48' x 48' raised stage, flanked on either side by a Jumbotron screen and a state of the art sound system. This stage was the scene of a continuing series of exhibitions and competitions throughout the three days of the Expo, and at any given time — depending on the event — crowds

of between one thousand and ten thousand would be watching.

One evening during our 2001 visit, in a casual conversation involving Jim and Arnold, the subject of “strongman” shows came up, and I offered my take on the ESPN event called the “World’s Strongest Man” (WSM) show. I explained that even though I saluted Barry Frank, the Trans-World International executive who gave birth to the show back in the late ‘70s, for having the vision to create the event and the clout to bring it off and sustain it all these years, I nevertheless thought it could be improved in certain ways. I pointed out that

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because so many of the events had time limits of ninety seconds or even longer the winner was often not the man who was the strongest, but the man who had the best combination of strength and endurance. I mentioned several examples, including a famous incident in which Gerritt Badenhorst — who had an official deadlift of almost nine hundred pounds had been in a WSM contest against Scotland's Forbes Cowan, a tough but

much more slightly built and generally weaker man. The contest featured the two men standing face to face with their backs to a car, to the frame of which were attached a pair of handles that were gripped with straps by the two men in a "wheelbarrow" fashion. The winner would be the man who could lift his car and hold it off the ground for the longest time. In any case, when the signal to lift was given, Badenhorst stood up with the car effortlessly, whereas Cowan needed every bit of his relatively meager back and leg strength to raise the car to a locked position. Even so, once he shook and trembled his way to the top he was able to hold it longer than Badenhorst, who was by far the stronger man. I argued that although the longer time limits of this and similar events perhaps made for more colorful TV — as the men were gasping for breath, red as beets, and shaking with effort when they finished — the strongest man often didn't win, which violated the implied promise of the title of the show. I also offered other examples to bolster my case, including the infamous race in 1990 in which the 400-plus pound O.D. Wilson was asked to carry a very small load for a very long way in what amounted to a two-man race for the WSM title against Jon Pall Sigmarsson, the much smaller, more telegenic Icelander who was far behind going into that last event and needed a big win to retain his title.

Another problem with the WSM contests, as I



History was made when Mark Henry power cleaned and push pressed this replica of Apollon's Wheels not once but three times, cleaning it on each rep. From left: chief referee David Webster Francis Brebner, Jeff "Mad Dog" Madden, and Bryan Neece.

Photo by Joe Roark

saw it, was that they had so many events — an average of eight to ten — that more men were injured than was good for the sport. In some past WSM shows three or four of the ten contestants were injured during the event so badly that they were unable to continue. I suggested that four or five carefully chosen events should be adequate to determine who had the greatest amount of raw, brute strength. I concluded my rant by saying that I thought it was possible to create a contest that would be safer than the WSM shows, more accurate in ranking the contestants in terms of overall strength, and maybe just as exciting to watch.

A couple of months later, I got a call from Jim Lorimer, who said he and Arnold had been talking about what I'd said that night in Columbus and that they wanted to have such a show as part of the 2002 Arnold Fitness Weekend if I'd agree to design and run it. Taken completely by surprise, I told Jim that I was flattered and that I'd think about it and get right back to him. Finally, after talking to Jan, I decided that I couldn't very well say no after blathering on about how an ultimate strength contest should be conducted. Thus it was that we began a quest to design four or five representative strength challenges and to attract the strongest men in the world to face them.

One of the first things that was clear to me at the outset was that we needed to make the contest appealing

not just to WSM-type competitors, but to athletes in all three of the main disciplines of strength — weightlifting, powerlifting, and strongman events. Each of the three sports has had a long history of referring to the man who was the top dog of the moment in their particular field as the Strongest Man in the World. This is understandable, and perhaps as it should be, for each discipline requires great overall body power. And the title itself — the Strongest Man in the World — is certainly one with true value and great historical weight, not unlike “The World’s Fastest Man,” or “The Heavyweight Champion of the World.” For at least the last century hundreds of professional strongmen have claimed the mantle for themselves as a way to increase their prestige and, as a result, their income. But how could we attract the best weightlifters, powerlifters, and strongman competitors to take part in a contest that would take all of them out of their “comfort zone?”

I realized that what we really needed was a prize package that would be instantly appealing to the world’s top men, and I suggested to Arnold that he might be able to convince the people who manufacture and sell Humvees to award one of those huge and powerful vehicles to the winner of the Arnold Strength Summit. He agreed, the Humvee people agreed, and armed with this great plum I appealed to the executives at MET-Rx (sponsors of the WSM show) for additional support. They agreed to a three year package in which they would provide \$50,000 each year as well as a year’s supply of their food products to the winners of each of our four individual events. Jim and Arnold agreed to absorb the additional costs, including transportation, meals, and housing; and so we were able to approach the athletes with an offer of a contest with the largest prize list in the history of such events.

Perhaps the most crucial thing I did after agreeing to design the show was to contact two of the very best men I knew to work with us in designing the events and choosing the contestants. One of these men was David Webster, Scotland’s ageless wonder of energy. David has been part of most of the WSM shows over the past twenty years as well as having promoted and/or judged at hundreds of Highland Games, weightlifting, and strongman events around the world. The other man we asked was Bill Kazmaier, a former world powerlifting champion and the most famous of the WSM competitors — a man who has added to his stature in the game over the years by creating unofficial world records in a variety of strength feats and by serving as the color commentator for several of the most recent WSM shows

on ESPN. I’ve been friends with David for almost forty years and I’ve known Bill for almost twenty-five, having helped him get started as a powerlifter and strongman competitor. Both men were intrigued by the idea of a strength event structured to test basic power and designed to bring together the best men in the world in the three disciplines of strength.

Together we began to talk about what events we could use that would be reasonably safe, reward brute strength more than technique, and yet not be totally familiar to either the weightlifters, the powerlifters, or the strongman competitors. We all wanted some sort of overhead lift, but we knew that if we simply tested the men in the clean and jerk using a standard Olympic bar we might just as well give the top prize in that event to the best weightlifter in the show. One day early on I suggested to David and Bill that a good challenge might be to reproduce a replica of the bell made famous by Louis Uni (Apollon), the legendary French strongman of the turn of the last century whose name had been given to a set of railway wheels which had only been lifted overhead by three men in the past one hundred years — Charles Rigulout, who cleaned and jerked Apollon’s Wheels in 1930 after several months of practice; John Davis, who lifted them with no practice at all in 1949 using a reverse grip to clean them (being unable to clean them with a traditional overhand grip); and Norbert Schemansky, who cleaned the Wheels in 1954 and then jerked them three times. It should be added here that at the time each man conquered the Wheels he was generally considered to be the strongest man in the world. There is considerable dispute as to whether Apollon himself ever raised his great Wheels overhead, but as to the merits of lifting the cumbersome bell, Olympic Coach Bob Hoffman said that Schemansky’s performance was, “the greatest feat of strength which has ever taken place in the world.”

Apollon’s Wheels weigh 366 pounds, and have a bar 1.93” in diameter, but the cleaning of them is made even more difficult because the thick shaft fits into the wheels so that when the shaft turns the wheels must turn, too. We all felt that the thickness of the bar (the bar’s diameter makes a “hook grip” impossible) and the fact that it didn’t revolve would make this event a real challenge, even for the weightlifters. Once we all agreed on this as an event, in the early fall of 2001. I contacted Tom Lincir of the Ivanko Barbell Company and asked if he would accept the challenge of reproducing Apollon’s Railway Wheels, knowing that Tom would match the dimensions of the Wheels precisely. An avid collector

of old barbells and dumbbells, Tom enthusiastically agreed to design and build the replica as a way of joining us as we tried to honor our past heroes by testing our present ones. So one of the events was set.

We also felt that we needed to do some sort of event that involved carrying something heavy — an event somewhat like a WSM-type Farmer's Walk, but sufficiently different so that the contestants from the Strongman world would have their natural advantage significantly reduced. After much discussion we determined that there were several primary ways in which this could be done — by making the object or objects to be carried much heavier than what was normally carried in Strongman events, by using a time limit of thirty seconds instead of ninety seconds so that endurance would play only a small part in the event, by having the men carry one solid object rather than the two normally carried in Farmer's Walk events, and by requiring the men to go up a short ramp with a grade approximating that of a wheelchair ramp.

Our first plan involved building the apparatus out of logs, but as we discussed this and as I made dozens of calls to lumber-mills, it became clear that logs presented a series of technical difficulties. We also considered simply building a metal frame with holders for Olympic plates in front and in back, and although this would have been far easier and less expensive it would have made the event less visually exciting as the iron weights would look much lighter than something less dense—like wood. Finally, after I located a source for old timbers (from demolished barns and wooden buildings) we decided to construct the apparatus out of 8"x8" and 8"x10" timbers. The timbers were held together by iron bolts drilled completely through, and the majority of the weight was placed in front and in back of the athletes, with two large timbers on each side plus the two handles connecting the timbers in back to those in front. Once assembled—only a few days before it was placed on a trailer and driven from Texas to Ohio—the apparatus was so massive that it looked unliftable. After much thought and deliberation we had settled on a weight of just over eight hundred pounds, as this seemed heavy enough to be a major challenge but not so heavy as to be beyond the strength of at least some of our eight stout contestants. We consulted with many men experienced in the Farmer's Walk, and most thought the best handle size was approximately 1¼", so that's what we used. Setting the bars in the wood so they wouldn't rotate. The same men felt that the bars should be approximately 30" inches apart, so that's the distance we used.

The ramp was constructed in the Columbus area, and it was four feet wide and thirty-two feet long, with a starting pad of 8' x 4' and a flat platform of approximately the same dimensions at the end. We would have made the ramp a bit longer, but the stage on which the event was scheduled to take place (the Columbus Auditorium) prevented this. The surface of the ramp was raw plywood, which provides good footing. The men had to lift the timber apparatus with their hands alone, as straps were not allowed, but they could put it down and re-grip if they lost their balance or their hands gave way.

Another event that we all supported from the earliest discussions last summer involved lifting a car or truck in a type of deadlift. Most experts through the years have considered (correctly, in my opinion and that of Jan, David, and Kaz) the deadlift to be the most basic test of brute strength in the iron game. It requires strength in the largest muscles of the body — the thighs, hips, and back — and it relies very little on technique. But since we wanted to make it different from a regulation deadlift, we decided to have the men lift a metal frame on top of which rested a vehicle of some sort. This would mean that the path of the lift would be considerably different from the path of a normal free-weight deadlift on an Olympic bar. Our first plan was to have the men lift the Hummer that would be the top prize, but as it was impossible to get one of the four ton behemoths onto one of the stages we chose instead to use a mid-size pick-up truck. The frame we planned to use had been used in several strongman events, but with the gripping handles set much higher from the ground than the height of a regulation deadlift. Another difference would be that in our event the grip used would not be the "wheelbarrow" style (palm facing palm). In our event we would use the normal, bar-in-front-of-the-shin overhand grip. Furthermore, as previously mentioned, when lifting a car the "groove" familiar to competitive powerlifters doesn't apply, so we thought this would even the odds for the non-powerlifters even more. Unfortunately, the frame apparatus failed to work as planned, as will be described later.

The fourth and final event was one over which we agonized for months, as we went back and forth considering three or four "possibles." Finally, we decided to require the men to push a Hummer, as we wanted to involve our major sponsor in some way. We knew, of course, that a Hummer, even as heavy as they are, would be no match for the men we intended to bring. Unless we took almost all of the air out of the tires — which is what we did.

Even before we had chosen our fourth and final event we had been involved in heavy discussions about who to invite and how to invite them. We had decided to limit our competitors to eight as a way to streamline the event, and it was critical that we devise a fair set of criteria on which to base our invitations. We started by agreeing to invite the two leading weightlifters, the two leading powerlifters, and the two leading Strongman competitors, and to fill out the contest with people who were outstanding in two or more of the disciplines.

In weightlifting, the top man in 2001 had been Saed Jaber, a Bulgarian national who had transferred his citizenship to the oil-rich (and athlete-poor) nation of Qatar. Our second choice was the venerable Andrei Chemerkin of Russia, former Olympic gold medal winner and multiple world champion. Accordingly, these men were contacted — at first informally and later formally — to invite them to take part. Both men responded well to the informal contact, and although Chemerkin never accepted the formal invitation Jaber told us via officials in Bulgaria as well as through backchannels that he was definitely coming. Unfortunately, he declined the invitation at the last minute, telling one of our contacts that he feared he was not heavy enough to do as well as he wanted. We also invited Ronnie Weller, but although Weller said he would probably train for the event and come the following year he declined. We then decided to ask Raimonds Bergmanis from Latvia as he was an elite weightlifter whose chances in the event would be, we thought, improved by his having also competed quite well in WSM events over the past several years. Bergmanis accepted enthusiastically.

In powerlifting, there are more federations than layers in a bench shirt, but we finally settled on the largest and oldest federation — the International Powerlifting Federation — and invited the man who had won the past two world championships in the superheavyweight class, Brad Gillingham of the United States. Once Brad fully understood the events, he told us he wanted to be part of the show. The other man we invited was Gary Frank, the WPO superheavy star who had put up such high totals over the past year or two. At 6'4" and almost four hundred pounds and with a background in field events and football we suspected Frank would acquit himself well. Kaz spoke to Gary at length, as did I, and after some original reluctance he agreed to come and began to do some event training. Just a short time before the meet, however, he told us he had suffered a tom biceps while doing deadlifts in training, and would be unable to compete. We hope he can come to the 2003 show as he recently became the first man to make offi-

cial lifts in one contest of over one thousand pounds in the squat, over seven hundred pounds in the bench press, and over nine hundred pounds in the deadlift. But with Franks hurt we needed another top powerlifter right away, and after David and Kaz and I conferred it was decided that David would call England's Andy Bolton, the WPC world superheavyweight champion and holder of the all-time highest deadlift with 925 pounds. Andy is a man unafraid of a challenge, and he enthusiastically agreed to take part.

In the Strongman world, our first step was to contact Dr. Doug Edmunds of the International Federation of Strength Athletes — the man who over the past 20 years has been more central than anyone else in designing and overseeing for Trans-World International the World's Strongest Man contests (and not coincidentally the author of a fascinating autobiography — *The World's Greatest Tosser*). We made contact out of respect for Dougie, Jamie Reeves, and the WSM organization. We wanted them to know that we had no intention of forming some sort of rival organization, but were merely trying to create a real test of basic strength and to provide the sort of prize package that would be of benefit to men of strength everywhere. We told Dougie that we hoped an invitation to the Arnold Strength Summit would be seen as the years passed as one of the perks a man would earn by winning TWI's World's Strongest Man contest.

With Dougie's blessing, we went first for Norway's Svend Karlsen, a consistent and colorful athlete who had won the WSM title in the fall of 2001. We also invited the 2001 runner-up and former winner, Sweden's Magnus Samuelson. Both men indicated some original interest, but both were reluctant to commit absolutely. As it happened, Kaz and Jan and I had a chance to see Magnus in person in San Antonio during the winter at a convention sponsored by the National Strength and Conditioning Association. While there, we did all we could to convince the big strongman to come, but he cited his wife's pregnancy as a reason for his uncertainty. We even invited him to take part in an impromptu exhibition by Mark Philippi (the UNLV strength coach) and Mark Henry there at the NSCA convention. Magnus declined to take part, but Kaz and Jan and I were so impressed by Philippi's strength and aggressive attitude about the show that after a discussion with David Webster it was decided to invite him to take part in the show, an invitation he readily accepted.

As the show neared, Magnus became difficult to contact, although we heard conflicting stories from mutual friends as to whether or not he was coming.

Finally, hearing nothing, we moved on to Phil Pfister of West Virginia, the top-rated American Strongman competitor over the past couple of years. Another man we had invited earlier, in anticipation that either Magnus or Svend or both would turn us down in the end was Canada's Hugo Girard, who had avidly courted an invitation by sending a lot of information about his career in strongman events and his interest in setting records in certain strength feats. Because of his grateful acceptance we were quite surprised when he bailed out just a few weeks away from the event. Svend



Svend Karlsen needed all of his Viking power to push this approximately eight thousand pound Hummer with virtually flat tires. The mighty Norwegian, who is the current TWI World's Strongest Man champion, finished second in this event to Latvia's Raimonds Bergmanis.

Courtesy Buckland Gillespie Graphic Design

remained on the fence until the last minute, but as the day to decide drew near his Viking spirit prevailed and he told us he would definitely come and that he would do well. After Magnus and Hugo declined to take part David called Janni Viertanen, but the Finnish strongman said no, too, citing a slight biceps problem and a belief that the events didn't particularly match his abilities. The last man chosen was Brian Schoonveld, a stout-hearted man who has been climbing the strongman ladder for several years and a man who had the stones to agree to come with very little preparation.

Our fourth category of participants — for those who had distinguished themselves in two of the three strength disciplines — came in handy as we wanted to include Mark Philippi, who was an outstanding lifter in the American Drugfree Powerlifting Federation before deciding to concentrate on the Strongman events, in which his best showing was a win at the Strongest Man in the U.S. back in 1999. Another switch-hitter who got one of the original invitations was Shane Hannan, the young Oklahoman who was one of the greatest squatters in the world (with an official best of over 1000 pounds)

before following Mark Henry from powerlifting into weightlifting and erasing all three of Mark's national records. Short, but massive and explosive, Shane appeared to us to be an ideal candidate. I had a long conversation on the phone with him about the contest and why I thought it would be fun for him and probably good for his career as well as his pocketbook; and at first he was very enthusiastic about taking part, saying that he could see the events were real strength events, sounded safe, and didn't require much endurance. Unfortunately, six weeks or so later, after speaking to his weightlifting coach, Shane told me he had decided not to come to Columbus and try to win the first prize package of approximately \$100,000 (the Hummer, \$10,000, a vacation for two and a year's supply for a superheavyweight of MET-Rx supplements).

Another man we wanted from the first — Greg Kovacs — was a bit off the charts, as he had never to our knowledge taken part in any sort of high level strength contest. Even so, he had been given so much publicity in the bodybuilding press because of his strength and size that many people in that field had come to believe

that he was the strongest man in the world. This is what the 6'4", 380 pound Kovacs has been called, in article after article, and claims came from his camp that he had done such things as incline presses with 650 pounds for six reps, seated presses with five hundred pounds for ten reps, and so on. Our reasoning was that since the Arnold Classic Weekend started as — and remains — a bodybuilding show, we thought Kovacs' fans would love to see the big man in the contest. Also, to be honest, we were all a bit skeptical about some of the claims made in his behalf and we were curious to see just how strong he really was. So Kaz and I began our assault, and we both had numerous conversations with Greg and/or his wife. At first, he appeared to be genuinely interested, though a bit apprehensive, too, but in the end he decided to pass, saying that he planned to enter a bodybuilding show in May and so would have begun to cut his weight by late February — the time of our strength contest.

Another man who earned his invitation because of his abilities in two of the three disciplines was Mark Henry, who has made his living since 1996 as a professional wrestler for the WWF (now the WWE). Mark won several national championships in the mid-90s in weightlifting and set all the national superheavyweight records, and he won the National and World Drug Free Powerlifting Championships in 1995, setting many world records in the squat, deadlift, and total. In fact, his combined best official lifts in weightlifting and powerlifting — all made within approximately six months — add up to a total poundage that is the highest ever made. Mark had been out of competition and heavy training for a very long time, however, and his weight had dropped about 70 pounds through dieting and doing an hour of cardio every day at the request of the WWF. For these reasons, I never gave much thought originally to him taking part because I knew the WWF really wanted him to keep his weight down and because they were the ones who paid his handsome salary. However, in the fall he got word that his mother had gone into the hospital and almost certainly wasn't coming out. So he took a leave of absence, went home to East Texas, and stayed with her for the final three weeks of her life. He stayed there for an additional two weeks, attending to the funeral and other related affairs, then returned to wrestling. I was in frequent contact with Mark, as Jan and I have remained in touch with him after he joined the WWF. During the times when I spoke to him while he was with his family following the funeral and after he had gone back on the road he seemed to be terribly depressed. His father died when Mark was quite young and his mother had raised him mostly by herself, and they were unusually close.

One night I talked to Jan about all this and asked her if she thought Mark could take part in the Arnold Strength Summit without embarrassing himself. At that time there were less than four months before the show, and for the previous five years all he had done in the weight room was light bodybuilding — of his upper body. He had done no pulls, no deadlifts, no cleans, no snatches, no jerks, and very few squats since 1997, and I was afraid that even with his great natural strength he had too far to go. But then I saw him one weekend and noticed that he had gained a lot of weight since before the funeral — most of it fat. I realized that while he'd been home he'd been eating comfort food at the tables of his grandmother and aunt and doing no cardio work. When I asked him what he weighed he said he was up to almost 360 — about forty pounds over his summer and early fall weight of 320 to 325. This, plus his depression, gave me the push to seriously consider inviting him.

Even though Jan and I were unsure if Mark would have enough time to build the strength he would need, I asked David and Kaz if they thought he deserved an invitation. I added that I knew if we invited Mark we'd open ourselves for criticism from people who might think the event had been rigged to favor him, especially if he did well. But both David and Kaz said that Mark's accomplishments had earned him a place at the table if he wanted to sit down and eat. They both added that whenever someone did something unusual there would be critics, but that most people who took the time to look into it would realize that we had already established three of the four events before Mark was even considered, and that the events themselves were so basic and straightforward that anyone who could win or do well in a contest featuring those events would unquestionably and obviously be a very strong man. So, bolstered by David and Kaz, I called Mark and told him we would invite him to take part in the show if he would agree to really bear down and devote his whole heart to the effort. I told him also that if his answer was yes he still had to get clearance from Vince to have the three months off to train and take part. I explained that deciding to enter such a contest carried some very real risks for him — the main one being that he had been promoted in the past by the WWF as "the strongest man in the world." I said that if he did poorly they could hardly promote him as "the fifth strongest man in the world," or whatever. "You have to really give this some thought," I added. The next day he called and said he had prayed about it, and that he definitely wanted in — that he saw the contest as a way to honor his mother's memory. In so many words he explained that going back to basics —

to his early roots as a lifter — would let him relive the days when his mother bought him his first set of weights and later walked with him at night up and down the dark streets in their neighborhood to help relieve the cramps he got from doing too many squats in junior high school. Mark is well aware that many fans of lifting wanted him to continue his competitive career rather than to take up the hard road of professional wrestling, and he realized that the Arnold Strength Summit would be a way for him to further unwrap the great gift of strength he'd been given and to share it with the world. The next step was Vince McMahon, who agreed enthusiastically after asking Mark if he thought he could win and hearing Mark answer, "Vince, I think I can win if you'll give me the time to train."

Finally the week of the contest arrived and one by one our eight strength athletes began to arrive in Columbus. By Thursday night everyone was there and settled into their large suites in the beautiful Radisson Hotel. Thursday evening the athletes and officials assembled in a conference room along with their coaches to meet Jim Lorimer, hear him explain the activities of the next three days, and then go by bus to look at the venues and the implements that would be lifted, pushed, and carried. Jim asked me to say a few words that evening and I used my time to pay my respects to him and to Arnold for supporting our efforts so generously and to thank David, Kaz, and Jan for their hundreds of hours of work in preparation for the show. Finally, I thanked the eight champions who had accepted the challenge and risk of our competition. I told them that we had invited the top men in the world in all of the strength sports and that not everyone had been willing to accept an invitation and to meet the challenge. I told them also how brave I thought they were for being ready to step outside the comfortable bounds of their individual sport and take part in the Strength Summit. I explained that I had conceived the event for strongmen everywhere, and that I was very happy we were able to offer the largest purse in the history of such contests. I closed by saying that Kaz and David and I wanted the strongest man in the room to win, and that we were extremely proud that so many outstanding, powerful, and valiant men had come to Columbus to make history.

The Contest

We decided to begin the competition with Apollon's Wheels, as we wanted the men to be as fresh as possible for their assault on this legendary implement. If any one of the four events could be seen as the signature

event for the contest this would be it, because the Wheels carry such a unique pedigree. We saw this event as a way to not only challenge our eight champions, but to pay tribute to the past — to the professional strongman Apollon and to the three iron game immortals who prior to the Arnold Strength Summit had been the only three men to successfully lift the Wheels from the floor overhead — Charles Rigulot, John Davis, and Norbert Schemansky. We knew, of course, that thick bars with 2" handles had been manufactured and sold over the past several years, but we also knew that if the plates used on those bars allowed the bars to rotate inside them, cleaning as well as push pressing or jerking the bar would be much easier with any given weight than the same weight would be on an implement which allowed the bar to turn only if the wheels turned at the same time and to the same degree. This point cannot be overemphasized.

Over the weeks prior to the meet Tom Lincir of Ivanko Barbell kept us on pins and needles as he perfected his design and built the Wheels. Originally, when Tom agreed in the late fall of 2001 to build the replica, he also agreed to build a lighter set of approximately 325 pounds with the same dimensions, so the men could have it as a warm-up and so we could use it in the contest for the athletes who were unable to raise overhead the 366-pounder. The construction of the big set proved to be so difficult and time-consuming, however, that two weeks before the show we agreed I would arrange to have the light wheels made in Texas. Fortunately, a talented, semi-retired machinist lives in my neighborhood, and he cut a 2" steel, extra-thick pipe down to 1.93" and fitted it securely into two 150-plus pound oilfield pulleys and we had our light set of wheels. True to his word, Tom finally finished the big Wheels and they were delivered via airfreight the day before the show. And a beautiful set of Wheels they were, too, up to his usual high standards — gleaming and yet somehow ominous.

Because cleaning the Wheels is the most difficult part of the lift, we agreed from the beginning to require the men to do repetitions of the clean and jerk and not just the jerk. Actually, because we heard that some of the men were having trouble cleaning 365 pounds even with the easier-to-lift 2" bar using regular plates, we finally and reluctantly decided to allow them to lift the Wheels to their shoulders in any way they wanted — with two exceptions: standing the barbell on end and rocking it over onto the shoulders or "continentalizing" it by placing it on top of a lifting belt and boosting it up from there. Similarly, we allowed the men to raise it overhead by pressing it, jerking it, push pressing it, or push jerking it, so long as they brought it under

control to the satisfaction of the judge. We knew these rules would set on edge the teeth of many purists, but we certainly didn't want to give the men a task that none of them could accomplish. We wanted to honor the men of the past, but we didn't want to embarrass the men of the present. We also thought that it might be interesting to see the sorts of inventive ways the men might find in their effort to elevate the massive, awkward weight.

Because we thought that some of the men would be unable to get the big Wheels to their shoulders and then overhead we decided to start with the heavy Wheels and then to allow those who failed to negotiate them to lift the smaller ones for as many reps as possible in order for us to rank the men for points. The winner of each event was to get eight points, with the next seven men getting from seven to one. In case of a tie the points

would be split. We also required the men to lift the small Wheels backstage before the event in front of the judges in order to qualify to continue in this particular event. We did this as a way to save time. As it happened, only England's Andy Bolton was unable to clean the smaller Wheels, so he finished last. The night before at our meeting at the hotel, the men had drawn lots to determine the lifting order in which they would attempt Apollon's Wheels on stage. Svend Karlsen wound up having to go first and Phil Pfister had the advantage of going last. Following the first two events, of course, the men went in reverse order of their current point score. In other words, the man in last place after the Wheels and deadlift would go first in the next event and the man in first would go last, having earned that right.

Finally the time came to roll Apollon's Wheels onto the stage in front of approximately seven thousand excited people and give the men a chance to join the ranks of Rigulot, Davis, and Schemansky. We had prepared some slides of these three immortals lifting the Wheels in France, and Kaz explained that it had been almost fifty years since the original Wheels had been lifted. Kaz didn't say — but I think it's fair to point out — that although all of our eight competitors weighed over three hundred pounds, most of them well over. Rigulot, Davis and Schemansky all weighed between 220 and 230 when they hoisted the great weight. I spoke to Ski several times before the show, and invited him to be there, and he helped me appreciate the difficulty of the challenge. "Hell," Ski said in his typical crusty, blunt way, "if you wanted to make it really tough, you should bend the bar like the original one was bent after Davis dropped it all those times back in '49." (Actually, according to most of the experts with whom I discussed this, it's likely that a bent bar would be easier to clean, as any sort of significant bend would allow the bar to be positioned so that the bend faced upward. The upward-facing bend would keep the bar from wanting to roll out of a lifter's hands, and thus make it easier to hold onto during the pulling motion. Ski is right, of course, that unless a bent bar is released at the top of the clean so that



British powerlifter Andy Bolton now holds the world record in the deadlift with 925 pounds, shown here. At the Arnold, he and Mark Henry, whose official best is 904, went head to head in the deadlift event with Mark making two reps with 885 and Andy making three.

Photo courtesy Andy Bolton

when it is caught at the chest the bend is still facing upward, the jerk would be much more difficult because if the ends of the bar in the jerk point upwards the bar would have a gravity-driven tendency to roll backward or forward and end up with the ends facing downward, thus twisting out of the lifter's hands as it rolled.) In any event, Ski wanted to be in Columbus and, at first, he thought he could come; but he's been having trouble with one of his hips and so in the end he didn't make it, much to our collective disappointment. He got the full results, of course, and I know he took some well-deserved pleasure in them.

The first man to try the Wheels was the 6'3", 320 pound Viking, Svend Karlsen, current winner of the WSM contest. Like all the other contestants, Svend was given 30 seconds to begin his attempt after his name was called, and two minutes after he began his first pull, to do as many reps as he could. Svend decided to use a technique in which he pulled the bar a few inches above his belt, rested it there briefly while leaning back, then boosted it onto the top of his abdomen and from there boosted it again to his shoulders. This he did with a slight struggle, but when he tried to push press the Wheels over his head they only went about 2/3 of the way. After a short rest he once again took the bar to his shoulders in three stages, but once again he was unable to shove the bar to arms' length although he came much closer the second time, using a rough push jerk technique. He appeared to have the same sort of problem several of the men had, which was controlling the non-revolving bar as they tried to adjust it on its way over their heads. In the months prior to the event I stressed to the competitors that the three things that would make Apollon's Wheels difficult to lift were its weight, its thick handle, and the fact that whenever the bar itself would turn the wheels would also turn. Practicing with a 2" bar and standard Olympic plates no doubt gave them unfounded confidence, as most 2" bars or axles will turn inside of the Olympic plates and thus not prepare them for the "feel" of an implement that is all one solid piece.

Brian Schoonveld was the second man to try the Wheels, and he devised a clever way to raise them to his shoulders. He used a reverse grip and lifted them to the tops of his knees and rested them there while he assumed a parallel squat position. He then released his grip and hooked his elbows under the bar and stood up so the bar was held in the crook of his arms — as in a Zercher Lift. Next, he moved his upper body forward and then quickly backward (as in a power clean) and raised his arms

into the air so that the bar rolled along his upper arms and came to rest on top of his deltoids. At that point both his arms were pointing skyward — more or less at the angle of a Nazi salute — and Brian still had the task of getting his hands under the bar so he could try to raise it overhead. Slowly but surely he managed to get first one and then the other hand under the bar, but when he tried to elevate it his hand-spacing was quite wide and he was so exhausted that on two attempts to push press it he got it only a bit beyond halfway. Even though he failed, his brave attempt was an amazing feat of strength and ingenuity. After a ten or 15 second rest he tried again, but this time he couldn't get the bar back on top of his shoulders.

The next competitor was big Brad Gillingham, a world powerlifting champion. He came out with fire in his belly and used a conventional power clean technique. He pulled the bar very high, but on the first attempt he failed to catch it on his shoulders. But on his second attempt he made a majestic power clean and just barely failed to fix it overhead. His textbook clean made Brad only the third man to clean Apollon's Wheels using a traditional cleaning style, as John Davis used a reverse grip to pull the bar into the air before he let go with his "underhand" and switched it back to a traditional grip. (It might interest readers to know that Davis' dramatic lift, made on his sixth or seventh attempt, was captured on film. Bud Greenspan of Olympic documentary film fame — making his first "major" documentary — followed Davis to France in 1949 to film him at the World Weightlifting Championships. While there, Greenspan immortalized Davis' heroic final effort with the Wheels, including the aftermath, when an exhausted Davis fainted and slumped into the arms of a nearby official.)

To students of pure strength, Brad Gillingham's power clean of Apollon's Wheels was one of the highlights of the entire contest, as it represented the first time that anyone — including Rigulot, Davis, or Schemansky — had used the power clean style to take the weight to their shoulders. A biomechanical analysis of the demands of bringing this particular implement to the shoulders reveals that it is easier to clean the Wheels using a split clean style than a power clean style (or, for that matter, a squat clean style). I say this because when a split clean is done the lifter is able to lean the torso slightly backward and thus catch the thick bar on the top of the chest more comfortably. In a standard power clean or squat clean the hips go a bit backward and the torso is inclined a bit forward as the bar is received at the chest — especially if the lifter lowers his torso more than

an inch or so from a fully upright position — and this forward-leaning position makes it very difficult to fix and hold the thick bar in place. What this means is that it requires more strength or, to be more precise, power to do what Brad Gillingham did than to do what Rigulot, Davis, and Schemansky did because Brad had to pull the bar higher in the air than would have been the case had he used a split clean style. This fact wasn't lost on the thoughtful Gillingham, a man who is part of what surely must be the strongest trio of brothers in the world. Brad told a few of us the following day that he was so excited at having cleaned the historic implement that he had been unable to get to sleep that night.

