

IRON GAME HISTORY

THE JOURNAL OF PHYSICAL CULTURE

VOLUME 17 NUMBER 2
SPRING 2024

THE ORIGINS OF MUSCLE BEACH
by Jan Todd

“ON THE HORNS OF A DILEMMA”:
THE BELEAGUERED LIFE OF HITLER’S
GREATEST WEIGHTLIFTER
by John Fair

THE POSTWAR CORRESPONDENCE
BETWEEN JOSEF MANGER
AND JOHN TERPAK
Edited by John D. Fair

PHYSICAL EXERCISE AS PREVENTATIVE
MEDICINE: LOOKING BACK AT
COLONIAL BENGAL
by Basudhita Basu

BRITAIN’S THOMAS INCH
by Lucy Boucher and Jan Todd

EDUCATING BODIES THROUGH A
TRANSNATIONAL PEDAGOGY:
PHYSICAL CULTURE CINEMA
by Eduardo Galak



IRON GAME HISTORY: THE JOURNAL OF PHYSICAL CULTURE...

was founded in 1990 by Terry and Jan Todd who wanted to promote academic scholarship related to the history of the strength sports, exercise, nutrition, training for sport, and other aspects of physical culture. Like the Stark Center itself, *Iron Game History* defines physical culture as “the various activities people have employed over the centuries to strengthen their bodies, enhance their physiques, increase their endurance, enhance their health, fight against aging, and become better athletes.” The journal has published a wide variety of articles over the past thirty years exploring physical culture from historical, sociological, anthropological, and gender and race-based approaches.

EDITORIAL BOARD

Jack Berryman (University of Washington - Seattle)
Simon Bronner (University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee)
David Chapman (Seattle, WA.)
Broderick Chow (University of London)
John Fair (University of Texas at Austin)
Thomas M. Hunt (University of Texas at Austin)
Charles Kupfer (Penn State - Harrisburg)
Joe Roark (St. Joseph, IL.)

EXECUTIVE EDITOR:

Jan Todd, Ph.D.

ASSISTANT EDITORS:

Charles Stocking, Ph.D.
Conor Heffernan, Ph.D.

CO-EDITORS-IN-CHIEF:

Kim Beckwith, Ph.D.
Jason Shurley, Ph.D.
Tolga Ozyurtcu, Ph.D.

TECHNICAL EDITOR:

Kyle Martin, B.A.

Postmaster: Send address corrections to: *IGH*,
NEZ 5.700, D3600, University of Texas, Austin,
Texas 78712

(ISSN 1069-7276)

SUBMISSIONS

Please visit our website for complete article submission details: <https://starkcenter.org/research-2/iron-game-history/>.

Like other academic journals, *Iron Game History* is peer-reviewed, non-profit, and welcomes contributions from scholars at all stages of their careers and from all academic disciplines. It also welcomes memory pieces and other kinds of articles that are not traditionally “academic.” Please write if you have an idea for an article so our editorial team can discuss it with you.

To submit articles for consideration, please send your manuscript to Tolga Ozyurtcu at tolga@austin.utexas.edu as a WORD document—not PDF. Manuscripts should include a title page with the article’s title, and your name, email, phone and other contact information. Please also include a 50-word biography of each author on this page. The names of the authors should only appear on the cover page. Please consult the *IGH* Style Sheet at the above URL for additional information on our unique parameters and footnote requirements.

Images for inclusion must be scanned at 300 or 600 DPI and should be attached to the email. Please indicate in the text where they should appear and write captions. If they are too large for emailing, please place in a Google Drive folder and share the link with your submission.

Iron Game History Thanks Our Patrons for Their Support of the Journal.