The fourth lifter to try the Wheels was Mark Henry, by far the heaviest of the contestants. Although none of the men were weighed, we had bio sheets on them all and, according to the information they provided, their weights ranged from approximately 300 to 335 — except for Mark, who weighed between 390 and 400. Most observers thought that because of Mark's having made a clean and jerk of five hundred pounds in the past he would be one of the favorites in this event, and those observers were correct. Using the same power clean style Gillingham had used, Mark took a traditional, pronated grip on the bar and hauled it nose-high before catching it on top of his massive chest. He then drove it overhead effortlessly, using a push press to get the bar up. He then dropped the bar and, after the spotters had replaced it in the center of the platform, made another powerful clean and another laughably easy push press. Down crashed the Wheels again, and once again it was re-centered on the platform. (During this time and throughout the contest he was being coached by Jeff "Mad Dog" Madden, the head of strength and conditioning at the University of Texas at Austin, and Jeff was giving him updates on how many seconds had gone by.) After Mark's second successful lift the huge crowd of 8000 or so iron game fans were all standing and screaming, as they knew they were witnessing a truly historic event. They roared their encouragement as Mark grabbed the Wheels again and yelled as he pulled them to his chest a third time and popped them overhead like a toy. He had done what he hoped to do — take it clean to his shoulders and get it overhead three times. "I hoped I could do it three times," he explained, "as a way to honor each of the three great lifters who lifted it before I did. I did one lift for each man, and I'm lucky there were only three."

David Webster, in an account of the contest published in the magazine *Muscle Mob*, had this to say about

Mark's performance with the Wheels, "Sensational. There is no other word for it. He was like a raging bull. He stalked the stage, then tore the bar to the shoulders easier than either Davis or Schemansky did. He celebrated exultantly with the crowd, then did another clean and jerk. Storming around like a man possessed, he psyched himself up for a third and final lift within the two minutes allocated for the attempts. The huge crowd, vocally supporting him in every lift, then showed their appreciation in no uncertain fashion. I have been organizing strongman competitions since the 1940s and can honestly say that the atmosphere created at Columbus Convention Centre has never been surpassed. This should give television producers food for thought."

As the crowd noise subsided, another Mark was chalking his hands and making ready to have a go — Mark Philippi. Having seen Philippi do so well in that exhibition in San Antonio, I thought he stood a good chance of lifting the Wheels, and he proved me right. Using the same reverse grip squat clean and sliding his left hand (underhand) grip to the center of the bar as he descended, he pinned the bar against his throat and held it there as he recovered. Once he stood up he gradually switched his left hand off the bar and then back under it so that it matched the position of his right hand. Finally he was ready to lift the Wheels overhead, and although the lift was a bit hard for him he used his athleticism and strength to balance it once he drove it off his chest and then pressed it out and held it for the "down" signal. He approached the bar for a second attempt, but gave it up as he realized he wouldn't be able to make another clean. Even so, by elevating the weight, he became the fifth man in history to lift either Apollon's Wheels or a replica of the Wheels and the crowd gave him a well-deserved and rousing ovation.

Latvia's Raimonds Bergmanis was another competitor who some predicted would do well with the Wheels because of his extensive weightlifting experience. Raimonds was taught the intricacies of "Olympic lifting" by his father, who was for years the national superheavyweight champion of Latvia. Raimonds has lifted more than 500 pounds in the clean and jerk and he has the large, thick hands of a natural strongman. But Apollon's Wheels proved too much for the genial Latvian, and even though he attacked the bar again and again he was never able to catch it and hold it at his chest as he dropped into a mid-range squat clean. He had it high enough to squat clean several times, but not high enough to power clean, and, as explained earlier, the thick, non-rotating bar and his forward-leaning style of

cleaning prevented him from completing the lift.

The last competitor was the big fireman from West Virginia — 6’5”, 320 pound Phil Pfister — who had larger hands than anyone else in the contest. As he approached the bar Phil exhorted the crowd for some support and they were glad to give it. But as he pulled for the first time they were no doubt as surprised as I was when he only managed to lift the Wheels a few inches off the floor. But Phil wasn’t finished. He psyched again and managed to raise the bar just above his belt and lodge it onto his stomach. From there he boosted it a few inches higher and caught it again before giving it another “jump” and taking it a bit higher still. Finally, he made one last boost and turned the Wheels into position at the top of his chest. But although he gave it a manful effort, his push press only went part way up before stalling and crashing back down. After a brief rest he tried again but the weight was just too heavy for him. A professional strongman competitor, Phil does very little standard lifting with barbells or dumbbells, preferring to concentrate his efforts training on the events he must do in the strongman contests.

At that point in the contest the exact replica of Apollon’s Wheels was rolled off the stage and replaced by a set of wheels that weighed 325 pounds. The lighter wheels had a bar with the exact same diameter and the bar was set firmly into the wheels, which came from a set of oilfield pulleys. The pulley-wheels were a bit smaller in diameter than the railway wheels used by Apollon, and so the bar was approximately 1 ½” inches higher off the floor than an Olympic bar is when it’s loaded with forty-five pound plates. But we needed the smaller wheels, as they allowed the remaining four men (Schoonveld, Gillingham, Pfister, and Bergmanis) to fight for placings. In a controversial ruling, Svend Karlsen, on the basis of his two “cleans” with the heavy wheels, was awarded third place and not required to try the smaller wheels. For the rest of the men (except for Andy Bolton, who came in last on the basis of his inability to get the small wheels to his shoulders during the warm-up/qualifier), the order of lifting was the same.

First up was Brian Schoonveld, who got the small wheels to his chest using his unique style and then push pressed them three times before returning them to the platform. Apparently, he was afraid that he might fail to get the wheels to his chest again and wanted to do the extra jerks and finish ahead of any man who did one successful “clean” and overhead lift but then failed to get it to his shoulders again. Not satisfied, however, Brian did get it to his shoulders again, but this time was unable

to bring his hands from the “Nazi salute” position to a position under the bar.

The next man out was Brad Gillingham, who manhandled the lighter bar—power cleaning it three times and push pressing it solidly after each clean. This took most of his two minutes, and he settled for three repetitions. Following Brad was Raimonds Bermanis, who made a hard, awkward squat clean and an easy push press, but then failed to clean the wheels again—although he made eight more attempts in the 90 or so seconds he had left after making his first lift. Obviously frustrated at his inability to clean a weight that he had probably snatched at least a hundred times during his long career, Raimonds attacked the bar furiously and with admirable heart. But the characteristics of both the light and heavy wheels, as we predicted, made the implement so much more awkward to lift that it took away from the weightlifter the natural advantage conferred by years of training on a modern, revolving bar.

The last man to lift was Phil Phister, who once again used his four-stage quasi-continental style to get the bar to his shoulders. This he was able to do three times, and to follow these “cleans” with three push presses, thus tying Gillingham for fourth place. So after the first event, the placings and points were as follows:

Mark Henry8 points
Mark Philippi	7 points
Svend Karlsen6 points
Brad Gillingham45 points
Phil Pfister (tie for fourth)45 points
Brian Schoonveld	3 points
Raimonds Bergmanis	2 points
Andy Bolton1 point

During this event David Webster was the chief referee, with Dr. John Fair and Jeff Everson serving as the side judges. Had it been necessary to call on them, we had a jury of sorts, which included Vic Boff, Joe Marino, Ray Stem, Ed Coan, and Bob Delmontique.

The Apollon’s Wheels event took place late on Friday morning, and the way the schedule worked out we decided to do Friday’s second event—the car lift — almost immediately afterward, while the men were still a bit warmed up. Unfortunately, it was necessary for us to set up the lifting area for the car lift in a large room where thousands of martial artists were having a contest. This made for major crowd control problems and made it difficult or impossible for those who wanted to watch to be able to see what was happening. But our major

problem had to do with the design of the frame on which the truck the men were to lift rested. Without going into more detail than such an article can sustain, I'll just say that although we were assured a small Chevrolet pickup (an S-10) had been lifted on the same frame that was brought to us in Columbus, men such as Brad Gillingham, Andy Bolton, and Mark Henry found during warm-ups that they were unable to lift without limit effort (and maybe not then) a Ford Ranger pick-up resting on the frame. As the Chevrolet S-10 and the Ford Ranger appear to be very equivalent in size and weight we were — and remain — puzzled as to how this could be so. But once we realized that none of our men might be able to lift the truck when the official contest began we were forced to scramble around and find a test that would require the same sort of basic hip, back, thigh, and shoulder strength we planned to test with the lifting of the car.

After a quick conference involving David Webster, Bill Kazmaier, John Fair, Jan, and I we decided to borrow an Olympic bar and as many Olympic plates as possible and simply ask the men to use straps and do singles in the deadlift to determine who was the strongest. But lo and behold — even though we found an Olympic bar there were no hundred pound plates, and so it would probably be impossible to put enough weight on the bar for at least some of the men in the event. At that point it was suggested that we get the 150 pound plus oilfield pulley-wheels that we used on the light bar in the previous event and put them on the inside with Olympic plates from there on out. This we did, only to learn that the most we could squeeze onto the bar with a collar was 88.5 pounds, and we feared that even that might not be enough for some of our eight young bulls. Our fear was based on two things, the first of which was that we were permitting the men to wear straps. This was done because we didn't want gripping strength to be the determining factor in the event, especially since two of the other events (Apollon's Wheels and the Farmer's Walk) were good tests of hand strength. The second thing which made us suspect that some of the men might reach 900 pounds is that the oilfield pulley-wheels were a bit larger in diameter than standard Olympic plates, which meant that the bar would be a bit higher off the floor at the start of the lift than an Olympic bar loaded with 45 pound plates. We reasoned that these differences should translate into slightly heavier deadlifts.

During our instructions to the competitors we told them that they would each get three attempts, as in a standard lifting contest, and that if they felt able to lift

885 pounds they should lift it for as many repetitions as they could as a way to separate themselves from one another. David Webster continued as the chief referee, and we were fortunate to have two outstanding lifters serving as side judges — Jill Mills, a former powerlifting champion and winner of TWI's World's Strongest Woman contest, and the legendary Ed Coan, many time world champion and world record holder in powerlifting. Jill, by the way, gave a well-received demonstration of her ability in some of the "strongman" events in front of the vast crowd at the Arnold Expo.

Using the "round system," in which the men with the lightest first attempts go first and then, once everyone has taken an attempt, the bar is lowered so the lightest second attempts can be done, and so on, the contest commenced. Schoonveld was first up with 615, followed by Pfister (615), Karlsen (705), Bergmanis (705), Philippi (755), Gillingham (755), Bolton (805), and Henry (805). All of these attempts were successful, and so the second "round" began, starting with Brian Schoonveld (665) Phil Pftster (675), Raimonds Bergmanis (765), Svend Karlsen (775), Mark Philippi (805), Brad Gillingham (815) and Andy Bolton (865). Mark Henry decided to take 885 on his second attempt, and he pulled this massive weight easily to the finished position once, then lowered it and did it again with power to spare. Then, for some reason, he put the bar down and began to celebrate. Later, he said that the bar had bumped his shin on the second rep and that he decided to stop — a serious miscalculation, as we'll soon see. For their third and last attempts, Schoonveld was again first, taking (and failing with) 705. Next up was Phil Pfister, a notoriously poor deadlifter, who managed a fine effort with 715. Svend Karlsen followed, taking 815 but only managing to get it a bit past his knees. Raimonds Bergmanis took the same weight and was delighted to make what was for him the heaviest deadlift of his life. Mark Philippi followed with 825 and made it solidly. But Brad Gillingham is one of the greatest deadlifters in the world, and he brought up 865 with no trouble at all — looking capable of perhaps as much as 900. Andy Bolton took 885 for his final attempt and made Mark Henry pay by hauling the big load once, twice, and then three times to take the lead. His last lift was a real limit — slow and soft on the lockout, and featuring one of the most spectacular nose-blood explosions I've seen in forty years of powerlifting. This blowout was all the more exciting as the spectators in the bleachers (including Arnold, Maria Shriver and their children) were no more than eight to ten feet away when the eruption

occurred. The crowd loved it, even though the scene was hectic and disorganized because of our inability to use the frame to lift the pick-up truck. Anyway, after a bit of deliberation, Mark decided to forego his last attempt. His coach, Jeff “Mad Dog” Madden, reasoned that even if Mark made four reps (which would have been doubtful) and finished first he would only have gained one extra point, and that one point would have required him to expend a great deal of effort.

Even though the deadlift event was more or less designed on the spot, the poundages lifted by all of these men were exceptional, and some were phenomenal. Five of the eight lifters exceeded eight hundred pounds, and the top three men, especially Bolton and Henry, could have gone to nine hundred and even beyond. So easily did the weights go up that anyone watching had to remind himself just how much was on the bar. That evening, as some of the lifters were rehashing the deadlift, it was generally agreed that both Mark and Andy might very well have been able that day to take a standard Olympic bar and, without straps, exceed Andy’s official all-time best deadlift of 925. It was also agreed that from an organizational and spectator standpoint the deadlift event left much to be desired. Even so, to a real student of strength our impromptu test of back, leg, hip, and thigh was a breathtaking thing to watch.

At the end of two events the placings and points were as follows:

Mark Henry.	15 points
Mark Philippi.	12 points
Brad Gillingham	10 points
Andy Bolton.	9 points
Svend Karlsen	8.5 points
Phil Pfister	7.5 points
Raimonds Bergmanis.	6 points
Brian Schoonveld.	4 points

The next day — Saturday — the final two events were scheduled, and the first of those was the Hummer Push. Because one of our primary sponsors was the General Motors Humvee, we wanted to feature one of the motorized beasts in an event. Rather than trying to find a way to lift a Hummer in some way, we decided that pushing one with deflated tires would be a real challenge. We did our best to make the event as fair as we could, and in this effort we bought shoes for the men so they would all have the same footwear. We also placed a long runner of rubberized matting between the tires so that as the Hummer was pushed the tires would roll on

concrete whereas the men would have the traction provided by the rubberized and slightly spongy runner. We realized, of course, that to push a “mere” Hummer would look somewhat unimpressive when compared with the things that have been pushed via a harness in TransWorld International’s World’s Strongest Man contests — tractor-trailer trucks, buses, airplanes, etc. But we were limited to an indoors format — we couldn’t go out to a local airport or train terminal. But we thought that if we took the air pressure down to almost zero even the strongest men would find it difficult not only to start the vehicle rolling but to keep it rolling. Finally, the GMC people sent a Hummer to Columbus (just a couple of days before the show) and so we were able to work with our two official testers — local strongman Bryan Neece and Francis Brebner of Scotland, an outstanding Highland Games athlete — in an effort to find where we should set the tire pressure. One of the bedrock principles under-girding the competition was that all of the events involving continuous effort could last for no more than thirty seconds. The reason for this decision on our part is that the “anaerobic threshold” is between twenty and thirty seconds, so if an event takes ninety seconds or two minutes to complete it’s quite possible for a man who is strong but also very aerobically fit to defeat a man who is stronger but less enduring. If at all possible, we wanted the stronger men to place highest in all of our events.

As we put the testers through their paces, lowering the tire pressure again and again, we finally learned that when the pressure was reduced to about six pounds the Hummer became very difficult to start and to push. I actually wanted to lower it a bit more as I reasoned that the men in the competition would be brimming with energy and adrenaline and that in any case they were also a bit stronger than our testers, but I was out-voted and we set the pressure at six pounds. In hindsight, it appears as if we probably should have reduced the pressure a bit more, as seven of the eight men completed the 40’ course in considerably less than thirty seconds. One problem, however, that might have been exacerbated by a further lowering of the pressure was that it would have been even more difficult than it was to correctly align the deflated tires at the start of each man’s attempt. As it was, several of the men experienced problems because, try as we might (and did), it was apparently impossible to align the tires for each man so that they were facing dead ahead. We learned that if the tires were even a fraction off dead straight it was far more difficult to get the Hummer rolling; the deflated tires seemed to sometimes

squish to one side or the other and form what amounted to a rubber wedge that had to be overcome before the man behind the wheel could straighten the tires and keep them aligned down the course. This became apparent when Brad Gillingham had trouble moving off the line and even more apparent during Mark Henry’s attempt. It almost seemed — as Mark began to apply his huge body to the rear of the Hummer after the signal to begin had been given — that the driver had his foot on the brake. Once Mark got the Hummer started, however, it appeared (and the videotapes support) that he was moving the vehicle very fast. Brad Gillingham, in fact, said a week or so after the show that “it was clear that the tires were wedged in some way when Mark began to push, because once he got it started his world’s strongest legs moved it faster than anyone else.” Another problem we faced is that since the event was held inside the Expo Center, we were not permitted to start the engine and leave it on during the push, which would have triggered the power steering and made it much easier for the driver to keep the tires properly aligned. Several of the men had been able to find and push a Hummer in preparation for the event, but they all did so outside with the engine running and the power steering mechanism working. But we learned from our mistakes, and next year we plan to involve a Hummer in a very different and, we hope, more error-proof way.

The surprise (and very popular) winner of this event was the man who came the farthest — Raimonds Bermanis — who burned up the course by covering it in 17.07 seconds. Raimonds is an extremely explosive and determined athlete and his thick legs drove like pistons over the course of the race. The athletic Svend Karlsen came in second at 17.62 seconds, followed by Phil Pfister (18 seconds), Mark Philippi (18.53 seconds), Mark Henry (20.59 seconds), Andy Bolton (23.47 seconds), Brad Gillingham (25.60 seconds), and Brian Schoonveld, (who managed to make it 35’6” in the allotted 30 seconds). The idea of pushing or pulling a heavy object over a relatively short course in 30 seconds or less is a sound one, but the trick is to find something to pull that doesn’t generate a lot of momentum on its own once it begins to move. Anything with wheels, for example, will usually develop a lot of momentum once it begins to roll; and even a series of connected train cars can be rolled over a flat course if they can be “started.” Next year, we may require our strength athletes to push or pull an object that has no wheels so that it is not much more difficult to start than it is to move once it’s started.

At the end of three events the overall placings on

points were as follows:

1. Mark Henry.19 points
2. Mark Philippi 17 points
3. Svend Karlsen15.5 points
4. Raimonds Bergmanis 14 points
5. Phil Pfister.13.5 points
6. Andy Bolton.12 points
7. Brad Gillingham12 points
9. Brian Schoonveld5 points

The final event — a variety of what has come to be called the Farmer’s Walk (we called it by such names as the Log Haul, the Timber Trudge, and the Lumberjack Logs) — was one that required a lot of research, thought, and experimentation. Earlier in this account, I explained that David Webster, Bill Kazmaier and I had concluded that the Farmer’s Walk event as it’s usually done lasts too long and uses implements which are too light for it to be a true test of brute strength. Naturally, it doesn’t require a Ph.D. in the science of rocketry to understand that, in a race for time, the lighter the objects carried and the farther they are carried the less chance there is for a really strong man to win. Imagine, if you will, two objects weighing one hundred pounds each and a race in which the contestants are to carry the two objects as far as possible in five minutes. Does anyone think that it would be particularly difficult to find athletes (certain football players, for example, or wrestlers) who could have easily defeated Bill Kazmaier and Jon Pall Sigmarrsson (in their primes) in such a race? Or what about a race lasting ten minutes. in which the contestants carried fifty pound implements? In that race it would be no great challenge to find very fit, enduring athletes who could defeat the men who defeated Kaz and Jon Pall in the previously imagined race. And so on. The point is that we wanted to keep the time of the race near the upper limit of the anaerobic threshold and we wanted to load the men as heavily as possible so that we were coming as close as we could to testing limit strength and not a combination of strength and endurance. However, even the latter part of the plan — to “load the men as heavily as possible” — proved problematic as we had no completely trustworthy method of knowing just how heavily we could load our eight strong men, especially since we were going to ask them to carry the implement up a ramp and not on a flat course. (One of the reasons for the ramp was that we feared a load near the limit of the men’s total body strength would be too heavy for their grip. We hoped to use a weight and a ramp angle

that would mean their grip strength and their body strength would be tested to approximately the same degree.)

Originally, the plan had been to stage this event on Saturday night at the Columbus Auditorium during the crowning of the winner of the Arnold Classic bodybuilding contest. That stage would only allow us a total course length of approximately forty-five feet, and so that's what we had the Ohio carpenters build. Early on, I had suggested to Jim Lorimer and Arnold that by allowing us to have the final event that night it would be a fitting way for the audience to watch as these giants of strength fought one another for the keys to a new Hummer. In most Strongman competitions, the Farmer's Walk is usually very popular among the spectators.

But as to how heavy we should make the implement the men would carry, we were entering uncharted waters. The heaviest Farmer's Walk we had heard about involved implements of approximately 350 pounds on a flat course, and most such Walks used far less than that in terms of weight. Plus, we had to consider that having to walk up a ramp with any given weight would be more difficult than walking along a flat course with the same weight. One unanswered question was that by using one solid implement (not unlike a giant trap bar) instead of two separate implements would we be making the event

easier or more difficult? We thought we knew, but could we be certain? We *were* certain of one thing, which was that by using one solid implement instead of two unconnected implements we would be making the event *different* — and this would help to insure that the “strongman” contestants with years of experience in the Farmer's Walk would lose a bit of their “training” advantage. With all these considerations in mind, David, Kaz, and I spent dozens of hours agonizing over how heavy to make



American strongman competitor Phil Pfister had the fastest time in the log carry on Saturday afternoon. Phil, without straps, carried the 815 pounds of wooden timbers up the 40' ramp in an astonishing 8.5 seconds, as measured by referee George Oates, on the right.

Photo courtesy Jim Lorimer

the implement, and each of us called other experts to get their opinions. Finally, as was stated earlier, we decided to build an implement of just over 800 pounds, reasoning that such an implement would be heavier than anything used in any previous Farmer's Walk. Regarding the bar thickness of 1 1/4", the general consensus was that anything much smaller would cut into the hands of the contestants and anything much larger might be impossible to grip and hold in a carrying event with such a heavy load.

The only one of the athletes I saw train during the run-up to the event was, of course, Mark Henry, and I watched him each week as he would load a rectangular metal apparatus he'd had made (at a machine shop). Each week he'd load it with more and more weight and carry it up a ramp at the Varsity Weight Room at the University of Texas in Austin. Although he had never done a Farmer's Walk event, and had only tried once to carry two objects (he carried two plate-loaded metal racks that day weighing 365 pounds each up a slight hill for a distance of approximately 50 feet and said he could have gone further), I suspected that because of his overall body power and strength of grip he should be able to meet this challenge if he had enough time to practice. Watching him get stronger gave me the confidence to suggest that a weight of eight hundred pounds would not

be asking the men to do the impossible. I realized, of course, that an apparatus made out of thick logs or timbers would be more cumbersome and difficult to balance than the small metal rectangle Mark was using in practice. Even so, I thought that when the Hummer was on the line most of the men would be able to carry eight hundred pounds at least part of the way up the ramp. I was joined in this assessment by several of our contestants, including Svend Karlsen, who thought eight hundred pounds sounded about

right. As for my own vote on the weight of the timber apparatus, I chose to stick with eight hundred pounds even though I suspected that an even heavier weight would have been a truer test of brute strength. I opted for the lighter load because I wanted all the men to have a good shot at carrying the timbers all the way to the top. I discussed this with David and Kaz and they both agreed that we should try our very best to load the men so that most of them could finish the course.

Finally, a father and son team of carpenters in Lockhart, Texas began to build the apparatus about a month before the event. After I had at last located some old timbers, and they finished just a few days before the apparatus had to be loaded onto a flatbed trailer and hauled up to Columbus. But before we loaded it, I asked Mark to come to the small town where it was built and try to lift and carry it. Even though it could be argued that by doing this I was giving Mark an advantage over the other contestants I felt we had to be certain that the apparatus could be lifted, balanced, and carried up a slight grade. I discussed this with David and Kaz and they concurred. We had to learn if the much more massive load of timbers would create problems for Mark and, by extension, the other competitors. And whom could I ask if not Mark? If there was a problem with the apparatus we needed to know it, so the problem could either be fixed before the actual contest or so we'd know we had to use a smaller, plate-loading metal frame instead of that brutal load of timbers. In any case, Mark drove down and it was good that he did, as he bent the braces the carpenters had used to hold the carrying bars in place. He predicted after looking the apparatus over that the braces would bend, but the carpenters said they wouldn't. The braces did bend when he lifted it, however, but new and larger braces were installed and the new braces held when Mark raised it off the shop floor for the second time. Encouraged, we loaded the bolted-together pile of timbers onto a trailer, drove it a couple of miles to the parking lot of a nearby grocery store, and unloaded it. Quickly, so as not to draw a crowd and perhaps be stopped by the store managers, Mark (already warm by having lifted the apparatus a few times while the bracings and balance were being checked out) stepped inside the timbers, chalked his hands, took his grip, lifted the timbers, and carried them up a grade fairly comfortably for about thirty-five feet. This was impressive to see, of course, but what really made Jan and I happy was that the apparatus appeared to balance well and, even more important, was definitely not so heavy as to be un-liftable. So we reloaded the apparatus, wrapped it securely with a tarp, tied it in place, and the

next day two of my neighbors — Josh Kosarek and Pat Hall — drove off toward Columbus, along with the disassembled “light” version of Apollon's Wheels.

The night before the contest began — during the tour all the contestants were given to view the implements and the places where they'd be lifted, pushed, and carried — the men saw for the first time the daunting pile of timbers for themselves. They were asked if they'd like to lift it, but understandably no one stepped forward on the night before the contest was to begin. Even so, after being assured that the timbers weighed “only” about 815-825 pounds, and that Mark had had one successful “test-flight” with them, the men collectively decided they could be lifted. They did make a group request to have the apparatus placed on blocks for each man so it wouldn't be necessary to squat down so far to lift the apparatus before carrying it up the ramp. The officials accepted that request.

One final twist in this event was that on Friday afternoon, just after the first day of competition, Jim Lorimer approached me and said that he and Arnold had been looking at the pile of timbers and were concerned that if none of the men could carry it up the ramp it would put a damper on the final show on Saturday night. He said they both doubted if anyone could really carry it all the way to the top. I explained that Mark had done it, and that after seeing the pile of timbers for themselves the men agreed that it could be lifted and carried. I also told him Kaz and I felt fairly certain that several of the men would be able to lift the timbers and carry them the full length of the ramp inside the thirty second time limit. I explained that even if some of the men failed to go all the way up we would mark the distance they achieved and that their failure would prove to the audience the difficulty of the task. Jim said he would talk it over with Arnold and get back to me. He did so the following morning, when he told me that he and Arnold were still worried and wanted us to move the event to Saturday afternoon on the stage at the Expo Center. Naturally, the officials and I and all of the competitors were disappointed by the decision, but we were grateful to Arnold and Jim and wanted to make the best of things. We consoled ourselves with the knowledge that an even larger crowd would get to see the men lift and carry the timbers, because the Expo Center on Saturday is even more crowded than it is on Friday.

Accordingly, the ramp was loaded onto a truck in pieces and assembled in the center of the Expo stage for the final, and deciding, event. The first man to challenge the timbers was Brian Schoonveld, and he drew roars of approval from the crowd by hauling the appara-

tus up the ramp in only 13.5 seconds and then holding it in the air for at least five seconds longer, smiling for all to see. He had been a bit overmatched in the overall contest, and it was good to see him finish on a high note. The only dark moment of the entire contest occurred on the next attempt, when Brad Gillingham injured his biceps just as he lifted the timbers off the frame. He immediately dropped the weight, and at first it was unclear if his injury was serious, but unfortunately he had partially torn his biceps, and a few days later he underwent surgery to repair the injury. The good news is that he recovered so fast that he was able to squeeze in enough training to finish second in the USAPL National Championships, earn a spot at the upcoming World Powerlifting Championships, and thus have the chance to defend his title and go for his third consecutive world superheavyweight title. Here's hoping he can pull it off. My personal feeling is that if he had not gotten a bad start with the Hummer and not torn his biceps with the timbers he would probably have finished in the top three in this contest. Brad is large, athletic, and powerful to a degree rarely seen. He is also an uncommonly fine young man.

The next man up was Great Britain's Andy Bolton, who fought his way to the top of the ramp in a time of 19.2 seconds. Mr. Pfister then came out to wrap those colossal mitts around the bars and show the crowd why he's been so successful on the strongman circuit over the past few years. Nor did he disappoint, literally smoking the course in the amazing time of only 8.7 seconds. So much for the men not being able to carry the timbers up the ramp. As it happened, the only man who failed to take the timbers all the way to the top was the next competitor — Latvia's Raimonds Bergmanis — who was bothered by a slight hand injury he had sustained going for one of his many misses with Apollon's Wheels. The bum hand affected his grip, and without full command of your grip it's impossible to hold the bars tightly enough to make it all the way up the ramp.

Norway's Svend Karlsen was in third place going into this event, and he hoped to improve his position and, perhaps, to win it all if Mark Henry should happen to falter. So he summoned all of the Viking Power at his disposal and almost matched Pfister's time, hitting the finish line in only 9.5 seconds. Mark Philippi needed to finish no lower than one place behind Svend in order to remain in second place overall and bring home \$15,000, but he had a bit of grip trouble and finished behind both Bolton and Schoonveld. This put Svend temporarily in first, Phil in second, and Mark Philippi in third.



On Saturday evening, during the finals of the Arnold Classic Bodybuilding Competition, the strength athletes were invited onstage and given a chance to lift the "unliftable" Inch Dumbbell. West Virginia firefighter Phil Pfister had to use two hands to shoulder the unwieldy implement, but he had no trouble pushing it to arm's length overhead. He then received a rare standing ovation from the enthusiastic crowd.

Photo courtesy Buckland Gillespie Graphic Design

Things now rested in the broad paws of Mark Henry, who had led the contest from the beginning and, as the leader, had retained the important advantage of going last in the final two events. This is especially critical in the last event as the leader knows in advance of his attempt what he needs to do to win not just that event but the much more important overall victory. As Mark prepared for his attempt with the timbers he knew that he didn't have to win this particular event in order to retain the lead. He knew that the only way he could lose would be if he tried to really hurry, stumbled, and was forced to re-grip. Armed with this knowledge, he lifted the timbers carefully, got his balance, and then marched majestically up the ramp toward victory, \$10,000, a tropical vacation for two, the keys to a brand new silver Hummer with all the bells and whistles, and the screams and

cheers of the thousands of fans. After roaring out his joy and acknowledging the crowd, Mark walked down the ramp and toward the back of the platform. Halfway there, he collapsed to one knee and began to sob. Someone went to him to ask if he was okay, and Mark finally managed to say, "I won the contest, but I lost my mother."

The final results and point totals were as follows:

1. Mark Henry.25 points
2. Svend Karlsen.22.5 points
3. Phil Pfister.21.5 points
4. Mark Philippi20 points
5. Andy Bolton and Raimonds Bergmanis. . . .16 points
7. Brad Gillingham13 points
8. Brian Schoonveld10 points

In the aftermath of the last event, most of the competitors said they thought we should add some weight for the show next year, and everyone was proud that the men rose to the challenge so well. Both Arnold and Jim said afterward that they wished they had had the faith to put the event in the Saturday night show, but that next year they would definitely do so. It should be added, in fairness, that what Jim Lorimer had told me about Arnold's legendary "gut instinct" was eerily accurate. Jim had told me that the reason they had wanted us to switch the location and time of the meet from the Auditorium on Saturday night to the Expo Center on Saturday afternoon was that Arnold had a feeling something might go wrong as the event was being conducted. As it happened, he was right. What went wrong was that several of the men built up so much speed as they carried the timbers up the ramp that when they dropped them at the top the momentum of that eight hundred-plus pounds hit with such forward force that several of the segments of the ramp were jerked apart. This meant that the carpenter crew had to rush out and put the ramp back together several times. Even though they did this quickly it still took valuable minutes and would have disrupted the carefully planned flow of Saturday evening's tight schedule of events. Now that we know what can happen, however, we can secure the ramp sections next year so they won't come apart.

One of the surprises of the final day was that because the Farmer's Walk had been removed from the Saturday night show, Arnold and Jim wanted the men to do something that night for the Arnold Classic audience at the Columbus Auditorium besides just shaking Arnold's hand and getting their checks and prizes. It happened that there was a replica of the famous Inch

Dumbbell available, and it was suggested to Jim that perhaps a small prize could be offered to the man who could pull it into the air the greatest distance using only one hand. Jim saw that this could be done quickly and would take very little set-up time. So that night, after the men were brought onstage and introduced, Bill Kazmaier and David Webster explained to the audience that any of the eight strongmen who wanted to attempt to lift the Inch replica had a chance to win an additional thousand dollars. The judges were David Webster and John Fair. Three of the men declined to make an attempt (Svend Karlsen, Brad Gillingham, and Andy Bolton), but five of the men decided to have a go. First up was Brian Schoonveld, who managed to pull the ponderous bell to the middle of his shin. Next up was the always-game Raimonds Bergmanis, who struggled for at least a minute but only managed to budge it a bit from the floor. Mark Philippi followed and made the best effort up to that point by pulling the bell approximately to his knee.

The next man out was the colorful Phil Pfister, who knows how to work a crowd. First, as he stood over the bell, he did a good Hulk Hogan imitation by cupping his huge hand around his ear toward the increasingly excited crowd. Next, he deadlifted the bell, placed one end of it onto his right thigh, and squatted to a parallel position, at which point David Webster signaled that the official part of Phil's attempt was over. But Phil wasn't finished. He then began inching the bell across his thigh toward his shoulder, but as he did so it began to fall and he was forced to touch it with his left hand and steady it. (With Phil's touching of the dumbbell with his left hand, Bill Kazmaier remained the only man to have "continentaled" an Inch replica with one hand and then pressed it overhead.) In any case, Phil was having fun, and he reasoned, correctly, that the crowd would enjoy watching someone try to get the famous dumbbell overhead. So once he had it fixed against his shoulder he stood up, and looked at the crowd as if to ask, "Do you want to see me put it up?" By then they were roaring their support for this impromptu effort, and so he tossed it about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way up, hesitated, and then pressed it out as the normally somewhat sedate crowd leapt to their feet and gave him a standing ovation.

That was a hard act for Mark to follow, as I had urged him beforehand not to try to clean the bell because he had never tried to clean a heavy dumbbell before and so might injure himself in the attempt. So he had to be satisfied with pulling the dumbbell to the middle of his chest, which was far higher than anyone else had done, including Phil, and pocketing an additional thousand dollars. But Phil had stolen the show, and in spontaneous appreciation Arnold and Jim announced that they

were awarding him a thousand dollars for his dramatic effort, a gesture that delighted the capacity crowd. On Monday after the event, Arnold said his wife, Maria Shriver, thought Phil's lifting of the Inch Dumbbell was the most exciting thing of the entire weekend.

The word we got from Arnold and Jim — as well as from other veterans of the Arnold Classic over the years — was that the Arnold Strength Summit was a great success, warts and all. In fact, both Arnold and Jim have pledged to continue and even expand their support of the show for at least the next few years. We believe the subsequent shows will be much less difficult as we will have already worked through most of the problems. Overall, David, Kaz, Jan, and I were very proud to have played a role in the event, and excited at the prospect of correcting our mistakes and hosting an even better show in 2003. Already, we've been talking to people who share our love of strength and strength competitions and thinking about what we can do to make things even more exciting to watch. One thing we know for sure — all of the events next year will be held on either the stage of the Expo Center or the stage of the Columbus Auditorium the night of the Arnold Classic finals. We also know we will once again ask the men to face the challenge of Apollon's Wheels, and to carry as much as nine hundred pounds up some sort of a ramp. The other events are being planned as this is being written, and we will very soon begin sending out invitations and announcements of those events.

This report wouldn't be complete or accurate without a listing of the sponsors and all the other people who helped with the contest. Our sponsors included the Arnold Classic, MET-Rx, the General Motors Company, the WWE, the Ivanko Barbell Company, Plaza Travel, and Sorinex. Many individual people helped, too, including John Fair, Eddie Coan, Bob Lorimer, Jeff Lorimer, Francis Brebner, George Oates, Ron Burgess, Chad Koy, Erika Neece, Bryan Neece, Vic Boff, Joe Marino, Travis Trimble, Mandy Melloun, Steve Slater, Pat Hall, Josh Kosarek, Jeff Everson, Jill Mills, and Jim Lorimer's wonderful office staff, including Lucy Pinney and Pat Brown.

It was a great honor to be asked by Arnold Schwarzenegger and Jim Lorimer to take the lead role in designing and conducting this particular competition — this Summit of Strength. Few things I have ever done have been as challenging or, at the end of the day, as rewarding. It took me a long time to recover from the event, and this period of recovery added to the lateness of this issue of *IGH*. Had I not had the constant help and support of Jan, David, and Kaz — not to mention that of Arnold and Jim — it would have been impossible to do



Arnold Schwarzenegger shakes Mark Henry's hand on Saturday evening as he presents him with the keys to his new Hummer and a 10,000 dollar check. In the background, Bill Kazmaier, who announced the contest during the weekend, looks on with a big smile.

Photo courtesy Jim Lorimer

what we did.

At the 2002 Arnold Strength Summit we brought together the greatest athletes in the world in powerlifting and the strongman competitions, and we had two elite weightlifters, too. And the top men who weren't in Columbus weren't absent because they hadn't been asked. We did our dead-level best to assemble the very strongest men in the world in order to determine who was the strongest man of all, and we plan to do the same next year as well. In 2003 we want to have the top powerlifters and strongman competitors again, as well as the very best weightlifters. By placing first and second, Mark Henry and Svend Karlsen have already earned an invitation and have accepted. The prizes we will provide will exceed those of this year, and the events will be announced well in advance. The challenge will be there for anyone with a strong back, a stout heart, and a willingness to lay it on the line for everyone to see. The men this year behaved like the warriors they are — they were brave, valiant, and anxious to challenge the events and each other. At the same time, they were unfailingly open in their praise of one another and supportive of outstanding performances. They could not have conducted themselves more appropriately nor could we have been more proud of them. They were — all of them — strong men in the truest and best sense.



Bob's brother, Jack Hoffman, at age 17.

Photo courtesy John Fair

NEW LIGHT ON BOB HOFFMAN'S GEORGIA ROOTS

John Fair

Warm as the sun that seeks its land,
Boundless as all its wealth may be
Open as its extended hand,
Is Southern hospitality.¹

-- B. H. King, 1894

A certain degree of mystery has always surrounded the early life of Bob Hoffman. Notwithstanding the fact that his identity is firmly fixed in Pennsylvania, and especially the "Dutch" country of York County, one must wonder how the so-called "Father of American Weightlifting" came to spend his first years in Irwin (now Tift) County, Georgia. This fascination with native origins was never expressed by Hoffman himself who never seemed very interested in forebears or family lore. "Bob was not interested in history," recalled his brother Jack. "His disinterest was noticeable as his obituary made no mention of his parents or brothers and sisters. One without knowledge might think he was illegitimate."² There is also the curious circumstance that Bob bore no physical resemblance to his brothers and that there is no record of his birth at the Tift County Health Department. Indeed he experienced serious problems in securing a passport for international travel with his weightlifting teams in later years because he could not prove his citizenship. But evidence of Bob's Southern birth is by no means lacking. In addition to his own occasional references to it in *Strength & Health* over the years and his military service record, his brother provides ample oral and written testimony that he and Bob were born in south Georgia, while their other brother and sisters were born in Wilkensburg, Pennsylvania.³ But what were Bob's parents doing in Tifton, Georgia, and what significance, if any, did it have to his later career as

a weightlifting promoter? This question is addressed in various local history sources that shed some new light on the circumstances surrounding the Hoffman family sojourn to the South and about rural development in *fin de siècle* America.

Tifton is actually one of the newer cities of Georgia, founded in 1872 when Captain Henry Harding Tift, a downeast Yankee from Mystic, Connecticut, decided to build a sawmill along the newly completed stretch of the Brunswick and Western Railway that connected Albany with the coast. Over the next several decades, Tift's mill, eventually expanding into turpentine and barrel-making operations, exploited the vast resources of 4,900 acres of virgin timberland adjacent to the railway that the owner had purchased from his uncles.⁴ The settlement of Tifton grew up around the sawmill on the highest ground south of the fall line at Macon. It consisted first of Tift's employees, then various service enterprises, and eventually a marketing center for such agricultural products as cotton, corn, livestock, fruit, tobacco, pecans, and even sweet potatoes. The latter was made possible by Tift's willingness to rent and sell much of his vast acreage after the timber had been harvested.

At first the town's growth was slow, but when the Georgia Southern and Florida Railway intersected the Brunswick and Western at Tift's mill in November 1888 the settlement, now connected with Atlanta and all

parts north, became a boom town. Tift promoted this enterprise by establishing a model farm just north of the town on which he raised a wide variety of crops and even experimented with oranges. Then he donated a large acreage to the railroad for an agricultural experiment station. It was called Cycloneta, after a tornado that had recently swept through the spot, and eventually led to the development of the Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College and the Georgia Coastal Plain Experiment Station in Tifton. So great was its growth and prosperity that Tifton was incorporated as a town in 1891 and became the county seat when Tift County was carved out of three neighboring counties in 1905.⁵

It was this agricultural boom town that served as such a lure for Addison Frederick Hoffman, Bob's father. But there were also powerful economic forces repelling him from western Pennsylvania where his family had resided for several generations. In contrast to the phenomenal growth that was taking place in the Southern outback throughout the 1890s a depression, sparked by the so-called Panic of 1893, gripped America's heartlands where industrial expansion had been occurring at a feverish pace during the previous decade. Within six months there were eight thousand businesses, four hundred banks, and 156 railways that went out of business. The economic slump, world-wide in scope, lasted for four long years.⁶ Deeply effected, though not devastated, was the Carnegie Steel Corporation of Pittsburgh where Addison was a general manager at the Duquesne mill. But the hard times did force the elder Hoffman to seek other employment possibilities.⁷

It was fortuitous that only a week after the nation's gold reserves dropped below the \$100,000,000 mark, thereby instigating the Great Panic, that an appeal for "more people" appeared in *The Tifton Gazette*. "The surest and quickest way to develop our state's resources, as they can and ought to be, is to multiply her population, and thereby fill up the waste places." It was "Georgia's Greatest Need."⁸ That this development could best be brought about by attracting outsiders was made clear in another editorial several months later. "There are immense tracts of land in every county of the state susceptible of the highest development and capable of adding untold millions to her wealth, and it would be done if people abroad were made acquainted with them." It was only through the intelligence and energy of "strangers" that Georgia could maximize its potential.⁹ Tifton itself, dubbed "the queen of all the lovely villages" situated along the line that connected Atlanta with the Sewanee River region of north Florida, was recognized as especially attractive to such settlers. In fact,

"four Pennsylvania gentlemen with their families" moved to Tifton in December 1893 to raise fruit on a five hundred acre plot, and an additional party of forty Ohioans and members of the Ohio Press Association were planning a visit in January. Local promoters rhapsodized about the virtues of their community and how fruit and vegetable growing, rather than cotton, would inaugurate a new age of prosperity on Henry Tift's recently cleared timberlands. "When her matchless pine forests are no more, south Georgia will not be a desert waste, but will be one vast garden, hardly less fair than Eden, and with a population much more numerous and contented, and Tifton will be the fairest and proudest of the beautiful cities of the bright future."¹⁰ Such were the rosy prospects that were held out to Northerners who wished to escape the ravages and uncertainties of the depression that was sweeping the more developed areas of the country.

It is almost certain that Addison Hoffman's family was included in the initial party of Pennsylvanians, inasmuch as he commenced farming operations on a 200 acre plot north of Tifton on January 1, 1894.¹¹ The family at that time included Bob's mother Bertha (Leone), his older sister Florence who would have been a toddler at this time, and his older brother Charles (Chuck), still an infant. Accompanying Bob's immediate family was his forty-nine year-old grandfather John L. Hoffman, a Civil War veteran who had also worked for Carnegie Steel. In fact, the elder Hoffman not only paid (between \$6 and \$10 per acre) for Addison's land but purchased an additional hundred acres for himself. Jack, though still unborn, attempts to recreate the conditions on the Hoffman homestead. "A house was built, a siding next to the Railway was built. cabins were built for the blacks who were hired with a black overseer, six hundred acres of trees and brush was cleared, trees were cut and stumps pulled with large white mules."¹² Along with their pioneer-style existence on the land, the Hoffmans might have encountered still some of the rude features of a frontier town in Tifton. As recently as 1892 a municipal ordinance made it "unlawful for any bull, boar or bitch to run at large upon the streets of said city."¹³ Also, perhaps a natural accompaniment of Tifton's frenzied growth, was the appearance of a certain lawless element, resulting in a shootout and some acts of arson.¹⁴

All contemporary accounts agree, however, that the character and conduct of the new Northern immigrants was beyond reproach. So numerous and concentrated were the properties of those from the Keystone State, about five miles north of Tifton, that the settlement was dubbed "Little Pennsylvania." It was situated in

Irwin County, where Jefferson Davis had surrendered in 1865, and it was near a smaller colony called "Little Ohio" in neighboring Worth County. As successive waves of Pennsylvanians arrived, they were greeted with paeans of welcome from Tiftonites who were convinced, notwithstanding the recent economic downturn, that they would infuse in Georgia wiregrass country the same kind of work ethic that had brought so much prosperity to the industrial cities of the North.¹⁵ "They are enterprising, energetic, economical, and the very best class of citizens," observed a local journalist. "And some of them can draw their check for a million! Altogether, near ten thousand acres will be growing fruit and truck tributary to this place during the present year."¹⁶ In early 1895, reported the *Macon Telegraph*, "a party of sixteen arrived from Pittsburg Thursday afternoon, the coldest day in years. While they suffered some from cold, they seemed delighted when the sun shone out Friday morning, and said it was much better than the blinding snowstorms they left in Pittsburg. About two thousand acres in small farms have been sold to these progressive people, and they are going right ahead planting fruit farms."¹⁷ Another undertaking was the Keystone Fruit Company, a joint marketing venture underwritten by several wealthy gentlemen from Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Illinois, which included not only peach orchards but a nursery and vineyard.¹⁸ But the most important of these immigrant enterprises was Little Pennsylvania, which consisted of forty families "who have within two years worked a revolution in the land."¹⁹

County historian Ida Belle Williams contends that this thriving pioneer community "was the result of the success of two Pennsylvanians in this section, U. S. Louther and A. F. Hoffman."²⁰ It is evident too that Bob's father was active in local society. On 26 April 1895, *The Tifton Gazette* reports that the young people of Tifton were treated to "a pleasant evening" at the Hoffman residence in Little Pennsylvania. As the paper reported, "on the return trip to the city, the horses hitched to one of the vehicles took a notion to have some fun on their own account by running away and there was a narrow escape from a serious accident. Several panels of fence were wrecked and the wagon considerably damaged."²¹

Resulting in a more positive outcome was Addison Hoffman's role as superintendent of the Garden Products Department for the Empire Garden Midsummer Fair in 1895.²² This annual event literally began on a dining room table at Henry Tift's residence in 1893 where samples of fruit grown on local farms were dis-

played. In the following year a special 80' x 80' building was erected to house the fair which attracted a thousand entries. Additional expansion ensued in succeeding years, and by 1897 there were five thousand visitors viewing the exhibits.²³ With regard to the 1894 Midsummer Fair, the *Atlanta Journal* observed that "a more complete success in every way has never been chronicled in this whole southern country."²⁴ For that same year Williams contends that "Tifton's peach market exceeded that of Fort Valley," traditionally regarded as the center of Georgia's peach industry.²⁵ Although the fairgrounds had to be sold in 1900, by this time the Tifton area had become recognized as the Empire Garden of the so-called Empire State of the South.

Addison Hoffman, with a spread of six thousand peach trees, three thousand plum trees, five hundred pear trees, and four thousand grape vines in 1896, could feel proud that he was playing an integral part in this development.²⁶ One must assume, especially with its immediate proximity to the railroad, that profitability was high in these years. *Farm and Fireside*, a popular agricultural digest of the time, estimated that a two hundred acre peach orchard could earn as much as \$50,000 or \$250 an acre per year. "One grower, with an orchard of less than eight acres, sold his crop on the trees for \$2,500, or more than \$300 per acre." That was a lot of money in the 1890s.²⁷ Yet one searches in vain for any mention of A. F. Hoffman, or even Little Pennsylvania, in any of the local history sources after 1896. And in 1903 his name first appears in the Pittsburgh city directory as a U.S. inspector at the Government Building in Wilkesburg.²⁸

The question remains of why the Hoffmans, particularly in light of the prosperity associated with fruit growing in the Empire Garden, returned so soon to their native state. Jack suggests that it had something to do with xenophobic attitudes of Southerners lingering from the Civil War. Their ripened peaches were "shipped in refrigerated cars that were supposed to be re-iced at Atlanta but they were not and arrived in Pittsburg in sad condition. There was considerable bitterness amongst Confederates who had lost the Civil War and Yankees did not always fare too well." This description, however, hardly accords with the overwhelming evidence that Pennsylvanians in particular and outsiders in general were enthusiastically welcomed for the spirit of enterprise they brought to this undeveloped area. A more believable scenario is that Bob's mother was disenchanted with the rusticity of pioneer living and longed to return to the refinements of big city life. Although, according to Jack, she adjusted to "the necessities of

living under greatly changed conditions,” she was “a trained piano and organ player who loved music.” She was “a lady.”²⁹ Hardships in south Georgia might also have contributed to the later separation and divorce of Bob’s parents. Another factor could have been that Addison got tired of farming or perhaps was not doing very well at it. Furthermore, by the end of the decade the Depression lifted, and a greater abundance of employment opportunities beckoned once again in the North. At any rate, the Hoffman’s settlement at Little Pennsylvania quickly lost its uniqueness as Minnesotans, Wisconsinites, Indianans, and even Swedes descended on Tifton and were eventually absorbed in the melting pot of city/county progress.³⁰

The extent to which Bob Hoffman’s birth and early life in south Georgia influenced his later rise to fame and fortune as a physical culturist would be difficult to determine. Certainly no direct connection can be drawn. The only possible premonition comes from an advertisement headed “Strength and Health” that ran regularly for several years in the Tifton newspaper. It featured a local snake oil concoction called “Electric Bitters” that supposedly provided relief for the “weak and weary” by aiding the liver, stomach, and kidneys to perform their functions.³¹ Bob too, as a promoter par excellence, was often accused of selling snake oil! But this is mere historical happenstance. On a more serious level, Bob’s Georgia roots cannot be so easily dismissed as whimsy or as useless bits of recondite lore. While it is the poundages lifted, records set, contests won, the ecstasy of victory and agony of defeat, that most excites our interest in iron game personalities, no real understanding is possible without an investigation of the whole picture, including one’s cultural context. Indeed this is the point behind Josef Svub’s recent revelations on “The Ancestry of John Grimek.”³² No lifter, body-builder, or promoter emerged in a vacuum. However much training routine, diet, and drug intake appear to be critical to an iron game athlete’s development, such less obvious factors as home life, ethnicity, religion, economic status, sexuality, education, career aspirations, psychological stability, and even ancestry likely have an even greater bearing. Though perhaps deserving no more than a footnote in the grand scheme of things, Bob’s early and brief Southern exposure must be considered part of the cultural baggage he carried with him en route to becoming weightlifting’s greatest promoter. Of all the honors Bob Hoffman received in his later years, “Distinguished Pennsylvanian” is no doubt one of which he was most proud; but his life actually began in “Little

Pennsylvania,” for which he also deserves the distinction of being recognized as a son of the South.

Notes:

- ¹ *Tifton Gazette*, 23 February 1894.
- ² Typescript by John L. Hoffman, December, 1987.
- ³ Interview with John L. Hoffman, Parker, Pennsylvania. 1 January 1988, and Hoffman Service Records, Pennsylvania State Archives, Harrisburg.
- ⁴ Sarah Cochran Atwater, *Tifton Centennial Commemorative Booklet* (Tifton, 1972) and “Tifton’s Founder: Henry Harding Tift,” typescript in the Genealogy Collection, Tifton-Tift County Public Library.
- ⁵ “From Pine Forest to Empire Garden,” *The Daily Tifton Gazette*, 26 September 1972.
- ⁶ John D. Hicks, *The American Nation* (Cambridge, Mass., 1958), 231.
- ⁷ Typescript by Hoffman.
- ⁸ *Tifton Gazette*, 28 April 1893.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, 21 April 1893.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 15 December 1893.
- ¹¹ *Tifton Gazette*, 8 February 1895.
- ¹² Typescript by Hoffman.
- ¹³ *Tifton Gazette*, 11 March 1892.
- ¹⁴ “A Shootout, Railroad, Bride and New Town,” *Daily Tifton Gazette*, 26 September 1972.
- ¹⁵ *Tifton Gazette*, 14 December 1894; 11 January 1895; and 18 January 1895.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 1 March 1895.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 15 February 1895.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 12 July 1895.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 3 May 1895.
- ²⁰ Ida Belle Williams, *History of Tift County* (Macon, 1948), 39-40.
- ²¹ *Tifton Gazette*, 26 April 1895.
- ²² *Ibid.*, 3 May 1895.
- ²³ “Growth Phenomenal During the 1890s” *Daily Tifton Gazette*, 26 September 1972.
- ²⁴ *Tifton Gazette*, 20 July 1894.
- ²⁵ Williams, *History of Tift County*, 39.
- ²⁶ *Tifton Gazette*, 10 July 1896.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, 28 August 1896.
- ²⁸ R. L. Polk & Co.’s Pittsburgh City Directory (1903) Carnegie Library, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Jack Hoffman suggests, from an early anecdote of his brother at age 3, that the family was back in Wilkensburg by 1901. Typescript by Hoffman.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*
- ³⁰ *Tifton Gazette*, 22 January 1897.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, 31 March 1893.
- ³² Josef Svub, “The Ancestors of John C. Grimek,” *Milo* 9(December 2001), 80-82.

THE COLD WAR'S IMPACT ON THE EVOLUTION OF TRAINING THEORY IN BOXING

Nicholas Bourne, Jan Todd, & Terry Todd



After World War II the Soviet Union was left as the sole military and political force capable of matching the United States. A forty-six year Cold War then ensued between the United States and the Soviet Union in the battle for global power and ideological supremacy. The Cold War was fought on many fronts, including the sporting arena. The former Soviet Union was highly successful in its pursuit of sporting dominance. During the Cold War era, in fact, the Soviet Union was by far the most successful nation in the Olympic “team” competition. The success of the “Big Red Machine” has been attributed to a number of factors, but the most significant was the allocation of enormous financial and scientific resources for sports development.¹ The availability of such resources meant that the Soviet Union conducted a wide variety of studies related to sport performance and training methodologies at a time when the United States and other free-world nations were still in their “infancy” in terms of sport science. Some of the Soviet research concentrated on applied aspects of training that would ultimately be incorporated into professional boxing in America from 1985 onwards. The areas of research included: periodization — the division of an athlete’s training program into specific cycles of time with the specific objective of peaking for major competitions; plyometrics — exercises that involve a rapid stretch of the muscle followed by a shortening of the muscle as seen in jumping; strength and power development, including weight training; optimal work-to-rest ratios; optimal means of recovery; the optimal training stimulus to facilitate adaptation; contribution of different energy systems in sport and optimal nutrition practices; and, of course, ergogenic drugs.

One example of Soviet research that specifically relates to boxing is V.I. Filiminov’s “Means of Increas-

ing the Strength of the Punch” that appeared in the January 1986 *National Strength and Conditioning Association Journal*. The authors used tensiometric dynamometers and observation to discover that the use of the legs when pushing off was responsible for producing 38.46% (the greatest percentage) of the power of the punch. Trunk rotation was second greatest at 37.42% followed by arm extension at 24.12%.² Filiminov’s research confirmed the importance of the legs in the transfer of force from the ground, through the trunk to the arm. Anyone not convinced of the effects of ground reaction force should try jumping up in the air and throwing a ball to see how far it goes. Then throw the ball with both feet on the ground and the importance of ground reaction force in the production of power becomes clear. This research validated the importance of incorporating lower extremity exercises such as squats, lunges, and in particular, Olympic lifts into the training program of boxers.

In 1984, L.P. Getke and I.P. Digtyraev examined the “Fundamental Means of Strength Training for Boxers of Different Ages and Qualifications.” They divided strength into maximum strength (the maximal amount of weight you can lift), explosive or reactive strength, and starting strength (the ability to overcome inertia) to see if there were any specific strength deficits. They concluded that it was “easiest to increase explosive strength by increasing maximal strength.”³ G.V. Kurguzov and V.Y. Rusanov, examined the use of “Interval Training for Increased Work Capacity for Boxers.” They recommended the development of an aerobic base during the general physical preparatory stage. This allowed sufficient recovery for anaerobic interval training during the specialized preparation stage.⁴ In 1983 B.A. Solovey investigated the effects of exercises with weights as a means of improving hitting speed in young boxers and

concluded that the use of weights significantly increased the speed of a single punch thrown by either arm.⁵

The Spread of Soviet Training Theory to the United States

Soviet research slowly filtered into America via track and field journals such as *Track Technique*, *Track and Field Quarterly Review*, the *Yessis Soviet Sports Review* and the *National Strength and Conditioning Association Journal*. It was not until the late 1970s and 1980s that carefully planned periodization and Soviet-training methods began to appear as part of consistent training structures in the United States.⁶ However, due to the unique nature of boxing it would take even longer before these training methods would become incorporated and then accepted as routine training methodologies,

Examples of articles that extolled the benefits of the new training methods included Kelly Corde's 1991 article that outlined the "Reasons to Strength Train for Amateur Boxing." The benefits of training Corde included were: increased anaerobic energy, injury prevention, increased contraction speed and increased force and power production.⁷ Mackie Shilstone (the conditioning coach of Michael Spinks) and Gerald Secor Couzes devoted a whole chapter to the "Physical Conditioning for Professional Boxing," in the 1993 *Medical Aspects of Boxing*. The chapter covers the concepts of training, cardiovascular conditioning, strength training, endurance training, overtraining, nutrition and the structure of individual workouts.⁸ In the same book Stephen Fleck and Jay T. Kearney outline the "Physical Conditioning Required for Amateur Boxing." The authors advocated a periodized approach to training dividing the year into a) a base period, b) a preparatory period, c) a pre-competition period and d) a peaking period. The authors recommend the use of Olympic weightlifting motions (such as the clean and jerk and snatch) for power production, the use of interval training, and upper and lower body plyometrics.⁹ The culmination of these approaches is seen in USA Boxing's 1995 247-page publication, *Olympic Style Boxing*, that includes chapters on interval training, plyometrics, cardiovascular training and weights.¹⁰

Despite advances in training theory the use of so-called "old-school" training methods such as long distance running and the avoidance of weight training still persist in boxing today. Tim Hallmark (Evander Holyfield's strength coach) and trainer Martin Nortiz both consider the use of these "old-school" methods to

be very prevalent today. "Too many coaches coach like they're back in the Stone Age," said Nortiz.¹¹

There are a number of reasons for this, with the primary one being a lack of education. In April 2001 the Nevada State Athletic Commission published a 174-page booklet entitled *Ringside and Training Principles* to address this issue.¹² The aim of the booklet was to dispense scientifically-sound advice to boxers from some of the sports more knowledgeable trainers. Dr. Margaret Goodman, the commission's ringside physician who spearheaded the project, and Flip Homansky, her colleague, explain various medical issues from proper weight loss and dehydration to chronic head injuries and concussions. In the rest of the text, reputable trainers like Teddy Atlas, Emmanuel Steward and Felix Trinidad discuss such topics as the three most dangerous practices that occur in the training gym, their criteria for stopping a fight, the use of headgear, the replacement fluids to give a fighter, the wrapping of the hands, and the post-weigh-in and pre-fight nutrition of the fighter. In the same book, strength and conditioning experts Tim Hallmark, Dave Honig, and Mackie Shilstone explain their philosophies in preparing a fighter to peak in optimal fighting condition. They also discuss what to eat, how much to run, how much to rest, and conditioning fallacies and myths. The booklet is the "first time any commission or professional boxing regulatory body has produced such a compilation of information."¹³

The booklet represents a significant step in the right direction but as Royce Feur notes it probably should have been done years ago.¹⁴ Martin Nortiz observes that unlike amateur boxing, professional boxing trainers do not have a certification program to test their knowledge, particularly on the medical aspects of training. This is one area where there is room for significant improvement.

Another reason for the persistence of "old school" methods has been a resistance to change. Nortiz refers to the old "If it ain't broke don't try to fix it" attitude that controls the behavior of many coaches.¹⁵ Trainers use their methods of success from the past or they copy fighters who have achieved success to train future athletes. They are reluctant to change or even be open-minded about new training innovations. It is also important to note that boxing is not included as a mainstream sport in major educational institutions. Consequently it does not benefit from immediate access to sport science departments and shared training facilities that enhance the growth of training knowledge.

The growth of sport science and in particular the

strength and conditioning profession has been significant in the last twenty years. Previously, as Angelo Dundee highlights, cornermen or trainers “were capable of doing every facet of the training regimen . . . everything that had to be done with the fighter.” Today the roles of cornermen have tended to be more specialized, which has annoyed Dundee. “They should be trainers. There shouldn’t be a cut man, bucket man, second man, third man, fourth man. You’ve got to be a complete man to help a fighter. You’ve gotta be able to do it all.”¹⁶

However, this is increasingly unrealistic with the tremendous expansion of training knowledge over the last twenty years or so. This is one of the reasons that strength and conditioning specialists such as Tim Hallmark (Evander Holyfield), Mackie Shilstone (Michael Spinks) and Courtney Shand (Lennox Lewis) have been increasingly consulted for their knowledge of boxing.

Weight training, once considered taboo in boxing, is much more prevalent today and as Austin boxing trainer Richard Lord notes, it is “just starting to get a hold.”¹⁷ One reason for weight training’s slow inception into boxing training has been its association with muscular hypertrophy (enlargement), which may or may not be desirable for a fighter. In weight-specific categories it could be extremely detrimental to add more muscle bulk if a trainer and a fighter felt that an individual had a better chance at a lower weight. Much of the controversy regarding weight training stems from trainers’ failure to understand that different types of weight training have very different effects on the body. Sets of ten repetitions with a one-minute rest between sets have been found to have a significant hypertrophic effect.¹⁸ This hypertrophy would be ideal for a light heavyweight making the transition to heavyweight, but not for a fighter in a lighter weight category. On the other hand, sets of two-to-three repetitions with heavier weights and, in particular, explosive movements such as the Olympic lifts (snatch and clean and jerk) have been shown to have a great effect on the activation of the nervous system (the ability to recruit a greater percentage of motor units and muscle fibers) with a minimal effect on muscle hypertrophy.¹⁹

It appears that boxers’ training practices are slowly catching up with the rest of the athletic world, although the universal acceptance of modern training methods may still be some way off. Testimony to progression is provided by trainers such as Richard Lord and Martin Nortiz, both of whom incorporate the use of weight training, plyometrics, interval training, and sound nutritional principles in the training of their fighters. Recent publications such as *Ringside and Training Principles* that feature successful conditioning experts in the

field of boxing are strong proponents of modern training methods.

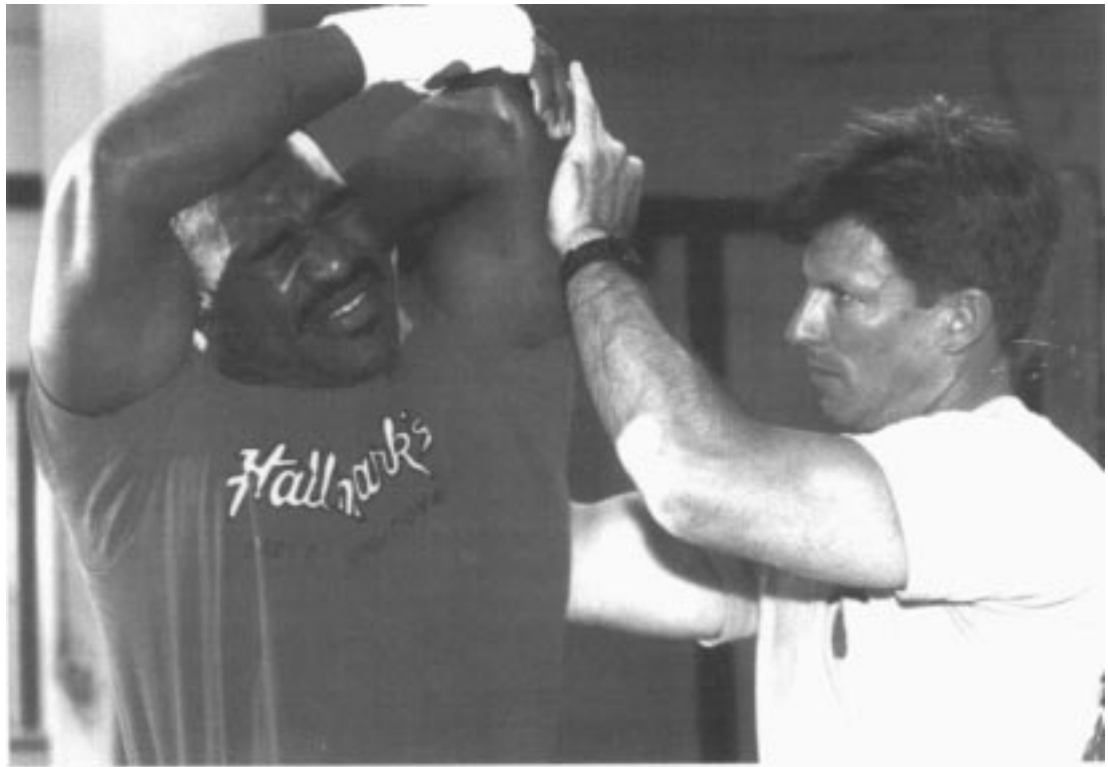
The changes that have occurred in boxing training over the last century have been remarkable. The contrast of Mike Donovan preparing for a training session by drinking a glass of sherry with an egg yolk and walking at least eight miles per day with occasional hundred-yard runs to Evander Holyfield’s highly scientific program of physiological monitoring, weights, plyometrics, sport specific drills and the use of nutritional supplements, vitamins and minerals illustrates how far training has come in the last century. In the desire for improved performance, the future of training in boxing is, as Tim Hallmark remarks, likely to get “more and more innovative.”²⁰

The Revolutionary Training Techniques of Evander Holyfield

In 1986, shortly after Leon Spinks took the title from Larry Holmes, a young up-and-coming boxer by the name of Evander Holyfield teamed up with Tim Hallmark, a strength and conditioning specialist from Texas. Their relationship would prove to be extremely rewarding and play a significant role in Evander the “Real Deal” Holyfield’s outstanding success.

Holyfield was born in Atmore, Alabama on 19 October 1962. He began his boxing career at age eight when he entered a “pee-wee” tournament. He later went on to compile an amateur record of 160-14 with 75 knockouts.²¹ On 12 July 1986 in only his twelfth professional fight Holyfield upset the two-time world champion Dwight Muhammad Qawi in a fifteen round split decision to win the World Boxing Association (WBA) Cruiserweight (190 lb.) title. In October 1990 Holyfield made the transition to heavyweight with a stunning third-round knockout of James “Buster” Douglas (who had dethroned “Iron” Mike Tyson earlier that year) for the undisputed heavyweight title. Holyfield lost his first professional bout (and his title) in November of 1992 to Riddick Bowe but regained it a year later in a rematch. After a spell of over a year out of the ring due to a controversial “hole in the heart,” for which he was eventually medically cleared, Holyfield made an unspectacular comeback. It was enough, however, to earn him a long-awaited title shot against Mike Tyson. On 9 November 1996, Holyfield, a 25-1 underdog, dominated the fight with his supreme conditioning and knocked Tyson out in the eleventh round to regain the heavyweight title for the third time. This fight was one of the biggest upsets in boxing history. Holyfield proved that it was no fluke by repeating the performance in June of 1997, in what was

later called the "Bite of the Century." Holyfield was well ahead on points, when Tyson bit part of his left ear off. Tyson was later disqualified when he attempted to bite Holyfield's ear again. In November of 1999, Evander lost his title to the present WBC, IBF and IBO champion, Lennox Lewis, in their second match. Most recently Holyfield made boxing history on 12 August 2000 when he outlasted John Ruiz to win the vacant



WBA title and become the first boxer to win a heavyweight championship on four occasions.

Tim Hallmark, of Wimberly, Texas, works with former heavyweight champion Evander Holyfield on stretching after a recent workout. Hallmark is part of a new breed of boxing trainers who incorporate scientific weight training methods along with ring and roadwork.

--Courtesy Tim Hallmark

Evander Holyfield and Tim Hallmark

In 1986 Evander Holyfield approached Tim Hallmark for assistance with his fight preparation.²² After an analysis of the sport of boxing Hallmark abandoned the traditional miles of roadwork and hours of sparring and replaced them with a comprehensive weight training program, sprints, and specific conditioning drills such as plyometrics (i.e. box jumps). Hallmark's approach was methodical and incorporated the latest advances in training theory and sport science. During conditioning drills Hallmark monitored Holyfield's heart rate to assess workrate and recovery. With this conditioning Holyfield's heart rate would drop from maximal to 130 beats per minute at the end of one minute's rest, just like the period between rounds. "When he first started," Hallmark said, "he could only drop to 175 or 180 beats per minute but now every round he goes out 66% more recovered."²³

In a 1987 *Sports Illustrated* article, Clive Gammon remarked that the combination of Hallmark's modern training techniques and Holyfield's dedication was

the "stuff of which revolutions are made."²⁴ Hallmark's conditioning had an immediate impact. Alluding to the Qawi fight Holyfield remarked that Hallmark "put me into that tight so good that I could work fifteen rounds and throw 1,290 punches."²⁵ This is over twice the number of punches thrown by Spinks, whose work output at the time was considered high.

Other innovative training techniques included the use of what Hallmark termed the "shadow vest." First bungee cords were used to tie Holyfield's lower body down to the floor to provide downward resistance. Then he had Holyfield put on a heavy vest so that his upper body also had resistance. Hallmark explained the training involved, "We have him start throwing punches . . . He's up to the point where he does 160 to 180 contractions in two minutes compared to the 60 to 80 punches that he will normally throw in a three-minute round."²⁶

Holyfield also followed Hallmark's comprehensive weight training program, which is generally credited for Holyfield's increase in size from 185 pounds to 210 pounds with no gain in body fat. The greater size allowed him to move up to the heavyweight division and compete for much greater prize money. In an interview

last November, Hallmark outlined his philosophy on weight training and the program he used in preparation for the Mike Tyson fight.²⁷ It consisted of sixteen sets of weights done on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday, in what Hallmark calls a “high intensity” workout. For each set, Holyfield performs eight to twelve repetitions not quite to the level of complete failure. Hallmark’s reasoning was to simulate the same physiological and mental feeling of tiredness that Holyfield would experience when competing in the ring. Hallmark explained, “So you’re getting a good cardiovascular workout because you’re going anaerobic every so often, you’re getting good endurance and strength because you get to the point where you really have to work hard to keep the same speed . . . It makes you mentally suck it up and do the next set even though you feel like you’re not quite ready to.”²⁸

In collaboration with a sports medicine physician, Holyfield’s blood, urine, and saliva are also analyzed to give hormonal and metabolic feedback on his state of health and response to training. Hallmark is also actively involved in Holyfield’s nutrition program. Holyfield takes various nutritional supplements, multivitamins and minerals (from Champion Nutrition and Sports Research) to facilitate optimal energy levels and recovery between training sessions.²⁹

Hallmark and a growing number of strength and conditioning specialists have revolutionized the way boxers train. As a positive testimony to his methods, Hallmark has been asked to oversee all aspects of the strength and conditioning program for USA Boxing at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs. Hallmark is the first to admit that the transition into professional boxing was not easy. “When I first broke into boxing they acted like what I was doing was something from another planet.”³⁰

Notes:

¹ For information on the rise of Soviet sport see: Yuri Brokhin, *The Big Red Machine* (New York: Random House, 1978).

² V.I. Filiminov, K.N. Koptsev, Z.M. Husyanov and S.S. Nazarov, “Means of increasing Strength of the Punch,” *National Strength and Conditioning Association Journal* 7(December/January 1986): 65-66.

³ L.P. Getke and I.P. Digtyraev, “Fundamental Means of Strength Training for Boxers,” *Soviet Sports Review* 24(December 1989): 192-194.

⁴ G.V. Kurguzov and J. Rusanov, “Interval Training for Increasing Specialized Work Capacity of Boxers,” *Soviet Sports Review* 23(March 1988): 13-14.

⁵ B.A. Solovey, “Exercises With Weights as a Means of Improving Hitting Speed in Young Boxers,” *Soviet Sports Review* 18(June

1983): 100-102.

⁶ William Freeman. *Peak When it Counts: Periodization for American Truck and Field* (Mountain View, California : TAF News Press, 1996).

⁷ Kelly Cordes, “Reasons to Strength Train for Amateur Boxing,” *National Strength and Conditioning Association Journal* 13(May 1991): 18-21.

⁸ Mackie Shilstone and Gerald Secor Couzens, “Physical Conditioning for Professional Boxing,” In Barry Jordan, ed. *Medical Aspects of Boxing* (Boca Raton, Fla: CRC Press, 1993) 93-102.

⁹ Stephen J. Fleck and Jay T. Kearney, “Physical Conditioning for Professional Boxing,” In Barry Jordan, ed. *Medical Aspects of Boxing* (Boca Raton, Fla: CRC Press, 1993). 51-92.

¹⁰ USA Boxing, *Couching Olympic Style Boxing* (Carmel, Indiana: Cooper Publishing Group, 1995).

¹¹ Martin Nortiz. Taped interview by author, Austin, Texas, 30 November 2001.

¹² Steve Kim, “Ringside and Training Principles.” Available at <http://www.maxboxing.com/Kim/kim070601.asp>.

¹³ Royce Feour, “Commission Manual to Give Boxers New Line of Defense.” Available at <http://wwwlvvj.com>.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Nortiz interview.

¹⁶ Fried, 27.

¹⁷ Richard Lord, Taped interview by author, Austin, Texas, 30 November 2001.

¹⁸ Steven J. Fleck and William J. Kraemer, *Designing Resistance Training Programs* (Champaign, Illinois: Human Kinetics, 1997). 161.

¹⁹ Carl Johnson. Lecture notes. USA Track and Field Level 3 Coaching Course held at Louisiana State University, July 1999. Johnson is coach to Johnathon Edwards. world record holder in the triple jump. Prior to breaking the world record Edwards increased the amount of weight he was able to lift without adding to his body weight.

²⁰ Tim Hallmark. Taped interview by author, Austin, Texas, 11 November 2001.

²¹ Biographical information on Evander Holyfield is available at http://www.sho.com/scboxing/fighter_bio.cfm?fighter=evanderholyfield.

²² Dave Nightingale, “A New Fighter for a New Age.” *Sporting News*, 211 (15, April 1991): 23-25.

²³ Clive Gammon, “Tuning Up for Tyson.” *Sports Illustrated* 67(14 December 1987): 48-50; 65.

²⁴ Gammon, “Tuning Up,” 49.

²⁵ Ibid., 50.

²⁶ Nightingale. “New Fighter,” 24.

²⁷ Hallmark interview.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Showtime presents: *Interview with Evander Holyfield* on 22 July 2000. Available at <http://www.talkcity.com>.

³⁰ Hallmark interview.

Reviewed by David Chapman

Donald Dinnie: The First Sporting Superstar

By David P. Webster & Gordon Dinnie

Edited by Charles Allan (Ardo Publishing, 1999)

As David Webster has shown so many times, the Scots are fond of strongmen. Of all the Caledonian supermen, however, none could ever compare in strength or stature to Donald Dinnie. Even in Dinnie's lifetime, he was accorded a place as a national hero, and after his death he has continued to be respected and admired for the many feats of strength that he performed.

This is a lively account of an extraordinary athlete — a man who was skilled as both a wrestler and a professional strongman. It was on the fields of Highland Games, however, where Dinnie felt most at home, and it is here where his reputation was first forged. No one could have been more Scottish than the mighty Donal', and this undoubtedly accounts for the affection in which he is still held by the Scottish people.

Dinnie was born near Aberdeen in 1837 just a few days before the coronation of Queen Victoria, and he passed away in 1916 during the height of the Great War. He thus spanned a pivotal time in the history of sport. As an itinerant participant in Scottish games, in effect Dinnie became one of the world's first true professional athletes. He was able to make a living as a competitor thanks to the many Scottish athletic associations that were then coming into existence around the world. As life became harder for those in the homeland, they began a diaspora that sent the Scots among the Sassenachs. The Celts in North

America, South Africa, and the Antipodes all retained a love for the land of their roots and its sports and customs. The Highland Games that these immigrants kept alive around the world meant that champion athletes like Dinnie would be invited to participate in sporting events wherever the bagpipes skirled.

Dinnie competed in many Highland Games events, but it was in wrestling, hammer-throwing, stone-putting, and caber-tossing that he excelled and eventually became unbeatable. Thanks to his growing reputation, the young Scotsman ventured on his first foreign tours to Canada and the United States in the early 1870s and there he found enough to keep him going until he was drawn in 1883 to New Zealand and Australia where he lived and competed for the next 14 years.

In addition to being a great competitor in the strength events at the Games, Dinnie came to represent his people both at home and abroad. He was intensely proud of his Celtic heritage, and no matter where he traveled or competed, he became a beacon for his fellow countrymen, drawing every Scot within miles to his side. No matter where he went or what the occasion, Dinnie always wore a kilt; in fact, it is said that he never owned a pair of trousers.

It is most remarkable that Dinnie was able to make a comfortable living as an athlete, but unfortunately he did not invest his earnings wisely, so



Although this life study of Dinnie is creased and water-spotted, it still explains, more graphically than words, why Dinnie was able to dominate the power sports of the Highland Games for so many years.

Courtesy David P. Webster

when he eventually returned to Great Britain in 1897, he had to continue work as a strongman on the music hall stage. He was sixty when he returned to Europe and settled in London, but he was forced to appear on the stage until he was seventy-five years old. Thanks to a series of benefits that were conducted in his honor, Dinnie was able to earn enough money to live on a small annuity until his death in 1916.

Dinnie's story is well told by Webster and Gordon Dinnie (a self-described "distant cousin" of the great man). Many facts are presented here for the first time, and the magnificent illustrations from the Dinnie family as well as from Webster's legendary collection are helpful and illuminating. Thanks to Webster's broad knowledge of strongmen, he is able to place the great Scotsman in an appropriate historical matrix, comparing him with other famous athletes of past and present.

In addition to introducing hitherto unknown information, the authors have done so in a facile and

readable way. This book is a good read, and it can be enjoyed by those who want to dive deep into sport history as well as those who simply want to take a shallow dip into the peaty waters of Scottish culture. Those who want detailed footnotes or academic rigor must look elsewhere, however. There are very few sources that are credited, and sometimes one longs for attributions. For instance, when we are told that due to a land bust, Dinnie was forced to sell 12 blocks of land (presumably in Australia) for only £30, we might wonder where those figures came from. Fortunately, Webster is a reliable enough historian so that his accuracy can be taken for granted.

This is a handsome volume, and it is well worth having in one's library. The story it tells of the growth of global sports superstardom is one that has received short shrift. Historically speaking, it is worth a Dinnie Stone in gold.

Reviewed by David P. Webster

A PHYSICAL CULTURE BIBLIOGRHPHY

Compiled & Published by David Horne

This publication fills a long felt want and is in the "must have" category for all avid physical culture readers, collectors, and those interested in sports history. Even if you are simply hooked on nostalgia, this tome makes interesting reading. Many years ago Terry Todd pointed out the need for such a reference book and now at last we have an author who had the diligence and patience necessary for such a painstaking task.

This bibliography covers the period up to and including 1955, and features over thirteen hundred titles from the well known to the obscure. There are also fifty-seven illustrations, mainly of mail-order muscle building courses. Authors are listed alphabetically beside book titles along with the number of pages, publishers names, and date. While almost entirely in English, some foreign publications are also included.

David Home, who is a practicing physical culturist and master of grip strength, not only compiled the entries, he personally collated and assembled the 110-page paperback, finishing it with spiral binding. It can truthfully be said it is all his own work, and he can be proud of the results.

I have already had fun noting those I have in my library and those I have read. Better still is finding some

books I should try to obtain. There is a wide range of subjects – the culture of the physique before it became specialized bodybuilding, physical education, even some boxing and wrestling. These combat sports have not been comprehensively reviewed for obvious reasons. David has included some non-physical culture books that were written by authors well known in our activity. This is done to illustrate the versatility of these personalities, with Hackenschmidt and Sandow being good examples. The list of Sandow's small health-related booklets will be of considerable interest to collectors. For me, the biggest surprise in the book was to see fifty-five publications listed under the entry for George Jowett. While these included small booklets and advertising brochures it showed he was an even more prolific writer than I had imagined.

David is currently at work on a second volume which will be available soon. Because his first book was privately published, only a small number of copies were printed and the edition is now technically "out of print." However, readers can contact David at irongrip@ntl.com about the possibility of ordering either volume. Congratulations, David, for a job well done.

David Webster is offering *IGH* readers his book on Donald Dinnie for \$20 US (this includes postage), an \$8.00 discount. To order, send check or money order to:
Strength Games
 43 West Rd., Irvine, KA12 8RE.
 Scotland



Dear IGH,

Your recent articles on Paul Anderson were arrogant and disrespectful. And because they were also laced with errors — from the egregious to the hilarious — they are especially embarrassing to their authors as well as to *Iron Game History*, purportedly, “a publication in which accuracy would be the byword.” I welcome anyone to compare these articles to my book on Paul Anderson.

Instead of publishing these anti-Anderson rants, why didn't you have the integrity to focus on Paul's greatness? Or to acknowledge that, minimally, *Paul Anderson: The Mightiest Minister* provided a meticulously documented account of Anderson's amateur lifting career, plus an honest statement on two of his most celebrated unofficial lifts — devoid of hyperbole and replete with significant new evidence on them? Is it because John Fair and Joe Roark, for all their posturing and puffery, have contributed virtually nothing of substance related to understanding Paul Anderson's lifts? Fair, whose multiple misstatements reveal his slipshod scholarship, is too preoccupied with minutia, if not muckraking, to contribute much of worth. yet he certainly takes a long time to say very little. And Roark, for all his vaunted accuracy, got lost early in his journey toward truth, supposedly examining the safe in Vidalia, even though it's in Toccoa, and he never does regain his bearings. In the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is king.

My book notes that, “Generally speaking, the world's most accomplished, respected lifters and Iron Game experts take the side of supporting Paul Anderson's lifts, and the few critics are generally people with much lesser credentials.” While it might not have been their intent, Terry Todd, John Fair and Joe Roark certainly corroborated my observation.

Randall J. Strossen, Ph.D.
IronMind Enterprises, Inc.
Nevada City, CA

Editor's note: When we made the decision to publish the research of Joe Roark and John Fair we realized that it

would make some people unhappy, and that Randy Strossen — who wrote the Anderson biography reviewed by Fair — would be particularly displeased. We regret these hard feelings because we consider Strossen to be one of the leading figures in today's iron game. Although we would like to see him cover the issue of drugs in a more comprehensive manner in Milo, the magazine is nonetheless consistently outstanding and fills many of the gaps left by the demise of Strength & Health and the change in focus of Iron Man. Even so, the question remains: if we are aware of painstaking research done by men who are known for their love of accuracy and who have no anti-Anderson political agenda — research that comes to the same essential conclusions about one of the most publicized feats of strength in history — is it not appropriate for us to publish that research in the interest of fairness? If insufficiently documented and possibly fraudulent records are allowed to stand it places those who have trained to break those records at a very unfair disadvantage, as the following letter makes clear.



Dear IGH:

One of the basic questions that a man asks is, “Do I measure up?” or “How do I compare?” People do this in a variety of ways: war, money, business, or athletic endeavors, to name but a few. Answering that question is the motivation for many, if not most of man's achievements. Throughout history, layer grows upon layer in a life story with surprising quickness, that either deifies or demonizes a person and in either way will exaggerate the person's life out of all proportion. I run into local lore quite regularly concerning myself, which would do justice to any ancient hero, both ways. Those of us in our respective fields pay very close attention to what is actually going on and has gone on there. It is very important to differentiate between what is myth and what is truth when measuring oneself against those in the past. It is not fair for a man to be required to measure flesh and blood against myth and legend.

It has been asked, “If a tree falls deep in the forest, and no one is there to hear it, does it make a sound?” Perhaps, but there is no significance unless someone bears witness. In the same way, concerning one's own endeavors, unless witness is borne, much if not all of the

significance of them is lost.

I have remained drug free and mostly supplement free throughout my strength career so that I can honestly compare, on a level playing field, my strength and feats with those of the giants of the past. I have thus placed myself at a considerable disadvantage in the “here and now” in my quest for this, I believe, greater significance.

In this regard, I salute *Iron Game History* for its courageous stand in speaking the truth as best as it can be known regarding the claims of Paul Anderson. I thank John Fair, Joe Roark, and you, Terry, for taking the time to research, and having the guts to reveal, facts which fill us all with a certain measure of sadness. What has actually, historically been accomplished in the backlift, or any other lift for that matter, is extremely important to people like me. In the case of the backlift especially, this represents the most weight lifted by a human being, and I believe that this is as historically significant as any other human achievement, except perhaps loving your neighbor.

Greg Ernst
Nova Scotia, Canada

Editor’s note: Greg Ernst has made the heaviest authenticated backlift in history (5340 pounds). Truth be told, the person we had most in mind when we decided to publish the results of the research done by Joe Roark and John Fair was Greg Ernst. Greg had spent almost twenty years specializing in the backlift when he made his historic lift, and it was done in front of thousands of people — two of whom were the two of us.



Dear IGH:

The story on Paul & his backlift; let him have his glory. He was no steroid-growth hormone-junkie. No support rubber suits. A nice guy and a credit to our game unlike the chemical freaks today! That’s why I dropped out of the game. Not enough guys like Paul. I met him several times-boy-what an appetite! What natural strength!

I did five reps in the quarter squat, with no wraps

or juice, with 1250 lbs. On regular squat racks, two guys hanging onto the bar. I weighed 200 lbs.

John Leitget
Brooklyn, NY



Dear IGH,

I finally worked my way through the current *Iron Game History* and wanted to tell you that John Fair’s article on Anderson is excellent. It is an excellent critique. I will be using the criteria he sets forth, in fact, as I wrap up the Arthur Jones project. The timing could not have been better.

John Szimanski
Piedmont Fractional Plates
Via email.



Dear IGH,

I wanted to congratulate Jan Todd and Michael Murphy on the great job you did on Ottley Coulter. I was amazed by the material you covered in the piece and all of it meticulously documented. I was particularly interested in the details on Prada, of whom I had only the slightest knowledge.

The one thing that jumped out at me was the very precarious existence that circus performers lived. It is absolutely wonderful to have this sort of thing available for scholars. I wish I’d known all this before the Sandow book was published because I think there are important parallels in the careers of both athletes. I am already looking forward to Part II with great anticipation.

It’s also nice to see the contrast between Ottley and Paul Anderson. Coulter was so clearly trustworthy and modest in his assertions while Anderson and his supporters are so loud and gassy in theirs. Terry’s introductory essay was a brilliant piece of diplomacy; no one wants to deny Anderson’s gifts. but he was in many ways his own worst enemy.

I just returned from two wonderful weeks in France. When I finally got to Paris, I found a rather large stack of books, including several very rare works by Marcel Rouet on women's fitness as well as a 1909 history of French physical education by Georges Demeny that I had never seen before. I think my greatest find, however, was *Le Palmarès de la Culture Physique Française (French Physical Culture's Roll of Honor)*. This is a richly illustrated book of essays by prominent sportsmen and a list of every Desbonnet school in France with photos and a brief commentary on all of them. It was limited to a hundred copies, so I'm very lucky to have found it!

Keep up the great work you're doing in *IGH*.

David Chapman
Seattle, Washington



Dear *IGH*:

The June 2001, Paul Anderson issue of *IGH*, was for me one of the most interesting, exciting issues so far. To me it brought back memories of 1957, 1958 when Paul Anderson's prodigious strength was the talk of most people in the Iron Game including those of us whose interests were in bodybuilding. I remember when Anderson made the unfortunate error of attempting to transfer his awesome lifting power into professional boxing. Arthur Harris, one of the most muscular men in the world at the time, and I were training buddies in New York's Bronx Union YMCA. Arthur had been a talented boxer. He and I were working out and the subject of Paul Anderson's boxing efforts came up. Harris thought Anderson was making a big mistake. Arthur said that "even if he has any success eventually he'll have to fight Sonny Liston." We both looked at each other knowing very well what that would mean. Paul's boxing career came to an abrupt end when he was stopped in the second round by a fellow he outweighed by about one hundred pounds. That was probably fortunate for Paul.

Fantastic issue! I enjoyed it very much.

Dr. Ken "Leo" Rosa
The Bronx, NY

Dear *IGH*:

Just a note about Paul Anderson. Your coverage was very balanced and honest and I don't think you will have had any criticism from Europe. Over the years there have been many cynical and critical comments about such claims [as Paul's backlift] and for the "strongest man that ever lived" kind of publicity. It took me quite a long time to get to grips with the problem as I hunted through magazines, trying without success to find reports written at the time of Paul's claimed backlift. He was, rightly, so much admired for his genuine lifting and being such a good Christian that it makes it very difficult for people to be critical. It was absolutely right and very brave to set the record straight. It was also appropriate that Americans did this; had others done it there would have been much more controversy. This way it is seen that your magazine is even-handed in recording historical happenings and correcting a long-standing inaccuracy to which a blind eye has been turned.

I also admire and enjoy the coverage elsewhere of Paul Anderson by his many supporters and we should not let this solitary incident diminish our respect for their contributions, or cloud our love for this great lifter.

David P. Webster
Irvine, Scotland



Dear *IGH*:

I was very pleased with the Steve Reeves issue. When speaking with you on the phone some time ago, I mentioned how odd it seemed for Steve to more or less drop out of show business when he could have done better pictures or gotten into television. That's where the money is. Look at his old buddy Jack LaLanne.

Some forty years ago my dad was kind enough to give me enough money to buy the Varsity Club from Jim Murray. As an impressionable teenager I remember everything Jim Murray told me. John Fair, who did a piece in the Reeves *IGH*, had the quotes of Jim Murray exact in his book *Muscle town*. This is a testimony to Jim's honesty and Mr. Fair's reporting ability.

John McCarthy
Waretown, NJ

Dear IGH:

I want to congratulate you on the issue of *Iron Game History* featuring the late Steve Reeves. It sounds as though you were held to the grindstone until the very end. I know exactly how that feels. I also want to thank you for noting my book *Worlds to Conquer: An Authorized Biography of Steve Reeves* in the journal. Again, a job well done.

I received a copy of *IGH* from Vic Boff only a few days ago. As you know Vic is a great guy and is an incredible asset to the iron game. He is by all means a true pioneer within the sport and we are very fortunate to have someone today with such a colorful history and background.

I was not aware that this tribute issue had been written until Vic had asked me if I had received a copy, as I had not. We have spoken over the phone now for a number of years during my project and Vic has turned out to be a sincere friend and an incredible aid.

Chris LeClaire
So. Chatham, MA

**Dear IGH:**

Once again you have done a wonderful job in paying tribute to one of the Iron Game's icons. Congratulations on the superb Steve Reeves tribute in *IGH*.

Enclosed is my renewal of *IGH* at the Patron level. Please continue it "In Memory of Chuck Sipes." His family is doing well. His oldest daughter, Daphne, was married this past summer. His next oldest daughter, Kathy, has two children, one in his teens and the other out of high school; and his youngest daughter, Trish, has two preschoolers. Mary, his wife, has moved to be close to Trish so that she can help out with the children. All are still in California. I have made a personal vow to share all my knowledge of their grandfather with the four grandchildren. Chuck's father, Bill, is well over 90 and lives near Chuck's brother's family in Oregon. Chuck's mother passed away two years ago. His parents had a long and fulfilled life with the exception of Chuck's demise.

On another subject, do you remember the video I sent you of those movies I took at the first two Olympias? Well, I recently discovered Dave Draper's website and so I offered him a copy of them like I sent you. His wife, Laree, handles the correspondence and was very excited about getting a copy as she had never seen Dave in his "Prime." (I think he looks as good today!) Well, before I sent them a copy, I wanted to get a more professional conversion from the movie to video when Laree contacted me and explained that the TV cable channel E! was doing a bio on Dave and she felt they could use the footage. So I sent one of my "home conversions" and Laree and Dave were just thrilled with it and they sent a copy to E! They were so excited they contacted me and had an expensive premium conversion done. The irony of this is that E! is in Los Angeles and they had previously utilized a company to convert some other home movies on another show awhile back; this company was unique in its abilities in that I guess it's the only one in the US of A that can do such a quality conversion. Well, where do you think they're located? A twenty-minute drive from my house! That's as ironic as Chuck's daughter moving within a fifteen-minute drive of my house! Talk about a small world. Anyway, when I get my copy of the master, you will be the first to get a copy. I have certainly gotten some mileage out of those movies, as they were how I first met Chuck in 1968. Also, have you seen Dave's book *Brother Iron, Sister Steel*? It's a classic.

Norm Komich
Beverly, MA

Editor's note: Norm, we appreciate your kindness, and the upgraded tape. We have read Dave's book and found it very interesting and well written.

**Dear IGH:**

Enclosed is a money order for another year of *IGH*. As usual, I found the latest issue interesting. Too much space, I thought, was devoted to Paul's backlift. Since it wasn't done under strict circumstances, I think it should be left as an Iron Game tale.

The same could be said about the nitpicking

about the depth of his squat. In the Broad St. Gym in York I saw Paul do 12 squats with 660. As far as I was concerned they were full squats. In the same training session he also cleaned 415 and pressed it three times. He and I were the only ones in the gym at that time.

It's no secret that not everyone has the same flexibility. Some can squat till their butt is a few inches from the floor. I saw a photo of Tom Platz doing an eight hundred pound squat. Very deep, thirty-plus thighs and all.

Piteo Margas
Via email

Editor's note: It should always be remembered that what you "see" and what you read is not always true. Tom Platz' squats in the 800 pound range that have been shown in photos in muscle magazines were taken with six plates (three on each side) that looked like standard 45 pound plates but were not. The dummy plates were widely used in photo sessions in Gold's Gym and other popular training facilities in the Los Angeles area, and they weighed almost nothing. The use of these plates reduces an apparent weight on the bar of approximately eight hundred pounds to an actual weight of just a bit over five hundred pounds.



Dear IGH:

Ken Rosa suggested that I write a few words of my own recollections of John Grimek.

I met John at Sig Klein's Bent Press contest the first weekend in May of 1941. I was an eager, enthusiastic 16-year old. (Ha-ha. I am an enthusiastic 77-year old now.) Anyway, he was so approachable and pleasant and I had a chat with him.

Four weeks later the Senior Nationals were held in Philadelphia. I was there for the two day session. Had the chance to see Stanko, Davis and Abele lifting. After the lifting I went backstage where the Mr. A contestants were preparing for the posing. I went to where Grimek was and spoke to him. He did not tell the pesky kid to go away, don't bother me. He was courteous and pleasant; as a matter of fact I helped him apply a bit of

oil on his body. I did not see him after he went out to pose. (I did watch the whole contest though.) I have such great memories of the whole affair that have lasted these 60 odd years.

I did not see Grimek again until I moved to York in late 1944 lock, stock and barrel. I went to work for Bob Hoffman and then I would see John five times a week, three of those times in the gym. They were interesting years. Visitors came from all over the USA and from quite a few foreign countries. Very memorable. John was a tremendous person physically, a unique example of outstanding development. And equally, or more so, a human being of warmth, kindness, and friendliness.

Since I was a seaman for over forty years, I did not see John very much [in later years] but I would call him periodically for gab sessions, which I enjoyed and I believe he did too. I miss my friend of so many years. Perhaps we will get to work out in the BIG GYM in the sky, someday.

Pete Marozas
Watertown, CT



Dear IGH:

This letter is long overdue. While I am somewhat saddened by John Grimek's death, he had a long life, admired by many.

I cannot recall an issue of *IGH* that was not done well; I have enjoyed it from the beginning. Some of my favorite articles have been about Apollon, Paul Anderson, Roy Hilligenn, Bob Peoples, Jim Lorimer, and all the ones by John Fair.

I know I have placed more than my share of phone calls to your office inquiring about when the next issue will be out. That is because I look forward to them so much. Thinking about future subjects for articles I came up with ones about various great gyms of the past — Ed Yarick's, Leo Stern's, Bill Pearl's, George Turner's, etc. Also [profiles of the] Greats of the Game like Bill Pearl, Clancy Ross, Norbert Schemansky, and Tommy Kono.

There is just so much subject matter to deal with that it presents a great challenge. I'm glad to see that

your list of patrons and fellows has grown to assist you in your quest.

The article about *Physical Fitness Magazine* in Vol. 5 #3 was also good and it would be good to do one like that from time to time. An article on Jack LaLanne and his contributions would also be real good. I will close now; I look forward to meeting you again. The last time was December 1982 at the University of Virginia at Charlottesville.

Good things to you both.

Howard S. Havener
Manassas, VA

Editor's note: We remember. It was at a strength coaching symposium organized by Bill Dunn at the University of Virginia. You may know that Bill died recently. He had a hard time during the later years of his life.



Dear IGH:

Just a few words to tell you how I appreciate your website. I am Prof. Edmond Desbonnet's grandson, and I read with pleasure the nice translation of my friend David Chapman on Apollon. I intend to put my own collection on line, maybe next year. I need to find time for that! Best regards and congratulations

Richard Desbonnet
Paris, France
Via email



Dear IGH,

It's probably overdue — I apologize — but enclosed is the second \$100 towards my patron subscription,

It was your Vol. 6, No. 3 May-June, 2000 headline that disheartened me. More than that I was genuinely 'upset.' Immediately it crossed my mind, "What the hell, was the poisoned!?" What, Steve Reeves 1925-2000 gone; all gone? It took an airplane crash to kill the

great Rocky Marciano — another sad day indeed.

I first met Steve Reeves the summer of 1945 at Ed Yarick's gym, Oakland, CA. He was 20, I was 15. He was born a 'mountain man and equestrian' in Montana, lost his real Dad before age two, came West with his Mother and late in the Great Depression was noticed by Ed Yarick about 1939. As I recall Steve bicycled (delivered papers) and had very strong limbs. Ed Yarick became Steve's "father." Steve often would ask me just to hear the answer, "Ted, who is the nicest man who ever lived?" I'd reply, "Ed Yarick, the Swede." Steve would smile and say, "right." Steve then would ask, "who is the second nicest guy who ever lived?" I'd answer, "George Eiferman." Steve would smile and say, "right." Some questions are real easy to answer.

When Steve lost his wife and agent in the early nineties he was a lonely man. His long-time pal from Norway (royal family tie-in), Sven Rider came up from Antigua and I took them both sailing on my ketch. Steve's agent-wife was originally Sven's fiancée. Since she spoke five languages and was involved with show biz in Europe she was the logical person to manage Steve's fifteen movies. Between the fourteen "Hercules" movies they lived in Switzerland and Steve said he only began training *three weeks* before a movie! He'd tell me with a most serious look, "Hey, when I train, I really train!" All Steve Reeves had to do was "look at his biceps and it would grow!" He had "designer genes." God gave him the same "steroids" he gave Eugen Sandow. Having the "potential-au naturelle" to train twelve to fifteen hours/weekly instead of eight or nine like most of us, Steve may have [been able to] become the 'world's strongest man.' I'd ask him [why he didn't try]. He'd reply, "why?" He simply refused to "over do it!" (As we know, oral and injectable anabolic plans make it possible to train thirty or more hours weekly as skeletal muscle 'recovery' is quickened, but then one has no time for anything else).

Steve was particular. I tried to line him up with a gal. It didn't work out. Debra just happened by. Next thing I knew Debra and her 12 year old were Steve's family! Steve's last sail on my ketch was with Debra. She 'filled the bill.' Steve had some rough years, but his "sense of humor" was terrific. That got him through a lot. Damn he'd make me laugh.

Ted Nolan Thompson, M.D.
Laguna Beach, California 92651

Review and Translation by David Chapman

Emparons-nous du sport: Les Canadiens français et le sport au XIXe siècle

**[Let us Seize Sport French Canadians & Sport
in the Nineteenth Century]**

by Gilles Janson (Montreal: Guerin, 1995).

Most lovers of strength lore know that the province of Quebec was the home of Louis Cyr, Horace Barre, Leo Robert, the brothers Baillargeon and Weider, and a host of other strength and physique stars. Quebec is still referred to by the name that George Jowett gave it over seven decades ago: the “cradle of strong men.”¹ Although the province is home to only around seven million inhabitants (roughly the same as Georgia or the greater Chicago area), its prominence as an important locus of weight training is far out of proportion to its population. Beyond weightlifting and bodybuilding however, Canada’s French-speaking province is as enthusiastic about sport today as any other region in North America. It supports successful professional baseball, hockey, Canadian rules football, and other teams; but as Gilles Janson points out in his book *Emparons-nous du sport*, it was not always thus.

Early in the nineteenth century, most Quebecers were excluded from both the halls of power and the fields of play. Sport and government were pretty much the exclusive domains of the English; so were the cities since the French relinquished these more or less to the British conquerors. For a number of cultural, linguistic and religious reasons, the Francophone majority lived apart, principally on farms and in small villages, but all of this changed with the industrial revolution when French Canadians were attracted back to the cities where (almost despite themselves at first) they were drawn into social, financial, and — most significantly for us — sporting circles.

The British had long touted the benefits of sport, and it did not take long for their French neighbors to take up the challenge. Sport became a way for Franco-Can-

dians to show that they were just as strong as their English

conquerors. “Let us seize sport” became the cry of those who wanted to show that they could be victorious, too. They could take back their pride as they took back the government. If they had lost the battle for their homeland on the Plains of Abraham in 1759, the French-Canadians might at least win on the baseball diamond or in the hockey arena.

Janson tells the story of this gradual change in mindset among the Francophones that took place in the late-nineteenth century. One of the main sources of pride for many in the province was the massive strongmen that peopled the folklore and history books of Quebec. Janson shows how these human anomalies fit into the bigger picture of sport and recreation in Lower Canada, and he documents his account with hundreds of quotes from newspapers and other contemporary sources. Gilles Janson is uniquely situated to write this book since he is Special Collections librarian at the University of Quebec at Montreal. His talents at locating rare or unique source materials cannot possibly be faulted (as the extensive footnotes and bibliography prove).

In addition to its impressive documentation, *Emparons-nous du sport* is also singularly well written. Those who yearn to know more about Louis Cyr and his fellow Quebec strongmen will find much in this book which will help them understand why *La Belle Province* has been the home of so many powerful and muscular athletes. Readers who have an interest in the history of sport on our continent should not overlook this wonderful volume.



“Feats of Strength” (Pages 89-95)

Feats of strength have always enjoyed a great popularity among French Canadians. A few strongmen have entered into legend. The literate elite, which ordinarily would disdain to discuss sport, did not hesitate to glorify those who were made famous by their muscular vigor. In 1884 the journalist, literary critic and writer, Andre-Napoleon Montpetit published *Nos hommes forts* [Our Strongmen] in which he “recalled the long tradition of physical strength which characterizes the French-Canadian nation.”²

That same year, Benjamin Sulte’s work *Joseph Montferrand* appeared.³ This was the story of a colossus who could put dozens of the “English” to flight. In 1903 Louis Guyon produced at Le National [The National Amateur Athletic Association] his “Canadian drama,” *Jos Montferrand*.⁴ Six years later, Edouard-Zotique Massicotte came out with *Athlètes canadiens-français. Recueil des exploits de force, d’endurance, d’agilité des athlètes et des sportsmen de notre race, depuis le XVIIIe siècle* [French-Canadian Athletes: An account of the feats of strength, endurance, and agility of the athletes and sportsmen of our nation, since the eighteenth century].⁵ Therefore, it is not surprising to see the Francophone media during the 1890s giving extended coverage to Louis Cyr, “the strongest man in the world,” then at the height of his glory, so that this “little French-Canadian” (he weighed over three hundred pounds!) glorified “the vitality which is inherent in the French-Canadian blood.”⁶ This man symbolized the vigor, robustness and power of a people who in many regards doubted their own merits. He became the answer to a community that felt inferior. Joliette College hailed with pride this phenomenon, “who proved that the prodigious strength of our fathers has not quite disappeared from amongst us.”⁷

The Society of St. John the Baptist honored this hero several times. Therefore, in the name of the Society, Joseph-Xavier Perrault and Laurent-Olivier David organized an evening’s entertainment for January 21, 1891 “together with all the athletic clubs” to “honor in the person of Louis Cyr . . . he who represents to the greatest acclaim the physical strength of our race.” The notice added, “At a time when the vitality of the French games are placed in doubt on the European continent, it is left to a Canadian of French background. . . [to] prove that at least in America, French blood has not degenerated.”⁸

Students from the University of Laval at Montreal and the Victoria School of Medicine accompanied the “Canadian Hercules” with flags and “music leading the way” to Queen’s Hall where a celebration took place.” Among those in the immense crowd who were in attendance at the presentation of an honorary belt to the hero of the day, one could recognize Wilfrid Laurier and Honoré Mercier.¹⁰ A year and a half later, “the citizens of Montreal” presented Cyr with a medal made of “solid gold.” Virtually apologizing for its appeal “to sporting instincts,” they made reference to the “republics of antiquity” who consecrated “a cult which accorded equality to physical strength and intellectual strength.”¹¹ And if this justification were not sufficient, they added the “Judaic tradition which has made of Samson a strong man sustained by God to protect the Jewish people against the tyranny of the Philistines.”¹² From there to making our strongmen the protectors of the French-Canadian people is but a short step. For Benjamin Sulte, Jos Montferrand “personified our race, which was then attacked and abused every day by the foreigners who wanted to reduce us to the level of the pariahs of India.”¹³ In the 1890s the feats of Louis Cyr in Canada, Great Britain, France, and the United States were cause for an immense pride among his compatriots.¹⁴

Recognition of Cyr’s merit by foreigners raised his prestige among his own people. Let us emphasize that Richard K. Fox, the New York proprietor of the *National Police Gazette* and promoter of various sporting events, considered Cyr to be the strongest man in the world.¹⁵ We might add that “the press in England and the United States is full of prodigious feats of our fellow countryman.”¹⁶ At the same time, the name of Horace Barre appeared in the firmament of strongmen.¹⁷ To this latter can be added the names of Pierre Cyr — Louis’s brother, Dollard Regimbal, J. P. Poitevin, Émile and Louis Robillard, and M. Brosseau who were discussed from time to time in the sporting chronicles.¹⁸

In addition to stimulating nationalistic feelings, strongman contests could earn sizeable financial benefits for their promoters. It is therefore not surprising to see the proprietors of Sohmer Park, Royal Park, and of the National Monument hosting such events.

Notes:

¹ George F. Jowett, *The Strongest Man That Ever Lived* (Philadelphia: Milo Pub. Co., 1927), 11.

² Kenneth Landry, “Nos hommesforts d’ André-Napoléon Montpetit,” *Dictionnaire des oeuvres littéraires du Québec*. (Montreal: Fides, 1978) 1: 526-527.

³ Benjamin Suite, *Joseph Montferrand* (Montreal: Camyre et Brasseur, 1884), 48. There was a new. revised edition of this book in

1899. **[Translator's note:** Although he actually existed (he lived from 1802-1864) Joseph Montferrand became a semi-mythical figure to many French-Canadians. Many fantastic deeds have been ascribed to him over the years; most of these feats demonstrated his superiority over his English-speaking Protestant neighbors. He was a boxer of great talent and particularly enjoyed beating Anglo Saxon opponents.

Other stories are more difficult to credit. For instance, Montferrand was supposedly so tall and limber that he could jump up and plant his footprint on the distant ceiling of a tavern. Another story tells of his victory over a crowd of "Shiners" or Irish Protestants who attempted to ambush him on a bridge over the Ottawa River. They were all soundly thrashed after Jos picked up an Irishman by the feet and swung him around at the

height of his career. Montferrand's deeds improved with the telling and he acquired a Paul Bunyanish persona. Known as "Big Joe Mufferaw" by the English, and it was said that he combed his hair with a pine tree and dug the Rideau Canal by dragging his axe behind him. A more accurate account appears in *Les Hommes Forts du Québec de Jos. Montferrand & Louis Cyr* by Ben Weider and E. Z. Massicotte (Trois-Pistoles: Editions Trois-Pistoles, 1999) 69-78.]

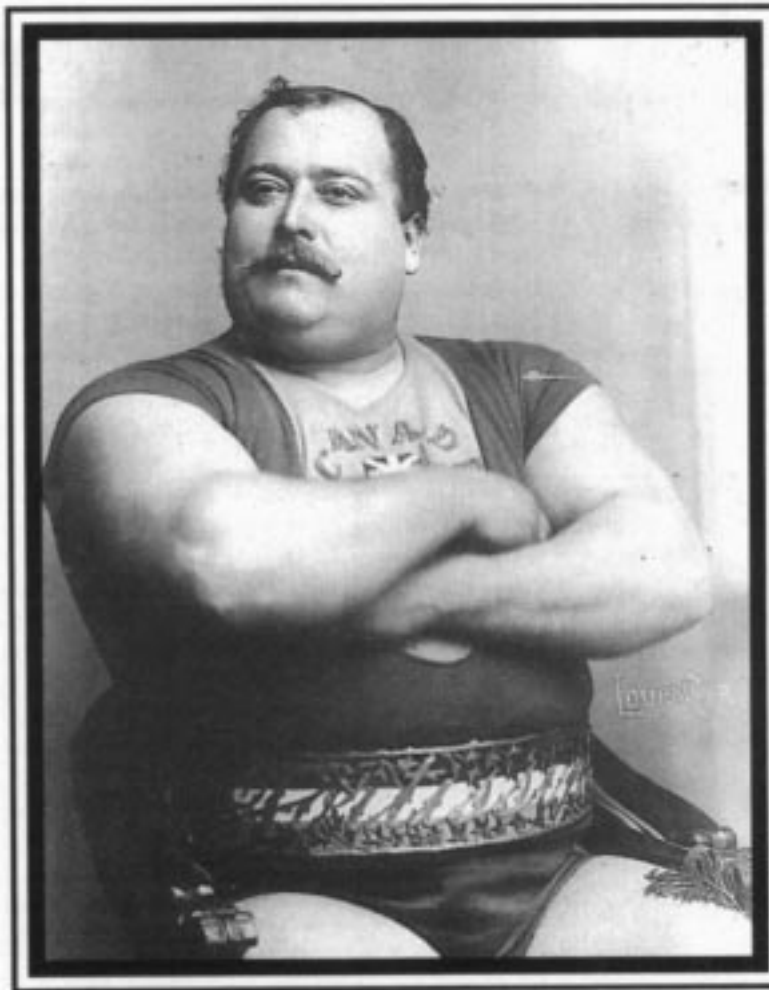
⁴ *Dictionnaire des oeuvres littéraires du Québec* (Montreal: Fides, 1980) 2: 732-733.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *La Patrie*, 27 January 1891, 3.

⁷ *La Patrie*, 27 October 1892, 2.

⁸ *La Presse*, 22 & 27 January 1891, p. 3; *La Patrie*, 22 January 1891, 4; 27 January 1891, 3. This fear of seeing "French blood" degenerate was repeated as a *leitmotiv* in the newspapers of the time. **[Translator's note:** The extraordinary Joseph-Xavier Perrault was born in Quebec City on May 27, 1836, and after spending his youth in Canada, he left for further schooling in France and England. When he



Louis Cyr, the Canadian Hercules, as he looked at the height of his career.

Photo courtesy David P. Webster

This is from a richly illustrated page of text which occupies the entire first page entitled "Strongmen Yesterday and Today." Jos Montferrand, Grenache, and Louis Cyr are compared to Samson, Hercules, Milo of Crotona, etc.

¹³ *La Presse*, 3 August 1891, 4.

¹⁴ **[Translator's note:** Cyr never performed in France.]

¹⁵ *La Presse*, 3 January 1891, 4; 19 November 1891, 1; 27 June 1893, 3; 10 April 1894, 5; 11 April 1894, 5; and 19 June 1894, 6. For Richard K. Fox, see Steven A. Riess, *City Games: The Evolution of Urban Society and the Rise of Sports* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 72, 172-173.

¹⁶ *La Presse*, 24 January 1891, 8.

¹⁷ *La Presse*, 26 December 1891, 4; 23 January 1892, 1; 13 August 1894, 6; and 29 September 1894, 7.

¹⁸ *La Patrie*, July 23, August 3 & 7, 1894. *La Presse*, 3 August 1894, 4; & 7 August 1894, 5.

returned, he was appointed Agricultural Secretary for Lower Canada, and in 1863 he was elected to Parliament. Despite his opposition to Quebec's joining the Canadian confederation, he rose to prominence in both provincial and federal circles. This ardent Quebec nationalist was also a dynamic promoter of sport, and he was one of the founders of the first gymnastics organization in Montreal, the Société Nationale de Gymnastique. His story is told in detail on pages 55-58 in *Emparons-Nous du Sport*. Laurent-Olivier David was a prominent sportsman and honorary president of the Montreal Lacrosse Club.]

⁹ *La Patrie*, 24 January 1891, 4; and 27 January 1891, 3.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* **[Translator's note:** Sir Wilfrid Laurier was Canada's first Francophone Prime Minister, serving from 1896-1911. Louis-Honore Mercier (1840-1894) was a French Canadian nationalist politician,

¹¹ *La Presse*, 6 August 1892, 2; & 8 August 1892, 4.

¹² *La Presse*, 1 April 1893, 1.

Requiem for a Strongman: Reassessing the Career of Professor Louis Attila

Kim Beckwith and Jan Todd

“One thousand dollars to any charity if I cannot conclusively prove that every alleged instructor of physical culture in this country is [either] a former pupil of mine or using one of the systems I have originated and perfected, and which from time to time I have published.”¹ This bold challenge posted by Professor Attila in the *National Police Gazette* in 1894 could arguably sum up the most important impact of this pioneer of physical culture. While strongman Ludwig (Louis) Durlacher, who went by the stage name Attila, had largely retired from performing by the time he moved to America in 1893, his career as a trainer of others was far from over. And, in the long run, his contributions to the growth of scientific weight training may ultimately be of equal, or perhaps even greater, significance to the overall growth of strength training and physical culture in the USA than those of his ex-protege, the professional strongman Eugen Sandow.

Historian David Chapman argued that Sandow laid the foundation for modern weight training because he opened a physical training institute in London, wrote several popular books on the subject, and, most importantly, because his heavily muscled, yet aesthetically pleasing body served to inspire athletes on both sides of the Atlantic.² Indeed, some of the most important figures of the early physical culture era did claim that Sandow had inspired them to pursue physical culture. British lifting champion Launceton Elliott, American magazine publisher Bernarr Macfadden, and barbell manufacturer Alan Calvert for instance, all claimed that Sandow’s image was the muse that started them on their own journeys toward self-improvement.³ And it cannot be denied that Sandow’s American tour, following on the heels of his wildly successful performances at the World Colombian Exposition of 1893, delighted thousands of North American men and women and created the realization that one did not have to accept the body with

which one was born. Despite all these claims to greatness, however, Sandow was not in every sense an “original.” Louis Durlacher was.⁴

Most people who remember Attila at all know him primarily as a moderately successful professional strongman who became Sandow’s mentor and trainer. But Attila’s historic legacy stretches far beyond the years he spent as Sandow’s *eminence grise*. The “Professor,” as he liked to be called in later years, was a major contributor to the European and American physical culture movements of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries and, during the course of his career, he: 1) was a pioneer in the use of weight training to help athletic performance; 2) was one of the first “personal trainers” for the rich and famous; 3) was an influential supporter of equal opportunity for women in the gym; and 4) argued nearly a hundred years before the medical community came around to the same position that weight training would retard the process of aging. When considered in light of the times in which he lived, Attila’s achievements and open-mindedness — especially on the question of women’s training — are truly remarkable, and make this peripatetic figure worthy of canonization as a major innovator in the field of strength training.

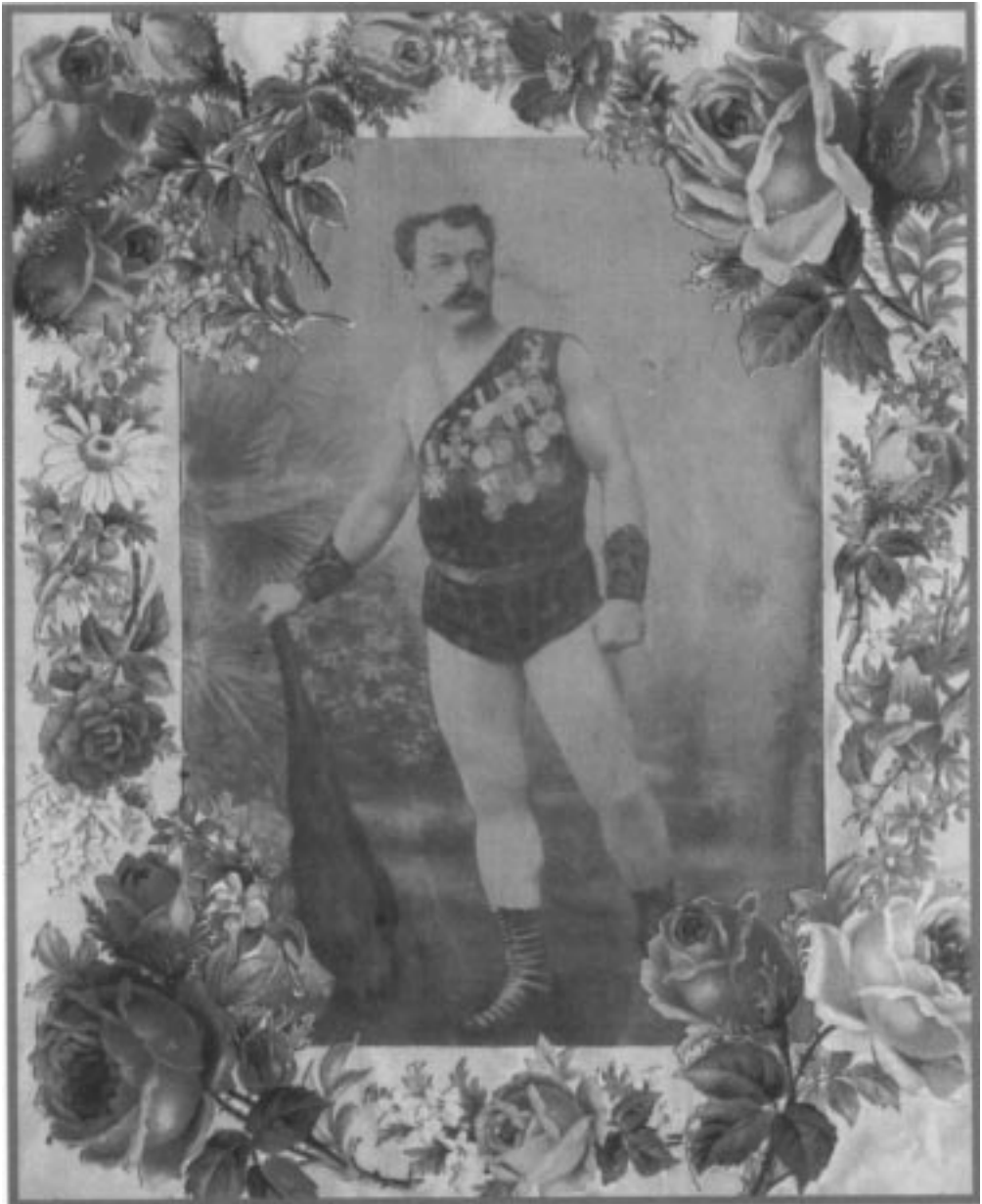
Ludwig Durlacher was born on 2 July 1844 in Karlsruhe, Germany, and developed an interest in sports and athletics at a young age.⁵ According to David Webster’s *The Iron Game*, Durlacher received his early education from a Professor Ernst in Berlin, who taught him to play the piano and helped him master five languages. The most significant event of Durlacher’s early years, however, was the day he saw Italian strongman Felice Napoli perform for the first time. Fascinated by the display, young Ludwig asked to study with Napoli as an apprentice. Napoli agreed, and from him young Ludwig learned all he could about the strongman profession.⁶ Napoli was a master of the platform. He understood the

importance of staging and costume, and he taught young Durlacher everything in his repertoire.⁷

Napoli had much to teach. Born under the surname Prades in Naples, Italy, in 1821, Napoli worked only the best European circuses and music halls where he performed at various times as a strongman, a pantomime artist, and a slackrope and trapeze artist. French historian Edmund Desbonnet reports that Napoli “was most remarkable for his artistic talent and by the way he presented his act.” A true showman, according to Desbonnet, Napoli also possessed a beautiful singing voice and worked for a time under the stage name of the Singing Strongman (*Athlète Ténor*).⁸

In this early era, most strongman acts didn’t consist simply of a series of lifts with explanations between them. Many showed their strength and physiques through short vignettes or pantomimes, with the lifts and posing integrated as part of a plot. Desbonnet writes of Napoli, “In all the circuses where he was engaged, he was the principal actor in the pantomimes. He was unsurpassed in the role of the poacher just when he is poised on the rock searching the horizon or when hidden behind a tree, his weapon at the ready, waiting for his pursuers. He displayed a physique so beautiful, and he assumed poses so noble that even the greatest artist could never have dreamed of creating anything equal to it.”⁹

The record isn’t clear on how long Attila stayed with Napoli, or what precisely the years were that they worked together. In fact, very little is known of Attila’s early life except that in 1861, at the age of seventeen, he joined the Baden Sharpshooters, a sport and riflery club.



In the Victorian era, it was the custom for people to decorate their scrapbooks with brilliantly colored, die-cut stickers. This original, sepia-tinted photo, showing Attila with his medals and famous club, must have been one of his favorites as it appears at the very front of his scrapbook and occupies a full page. The roses surrounding the picture are in shades of red, pink and white. The large daisies are yellow, and the smaller flowers are blue.

Although not a tall man at an adult height of 5’4”, Attila earned a reputation as a gifted all-round athlete and excelled in track and field events and swimming.¹⁰ While associated with the Sharpshooters, Attila supposedly saved the son of the Duke of Baden from drowning, and then apparently spent some time with the Duke’s family. This incident introduced him to wealth and culture and reinforced Attila’s desires to move in the best

circles. He knew that the theater was his ticket to that lifestyle and so, after adopting the name of the famous leader of the Huns, Attila set off on his first solo tour in approximately 1863 at the age of nineteen.¹¹ At first he advertised himself modestly as “Victor D’Attila – the Great Teutonic Hercules, the Lion Athlete, the Modern Samson.”¹² How long he worked as a “single” is unclear, however, for clippings in his scrapbook reveal that he was soon traveling with “Valerie,” who received top billing over Attila as “The Female Gladiator, The Magnificent, Queen of the Athletes, The Model.”¹³ Attila and Valerie performed at some of the most prestigious venues in Europe: The Royal Foresters’ Music Hall, The Metropolitan Theater, The Royal Aquarium, The Marble and Alexandra Skating Rinks in London, the Gaiety Theatre of Variety in Manchester, England, and the Folies Bergeres Theatre in Paris.¹⁴ At one English exhibition, organized by the Marquess of Abergraveny at a skating rink in May of 1878, the show was billed as a “Grand Assault of Arms,” and included displays of swordsmanship by Sergeant Major Plunkett along with the strength feats of Victor D’Attila. A contemporary newspaper reported, “Victor Attila then went through his wonderful performance, and at the conclusion was presented with a wreath by Lord Henry Nevill, on behalf of several gentlemen, who had been pleased with his performance the previous evening . . . Attila, who has been rightly named the Lion Athlete, elicited loud applause by his wonderful feats of strength and it seemed as if hundredweights were but mere playthings in his hands.”¹⁵

Attila’s act in those early years was apparently well staged and financially successful. Desbonnet tells us that “Attila’s act was simply designed to showcase his feats of balance and showmanship . . . Attila was, above all, an artist, and his well presented act was not faked. It was a real success.” To be fair, however, Desbonnet then points out that some individuals questioned the weight of Attila’s implements. Around 1885, while Attila was performing at the Alcazar Theater in Faubourg Poissonnière, Desbonnet reports, a Professor Dubois inspected Attila’s weights and stated that they were “particularly light.” Dubois claimed that one particularly unwieldy, evil-looking barbell covered with iron spikes, was made of some sort of exceptionally light metal and thus weighed only forty-four pounds.¹⁶ While they may have been light, they were undoubtedly elegant; the fifteen hundred pounds of weights Attila used in his act were nickel-coated and, as one reporter put it, he possessed “the finest and most costly apparatus ever seen on the stage.”¹⁷

One thing that set Attila apart from many of the strongmen then working the sawdust circles of the European circuses, and about which there is no controversy,

is that he was both inventive and intelligent. As a performer, he strove to find new and spectacular ways to demonstrate his strength and is credited by David Webster with inventing the “screw press” or bent press, and for originating the Human Bridge stunt that became a standard fixture in most strongman routines thereafter.¹⁸ Some authors also credit him with inventing such new pieces of apparatus as the Roman Chair and the shot-loading globe barbell.¹⁹

As Attila toured the capitals of Europe, playing to standing room only crowds in most cities, he began to be asked for exercise advice. His five languages came in handy as he found himself helping to shape up many of the crowned heads of Europe.²⁰ During this stage of his career he worked with Alexander III, the Czar of Russia; King George of Greece; the Prince of Wales, who became King Edward VII of England; King Haakon of Norway; the six children of King Christian of Denmark; Princess Dagmar, who later became Empress of Russia and the mother of Czar Nicholas; and the Queen Mother Alexandra of England. In addition, Attila trained dozens of millionaires, including Cornelius Vanderbilt and such nobles as the Baron Rothschild of France and Lord Lonsdale of England.²¹

In approximately 1886-1887, Attila began to curtail his strongman performances and opened a private gymnasium in Brussels.²² One newspaper account states that it was here, at his Brussels gym, that Attila first met Friedrich Mueller, the extraordinarily handsome, golden-haired youth who would become internationally famous as Sandow.²³ According to an article in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, “Attila . . . is a professor of athletics, and keeps a school in Brussels, where he has some three hundred pupils. Two and a half years ago, Sandow was brought to him by some of his pupils. He was then quite undeveloped, and Attila, after looking him over, undertook to make Sandow the strongest man in the school. Sandow submitted himself assiduously to the training, and in two months time the pupil was positively stronger than the master, and Attila’s strength is something out of the ordinary. He appears with his wonderful pupil at the Alhambra and joins him in tossing the 150 pound balls, and amuses himself with 90 lb. weights and such like.”²⁴

According to clippings in his scrapbook, Attila and Sandow performed together across continental Europe off and on from approximately 1887 to 1889. As Napoli had done for him, Attila taught the young man how to present himself and helped Sandow organize a strength and physique act. But, their friendship and business partnership temporarily fell apart around 1889 when Sandow began performing as a single act and then took time off from touring to model for the painter Aubrey Hunt. Attila then moved on to London and

opened another training facility.²⁵ His new gym was located in Bloomsbury, and Webster describes it as merely a “modest establishment.”²⁶ In 1889, the *Pall Mall Gazette* visited the establishment and reported, “Attila’s ambition is to teach the British youth how to develop great strength. He has a special system of training which he is eager to have adopted in our army and public schools. He greatly admires the pluck and endurance of the John Bull race, and is confident that if his system were adopted, Britons would become the most physically strong race on the face of the earth.”²⁷

Because of publicity such as this, and Attila’s excellent reputation as a theatrical performer, his gym became a magnet for the wealthy and famous. He even advertised the fact that he had opened the gym at the “behest” of the city’s sporting gentlemen.²⁸ Sporting men and nobles worked out side by side, and when the American tabloid publisher, Richard K. Fox, of the *National Police Gazette*, visited London, he, too, paid a call at Attila’s gym.²⁹ In that meeting, Fox and Attila found they had much in common. Fox advised Attila to come to America where he thought the time was ripe for the kind of gymnasium Attila hoped to one day establish. Although the Professor later claimed that Fox’s suggestion was the best advice he had ever been given, he didn’t immediately act on it.³⁰ In fact, it appears that his immigration to America may have owed more to Eugen Sandow and happenstance than it did to careful planning.

Shortly after Attila opened his gym in London, Sandow re-entered his life. The young strongman had come to the capital city to challenge the professional strongman Charles A. Sampson, who had a standing offer that no one could best him in a series of strength tests.³¹ Attila helped Sandow prepare for the public contest and after defeating Sampson, on 2 November 1889, Sandow began performing with Attila again, replacing Charles Sampson at the prestigious Alhambra. One of the London papers gave this account of their act:

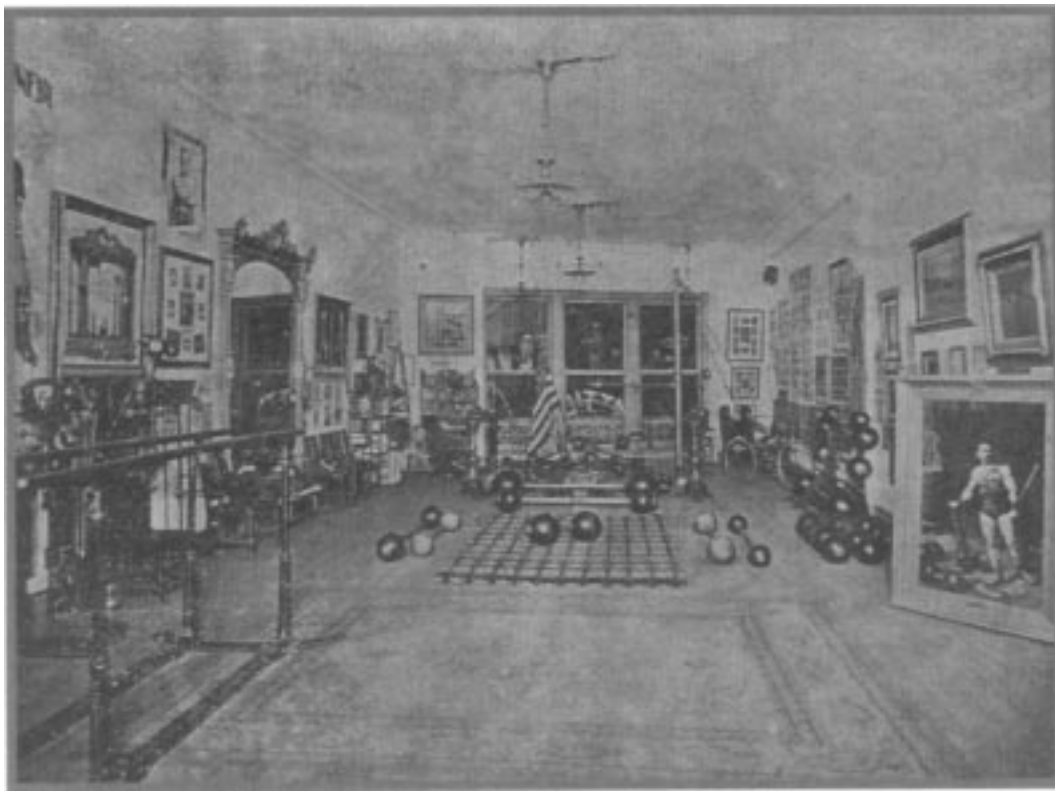
After Bertram [a magician] came Attila, vivid in scarlet, his mighty muscles in strong relief, causing his Mephistophelean-hued and complete set of tights, which was drawn to the figure as an eel’s skin to his sinuous body to quiver as he moved. Witlings, bardlets, poetasters, dainty mouthers of nothings into ladies’ ears, became as mere emasculate shadows when this Hercules appeared. Eyes sparkled, breath was quickly drawn, delicate palms clapped feverishly. Attila gave his performance — you have seen it. When standing on

a chair, he bends backward over the back, throwing the huge vigor of his thighs into grand relief, picks up a 150 lb. weight and brings it up with him to an erect position, rapture was at its highest. When Sandow came, semi-delirium seized the delighted dames and damosels. Those at the back of the room leapt on the chairs; paraquet-like ejaculations, irrepressible, resounded right and left; tiny palms beat ecstasy till five and three-quarter gloves burst at their wearer’s energy. And when Sandow, clad . . . in black and white, made the mountainous muscles of his arms wobble! Oh Ladies!”³²

After their run at the Alhambra was over, Attila accompanied Sandow and the magician Bertram on a tour of England and Scotland. The new act, called “Music, Muscle and Mystery,” played one night at the Mechanics Hall in Nottingham, and the local paper described the large hall as being filled to capacity on the night of their show. The reporter described Attila as a “compactly built athlete, well set up in the lower limbs, possessing a fine chest and arms, massive with muscle

. . . [He] first manipulated 56 lb. weights with great dexterity, performed evolutions with a bar weighing 90 lb. almost with ease, and gave a ‘sketch’ illustrative of the ‘sleep, dream and awakening of Hercules,’ necessitating the exercise of great skill and endurance, apart from physical force.” The paper goes on to then explain that “Attila is not merely strong, he shows gymnastic training and is also somewhat of an actor, and an experienced stage performer. His share in the programme is not only clever but graceful and finished.”³³ Napoli would no doubt have been proud of the description of his former pupil.

Other press reports from that tour also praise Attila’s physical prowess, even though he was well into his forties by this time. A clipping from Attila’s scrapbook reports that, “Then came the two chief artistes of the evening, Attila and Sandow, two athletes whose names are familiar to most people. Attila is the elder and has been much longer before the public. He is a finely built man and the feats he performed were received with hearty applause. Weights of 56 lbs. were knocked about with ease, and a steel bar, weighing 90 lbs. was wielded cleverly, balanced on his chin, and then a little musketry drill was gone through with it. His finest feat was standing in a low chair, bending himself backward until his head touched the floor, then, picking up a two handed dumb-bell weighing 150 lbs. He raised himself steadily until he once more stood erect, holding the dumb-bell aloft.”³⁴



This rare photo shows Attila's Athletic Studio and School of Physical Culture in New York as it appeared in approximately 1900. The large oil painting on the right now hangs at the Todd-McLean Physical Culture Collection at the University of Texas at Austin. The painting was reportedly done by one of the royal painters at Queen Victoria's court and was given to Attila by the Royal Family in gratitude for his work as a personal trainer.

Something happened on the tour, however, that caused the two men to have another “falling out.” According to W. A. Pullum, when the tour ended, Sandow took an engagement at the Royal Music Hall, but without Attila. Absent the professor's advice, Sandow made the mistake of accepting a challenge from the McCann Brothers, who soundly beat him in an on-stage contest. Said Pullum, “[Sandow] now lacked the sage counsel and adroit guidance of Attila, having made alterations in his act when he came back to London which dispensed with the Professor's services in this — his company as well!”³⁵

What Attila did next is a matter of some dispute. The story generally told is that Attila remained behind in London where he ran his gym and concentrated on his personal clients (such as the Prince of Wales), while Sandow went on to America without him.³⁶ Once in the United States, Sandow was “discovered” by the young Florenz Ziegfeld, who invited him to appear at the 1893 Chicago World Fair, known as the World's Colombian

Exposition. While appearing on the midway to rave reviews, Sandow ran into an old acquaintance, the performer Sarah White, better known as “Lurline, the Water Queen.” Lurline then reportedly assaulted Sandow with a horse-whip, charging that he had borrowed money from her in Belgium and fled the country for Italy.

Sandow responded by charging her with blackmail.³⁷

The story, as told by iron game historians Webster, Chapman, and Gaudreau is that Attila came to the United States because of Lurline's charges so that he could testify against Sandow. However, Attila's immigration record shows that he arrived in New York City on 18 August 1893; and that his ship,

the Coleridge, came to New York not from England or France, but from Santos, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Attila was a second class passenger, and arrived with four trunks. He listed his nationality as German but did not indicate either a permanent address or an occupation on the forms. Interestingly, he either did not tell the truth about his age, or the immigration clerk mis-heard him as he is listed on the the ship's manifest as only thirty-nine years old; he had turned forty-nine the previous month.³⁸

In any case, whether Attila came to the United States because of a request by Lurline, or whether he just happened to show up in New York City after appearing in South America, he almost immediately became embroiled in the Sandow case. Although the trial finally ended in an out-of-court settlement (in which Sandow paid money to both Sarah White and Attila) the feelings between the two strength artists remained tense. In July of 1894, Sandow signed out a warrant to have Professor Attila arrested for “venting feelings through the mail,” a crime at the time. Sandow charged that Attila had sent

him an anonymous letter in which he called Sandow a “blackguard,” and a “clog of quicksilver,” among other names.³⁹ The idea that Sandow would have him arrested made Attila furious, and having to pay the \$2,500 bail led him to threaten Sandow with bodily harm – an offense worse than using the mail as a bearer of malice.⁴⁰ Again, the exact nature of the dispute is unclear from the surviving evidence. However, at some point the two men reconciled at least part of their differences, for within a few years the entrepreneurial Attila displayed signs in his new American gymnasium announcing himself as the “Tutor and Trainer of the Invincible Sandow,” and he named his first daughter Louise Sandowa Attila.⁴¹

Shortly after his arrival in New York in 1893, Attila visited Richard K. Fox at the *National Police Gazette*. Attila, who enjoyed boxing and wrestling, must have hoped that by reacquainting himself with Fox, he could lure some of the top athletes of the day into becoming his pupils. The *Gazette* was then one of the only sources of sport news in the country and it served as the hub of the professional sporting world. Boxers, wrestlers, and professional strongmen used the *Gazette's* pink pages to hurl challenges and arrange matches, while publisher Richard Fox often put up prize money and provided championship belts and trophies for the winners.⁴² In fact, Drago, the Australian Hercules challenged Attila to “lift weights, dumbbells, etc. for \$500 or \$1000 a side” or to a wrestling match “Greco-Roman, best three in five falls, for \$500 or \$1000 a side” just a few days after the Professor arrived in the country.⁴³ But Attila apparently didn’t take him up on the offer. He had bigger plans.

Attila’s Athletic Studio And School of Physical Culture

Shortly after his arrival. Attila began to make plans to stay in the United States and open a truly unique gymnasium. The city was by far the largest in the United States with a population of over three million people and, more importantly, it was at the very epicenter of the “German Belt.”⁴⁴ Thousands of German immigrants had settled in New York City and were prime customers for Attila’s new studio. Many of them had trained at *turnvereins* in their native (Germany and, newly arrived in the United States, they tried to keep their athletic traditions alive by forming *Turner* societies or by frequenting the growing number of commercial gyms. Attila reasoned that at least some of them would be drawn to a gym with a German-speaking owner.⁴⁵ The other thing that made New York ideal, however, was that it was filled with tired, dyspeptic office-workers who were turning to

exercise in increasing numbers as a way to rejuvenate themselves and look better physically. Thus it was that when Attila opened his doors late in 1893, he did so in a cultural climate that could hardly have been hungrier for discussions of health, strength, and hygiene.

To attract the right kind of clientele, Attila knew it was important to give his gym a suitable name. A short, simple name like World Gym would not have conveyed the elegance and sophistication Attila hoped to achieve. But, “Attila’s Athletic Studio and School of Physical Culture” made his members feel as if they were getting “physical education,” and not just a workout. The use of “studio” was also significant as it conveyed the artistic aspect of building the body; it also made the facility more appealing to women. While the chronology is difficult to deduce based on his scrapbook, it appears that Attila stayed at least part of that first year at the Secatague House in Islip, New York, and operated a small gymnasium there at Dufour’s Railroad House.⁴⁶ Why Attila was staying forty-five miles east of New York isn’t clear. However, like many Long Island cities, Islip was a popular summer and weekend resort for prosperous New Yorkers, and so it is possible that Attila may have known someone there who was helping him get established in America or, that he simply decided to enjoy some sea air. This second explanation makes sense based on a testimonial letter sent to Attila by stage performer, Lou Fuller, on 4 October 1893. That letter, welcoming Attila to New York and reiterating how much help the Professor’s exercises had been to him in Paris, is addressed to 248 East Twenty-third Street. An article in the Attila scrapbook has him living and operating a gym in December of 1894 at the same address.⁴⁷ In 1896, when he married for the first time at the age of fifty-two, he lived at 42 West Twenty-Eighth Street.⁴⁸ Although one newspaper reported that he was residing in Montreal, Canada in 1898, it is likely that this was merely an extended visit to gather information for a lifting competition between the strongmen of Canada and the United States or to explore the possibilities for another studio.⁴⁹ By 1898 Attila had made his final move in New York City and opened his Athletic Studio and School of Physical Culture in the New Zealand Building at 1383 Broadway on the northwest corner of Thirty-Seventh Street.⁵⁰ This location, in midtown Manhattan close to the theater district, proved useful in attracting the top musical and theatrical people of the day as well as a number of athletes and successful businessmen. The studio remained at this address until Attila’s death on 15 March 1924 at the age of 79.⁵¹

Attila’s midtown studio was a delight to the senses. The walls were filled with signed, gilt-framed

photographs of contemporary boxers, wrestlers, and strongman stars such as Sandow and Lionel Strongfort. Brightly-colored Turkish carpets protected the floor, a large oil painting of Attila in his leopard-skin stage costume dominated one wall, while another wall held a large, ornately-framed mirror. Several replicas of Greek statuary helped to create an atmosphere of elegance, refinement and classical beauty. Everything was of the finest quality, even the barbells. "Some had brass spheres and nickel plated bars. Some had black spheres with brass flanges on the ends and grooved grips in the center."⁵² Resting on the floor, along the bottom of the walls were solid weights of all types: ring weights, French block weights, kettlebells, and dumbbells. A set of parallel bars dominated the center of the room, while climbing ropes and gymnastics apparati were attached to the ceiling. As Siegmund Klein, who married Attila's daughter Grace and took over the gym following Attila's death put it, the beautifully appointed gym was "a strongman's paradise."⁵³

Renewing his acquaintance with Richard K. Fox paid off for the new immigrant. Fox featured Attila frequently in the *Police Gazette* and helped spread the Attila name throughout North America. When professional strongmen visited New York, nearly all of them stopped in to see Attila and to admire and train in his elegant studio. Louis Cyr, Horace Barre, Warren Lincoln Travis, Gottfried "Rolandow" Wuthrich, Henry W. "Professor" Titus, and Adolph Nordquest – the most famous strongmen of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – all came to Attila's to visit and learn from the master. According to Attila's scrapbook, so too did "the prominent, the distinguished, the eminent and the great."⁵⁴ Richard K. Fox, J. Pierpont Morgan, Jr., Alfred Vanderbilt, Florenz Ziegfeld, Oscar Hammerstein, John Philip Sousa, and heavyweight boxing champion James J. Corbett were all members at one time or another.⁵⁵ Attila's business was doing so well, in fact, that in 1908 he opened a second gym in Chicago. By 1912 he had a third gym operating at the Burns Hotel in Detroit. How long "Attila's Strength Institute of Detroit" or the Chicago gym lasted is not known.⁵⁶ Nor is it clear how much time Attila personally spent at either site.⁵⁷

Athletic Strength Training and James J. Corbett

If the number of articles in his scrapbook is an indication of his interests, then Attila was particularly interested in the sport of boxing. His fondness for the "sweet science" may well have been fueled by Fox's passion for pugilism and by the fact that he, Attila, used

boxing to help establish his name in America. With Fox's support, Attila gave exhibitions during several of the big prizefights that forged a connection between himself as a trainer and the boxing community. Attila recalled that in one of those shows he pulled "against twenty-six British soldiers with my teeth. That was in Madison Square Garden." According to the *New York Herald's* account, Attila placed a strap in his teeth that had "a rope tied to it and the soldiers had ahold of the rope. They worked hard, but I pulled them. It was fun to see them slip around and try to pull my teeth out, but I haven't lost one yet. That was nineteen years ago. I was a strapping young fellow of forty-eight and feeling my oats as Americans say."⁵⁸

Long before he moved to New York, Attila believed that athletes in all sports should do specific training to prepare themselves for competition. Although it was considered heresy in many quarters, Attila particularly believed that athletes should train with weights. Although popular sentiment was generally against such methods, Attila believed that increased strength would produce increased speed and greater power in an athlete. His hope was that he could find a well-known prizefighter willing to work with him. If he could get the boxer to follow his methods, he believed he could show other athletes that lifting could also help their performance. Attila got his chance in 1893, when James J. Corbett, the reigning world heavyweight champion, asked the Professor to help him increase his punching power as he prepared for the defense of his heavyweight title against Charley Mitchell of England.⁵⁹ "Gentleman Jim" later told a newspaper reporter that he had been hearing high recommendations for a man named Professor Attila, so he had to look him up.⁶⁰ Attila, writing about his approach to Corbett's training, said he used his knowledge of anatomy, "the primary essential for a physical culture instructor," but that he had also applied, "the principle of natural philosophy" to help Corbett perfect his famous "hook blow" punch.⁶¹ Corbett was more than pleased with the results. After winning the match handily, Corbett wrote to Attila. "Well old boy," he began, "it done me a great deal of good and I must say it is a wonderful (sic) method and might have not a little to do with my recent success."⁶² Attila had that letter framed and hung it prominently in his new gym. Corbett also expressed his appreciation more publicly in March of 1894 when, at a performance of "Gentleman Jack"—Corbett's theatrical show—he presented Attila with a gold medallion to commemorate his role in the recent title defense.⁶³

Modern practitioners of strength training expect to incorporate scientific methodologies such as peri-

odization, negative resistance, plyometrics, and even massage and hydrotherapy into their routines.⁶⁴ Elite athletes often use machines described in such technical jargon as isokinetic, variable resistance, or dual axis. Modern strength training is a science, complete with professional associations, peer-reviewed journals, and broad cultural acceptance. In fact, it is now virtually unheard of for an athlete at the top of his/her sport to not utilize some form of strength training. At the close of the nineteenth century, however, America's ideas about training for athletes were anything but scientific.⁶⁵ But Attila was anything but ordinary. He knew and understood the basic principles behind progressive weight training and he pioneered a concept that is commonplace today — Specificity of Training. After analyzing Corbett's punch, Attila prescribed specific exercises from his famous "Five Pound Dumb-bell Exercise System" to

strengthen Corbett's arms, shoulders, back, and forearms.⁶⁶ Rather than urging Corbett to spend his time on training his entire body, Attila focussed the strength exercises on the parts Corbett used most in punching in order to simulate both the speed and the range of motion of the movement. Corbett did some of the training in Asbury Park, some at Attila's gym in New York, but then the boxer carried weights with him to his training camp in Florida. In addition to the dumbbell exercises, Corbett also used an eighteen-pound "training stick" which Attila had given him.⁶⁷ It must be admitted that from today's vantage point, Corbett would have benefitted from a more extensive, heavier, total body weight training program. Even so, Attila's abbreviated exercise routine was still basically sound.

Attila always claimed he had invented the series of exercises that came to be known as his "Five Pound Dumb-bell Exercise Routine" as a way to train while he was with the Baden Sharpshooters.⁶⁸ His "system" was not published until 1910, however, when Richard K. Fox included it as part of the *Police Gazette's* series of instructional training manuals. By including it in the series, Attila was assured of good sales and regular advertising in the *Gazette's* pages. Although Attila recommended that beginners use light dumbbells, he did his best to make up for the lack of weight by requiring a high number of repetitions. The first exercise was a biceps



This sketch of Attila's New York gym appeared in a German-American newspaper in 1895 as part of an advertisement.

curl much like the present day exercise. Then the exerciser would rotate the palms and curl with the knuckles up to emphasize the forearm muscles. These two exercises would be done for fifty to one hundred repetitions each. The triceps and shoulders were worked by placing the dumbbells over the shoulders with the elbows pointing straight out from the body, the upper arms at right angles with the forearms. The trainer would then press the dumbbells alternately, keeping the elbows up, twenty to thirty times with each arm. The lifter would then repeat this exercise for ten to twenty repetitions moving the forearms simultaneously and gradually away from the body and then, again gradually, back over the shoulders. The pectorals and deltoids were exercised by a type of standing "dumbbell fly," (starting with the arms held straight out to the sides at shoulder height, and bringing them violently forward so that the dumbbells would meet in front of the chest at shoulder height.) More shoulder exercises followed, as well as a series of what today would be called rotator cuff exercises.⁶⁹

These upper body exercises were then followed by movements for the muscle group Attila believed to be the most important for an athlete — the back. According to the Professor, "The back is where the strength lies . . . (the front is for all your misery — that you become blind, that you lose your teeth, that you catch cold, that you feel pain in the stomach, that you pay the doctor's

fees.)⁷⁰ First, the back muscles were engaged by a series of punching movements; then the lifter performed an overhead-to-toes, stiff-legged deadlift to stretch and strengthen the lower back. He next executed a “shrugging” movement to stress the trapezius muscles of the upper back. These three main exercises were then followed by more standing pectoral fly motions — although in this series the lifter held the dumbbells at a low angle to the body — trunk bends, and a rear deltoid fly exercise.⁷¹

Attila’s leg exercises began with calf raises and a similar exercise for the front of the lower leg in which



In his prime, Attila stood 5'4" tall, weighed 175 pounds and had the following measurements: chest - 46", neck - 17.5", calf - 16.5", waist 36", and thigh 25". This photograph was taken in approximately 1894.

the heels were held motionless while the toes were raised from the floor. A one-legged squat then followed the more common two-legged squat. It is easy to imagine Attila laughing when he explained to a reporter that most pupils practice that exercise at home due to the difficulty and the high degree of coordination needed to balance the body in the one-legged squat. The reporter observed, “If its effectiveness be measured by its difficulty of execution, it should fulfill the claims of its inventor, who says that it adds inches to the girth of the leg.”⁷² The leg work was finished with a series of exercises to work the hip flexors and extensors as well as the adductors and abductors. The entire “Five Pound Dumb-bell Exercise” system concluded with stiff-legged sit-ups, back extensions from the floor and, finally, traditional pushups.⁷³ Most of these exercises were no different from modern exercises. Only a few adjustments — such as eliminating the locked-out joints that Attila favored — would be necessary to recognize them as acceptable exercises today in terms of their execution.

Unlike many physical culturists in his era, Attila did not believe that light weights were all that was needed to produce strength and fitness. Attila claimed that light dumbbells were good for beginners and would “develop every muscle group” when used scientifically. However, once people had trained for a time, “[the pupils] are taught great feats [of strength.]”⁷⁴ Attila differed from most physical culturists of his day by believing that the end goal of exercising was to build strength and that this strength in turn would promote good health and fitness. In much the same way, Boston physician George Barker Windship had preached a similar message in the 1860s by advocating the “Health Lift” or partial deadlift and adopting as his motto, “Strength is Health.”⁷⁵ Attila believed deeply in strength, and he was proud of his own and that of his pupils. As he said, “What is the use of acquiring strength if you do not also learn how to use it?”⁷⁶ Attila believed that the lifting of heavy weights was “a noble and ancient branch of athletics” and that if a high level of strength could be built then one would have achieved “the highest reward of labor, and the one indisputable test of manhood.”⁷⁷ Much like the strenuous life movement of Theodore Roosevelt, in which one’s manhood was constantly tested through experiences in the outdoors, Attila believed in challenging the body, and thus one’s masculinity and self-identity, through the use of progressively heavier weights.

Professor Attila and Women

Attila saw many changes in the American scene through the plate glass windows of his beautiful studio,

and among the most revolutionary was the change in the status of women. As urban centers became more densely populated, large numbers of women were needed to fill jobs outside the home. Their new financial independence coincided with a rise in feminism as women challenged the status quo for equal rights and voting privileges. As women strove for equality they also began to develop a consciousness about the self. Professor Attila was only too happy to help.

If the clippings in his scrapbook are accurate, many of Attila's pupils during his later years were women. This had not always been the case, as one undated (but almost certainly early) article has Attila claiming that he did not have many female pupils because American women were lazy. German and Austrian women, according to Attila, took pride in being known as strong and hard-working. But American women were insipid and fashion-conscious with "deformities" such as shallow chests and thin necks from their lack of work and exercise.⁷⁸ That attitude changed in the United States, however, as the Progressive Era birthed a generation of "New Women" who were ready to take on the world. Attila trained these paragons in weightlifting and boxing, and soon claimed to a reporter that "women pupils are far more ambitious and therefore more satisfactory to train."⁷⁹ That same article claimed that Attila was "inaugurating the strongwoman fad here and if the fair sex is not as well able to defend itself physically as a man," it was through no fault of his.⁸⁰ When asked if he believed women were the weaker sex, Attila replied that "the Creator never intended her to be the weaker," and that furthermore, "has she not the greater need of defending herself on account of her being female?"⁸¹ Although more than one reporter made fun of Attila's trainees, the Professor continued to introduce his women gym members to a regimen of boxing and weightlifting and to teach them one and all to "hit like men."⁸²

Actress Edna Wallace Hopper reported that along with her dumbbell and medicine ball routine she regularly boxed with Jack Cooper while training at Attila's gymnasium.⁸³ *Vanity Fair* published an article — "How a New York Woman Develops Her Figure" — in which a woman is pictured at Attila's studio hitting a punching bag and boxing with a man, as well as performing various exercises with weights and rubber chest expanders.⁸⁴ Charlotte Poillon trained under Attila and took her boxing portion a step further. She actually considered herself a pugilist and got the chance to go three publicity rounds with James J. Corbett before he was to fight "Kid" McCoy.⁸⁵

Professor Attila not only wanted women to be able to defend themselves, but to be strong enough to get

themselves out of dangerous situations, like fires and muggings. Self-help was one of the primary justifications Attila used to encourage women to become strong, and such an attitude was not at all unusual among reformers. In addition to teaching women how to box, Attila had rope ladders, poles, climbing ropes, and fire escape devices attached to his ceiling; and he trained women on the equipment to strengthen their arms and shoulders and allow them to "save themselves from fire."⁸⁶ Attila further believed that "Nature herself supplies the only true remedy for keeping the body as Nature originally intended it to be . . . physical exercise."⁸⁷ Believing that the outdoors could have medicinal effects on the body was not a novel idea. Attila stressed the need for fresh air and outdoor exercise because, "pure air and exercise are the only physicians that ever attend me."⁸⁸ He stressed breathing exercises in order "to develop chests and [build] thin necks." Otherwise, he had women perform the same exercises as the men but with a bit less intensity.⁸⁹

Above all things, though, Attila believed that the acquisition of strength was of paramount importance for both sexes. Strong women were to be admired, and even married. In April of 1896 New York Mayor Strong (Attila undoubtedly liked the man's name) performed the marriage ceremony for Attila and Rosa Sanders, one of his pupils.⁹⁰ Reporters found it amusing that after the ceremony Mayor Strong declined his traditional kiss of the bride. More than one paper joked that the mayor feared Attila would be jealous, or that Rosa, who also had a reputation for strength, might object to the kiss.⁹¹ Rosa was only nineteen on her wedding day; Attila was fifty-two. Several of the newspapers covering the ceremony speculated that Rosa had been planning to open her own studio and that Attila married her to keep her from doing so.⁹² Even Attila's three children would not be immune to his lifelong passion. His scrapbook contains a picture of his daughter Louise Sandowa at eight months of age sitting in a crib littered with dumbbells and Indian clubs, and an article discussing her training at thirty months.⁹³

Many of Attila's women clients joined his gym because they were — to use his terms — "overplump," or "fleshy." His most famous pupil of this type was Caroline Baumann. The young Austrian immigrant showed up at his Chicago studio when she was eighteen years old and plagued by what one newspaper described as "stomach troubles, getting fat, and, horrors — her beauty was deteriorating!"⁹⁴ After ten months of training she lost twenty-five pounds, could "lift from the ground 400 pounds, and . . . put over her head 140 pounds." At a height of 5' 5", a weight of 142 pounds, and with a bust



Undated French cartoon from the Attila scrapbook showing Attila working with a woman trainee.

of 38", a waist of 24", a neck of 13 ½", an upper arm of 13", and a chest expansion of 5" she was the "most magnificent specimen of womanhood in the world," at least to the eyes of the *National Police Gazette* reporter.⁹⁵ Baumann became one of Attila's prize pupils and eventually took over the running of his women's training programs. She traveled with Attila from the Chicago gym to his studio in New York City, and also helped him open the Detroit Strength Institute.⁹⁶ Throughout the teens she appeared in the *Police Gazette* from time to time and was often described as a boxing trainer. Although she never seems to have competed in any particular sport, she was, nonetheless, one of the most famous sportswomen of her era and undoubtedly served as a magnet to attract other women to Attila's studio.

Attila apparently was free of the Victorian concerns that had curtailed so much women's exercise in the late nineteenth century. He admonished women to not wear corsets to the gym, but rather to wear loose, baggy clothing that allowed for a full range of motion, adequate breathing, and free blood circulation.⁹⁷ This was a risky thought for conservative women who still dressed according to Victorian standards. But Attila urged women forward, writing, "Strength gives confidence, confidence courage."⁹⁸ "Women" he wrote, have at last "broken loose from ancient tradition and are not ashamed to cultivate their bodies as well as their

minds."⁹⁹

Requiem for a Strongman

In addition to Attila's work with women and athletes, he was also prescient about the effects of training on aging. Throughout his life, Attila had argued that training could offset the aging process, and in 1912, at the age of 68, he appeared in a full-page article in the *New York Herald* entitled, "Discoverers of the Fountain of Youth." Clad in a tuxedo, with hair still mostly black, Attila is shown in one photo holding aloft over two hundred pounds in ring-weights and kettlebells. In the article, the reporter described his visit to Attila's studio. Asked to talk about his remarkable vigor, "Attila's eyes flashed like a man's of twenty," as the Professor claimed he'd found the "fountain of youth." The secret, Attila explained, was "Exercise. Normal treatment of the body and exercise arranged to develop all the muscles of the body and not any certain set."¹⁰⁰ When asked if he followed a special diet as some of his contemporary physical culturists advocated, Attila replied in the negative, going on to explain that, "I drink — but never too much. That is the secret of the thing, moderation. I take wine, beer, schnapps, anything, but I never get intoxicated." As to diet, continued the strongman, "I eat as I please. Not too much meat and not too much vegetables, but well balanced. And that shows what foolishness some people are teaching. I would like now to put on the gloves with Horace Fletcher and Bernar [sic] Macfadden and pound them both all the way to Long Island City. That's faddism they teach and you have only to look at me to prove it."¹⁰¹

"I am now sixty-seven years old," continued the Professor, "and have been in the business fifty years. If I was fifty years in any other business — banking, merchant, workman, physician, navy, anything — imagine what I would be now. My hair would be white and I would walk bent over." To demonstrate that he was still stronger than an average man of twenty, the Professor then reportedly picked up an iron ball weighing eighty-five pounds and swung it up over his head with his right arm and balanced it in the air for a couple of seconds. According to the reporter, "His arm did not tremble, nor did the muscles of his thick neck stand out like they do in the photographs exhibited in front of vaudeville houses."¹⁰² Next, the reporter explained, Attila placed a leather strap around an eighty-five pound dumbbell and, clamping his jaw over the end of the strap, lifted the dumbbell to the center of his chest and held it while Caroline Baumann handed him a pair of seventy-five pound kettlebells. He then lifted these overhead while still holding the other dumbbell in his teeth for a total weight of 225 pounds. After the photographer snapped the pho-

to, Attila told the reporter as the weights crashed to the floor, “That’s what a man of three score and ten can do.”¹⁰³

While fifty years is indeed a long time to “be in the business,” by the time of his death on 15 March 1924, Attila had actually been in the business for more than sixty years and had managed during that long career to impact nearly every aspect of the iron game. While this essay has focussed primarily on his contributions after he arrived in the United States, Attila’s legacy was truly international in scope. He set a new standard for the running of gymnasiums with his beautifully appointed studio on Broadway. His “students” would carry his methods across Europe and the United States, and, through Sandow, down to Australia and the Pacific islands. Sandow would finally settle in Britain, open his own school of physical culture, and devote his later years trying to physically reform the subjects of the British Commonwealth. Webster claims that both Edmund Desbonnet, the so-called father of French physical culture, and weightlifting pioneer Theodore Siebert of Germany were, like Sandow, Attila devotees who continued his methods in their own work and thus spread Attila’s training principles across Europe.¹⁰⁴ Alan Calvert, founder of the Milo Barbell Company and publisher of *Strength* magazine in the United States also acknowledged Attila as an important influence on his ideas about strength and exercise. What’s more, through *Strength* Calvert propagated Attila’s philosophy that strength was what mattered — that strength was the goal. And then there are Attila’s contributions to the professionalization of strongman performance. Not only did he invent equipment and create new stunts, but strongmen on both sides of the Atlantic sought Attila’s advice on how to stage their acts and how to train to maximize their strength. The names of the men he worked with are a veritable “Who’s Who” of the strength world. Warren Lincoln Travis, Lionel Strongfort, Rolandow, Titus, Anthony Barker, Bobby Pandour, Louis Cyr, Horace Barre, Arthur Dandurand, Adolf Nordquest, and Milo Brinn were all Attila students at one time or another.¹⁰⁵ And then, of course, there were the athletes. Heavyweight title holder James J. Corbett was certainly the most notable, but Attila also worked with dozens of other boxers and wrestlers, and in so doing pioneered the use of resistance training by athletes.¹⁰⁶ Finally, but not insignificantly, there was his work with women. He encouraged them to train — to be proud of their strength and competence, and to not be fearful of doing the same exercises as men did. Taken as a whole, Attila’s list of contributions to resistance training is absolutely remarkable. It is also a list of contributions that proves he was much, much more than simply

Sandow’s mentor and trainer.

Notes:

This paper is primarily based on clippings and articles in the personal scrapbook of Professor Attila, which is now located at the Todd-McLean Physical Culture Collection at the University of Texas at Austin. The four-inch-thick scrapbook is filled with dozens of articles about Attila’s performances as a strongman, his work at the gym in New York City, and advertisements for his acts. The book is bound in brown leather, about 8 x 10 inches in size, and on the cover, in gold letters it reads, “Attila’s Recensionen Album.” (“Recensionen” is a now archaic word meaning survey or review.) Although the interior flyleaf reads, “Press Opinions of Professor Attila from 1870-1890,” the book contains clippings from throughout Attila’s career. In the footnotes that follow, clippings from the scrapbook begin with the designation “AS:” and we’ve provided as much information as is available. Many of the clippings are not identified as to date and source, however.

¹ AS: Louis Attila letter to the editor. “Here’s a Challenge!,” Richard K. Fox, *The National Police Gazette*, 9 June 1894.

² David L. Chapman, *Sandow the Magnificent: Eugen Sandow and the Beginnings of Modern Bodybuilding* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994).

³ Launceton Elliott was the winner of the heavyweight class in the first modern Olympic Games in Athens in 1896. Macfadden was the founder and publisher of *Physical Culture* magazine. Alan Calvert owned the Milo Barbell Company and later edited *Strength* magazine.

⁴ Chapman, *Sandow*, 189.

⁵ Kenneth R. Dutton, *The Perfectible Body: The Western Ideal of Male Physical Development* (New York: Continuum Publishing Company, 1995), 102, 105; and Chapman, *Sandow*, 8.

⁶ Webster, *Iron Game*, 10-11.

⁷ Siegmund Klein, “Strong Men I Remember Best – Professor Attila,” *Strength and Health* (March 1959), 25 & 53.

⁸ Edmund Desbonnet, *Les Rois de la Force* (Paris: Librairie Berger-Levrault, 1911). Translated by David Chapman. Unpublished manuscript in Todd-McLean Collection, 70.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ David Webster, *Barbells and Beefcake* (Ayrshire, Scotland: by the author, 1979), 15.

¹¹ AS: “Discoverers of the Fountain of Youth,” *New York Herald*, 7 July 1912, Magazine Section.

¹² How Louis Durlacher chose his stage name is a topic of some controversy. Most authors say he took it from Attila the Hun because Durlacher wanted to present a powerful image. However, a newspaper clipping in his scrapbook states that Attila was his mother’s maiden name and that he’d taken it to honor her. Professor Attila’s scrapbook contains several drawings of the historic Attila.

¹³ AS: The advertising clipping for his act with Valerie contains no dates.

- ¹⁴ AS: Advertisements for Valerie and Attila performances.
- ¹⁵ AS: "Grand Assaults of Arms," *List*, 25 May 1878.
- ¹⁶ Desbonnet, *Les Rois de La Force*, [Chapman translation], 126.
- ¹⁷ AS: "Attila."
- ¹⁸ Webster, *Iron Game*, 10-11, Webster suggests that Attila may have been the first person to bent press more than two hundred pounds.
- ¹⁹ Klein, "Strong Men," 53. For a description of developments in weight-lifting equipment see David Webster, *The Iron Game* (Irvine: John Geddes Printers, 1976), 57-58; and Jan Todd, "From Milo to Milo: A History of Barbells, Dumbbells and Indian Clubs," *Iron Game History* 3(April 1995): 4-16.
- ²⁰ Webster, *The Iron Game*, 10.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*
- ²² Mark H. Berry, "The Rising Generation Indebted to Attila," *Strength* 15(January, 1930): 89. See also Webster, *Iron Game*, 10.
- ²³ Strength enthusiast Ernest Edwin Coffin claims that the two met in 1886 when Sandow was nineteen and the professor was forty-two. Quoted in Leo Gaudreau, "Professor Louis Attila" in *Anvils, Horse-shoes and Cannons: The History of Strongmen* Vol. 1 (Alliance, NE: Iron Man Publishing, 1975), 162.
- ²⁴ AS: *Pall Mall Gazette*, December 1889.
- ²⁵ Chapman, *Sandow*, 37-38. See also: Gaudreau, *Anvils, Horse-shoes and Cannons*, 161-164.
- ²⁶ Webster, *Iron Game*, 10.
- ²⁷ AS: *Pall Mall Gazette*, December 1889.
- ²⁸ AS: Advertisement for Attila's Bloomsbury Gym.
- ²⁹ Richard K. Fox, *National Police Gazette*, 6 January 1894.
- ³⁰ "Attila, World Famous Athlete," *National Police Gazette*, 19 September 1908, p.6.
- ³¹ Desbonnet, *Les Rois de La Force*, [Chapman translation], 157 & 174-176.
- ³² AS: "Alhambra,"
- ³³ AS: "Music, Muscle and Mystery."
- ³⁴ AS: "Sandow and Attila Perform."
- ³⁵ Pullum, "Foreword," in *The Amazing Sampson* (London: The Sampson Institute, 1925), 12-13.
- ³⁶ Webster claims that Sandow and Attila "made a fortune" on their tour of England and Scotland. Webster, *Iron Game*, 18.
- ³⁷ AS: "Lurline Held for the Grand Jury - Sandow may get a Challenge from Attila, Mrs. White's Witness."
- ³⁸ Attila's immigration record is available on-line through: www.ellisland.org. He can be found by searching under the name "Louis Attila."
- ³⁹ AS: "Sandow and Attita Meet - Commissioner Shields Presides and The Strongmen Glare and Glower at Each Other - Did Attila Write the Letters?"
- ⁴⁰ AS: "Would Hit Sandow," 11 July 1894.
- ⁴¹ Chapman, *Sandow*, 55.
- ⁴² For examples of challenges posted, see Jan Todd, "The Mystery of Minerva," *Iron Game Histoy* 1(April 1990): 14-17.
- ⁴³ AS: Letters to the editor, "Drago, the Australian Hercules," *National Police Gazette*, 16 September 1893, p. 10.
- ⁴⁴ German immigrants settled primarily between the "northern boundaries of Massachusetts and Maryland, spread westward north of the Ohio River to the Great Lakes and onward into the neighboring two tiers of trans-Mississippi states." Albert Bernhardt Faust, *The German Element in the United States* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1909), 581-582.
- ⁴⁵ Jan Todd, *Physical Culture and the Body Beautiful: Purposive Exercise in the Lives of American Women 1800-1875* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1998), 34-36.
- ⁴⁶ AS: "Gottfried Wuthrick Trained at Attila Studio."
- ⁴⁷ Lou Fuller to Professor Attila, 4 October 1893. Atilla Papers. Todd McLean Physical Culture Collection. The University of Texas at Austin. Also: AS: "Sandows Not Scarce," *New York Sunday News*, 9 December 1894.
- ⁴⁸ AS: "Man of Muscle Marries," *New York Press*, 9 April 1896.
- ⁴⁹ AS: "Attila's Success," 19 February 1898 and "Attila and . . . Sandow" [part of title missing].
- ⁵⁰ AS: "Attila on Daily Exercise," *New York Herald*, October 1900, and various advertisements for "Attila's Athletic Studio - School of Physical Culture."
- ⁵¹ "Obituary Notices," *New York Tribune*, 17 March 1924.
- ⁵² Siegmund Klein, "My Quarter Century in the Iron Game, Part 6," *Strength and Health*, August 1944, pp. 28, 34.
- ⁵³ *Ibid.*; and Berry, "Rising Generation," 29.
- ⁵⁴ Klein, "Strong Men," 53.
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁷ AS: "Attila's Strength Institute of Detroit," and advertisements.
- ⁵⁸ AS: "Discoverers of the Fountain of Youth," *New York Herald*, July 7, 1912, Magazine Section.
- ⁵⁹ Corbett won the world title in 1893 by defeating John L. Sullivan.
- ⁶⁰ AS: "Corbett's Half-Arm Blow."
- ⁶¹ AS: Attila, Louis, "Methods of Systematic Exercise," *Ev'ry Month*.
- ⁶² Letter from James J. Corbett to Professor Attila, Attila papers, The Todd-McLean Collection, The University of Texas at Austin.
- ⁶³ AS: "Attila Honored," *The World Sun*, 18 March 1894; "untitled." *The Press*, 12 March 1894 and "untitled" *New York Illustrated*, 22 March 1894.
- ⁶⁴ See *National Strength and Conditioning Association Journal* for more information concerning these and other training methodologies. Useful articles include the following: Jimmy Pedemonte, "Historical Perspectives: Foundations of Training Periodization Part I: Historical Outline," 8(3):62; Jimmy Pedemonte, "Historical Perspectives: Foundations of Training Periodization, Part 2: The Objective of Periodization," 8(4):26-28; Roundtable "Periodization: Part 1," 8(5): 12-22; Roundtable "Periodization: Part 2," 8(6): 17-24; Roundtable "Periodization Part 3," 9(1): 16-26; Phil Lundin, "A Review of Plyometric Training," 7(3):69-74; and Alan Tyson, "Rehab Tips: Aquatic Therapy," 18(5):30-31.
- ⁶⁵ Terry Todd, "The Myth of the Muscle-Bound Lifter," *National Strength and Conditioning Association Journal* 7(March 1985): 37-

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⁶⁶ AS: "Attila Maker of the Punch that Helped win Mitchell Fight."

⁶⁷ Letter from James J. Corbett to Louis Attila, Attila Papers, Todd-McLean Collection, The University of Texas at Austin.

⁶⁸ Dave Webster, "The Catalyst - Prof. Louis Attila," *Ironman* 44 (3, 1985): 34-35.

⁶⁹ Professor Attila, *Professor Attila's Five Pound Dumb-bell Exercise*, (New York: Richard K. Fox Publishing Company, 1913).

⁷⁰ AS: "How to be a Strongman - Simple Rules for Gaining Strength and Remaining Young," May be from the *Evening Sun* as it is mentioned in the article.

⁷¹ Attila, *Five Pound Dumb-bell*.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ AS: "How to be a Strongman."

⁷⁵ Jan Todd, "'Strength is Health': George Barker Winship and the First American Weight Training Boom," *Iron Game History* 3 (September 1993): 3-14.

⁷⁶ AS: "How to be a Strongman."

⁷⁷ AS: "Reference to Professional Strong Men;" and "How to be a Strongman."

⁷⁸ AS: "Nation Becoming Athletic - the Surprising Development of Physical Culture." Attila's notion of American women having deformed and physically imperfect bodies is somewhat ironic as he, himself was Jewish, and many Jews were considered poor athletic specimens in these years. For more information see John Hoberman, *Darwin's Athletes, How Sports has Damaged Black America and Preserved the Myth of Race* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997).

⁷⁹ AS: "Making a Woman Strong: What Can Be Accomplished with Dumb-bells," unknown New York newspaper.

⁸⁰ AS: "Making a Woman Strong."

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² AS: "Fair and swell Woman Athletes."

⁸³ AS: Arthur Colton, "How One Actress Keeps Her Form

- Edna Wallace Hopper is Rapidly Becoming an Athlete - How She Does It," *Broadway Magazine*, undated, p.36.

⁸⁴ AS: "How a New York Woman Develops Her Figure," *Vanity Fair*.

⁸⁵ AS: 'Girl vs. Corbett - Her Story of How They Fought Three Rounds,' *Evening World*, undated; see also: "Girl Pugilist Whips Two Thugs in the Park," *New York Evening Journal*, 4 October 1900. This article mentions that the match with Corbett occurred on August 27 and Corbett fought "Kid" McCoy on August 30, 1900.

⁸⁶ AS: "How Women May Save Themselves From Fire," *The World*, 11 June 1899.

⁸⁷ AS: "How to Get a Perfect Figure - One Method of Strengthening the Muscles of the Arm Chest Shoulders," *The Saturday Standard*.

⁸⁸ AS: "Making a Woman Strong."

⁸⁹ AS: "The Way to Develop Chests and Thin Necks;" and "Methods of Systematic Exercise," *Ev'ry Month*.

⁹⁰ AS: "Man of Muscle Marries," *New York Press*, 9 April 1896. See also similar articles from AS: *The World*, 9 April 1896 and "They'll Make a Strong Pair," *The Evening Sun*.

⁹¹ AS: "Was the Mayor Afraid'?"

⁹² AS: "Cupid and Muscle." *The Morning Advertiser*.

⁹³ Photograph in AS titled "Louise Sandowa Attila at 8 months." See also "Louise Sandowa Attila, Gymnast - Aged Thirty Months." *The World*, 4 June 1899, for more information on Attila's daughter.

⁹⁴ AS: "Girl Hercules Defies the World with a Challenge, a Beautiful and Well Developed Viennese Who Can Box, Wrestle and Lift Great Weights," *National Police Gazette*.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ AS: "Professor Attila and Pupil in Detroit," and "Life Without Health Has No Value" Attila's Strength institute advertisement.

⁹⁷ AS: "Making a Woman Strong."

⁹⁸ AS: "Athletics Are Not Harmful."

⁹⁹ AS: "Making a Woman Strong."

¹⁰⁰ AS: "Discoverers of the Fountain of Youth," *New York Herald*, July 7, 1912, Magazine Section.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Webster, *Iron Game*, 10.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ AS: Assorted clippings.



Caroline Baumann was Attila's most famous female student. Baumann worked for Attila for many years, teaching weight training and boxing to other women.

Photo courtesy Todd-McLean Collection



The “bikini mosaic,” located in the ruins of a fourth-century villa in Sicily, provides one of the best clues to what kind of exercise women did in the ancient world. Note the *halteres* [dumbbells] and the *paganica* or medicine ball.

“AS MEN DO WALK A MILE, WOMEN SHOULD TALK AN HOUR . . .TIS THEIR EXERCISE” & OTHER PRE-ENLIGHTENMENT THOUGHT ON WOMEN AND PURPOSEIVE TRAINING

JAN TODD

Open any modern women’s magazine and you’ll find at least one article on exercise. Visit your local video rental store and you’ll find dozens of exercise tapes aimed specifically at women. Log on to the Internet and see what happens when you search for the phrase, “women’s exercise;” you’ll be bombarded with links to information ranging from aerobic dance to weight training to Pilates to walking to yoga. Advice on what women should do for exercise is *everywhere* these days. Standing in the grocery check-out line, watching television, even listening to the radio, one cannot escape the message that women need to move, to get strong, to build endurance, to become more flexible. Hundreds of modern experts preach that women need to exercise for the same reasons that men do — to enhance their health,

increase their longevity, and improve their appearance. And, most significantly, women are increasingly told that they need to train like men — that there is no physiological reason why non-pregnant women shouldn’t follow essentially the same kind of physical culture regimens as men do.

While the belief that women are capable of vigorous, and even strength-essential exercise, seems logical in this Post-Title IX — post-Women’s Liberation era, this attitude has not historically dominated Western Civilization’s ideas about appropriate exercise for women. Rather, for most of western history, women were either told they didn’t need to train, or that they needed to do only light, gender-appropriate exercises. Perhaps because widespread women’s exercise is such a new

phenomenon, we've paid little attention to its history — particularly its early history. The same is true of early women's sport, as historian Allen Guttmann observed when he wrote, "those who want to know more about women's sport in antiquity, in the Middle Ages, during the Renaissance, in early modern times, will be frustrated."¹ This essay aims to ease the similar frustration one feels when searching for information about women's exercise in earlier historical eras.

There are a number of reasons why sport historians have paid so little attention to the history of women's exercise. The most basic one is the problem of real evidence. Exercise doesn't require organizations and statisticians. It doesn't leave behind record books and box scores or records of winners carved on temple walls. Unlike sport, which is public, exercise is generally a private, personal act. And so unless someone has kept a diary that includes discussion of his or her exercise routine, it is difficult to really know what was done, by whom it may have been done, and what it meant to the man or woman performing the exercise. However, this does not mean that we have no idea what women did for exercise in earlier eras. Throughout western history, some hygienic authors have included advice for women on exercise. These suggestions, along with the archaeological remains of gymnasia, public baths, and statuary surviving from Ancient Greece and Rome reveal much about what happened before the eighteenth century's sudden flowering of interest in the body, hygiene, and exercise.

This essay, then, is an attempt to trace the history of what I call "purposive exercise" for women through the Age of the Enlightenment — the era of scientific discovery triggered by Isaac Newton and John Locke that blossomed in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The essay relies heavily on the didactic literature about hygiene and physical culture published over a period of approximately two thousand years, with the acknowledgement that such sources can create an incomplete and even inaccurate history. However, these instructional books and treatises are the best, and in some cases the only sources we have on what women's exercise experiences may have been like before the eighteenth century. I define "purposive exercise" as movement undertaken for specific hygienic reasons; it is exercise meant to create specific changes in the body — to help the person become more healthy, to improve appearance, to gain in strength, or to create psychological self-confidence. Through this examination of the early literature I have two main aims. The first is simply to create a chronological history of the advice given to women concerning exercise in the pre-Enlightenment era. A secondary goal, however, is to explore the

impact that pre-Enlightenment advice had on our modern notions of appropriate exercise for women. As for the history of women's exercise after the Enlightenment, a few modern scholars have begun to document this aspect of women's lives. For those interested in the topic, I would suggest as possible sources my own *Physical Culture and the Body Beautiful: Purposive Exercise in the Lives of American Women—1800-1875*; Patricia Vertinsky's *The Eternally Wounded Woman: Women, Exercise and Doctors in the Late Nineteenth Century*; Mary Lynn Stewart's *For Health and Beauty: Physical Culture for Frenchwomen: 1880s-1930s*; Susan Cahn's *Coming on Strong: Gender and Sexuality in Twentieth Century Women's Sport*; and Allen Guttmann's *Women's Sports: A History*.²

Purposive Exercise and the Philosophy of Hygiene

The history of purposive exercise is inevitably tied to the history of hygiene and that history is very old indeed. We know, for instance, that purposive exercises were used as part of hygienic prescriptions as early as the fifth century B.C., when Herodicus of Selymbria (480-?), a former boxing and wrestling instructor turned physician, recommended "gymnastic" exercise to his patients. Herodicus was one of the first to understand the importance of preventive medicine, and he claimed that it was "just as important to provide against diseases in the healthy man as to cure him who was already attacked."³ Gymnastics for the Greeks consisted of a wide variety of activities including wrestling, running, leaping, boxing, mock combat, and resistance training or weightlifting.⁴ Herodicus' most important contribution, however, was the introduction of "systematic" exercise as part of athletic preparation. In fact, sport scholar E. Norman Gardiner blamed Herodicus for the decline of the ancient Olympic Games, claiming that the introduction of purposive exercise "ruined athletics" by making training into a system. "After his time," wrote Gardiner, "victory at Olympia became a thing which had to be worked for by special methods." Gardiner's attitude toward training was very much a product of his time and upper-class heritage. Like Baron Pierre de Coubertain, who founded the modern Olympic Games, Gardiner was a staunch believer in amateurism and took the position — as did many men in the early twentieth century who were educated at elite universities like Harvard and Yale in the United States, and Oxford and Cambridge in England — that specific training to be better at a sport made one a "professional."⁵

Herodicus' contemporary, Hippocrates (460 B.C.-?), the so-called, "father of scientific medicine"

authored three major treatises on hygiene and exercise. His most complete discussion of the subject was *Corpus Hippocraticum* but he gave more detailed advice on how to apply his ideas in his two other famous treatises: *Regimen in Health* and *Regimen*.⁶ Hippocrates' great insight was that an equilibrium existed in the body between food and exercise. He took considerable pride in his grasp of this seemingly obvious concept, writing: "This discovery reflects glory on myself its discoverer, and is useful to those who have learnt it." As Hippocrates put it, "Whether food over-powers exercise, whether exercise over-powers food, or whether the two are duly proportioned . . . it is from the overpowering of one by the other that diseases arise, while from their being evenly balanced comes good health."⁷ Hippocrates viewed exercise as part of a total, hygienic system and understood that the physical condition of the "patient" would determine which exercise modality was appropriate. Hippocrates differentiated between exercises appropriate to the training of athletes and exercises for general health and fitness, and he considered walking to be the most healthy exercise for persons of either sex.⁸

Over the next several centuries, following the lead of Hippocrates and Herodicus, numerous Greek authors preached that the road to health and longevity consisted of regular exercise, dietary restraint, and moderation in all aspects of life. Cicero (106-43 B.C.), for instance, maintained that, "Exercise and temperance can preserve something of our early strength even in old age."⁹ Aristotle (384-

322 B.C.) likewise sought the *media via* and argued that ". . . we must surrender our children in the first instance to gymnastics and the Art of the Trainer, as the latter imparts a certain character to their physical condition and the former to the feats they can perform."¹⁰ Aristotle also favored moderate exercise for adults. "For a vigorous habit of body . . . for health and the procreation of healthy children, what is wanted is not the bodily condition of an athlete nor on the other hand a valetudinarian and invalid condition but one that lies between the two. The right condition then, although it is one of discipline, is disciplined not by violent exercises, nor for one pur-

pose only like an athlete's, but for all the actions of a liberal life. Also this condition should be the same for women as for men."¹¹

The hygienic ideas of the Ancient Greeks found new life in the work of Claudius Galenus or Galen, who lived from 129 to approximately 199 A.D.¹² According to medical historian Jack Berryman, it was Galen who structured the theory of the six "non-naturals," a physiological precept that dominated hygienic thought to the mid-nineteenth century. Galen argued that the body's equilibrium, or state of perfect health, resulted from a balance between the "naturals," or those things which were innate, and the "non-naturals," or outside influences. The six "non-naturals," the external elements that

Galen believed could negatively influence health, were air; food and drink; motion or exercise; rest; sleep and wakefulness; excretions and retentions; and what he called the passions of the mind, meaning such emotions as anger, lust, and jealousy. Moderation and proper balance of these non-naturals was critical to the maintenance of health and longevity, according to Galen.¹³

As Berryman observed in his seminal article tracing the tradition of the six non-naturals through the medical history of the last two thousand years, it was Galen who first "regarded exercise as a branch of hygiene and hygiene as part of the science of medicine."¹⁴ Galen further helped the growth of physical culture by differentiating between simple movement and purposive exercise. "To me," he wrote, "it does not seem that all movement is exercise but only

when it is vigorous. But since vigor is relative, the same movement might be exercise for one and not for another."¹⁵ More than anyone else up to that time, however, Galen approached the study of exercise from a scientific perspective.¹⁶ He argued that physicians could help to determine proper exercise prescriptions by watching respiration. "The criterion of vigorousness is change of respiration; those movements which do not alter the respiration are not called exercise."¹⁷ Galen believed that bodies at all stages of life needed motion and he recommended in *On Hygiene* that passive movements such as massage, rocking in a cradle, sailing, and swinging be



Hippocrates, considered the father of medicine, was the first to write about the connections between diet and exercise.

Courtesy National Library of Medicine



Many of our ideas about the effects of exercise on health and vigor were first described by the Roman-era physician Claudius Galenus (Galen), who lived from 129-199 A.D.

Courtesy National Library of Medicine

strong soldiers, the evidence is less clear on what was considered appropriate exercise for women in ancient Greece and Rome.²⁰

Ancient Trainers

When it came to women's exercise in ancient Greece, geography was very nearly destiny, as women in Greece's two main city-states had dramatically different exercise experiences. Upperclass Athenian women, for example, were expected to marry and then stay hidden away at home bearing and rearing their husband's children; they appeared in public only for religious festivals and funerals. Spartan women on the other hand were *required by law* to exercise and be fit.²¹

Before their marriage, Athenian girls played with balls and a few may have even participated in the Heraean Games held every four years at Mount Olympus in the month prior to the Olympics. The Heraean Games were a series of races held in honor of the goddess Hera that predated the more famous Olympic Games.²² Although German historian M. Lammer claims that the contestants were all local girls and thus the Heraean Games were not nearly as important as the Olympic Games, other sport historians believe that the Heraean Games did matter and that they attracted competitors from throughout Greece.²³ The second century A.D. author Pausanias thought they were important enough to

employed for those in poor condition, while vigorous exercises which increased the rate of breathing should be undertaken by those who were more fit.¹⁸

These early ideas of the centrality of exercise to the healthy life formed the framework for exercise in ancient Greece and Rome for men. However, unlike men whose exercise routines were supported by public gymnasiums, *paidotribes* (athletic trainers),¹⁹ organized competitive sports, and the government's needs for

describe the competitors, writing: "They run in the following way: their hair hangs down, a tunic reaches to a little above the knee, and they bare the right shoulder as far as the breast. These too have the Olympic stadium reserved for their games, but the course of the stadium is shortened for them by about one sixth of its length. To the winning maidens they give crowns of olive and a portion of the cow sacrificed to Hera."²⁴ There are two surviving statues that show women runners dressed in exactly this way.²⁵ Historian Betty Spears points out that the statuette from 500 B.C., now in the Vatican collection, is "typical of the Archaic art style, her legs are hefty, thighs well developed, and calves bulging."²⁶

Most scholars have argued that despite the importance of the gymnasium to the men of Athens, the city's women were not encouraged to participate in exercise or physical training.²⁷ However, in recent excavations at Brauron, just outside Athens, evidence has been found suggesting that races similar to those of the Heraean Games were held at that site in honor of the Goddess Artemis. From pottery shards and other evidence, archaeologists speculate that children and teenaged girls participated in races and dances to honor the goddess. It appears that some of them competed in the nude, just as the male athletes did in the Olympic Games. While little else is known about these races, the historian Allen Guttmann points out that "At least one of the nude Brauron runners has the muscular physique and long stride of a modern athlete," a fact which suggests, but does not prove, that these were indeed athletic events and not merely some form of fertility rite.²⁸ Pausanias, writing nine hundred years after the first Heraean Games, reported that similar races were also held at Argos, Delphi and near Kameios in Lakonia.²⁹

Another interesting clue suggesting that ancient Greek women may have exercised systematically is a

vase painting in which three muscular young women are shown in a gymnasium scene. The classicist Claude Bérard argues that the vase is significant as it clearly shows women (not young girls) "after their exercise. The one on the left, with a very athletic body is in the process of cleaning her back with a strigil [to



This bronze statuette of a Greek woman running is now housed at the British Museum in London.



Attic vase depicting three women cleansing themselves after exercise. The woman on the left holds a strigil in her hand to scrape the dirt and sweat from her back.

remove oil, sweat and dust]; above her on the right, one sees the sponge and oil flacon.”³⁰ Bérard contends that the vase proves that young women as well as young men frequented the gymnasia. The way the artist has depicted the athletes’ bodies — with broad shoulders, muscular arms, and tightly muscled legs and hips — gives credence to Bérard’s theory.

The record of women’s involvement in exercise is much clearer in Sparta, a society that allowed its women far more freedom than did Athens. Founded by King Lacadaemon, the city was named in honor of his wife, Sparta, suggesting the importance of women to the society from the beginning.³¹ Although not a true matriarchy, Sparta gave women far more rights and responsibilities than women had in other parts of ancient Greece. They could own property, for instance, and because their husbands were so frequently away at war, they took on many tasks not available to Athenian women.³²

The pattern of life that historians now regard as distinctly “Spartan” evolved in the seventh century B.C. under the direction of King Lycurgus. Lycurgus organized Spartan society to enhance its military preparedness and set up a body of laws that proscribed behavior for both men and women. Lycurgus argued that women should not be cloistered but, rather, that they should become fit and strong so they could bear stronger children to fight in Sparta’s armies and to defend her borders. The ancient historian Xenophon tells us, “But as far as free women were concerned, because [Lycurgus] thought childbearing was their most important function,

he decreed that the female sex ought to take bodily exercise no less than the male. He established competitions of running and strength for women with one another, just as he did for men, because he thought that stronger offspring would be born if both parents were strong.”³³ Xenophon further reports that Lycurgus’ eugenic plan succeeded, arguing that the men of Sparta were superior in height and strength to men from other parts of Greece. In Plutarch’s biography of the Spartan law-giver, written five centuries after the time of Lycurgus, he writes: “Lycurgus took particular care about the women as well as the men. He made the young women exercise their bodies by running and wrestling and throwing the discus and javelin . . . He freed them from softness and sitting in the shade and all female habits, and made it customary for girls no less

than boys to go naked in processions and to dance naked at certain festivals and to sing naked while young men were present and looking on.”³⁴ Perhaps the fear of nakedness was incentive enough to train. However, whether from their exercise, their “superior genetics” or both, Spartan women enjoyed a reputation throughout the ancient world for their great beauty. Helen of Troy herself, according to the third century B.C. poet Theocritus, took part in races along the Eurotas River with 240 other young girls.³⁵ Guttmann points out that other evidence of Spartan women training can be found in Aristophanes’ play *Lysistrata* when one of the women characters takes time out from protesting the war to do her exercises.³⁶

Although most Athenians and probably most Greeks living outside Sparta looked with disapproval on the Spartan’s love of exercise, not everyone thought it was inappropriate. Plato, for instance, was also enamored of the idea of exercise for women. In *The Laws* he proposed that women should join their husbands in the gymnasium. “My law should apply to females as well as men; they shall both go through the same exercises. I assert without fear of contradiction that gymnastics and horsemanship are as suitable to women as to men.”³⁷

As Greek society evolved and entered what historians call the Hellenistic period (around 323 B.C.) we find even more evidence of women’s participation in gymnasium training and sport. For instance, Claudia Metrodora is memorialized in a stone inscription on the island of Chios for being four times “*gymnasiarch*” and twice

benefactor of the games in honor of Heracles. A *gymnasiarch* was a gymnasium manager and the inscription describing Metrodora's involvement goes on to explain that she was even honored by being asked to distribute the oil used by the male athletes in the games. It is possible, of course, that her involvement with the gymnasium was strictly financial. However, at Dorylaeum in Phrygia it is recorded that Asclepiades was the *gymnasiarch* of free men and slaves, while his wife Antiochis was the *gymnasiarch* of the women. As Guttman points out, that women had a *gymnasiarch* indicates that at least some women actually used the gymnasium.³⁸

As for the Romans, near the village of Piazza Armerina in Sicily stands one of the most significant architectural treasures of the ancient world — and one of the most intriguing artifacts in the history of fitness — the Roman Villa of Casale. The villa, believed to have



Bronze statue of a woman athlete from the first century A.D. Note the strigil and the bandage around her knee. This statue is on display at the Hamburg Museum of Art in Germany.

been built by the Emperor Maximian as a summer retreat in the late third and early fourth centuries A.D., is famous for its breathtaking mosaics depicting scenes from Roman life.³⁹ Included alongside the scenes of gladiators, farming, and other everyday Roman activities, however, are depictions of ten young women dressed in two-piece costumes resembling bikinis. One of the young women, whose shoulders appear larger than the others, is holding a pair of *halteres* or dumbbells. Standing next to her is a figure holding either a large ball or a discus. If it is meant to be a ball, it was probably a *puganica* or medicine ball — commonly used by Roman men in their training. Other women in the fresco are shown running, playing a ball game, and holding palm leaves and other symbols of athletic victory. It is a beautiful mosaic, artistically conceived and painstakingly crafted. The women's bodies are in motion, their fitness and health readily apparent. What's more, the mosaic's presence in the home of a prosperous aristocrat at the height of the Roman empire provides compelling evidence that perhaps some ancient women found ways to participate in sport and exercise. As Guttman puts it, "Quite probably, the girls represent a javelin thrower, a jumper, a discus-thrower, two runners, two ball players, and three girls with their prizes."⁴⁰

Other evidence of involvement in exercise by women in the Roman era can be found in Athenaeus' dialogue *Concerning Women*, written in approximately 228 A.D. Athenaeus reported seeing girls wrestling in a gymnasium on the island of Chios and wrote, "it is very pleasant just to walk to the gymnasium and running-tracks and watch the young men wrestling with the girls."⁴¹ Propertius, who died in about 15 B.C., also gives credence to the idea of women wrestling and engaging in vigorous activity in the early Roman era:

I much admire the Spartan wrestling schools,
but most of all I like the women's rules;
for girls and men can wrestle in the nude
(the Spartans think such exercise is good);
naked they throw the ball too fast to catch,
and steer the creaking hoop in the bowling match.
stand waiting, grimed with dust, for the starting gun,
and bear the brunt of the Pancration,
put boxing gloves on hands so soft and fair,
and whirl the heavy discus through the air
If Roman girls would do as the Spartans do,
Then, Rome, I'd have cause for loving you.⁴²

Other evidence that Roman women trained in meaningful — and strikingly modern — ways can be found in Juvenal's description of a Roman matron: "It is at night that she goes to the baths, at night that she gives orders

for her oil-flasks and other impedimenta to be taken there; she loves to sweat among the noise and bustle. When her arms fall to her sides, worn out by the heavy weights, the skillful masseur presses his fingers in to her body."⁴³ Juvenal even disapprovingly suggests, in another part of the Satires, that some women trained to become gladiators and battled wild boar in the arena.⁴⁴ Another tantalizing bit of evidence is the first century A.D. bronze, now housed in Hamburg's Art Museum, that shows a young woman athlete, bare to the waist, with a strigil in one hand and a bandage wrapped around her knee.⁴⁵

We'll never know how many ancient Greek and Roman women trained, or what kind of exercise routines they may have used. Nor will we know exactly how their cultures perceived their involvement with exercise. But at Delphi, where athletic games similar to those of the Olympics were held every four years, one proud father set up a monument to his three daughters — who won both foot races and chariot races while wearing armor at sporting games held in Delphi, Nemea, and Isthmus.⁴⁶ And if classicist H.A. Harris is correct, then similar women's athletic events were held at Corinth, Naples, and at the Capitoline Games during the Roman era.⁴⁷ It would be wrong, however, to infer from this evidence that there was a widespread women's fitness movement in either ancient Greece or Rome just as it would be wrong to assume that everyone approved of the idea of women's exercise. It would also be wrong to infer that there was *no* fitness exercise done by women. There is simply too much evidence that some women trained systematically. Whether the young women depicted in the Bikini Mosaic represented simply an erotic/aesthetic ideal or, as Guttmann suggests, they depicted living female athletes, the very fact that a wealthy, influential Roman wished to immortalize such women in his villa is indicative that the idea of exercise and training for women was accepted in some quarters of Roman society. How many American homes have chosen a similar decorative theme?⁴⁸

Renaissance Writers Rediscover Hygiene and Exercise

Interest in the therapeutic value of exercise declined sharply following the fall of the Roman Empire around 500 A.D. The early Christians, attempting to divorce themselves from what they perceived as Roman dissipation and paganism, de-emphasized the body, largely abolished athletic competitions, and encouraged men and women to live pious, reflective lives instead.⁴⁹

Unlike most Romans and Greeks who had lived by Juvenal's philosophy of *Mens Sana in Corpore Sano*, (the sound mind in the sound body) early Christians preached the duality of man.⁵⁰ The body and soul were separate and the mortal body was far less important than the immortal soul.⁵¹ Although historian William Baker tells us that a number of ball games and wrestling matches continued to occur during what historians characterize as the Dark or Middle Ages, purposive exercise does not make a significant reappearance until the feudal system and Great Crusades gave rise to knighthood and its new code of conduct — chivalry. Male knights throughout Europe commonly practiced wrestling, vaulting, boxing, leaping, archery, stone hurling, fencing, spear throwing and horsemanship; and an outgrowth of this training — the knightly tournament — evolved so that these aristocratic males could test the results of their training.⁵² While knightly training might make one fit for battle, the resultant health and harmonious body development valued by the ancient Greeks was coincidental. However, in the early years of the Renaissance, the Humanist Movement spawned a widespread resurgence of interest in Greek and Roman culture, including ancient matters of health and hygiene. As the old Greek texts were rediscovered, the idea that purposive exercise could be beneficial on a number of levels began again to receive more critical consideration. One of the first to write on these matters in the early Renaissance was Petrarch (1304-1374) who suggested in *Against a Certain Physician* — a small pamphlet that espoused the pleasures of the simple life — that exercise could be substituted for the medicines of his day, which often poisoned the body rather than cured it.⁵³

Medical historian L.H. Joseph argues that the revival of interest in Greek culture during the Renaissance particularly resulted in the popularization, through the mid-1700s of the hygienic theories of Hippocrates and Galen.⁵⁴ A large number of hygienic treatises — produced by enthusiasts of the Greek ideal — preached moderation, the value of exercise, and the idea that health should be a matter of societal concern.⁵⁵ Although Latin was the favored language of the educated classes of Europe during the Renaissance, many of these hygienic works were written in the vernacular and thus had a wider readership.⁵⁶ A classic example of this trend was the anonymously published *Regimen Sanitatis Salernitanum*. The *Regimen* was based almost entirely on Galen's writings, and it was largely responsible for reintroducing to western society Galen's thoughts on medicine and exercise when it appeared in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century. Originally published in Latin, the *Regimen Sanitatis Salernitanum* contained

several brief mentions of therapeutic gymnastics, and remained an important source of hygienic doctrine for the next several hundred years. In 1607, John Harrington (1561-1612) translated the book into English verse and called it *The Englishman's Doctor. Or the Schoole of Salerne. Or Physicall Observations for the Perfect Preserving of the Body of Man in Continual Health*. According to British historian H. E. Sigerist, Britons loved the verse format of *The Englishman's Doctor*, and it subsequently went through numerous English-language editions during the next several centuries.⁵⁷

In these new vernacular texts, Galen's humoral theory and his doctrine of the six non-naturals became codified by Renaissance authors into what came to be viewed as the "laws of bodily health" — ideas increasingly expressed as value prescriptions.⁵⁸ Readers were encouraged to become both their own physicians and their own physical educators. The message was simple: health and fitness are attainable by anyone willing to make a personal commitment to moderation, exercise, and self-sacrifice.⁵⁹

Among the most significant of these new vernacular texts was Thomas Elyot's (1490-1546) *Castel of Helthe*. Berryman believes that *Castel of Helthe*, which by 1610 had gone through fifteen editions, was the first Renaissance manual of popular or domestic medicine designed to provide working class men and women with simple instructions on how to keep well.⁶⁰ Elyot discussed a number of exercises in the text and differentiated between those that could be done indoors in one's home and those that needed space outdoors. Included in Elyot's list of useful exercises were "deambulations [walks], labouring with poises [weights] made of lead or other metal called in Latin *alteres*, lifting and throwing the heavy stone or bar, playing at tennis, and divers semblable exercises."⁶¹

Joachim Camerarius also discussed specific exercises in his 1544 *Dialogue de Gymnasius*. Historian Fred Eugene Leonard reports that Camerarius recommended that boys wrestle, run, jump, fence, play ball, and lift weights.⁶² Camerarius also included a discussion



John Harrington (1561-1612) introduced Galen's ideas on health and medicine to a new class of citizens with publication of *The Englishman's Doctor* in vernacular English.

about what sorts of exercise should occur in schools and recommended that the teacher provide for such activities as "hanging from a bar, climbing a rope, lifting weights, and matching strength with an opponent in various ways, and for a number of active games in the open air."⁶³

One of the most important books philosophically was Luigi Cornaro's 1558 *Trattato della Vita Sobria* or *Treatise on a Sober Life*.⁶⁴ Cornaro (1467-1565) was a typical member of the Italian nobility — wealthy and interested in the arts, yet also given to bouts of gluttony and alcoholic excess. When his health deteriorated during his mid-thirties, Cornaro's physicians warned him that he would not live much longer unless he made serious lifestyle changes. Cornaro's conversion was total. "I immediately concluded, that the foregoing contrary effects could not be produced but by contrary modes of living; and therefore, full of hopes, resolved, in order to avoid at once both death and diseases to betake myself to a regular course of life."⁶⁵

Cornaro saw in his new temperance a moral precept around which he could shape his life. He wrote, "But when I once resolved to live sparingly, and according to the dictates of reason, seeing that it was no difficult matter, nay that it was my duty as a man to do so, I entered with so much resolution upon this new course of life that nothing has been since able to divert me from it."⁶⁶

Cornaro's concept of temperance as a moral imperative was to resonate down through the centuries that followed the publication of his original treatise.⁶⁷ Even Americans such as Benjamin Franklin and nineteenth-century health reformer Sylvester Graham were influenced by Cornaro's views, especially his notion that exercise and dietary restraint should be moral imperatives.⁶⁸

Perhaps the most significant impact of Cornaro's book, however, was his message of the value of moderation. Cornaro's regimen was designed to lengthen life by "conserving the vital principle of the body."⁶⁹ Cornaro, who reportedly died at the age of ninety-eight, believed that limiting his food, guarding against excessive heat and cold, avoiding fatigue, and keeping a

happy frame of mind enabled him to hoard his life's vital energy and thereby extend his lifespan.⁷⁰ This idea, that the body's vital forces must be rationed, was to have an enormous impact on the lives of women for the next several centuries as hygienic authors and physicians urged women to avoid strenuous exercise so that they could conserve their life force for maternity. Both menstruation and pregnancy, the argument went, placed such demands on a woman's physiology that she must be extremely cautious about the amount of physical, and even intellectual, exercise she took lest she deplete herself and be unable to fulfill her true calling in life — motherhood.⁷¹

While many late-Renaissance hygienists followed Cornaro's lead and advocated only moderate exercise, there were authors who believed in the benefits of a more vigorous approach. The most famous of this group was Hieronymus Mercurialis (1530-1606), who included exercise advice for both men and women in his influential *De Arte Gymnastica Apud Antientes* (Art of Gymnastics Among the Ancients).⁷² Quoting from more than ninety-six earlier authors, Mercurialis' heavily illustrated work first appeared in 1569 in Venice, Italy with subsequent editions in 1573, 1587, 1600, 1614 and 1672.⁷³

Mercurialis was one of the most famous Renaissance physicians. Educated in Padua, Italy, he later served as personal physician to Emperor Maximilian II, and was knighted by the Emperor in 1573 following a successful cure. In later years Mercurialis taught medicine at the university in Bologna and, later still, at Pisa. He was so highly regarded in his day that his hometown of Forlì erected a monument to his memory.⁷⁴

De Arte Gymnastica relied heavily on the Hippocratic definition of health as an equilibrium among the body's humours. Mercurialis classified gymnastics into two main types — preventive and therapeutic — and believed that the quantity and duration of each exercise should be individualized according to a person's constitution and level of fitness.⁷⁵ Mercurialis' distinction between preventive and therapeutic gymnastics was to



Hieronymus Mercurialis, author of *De Arte Gymnastica* lived from 1530-1606. His book on exercise reintroduced the ideas of Ancient Greece to the Renaissance and became the "Bible" for those interested in health and exercise for the next several centuries.

Courtesy National Library of Medicine

be an important innovation. As medical historian Joseph notes, "In reality, all the books on gymnastics of the next centuries are based on this standard work of Mercurialis."⁷⁶

Among the exercises Mercurialis advocated as most important to health preservation are walking, throwing the discus, rope climbing and ball playing. Mercurialis recommended "calcio," an early form of soccer, as well as exercises using light balls filled with feathers and heavy balls tilled with sand, forerunners of modern medicine balls.⁷⁷ He also included dumbbell exercises and differentiated among three degrees of walking — walking slowly to stimulate intellectual activity, rapid walks to stimulate digestion and evacuation, and mountain climbing for those whose legs need specific strengthening.⁷⁸ Running was also recommended, especially at night when the body will not over-heat as quickly.⁷⁹

Throughout the work, Mercurialis included references to women. Ball games, he argued, work all the muscles of the body and are good for "convalescents, weak persons and even for wet-nurses."⁸⁰ Long-jumping was fine for men and for non-pregnant women. In the section on therapeutic exercise, Mercurialis argued that passive movements such as swinging can strengthen a person's circulation and included an illustration of a young woman in a hammock or sling as an example of passive exercise.⁸¹ Historian Ellen Gerber notes that Mercurialis' view of exercise was primarily a functional one: "To men like Mercurialis the concept of sport for the sake of pleasure, or athletic competition for the purpose of challenging men to fine, even heroic performance, was not an issue. The importance of gymnastics lay solely in its healthful, medicinal aspects. A man exercised, played ball, climbed ropes, even wres-

tled to strengthen his body, to prevent its degeneration, and to ward off disease.”⁸²

Christobal Mendez & The First Exercise Advice for American Women

Although Mercurialis and a few other Renaissance authors mention women’s exercise in passing, the best source on what women might have done for exercise during the Renaissance is undoubtedly Christobal Mendez’ *Libro del Exercicio Corporal* or *Book of Bodily Exercises*.⁸³ According to Frederick Kilgour, who edited the 1960 English translation of the *Libro*, Christobal Mendez (1500?-1561) was born in Jaen, Spain, moved to Seville as a boy, and was a medical student at the university in Salamanca in 1524.⁸⁴ From the text of the *Libro*, it appears that Mendez made his way to New Spain (Mexico City) by 1530 and did not return from North America until 1545.⁸⁵ Little else, however, is known about his life except that he published two other medical books once he returned to Spain.⁸⁶

Mendez’s *Libro del Exercicio Corporal* is significant for several reasons. Published in Seville, in 1553, it was the first book written by a physician primarily devoted to exercise.⁸⁷ However, unlike earlier hygienic tracts which included only a smattering of exercise advice alongside lengthy discussions of diet, constipation, the need for fresh air, and so on, Mendez’s entire book is devoted to the subject. Adopting as his motto “Leisure Hurts,” Mendez says straightforwardly on his title page that this book is written so “everyone will understand what exercise will be necessary to preserve his health.”⁸⁸ The book is also unusual because of the attention Mendez pays to women. The *Libro* contains an entire chapter on women’s exercise, the first found by this author in any Renaissance text. And, because that chapter is based in part on Mendez’s experiences at the court in New Spain, the book thus includes the first exercise prescription aimed at “American” women.

Unlike earlier authors, Mendez approached exercise in a unique and novel manner. Though he quotes occasionally from Aristotle, Galen, and other ancients, the bulk of the *Libra* is based on his own personal observations and adventures. “I was moved to search (in reference to medicine) the easiest thing that can be done to acquire health in the body whence the soul may sometimes follow . . . I found that with just doing exercise . . . we could try and obtain great good and utility . . . That is why . . . I was persuaded to write this book on exercise to show all its great benefits, and wherein I bring everything that can be said about it, as well as several other things not improper to this purpose

that are worth knowing and helpful.”⁸⁹

The book is divided into four treatises, and Mendez first discusses the physiological relationship of exercise to health and differentiates between “movement,” “work,” and “exercise,” the latter of which he defines as voluntary movement which increases breathing, raises the body’s heat, and speeds up the heart. He concludes the first treatise with the admonition that exercise should provide “moderate pleasure” and:

exercise must be continuous and not interrupted, because if you start to exercise and leave off in the middle, you move the humor that has to be consumed and dissipated, which if not consumed comes out through the pores of the body opened by the increasing heat produced by the movement. Without doubt this could bring harm and even produce greater inconveniences. This is why good exercise should be continuous, frequent and rapid until the end and until we feel a sort of relief in the body no matter how tired we may be. Even excessive exercise will be better than too little.⁹⁰

Chapter Nine of the second treatise is entitled, “On Particular Exercises for Women and What the Ladies Can do to Benefit Their Health.” In this chapter Mendez feels a distinction is necessary between ladies of leisure and rural women who “do the work of husbands and labor like them” and help with digging, plowing, sowing, and mowing. Mendez also suggested that working class women who fulfill traditional domestic roles — “housekeeping, preparing food, kneading dough, washing, and taking care of children” — do not need to be concerned with doing additional exercise. “This is why,” he writes, “. . . to these we do not need to give any rules of exercise to keep their health because they work so much that they used to say that women’s work never ends.”⁹¹

But for the wealthy, leisured class of women, Mendez feels that regular exercise is essential to the maintenance of health. “There are ladies who have everything necessary at home and somebody to take care of it; exercise may bring great benefits to them.”⁹² He also introduces a refrain which will appear repeatedly in the exercise prescriptions for women of the next several centuries: “they never can produce any change in their bodies because they do not take any exercise, and this is why they never have so many children . . .”⁹³ As to the types of exercise he recommends for wealthy women, the suggestions are, not surprisingly, primarily domestic pursuits. Wealthy women should walk about their house

in the morning, checking on their servants and seeing to the accuracy of their servants' work. Reprimanding the maids when there are lapses or even pretending there are lapses, "will be very useful," he argues. If the noblewoman can appear irate and "raise one's voice . . . This will be their exercise and will bring good health."⁹⁴ After this morning walk, Mendez suggests that women exercise their upper bodies. be utilitarian, and "make a good appearance" by sitting so as to "comb and spin linen, to arrange it in skeins, to sew, to make ribbons, to braid their hair, to make hats of very rich things of gold and ruffled collars."⁹⁵ Later in the text, hunting, bowling, and dancing are also mentioned as acceptable forms of exercise for women.⁹⁶ His final hygienic recommendation for women is, not surprisingly, that they take regular walks. "I do not believe there is a lady who is not in a position to close the door of a room and to stroll for two hours before meals in one of those halls. I swear that although your ladyship pass your lives without doing this you could live longer and better without troubles by doing so." In walking, all the "animal faculties are exercised," Mendez wrote, explaining that a person can hear, and see, and use his/her imagination while walking.⁹⁷

However silly the idea sounds to us, the idea that vocal exercise could be enough for women would linger for centuries. An English essay, entitled *Woman*, written by Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher in approximately 1600 argued, "As men do walk a mile, women should talk an hour after supper . . . tis their exercise."⁹⁸ And numerous authors, including Mendez, explained to readers that the reason nuns lived such long lives was because they spent so much time singing and praying. As Mendez put it, "Since the nuns have a choir and sing, they receive great benefit from this as exercise."⁹⁹ [I might have thought it had more to do with not having to bear so many children.] Even in the 1700s the physician Nicholas Andry argued that women needed less exercise than men because "they are more loquacious" and thus, he claimed, gained the positive benefits of physical exercise which shows the "surprising care

and foresight of Nature."¹⁰⁰

That Mendez's ideas about the suitability of exercises for wealthy women were consistent with his era is corroborated by a letter he reports was sent by the Empress Isabella to the court in New Spain in 1530. The edict, Mendez reports, requested that: "all ladies should busy themselves with some exercise because very extensive unfitness follows leisure, and if necessary she could provide enough linen to spin. Some of the ladies took this as an affront, but the bishop of Mexico pointed out to all of them that it was a great mercy because such a high lady was thinking of them, and indeed the great care of such a generous princess is worthy of mention."¹⁰¹

Solid evidence that health and exercise were concerns which reached all levels of Spanish Renaissance society can be found in the anecdotes which enliven the pages of Mendez's work. Besides the previously mentioned letter from Isabella, Mendez also describes the exercise of nuns, discusses how exercise could be incorporated into the lives of tradesmen, and tells of a group of

shipbuilders he met in Havana who worked up a sweat by picking up the pace of their labor at the end of the workday because "in that way the body is cleansed and stays healthy."¹⁰²

One reason Mendez and other Renaissance authors believed that women needed different kinds of exercise than men was because women were viewed not only as physiologically inferior but almost as a different species.¹⁰³ The processes of menstruation and pregnancy were viewed as illnesses rather than as natural functions and some physicians and hygienic authors used this view as a reason to limit women's exercise. However, a few authors did argue that exercise would improve a woman's chance of having a healthy child. Maffeus Vegius (1407-1458) in *The Education of Children*, for instance, gave advice for both parents about their physical condition prior to conception.¹⁰⁴ Likewise, Venetian nobleman Francesco Barbaro (1395-1440) penned *Prudent and Important Documents for the Choice of a Wife*, in which he argued that young women needed exercise



Illustration of "passive" exercise for women from Hieronymus Mercurialis' *De Arte Gymnastica Aput Ancienres*.

to make themselves more fit to be mothers.

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, interest in the physical condition of women increased as it began to be understood that a woman's health and fitness could have a direct link to the vigor of the developing embryo. Johann Amos Comenius (1592-1670), for instance, advised pregnant women to maintain their normal work patterns and to not simply sit and rest while pregnant. "The mother should be careful not to indulge in excessive sleep, indolence or torpor," he wrote, "but should go on actively with her usual employments."¹⁰⁶ More significantly, Scevole de Sainte Marthe (1536-1623) argued in his long poem, *Paedrotrophia, or the Art of Nursing and Rearing Children* that:

The body thus, from EXERCISE, *acquires*
New health, new strength, and brisker vital fires.
Motion and heat produced by motion, prove
The cure of all obstructed paths, remove
Whate'er of heavy or of useless, fills
The sluggish veins, or stop the vital rills.
And make the pains of child-birth glide away,
When the young foetus pushes into day;
Nor can o'erflowing humor then detain
The ling'ring child, or render labor vain;
But sleep and MOTION make the body pure.
Clear ev'ry passage, bring him forth mature,
Set open all his prison-doors with ease,
And free the mother from her long disease.¹⁰⁷

Finding the proper balance between too little exercise and too much exercise was important to the Renaissance hygienists. Claude Quillet (1602-1661) argued in *Callipædia, or the Art of Getting Beautiful Children*, that women must search for an Aristotelian Golden Mean between too much motion and too much ease. His long moralistic poem gives a good overview of late Renaissance thought on exercise and pregnancy.

How too much MOTION, and too violent Speed,
Had killed the Product of th' enlivened Seed,
When the formation was but just begun,
And the thin thread of life but newly spun.
So if a Matron, eight months gone with child,
Dance like a Bachnalian, loose and wild,
She surely brings the Birth before the Time.
And dearly suffers for her foolish Crime.
From these diversions which her Sex delight,
She should not therefore to inaction lean,
But follow Reason and her Golden Mean.
For both Extremities alike displease.
IMMOD'RATE MOTION, or immod'rate Ease.
Sloth with gross Humours loads the racy-Blood,

And choaks the Passage of the vital Flood;
That sprightly Vertue and ingenit Heat.
Which the Foetus in just form complete,
Oppress'd by Inactivity. retire,
Unable to exert their gen'rous Fire.

But well us'd EXERCISE will clear the Mind,
And free the Spirits, which have slept confin'd
Beneath a sluggish Heap of misty Formes
Til the Soul wakes, and all her native Warmth
resumes:

Hence the young Pris'ner in the Womb transpires
With greater Freedom, and sound Health acquires,
Well limb'd and hale, when Stranger to the Day.
On the World's Stage he makes life's first Essay.¹⁰⁸

The problem of didactic sources, of course, is that it is impossible to say if anyone really paid any attention to them. M. H. Green, a medical historian at Duke University, argues that women who lived in the Middle Ages would not have had access to such books and, secondly, that if they had had access they would not have been able to read the books.¹⁰⁹ Dr. Green's point is well-taken. There were few attempts made to educate women in these years and books were expensive to purchase, even after the invention of the printing press. Consequently, the number of women who were able to read for themselves Mendez's *Libro* or Claude Quillet's hygienic poem, for instance, was undoubtedly small. But whether women read such books themselves, had them read or paraphrased to them by husbands or priests, or simply picked up on the philosophical approach suggested by such books through conversations with physicians and others interested in hygiene, the books are still our best, and probably only, source of what people believed at this time. And the widespread belief in women's difference and inferiority in the Middle Ages and Renaissance meant that women's exercise in this era no longer aimed to produce the kind of robust strength that allowed Spartan girls to fight wars and wrestle men but, rather, to create a constrained fitness that was closely tied to appropriate decorum and, most especially, to maternity.

Ultimately, the belief that greater health and vigor could enhance a woman's chances of giving birth to a healthy child would provide a powerful rationale for the incorporation of exercise into the lives of women. As women's academies began adding physical training to their curricula in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, again and again the idea that fitness enhanced fertility and strength for child-bearing was used as a justification for the adoption of physical education in the curriculum. As the nineteenth century progressed and women themselves began to decide curriculum issues,

the ideological base of women's exercise shifted and the idea that exercise created health and strength for all aspects of a woman's life became more central to the philosophy of women's physical education.¹¹⁰

And so while feminists might decry the pre-Enlightenment philosophies that encouraged exercise for maternity enhancement rather than for its ability to physiologically and psychologically empower women for their own sake, at least the record indicates that some women in these earlier historical eras did some training, even if it was only strolling their estates and yelling at their servants. In all seriousness, however, it should be clear that even though most pre-twentieth century men who recommended exercise for women did so because they wanted women to make healthier and stronger children, it wound up making healthier and stronger women as well.

Notes:

¹ Allen Guttmann, *Women's Sport: A History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 317. Guttmann's book won the North American Society for Sport History's award for best book of the year in 1992.

² Jan Todd, *Physical Culture and the Body Beautiful: Proposive Exercise in the Lives of American Women, 1800-1875* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1998); Patricia Vertinsky, *The Eternally Wounded Woman: Women, Exercise and Doctors in the Late Nineteenth Century* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1990); Mary Lynn Stewart, *For Health and Beauty: Physical Culture for Frenchwomen, 1880s-1930s* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2001); Susan Cahn, *Coming on Strong: Gender and Sexuality in Women's Sport* (New York, Free Press, 1994); and Guttmann, *Women's Sports*.

³ J.W.F. Blundell, *The Muscles and Their Story from the Earliest Times; Including the Whole Text of Mercurialis and the Opinions of Other Writers. Ancient and Modern, on Mental and Bodily Development* (London, Chapman and Hall, 1864), 48.

⁴ See, for instance, H.A. Harris, *Sport in Greece and Rome* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972).

⁵ Norman A. Gardiner, *Athletics in the Ancient World* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1930), 21. See also: David C. Young, "The Modern Origins of Amateurism," *The Olympic Myth of Greek Amateur Athletics* (Chicago: Ares Publishers, 1984), 15-44 and 55.

⁶ Jack Berryman, "The Tradition of the Six Things Non-Natural: Exercise and Medicine from Hippocrates through Ante-Bellum America," *Exercise and Sport Sciences Reviews* 17(1989): 518-519. See also: L.H. Joseph, "Physical Education in the Early Middle Ages," *Ciba Tynposia* 10(March-April 1949): 1030.

⁷ Hippocrates, *Regimen*, trans. W.H.S. Jones (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), 383.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 229.

⁹ Cicero, quoted in Gerald F. Fletcher, "The History of Exercise in the Practice of Medicine," *Journal of the Medical Association of Georgia* 72(January 1973): 35.

¹⁰ Aristotle, *Politics*, 5:3. Quoted in Rachel Sargeant Robinson, *Sources for the History of Greek Athletics* (Cincinnati: by the author, 1955), 136.

¹¹ Aristotle, *Politics*, 4:16. Quoted in Robinson, *Sources*, 135-136.

¹² *Encarta Encyclopedia* 1998, Galen, CD ROM. See also: Michel Foucault, *The Care of the Self: The History of Sexuality*, Vol. 3 (New York: Vintage Books, Random House, 1986), 105-112.

¹³ Berryman, "Six Non-Naturals," 517. An interesting discussion of Galen's hygienic thought also occurs in Fletcher, "History of Exercise in the Practice of Medicine," 35-38. For another view see, C. R. Bums, "The Nonnaturals: a Paradox in the Western Concept of Health," *Journal of Medical Philosophy* 1(1976): 202-211. See also: P. H. Nicbyl, "The Non-Naturals," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 45(1971): 486-492.

¹⁴ Berryman, "Six Non-Naturals," 520.

¹⁵ R. M. Green. *A Translation of Galen's Hygiene* (Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, 1951), 53-54.

¹⁶ Gardiner, Norman A., *Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals* (London: 1910), 509. Also: Robinson. *Sources*, 177.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Robert A. Mechikoff and Steven G. Estes, *A History and Philosophy of Sport and Physical Education: From Ancient Civilizations to the Modern World*, 3rd ed. (New York: McGraw Hill, 2002), 53.

²⁰ For information on men's sport in ancient Greece see: Don Kyle, *Athletics in Ancient Athens* (Leiden: A.J. Brill, 1987); David C. Young: *The Olympic Myth of Greek Amateur Athletics* (Chicago: Ares Publishers, 1984) and Al N. Oikonomides and Ladislaus J. Bolchazy, eds. *The Ancient World: Athletics in Antiquity* (Chicago: Ares Publishers, 1983). For ancient Rome, see: Alison Futrell, *Blood in the Arena: The Spectacle of Roman Power*. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997); H.A. Harris. *Sport in Greece and Rome* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 1972); and Eckart Kohne and Cornelia Ewigleben, eds. *Gladiators and Caesars: The Power of Spectacle in Ancient Rome* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

²¹ For an overview of the exercise and sporting experiences of ancient Greek women see: Guttmann, *Women's Sports*, 15-32; M. Lammer, "Women and Sport in Ancient Greece: A Plea for a Critical and Objective Approach," *Medicine and Sport Science* (Basel: Karger, 1981): 16-23; Betty Spears, "A Perspective on the History of Women's Sport in Ancient Greece," *Journal of Sport History* 11 (Summer 1984): 32-47; and Reet A. Howell and Maxwell L. Howell, "Women in Leisure Activities in Ancient Greece and Rome," *Medicine and Sport Science* 24(Basel: Karger, 1987): 83-100.

²² Historian William J. Baker suggests that besides footraces, wrestling contests and chariot races were held as part of the Games. William J. Baker, *Sports in the Western World* (Totowa: NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1982), 22.

²³ Lammer, "Women and Sport in Ancient Greece," 19; Howell and Howell. "Women in Leisure Activities," 91; and Baker, *Sports in the Western World*, 22.

²⁴ Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, vol. 2., translated by W.H.S. Jones. (London: William Heinemann, 1918-1935), 473.

- ²⁵ One of the two statues of female runners is in the British Museum in London; the second is in the Vatican's collection. A third statue of a female athlete is in the Hamburg Art Museum.
- ²⁶ Spears, "Reflections," 36.
- ²⁷ Lammer, "Women and Sport in Ancient Greece," 18. Kyle similarly argues that the gymnasias of Athens had a military origin and that even when they became famous as learning centers women were not included. Kyle, *Athletics in Ancient Athens*, 65-66.
- ²⁸ Guttman, *Women's Sports*, 22.
- ²⁹ Pausanias, 5.16, Peter Levi, trans. (New York: Penguin Books, 1971), 2-4.
- ³⁰ Claude Bérard, *A City of Images*, Deborah Lyons, trans. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 92. Quoted in Guttman, *Women's Sports*, 23.
- ³¹ Howell and Howell, "Women in Leisure Activities," 84.
- ³² Spears, "Perspective," 34; See also: Mary R. Lefkowitz and Maureen B. Fant, "Women's Life in Greece and Rome: Legal Status in the Greek World" website found at: www.uky.edu/ArtsSciences/Classics/wigr/wigr-greeklegal97.html on 20 November 2001; and Howell and Howell, "Women in Leisure Activities," 84.
- ³³ Xenophon, *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians*, 1.2-10. Viewed at: Lefkowitz and Fant, "Women's Life in Greece and Rome" at www.uky.edu/ArtsSciences/Classics/wigr/wjgr-greeklegal97.html on 20 November 2001.
- ³⁴ Plutarch, *Life of Lycurgus* 14-16. Viewed at: Lefkowitz and Fant, "Women's Life in Greece and Rome" at www.uky.edu/ArtsSciences/Classics/wigr/wigr-greeklegal98.html on 20 November 2001.
- ³⁵ Theocritus, *Idylls*, 18:22-24. A.S.F. Gow, trans. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965).
- ³⁶ Guttman, *Women's Sports*, 27.
- ³⁷ Plato, *Laws*, 7:560. R.G. Bury, trans. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952). See also: Spears, "Perspective," 38.
- ³⁸ Guttman, *Women's Sports*, 29.
- ³⁹ Herbert W. Benario, "Sport at Rome," *The Ancient World: Athletics in Antiquity*, 7(March 1983): 43.
- ⁴⁰ Guttman, *Women's Sports*, 38.
- ⁴¹ Athanaeus, *Deipnosophists*, 13:566. C. B. Gulick, trans. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1923).
- ⁴² Quoted in Guttman's *Women's Sports*, 37. Guttman points out that the reference to a "starting gun" is the translator's attempt at irony.
- ⁴³ Juvenal, 6: 419. Rolfe Humphries, trans. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1958), 72-73. See also: H.A. Harris, *Sport in Greece and Rome* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972), 150.
- ⁴⁴ Juvenal. *The Satires*, 6:268-82.
- ⁴⁵ Kohne and Ewigleben, *Gladiators and Caesars*, 136.
- ⁴⁶ Harris, *Sport in Greece and Rome*, 41 ; Guttman, *Women's Sports*, 36.
- ⁴⁷ Harris, *Sport in Greece and Rome*. 41
- ⁴⁸ Guttman, *Women's Sports*, 38.
- ⁴⁹ Edith L. Hildebrandt, "The Historical Aspect of Physical Education," *Mind and Body* 26(April 1919): 49-52.
- ⁵⁰ See Harris, *Sport in Greece and Rome*, 65, for a discussion of Juvenal's true attitudes toward Greek athletics.
- ⁵¹ For information on attitudes toward health and hygiene prior to the Renaissance see Baker, *Sports in the Western World*, 42-27 and Guttman, *Women's Sports*, 41-43.
- ⁵² The best source on the exercises used as part of knightly training is Vera Olivova's "From the Arts of Chivalry to Gymnastics," *Canadian Journal of History of Sport* (Summer 1979): 29-55.
- ⁵³ L. H. Joseph, "Gymnastics During the Renaissance as Part of the Humanistic Educational Program." *Ciba Symposia* 10(March-April 1949): 1034.
- ⁵⁴ L. H. Joseph, "Physical Education in the Early Middle Ages;" "Gymnastics During the Renaissance as a Part of the Humanistic Educational Program;" "Medical Gymnastics in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries;" and "Gymnastics in the Pre-Revolutionary Eighteenth Century" all appear in *Ciba Symposia* 10(March-April 1949): 1030-1060. Joseph's four-article series remains the best overview of therapeutic exercise up to the Enlightenment. Joseph defines "medical gymnastics" as all healthful and health-furthering exercises (1030).
- ⁵⁵ Joseph, "Gymnastics During the Renaissance," 1034-1035. In 1807, Sir John Sinclair published a bibliography of more than 1400 texts dealing with hygiene and longevity in the second volume of his *Code of Health and Longevity, or a Concise View of the Principles Calculated for the Preservation of Health and Attainment of Long Life* (Edinburgh: Arch. Constable & Co, 1807).
- ⁵⁶ G. Smith, "Prescribing the Rules of Health: Self-Help and Advice in the Late Eighteenth Century," in R. Porter, ed. *Patients and Practitioners: Lay Prescriptions of Medicine in Pre-Industrial Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 250-251.
- ⁵⁷ H. E. Sigerist, *Landmarks in the History of Hygiene* (London: Oxford University Press, 1956), 22.
- ⁵⁸ Bums, "Paradox," 208.
- ⁵⁹ Sigerist, *Landmarks*, 23.
- ⁶⁰ Berryman, "Six Non-Naturals," 523-525. See also: Eleanor B. English, "Giroloamo Cardano and *De Sanitate Tuenda*: A Renaissance Physician's Perspective on Exercise." *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport* 53(1982): 287-288. This article compares Cardano's and Elyot's ideas on health and exercise.
- ⁶¹ Sir Thomas Elyot, *The Boke Named the Governor*, S. E. Lehmberg. trans. (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1962), 59-60. Quoted in Terry Todd, "The History of Resistance Exercise and its Role in United States Education," (Ph.D. diss. University of Texas at Austin, 1966), 34-35.
- ⁶² Fred Eugene Leonard. *A Guide to the History of Physical Education* (Philadelphia: Lea and Febiger, 1923), 53.
- ⁶³ Ibid.
- ⁶⁴ See "Louis Cornaro, The Glorified Hygienic Crank." *Mind and Body* 10(November 1903): 247-249, for an amusing analysis of Cornaro's longevity. This essay originally appeared in the *Boston Herald* upon the publication of a new edition of Cornaro's treatise.
- ⁶⁵ Louis Cornaro, *How To Live Long: The Discourses and Letters of*

Louis Cornaro (New York: The Health Culture Company, 1916). Originally published in 1556 as *Treatise on a Sober Life*.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 15.

⁶⁷ See: "Old Age of a Temperate Man," *Journal of Health* 2(10 November 1830): 71-73 for an example of Cornaro's continued influence. Following the printing of the 1558 Italian vernacular edition, Cornaro's treatise was translated into Latin, English, French, German and Dutch. One English edition of Cornaro's treatise, originally published in 1704, went through more than fifty editions and was still in print in the mid-nineteenth century. Gerald J. Gruman, "The Rise and Fall of Prolongevity Hygiene: 1558-1873," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 35(1961): 224. See also: William B. Walker. "Luigi Cornaro, A Renaissance Writer on Personal Hygiene," *Bulletin of the History, of Medicine* 28(1954): 530-531.

⁶⁸ Franklin included a copy of Cornaro's work in: Benjamin Franklin. *Immortal Mentor, or Man's Unerring Guide to a Healthy Wealthy and Happy Life* (Philadelphia: 1796). For information on Graham, see: James C. Whorton, *Crusaders for Fitness* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1982).

⁶⁹ Gruman, "Rise and Fall of Prolongevity Hygiene." 223.

⁷⁰ Cornaro, *How to Live Long*, 53.

⁷¹ Todd, *Physical Culture*, 177.

⁷² Information on the life and legacy of Mercurialis is available in P.C. McIntosh, "Hieronymus Mercurialis, *De Arte Gymnastica*: Classification and Dogma in the Sixteenth Century." *British Journal of Sports History* 1(1, 1984): 73-84; Joseph, "Medical Gymnastics in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," 1041-1045; Berryman, "The Six Non-Naturals," 526; Gerber. *Innovators*. 22-26; and Fred Eugene Leonard, *Guide to the History of Physical Education* (Philadelphia: Lea and Febiger, 1923) 52-53.

⁷³ The title page of the Springfield College Library edition of *De Arte Gymnastica* examined by this author reads: Hieronymi Mercurialis, Foroliviensis, *De Arte Gymnastica Libri Sex: In quibus exercitationum omnium vetustarum genera, locu, mosi, facultates, & quidquid denique ad corporis humani exercitationes pertinet diligenter explicatur. Editio novissimu, aucta, emendata, & figuris authenticis*, Christophori Coriolani exornata, Amstelodami, Sumptibus, ANDREÆ FRISII cl I LXXII (1672). Later editions, such as the 1672 version examined by the author in the preparation of this manuscript, were published in Amsterdam.

⁷⁴ Joseph, "Medical Gymnastics in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," 1041-42.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 1045. See also: Blundell, *The Muscles*. Blundell spent seven years translating Mercurialis' work into English only to decide that a simple translation rendered a product "too diffuse and verbose to suit the modern reader." So, he organized Mercurialis' ideas into subject chapters divested them "of obsolete argument without impairing their sense," and tried to "make them subservient to the knowledge of the present day." Blundell notes in his preface that "for two centuries at least," *De Arte Gymnastica* was the major source of information about exercise in the classical period and for the proper uses of exercise in therapy and prevention.

⁷⁷ Gerber, *Innovators*, 22-23.

⁷⁸ Dumbell training became quite popular as an indoor activity, especially in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Addison trained with dumbbells in his youth, for instance, and wrote in the *Spectator*, No. 115, that he learned of the exercises from "a Latin treatise written with great erudition." This was undoubtedly the Mercurialis text. Cited in: *Sure Methods of Improving Health and Prolonging Life or, a Treatise on the Art of Living Long and Comfortably* (London: by the author, 1827), 238-239.

⁷⁹ Joseph, "Medical Gymnastics in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries." 1043-1044. See also: Blundell, *Muscles*, 167.

⁸⁰ Blundell, *Muscles*, 26.

⁸¹ Ibid., 23.

⁸² Ibid., 26.

⁸³ Christobal, Mendez, *Book of Bodily Exercise*, trans. Francisco Guerra, ed. Frederick G. Kilgour (New Haven. CT: Elizabeth Licht, 1960).

⁸⁴ Ibid., x.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 43 and 69.

⁸⁶ Ibid., xi.

⁸⁷ Ibid., ix.

⁸⁸ Ibid., i.

⁸⁹ Ibid., xxiii.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 26.

⁹¹ Ibid., 42.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid., 44.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 42-43.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 43.

⁹⁶ Ibid. 52-53.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 44.

⁹⁸ Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, *Woman* (London: 1600), 18.

⁹⁹ Mendez, *Libro*, 44.

¹⁰⁰ Nicolas Andry, *Orthopædia: Or, The Art of Correcting and Preventing Deformities in Children . . . To which is added, A Defence of the Orthopædicia*, vol. I (London: A. Millar, 1743). 89.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 43. Spinning was regarded as an ideal exercise for women as late as the mid-nineteenth century because it required women to move their upper bodies and, at the same time, be employed in a domestic task.

¹⁰² Ibid., 44-46.

¹⁰³ M.T. Walton, R.M. Fineman and P.J. Walton, "Why Can't a Woman Be More Like a Man? A Renaissance Perspective on the Biological Basis for Female Inferiority." *Women Health* 24(4): 87-95.

¹⁰⁴ Joseph, "Gymnastics During the Renaissance," 1036.

¹⁰⁵ Quoted in: Joseph, "Medical Gymnastics in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," 1053.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 1052-1053.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 1051-1052.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ M.H. Green, "Books as a Source of Medical Education for Women in the Middle Ages," *Dynamics* 20(2000): 331-69.

¹¹⁰ See Todd, *Physical Culture*, for attitudes in the nineteenth century.

NEWS FLASH!

**Mark Henry
Cleans the
“Unliftable” Inch
Dumbbell With One
Hand & Push
Presses It at the
2002 AOBs Dinner**

Just over one hundred years ago, or so the story goes, the professional strongman Thomas Inch had a special dumbbell cast that weighed 172 pounds. What makes the dumbbell particularly difficult to lift is the thickness of its handle — almost 2 ½” in diameter. For the first half of the twentieth century, Inch claimed that he was the only man who could lift the huge bell off the floor at all, and he often offered large cash prizes for anyone who could do so. He never had to pay, and it was not until the 1950s when several men in Scotland, including Henry Gray, were able to lift the bell. In the 1990s replicas of the inch Dumbbell began to be manufactured and sold by Sorinex and IronMind Enterprises, and with these replicas available more and more people were able to train with the bell. Soon, a few men managed to lift a replica, a tiny handful managed to actually do a complete deadlift with one. No one, however, including Inch himself, has ever been able to come close to cleaning the dumbbell. No one has had both the grip strength to hold the bell tightly enough during the acceleration through the middle portion of the clean and the wrist strength to turn it over and catch it at the shoulder.

Finally, on June twenty-second, in front of a group of people whose collective knowledge of the early days of the iron game is second to none, Mark Henry did what many thought was impossible. In one powerful movement, he gripped a Sorinex replica of the Inch Dumbbell in his right hand, pulled it to his shoulder in an easy power clean, balanced it, and drove it to arm’s length to the absolute delight of the crowd. Then, in a feat that many in the audience thought was almost equal to the one-hand cleaning of the bell, he walked the ten feet or so to where the bell had rolled after he dropped it, leaned down to the side of his body, grasped the weight with his left hand, deadlifted it as if it were a suitcase, carried it with a level grip for about twenty feet, and not



so gently placed it onto the head table in front of Ken Hall, one of the men being honored that night.

Following Mark’s historic feat, dozens of men gathered around to congratulate him and to try the bell for themselves. There were many grip specialists in attendance this year, and of the many who attempted to lift the bell off the floor, only one, Richard Sorin himself, managed to lift it at all. Mark’s lift has flashed over the “iron grapevine” via the Internet and Tom Black, who covered the event for the Cyberpump website, called the lift “the best documented feat of all the legendary performances and perhaps the most spectacular feat of strength ever performed.” This may be drawing too long a bow, but no one can deny the enormous historic resonance of what Mark accomplished.

Following his performance in front of all the old heroes and afficianadoes — Mark went to the microphone and, in a long and emotional statement, told the crowd that he wanted to do it for Vic’s group and that he wanted them all to know he was lifetime drugfree. He said that he had been inspired by greats of the past like Paul Anderson, Vasily Alexeyev, and Bill Kazmaier, and that he intended to keep on breaking strength records for as long as his body would allow him to do so. What he will do next is unclear, even to Mark, but Vince McMahon has supported him in his quest for immortality and has given him time off to make his recent appearances. In any case, Mark treated those of us who were in the audience on June twenty-second to a truly memorable display of power, proving again that he deserves to be ranked among the strongest men of all time.