IRON GAME HISTORY PATRONS

Richard Abbott
Neil Ballard
Clarence Bass
Regis Becker
Laszlo Bencze
Bill Clark
Kevin Collins
Colin Duerden
Salvatore Franchino
Roger Gedney
Mike Graham
Howard Havener
Bill Henniger
Caity Henniger

Jarett Hulse
Walter Imahara
Daniel John
Irving Kirsch
Thomas Lee
Red Lerille
Robert McNall
Lou Mezzanote
H. Movaghar
Graham Noble
Ben Oldham
Kevin O'Rourke
David Pelto
Rick Perkins

Earl Riley
Sylvia Robinson
David Small
Mitchell Snow
Harold Thomas
Lou Tortorelli
Tom Townsend
Steve Wennerstrom

In Memory of:

Joe Assirati
Chris Dickerson
Pete George
Tommy Kono

John Leitgeb
James Lorimer
Jim Murray
Bill Pearl
Steve Reeves
Terry Robinson
Les Stockton
Pudgy Stockton
Dr. Al Thomas
Jack Woodson

THE ORIGINS OF MUSCLE BEACH: A RECONSIDERATION

BY JAN TODD
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

“Muscle Beach became an international icon, a paradigm of the larger than life Southern California lifestyle, and the larger than life heroes who dominated the stage.”

—Mark Sarvas, *Santa Monica News*¹

Released in 2009, the oversized, two-inch-thick, *Los Angeles: Portrait of a City*, contains more than five hundred photographs of life in the City of Angels. Only one image appears on the book’s front cover, however, and it shows a group of men, women, and children—all tan and fit—on a raised platform doing acrobatics at the original Muscle Beach in Santa Monica.² Off the platform an audience has gathered, and their eyes are nearly all focused on a small woman flying through an almost cloudless blue sky toward the safety of her partner’s arms. Some members of the audience are in street clothes, many more in beach wear, and while the vast majority of the audience and all the participants on the platform are white, several Black men are also present, watching the acrobatics demonstration which occurred nearly every weekend at Muscle Beach in the middle years of the twentieth century.

If historian Alan Trachtenberg is right and symbols serve a culture by “articulating in objective form the important ideas and feelings of that culture,” then the use of Frank Thomas’ photo as the cover for a book attempting to capture the essence and spirit of Los Angeles (LA) could not be more appropriate.³ The micro-second captured by the shutter’s closing is filled with movement and beauty. It reveals Muscle Beach as a cultural nexus where athleticism,

fun, fitness, daring, performance, family, and the beach merged. Greater than its disparate parts, the photo presents Muscle Beach as a site where physicality, sensuality, muscle, grace, and the idea of limitless possibility converged. Muscle Beach was unique. At Muscle Beach in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s well-conditioned bodies, amazing acrobatic tricks, and demonstrations of physical strength took center stage in a way never before seen in America. Although closed down by the City of Santa Monica in 1958, what started at Muscle Beach served to inspire the fitness revolution of the last half of the twentieth century and, it irrevocably linked the sun, sea, and sand of Southern California with the quest for physical perfection.

In the mid-1950s, when Thomas took his photo, the idea of Muscle Beach as a non-conventional outdoor gym and performance space home to hard-bodied men and women had already spread well beyond the United States. Hundreds of muscle-magazine and wire service stories, several newsreels, and the dozens of public appearances, acrobatic performances, and even the TV and film work by some of the early regulars at Muscle Beach made it so famous that it was admired and emulated as far away as chilly Aberdeen, in Scotland.⁴

Despite the importance of this patch of sand and the men and women who flexed, flipped, flew, and lifted there, surprisingly little attention has been paid to Muscle Beach by academic historians. Tolga Ozyurtcu has written the sole dissertation on Muscle Beach and neither that dissertation, nor the few other scholarly articles written to date, have paid much attention to how the original Muscle Beach began and why it evolved as it did.⁵ In order to fill at least part of this void, this essay attempts to provide a definitive “origin narrative” for what is now generally referred to as the “original” Muscle Beach—a distinction necessary because

Correspondence to: Dr. Jan Todd, NEZ 5.700, Dept. of Kinesiology & Health Education, Stark Center, University of Texas at Austin, 78712. Email: jan@starkcenter.org.



This Frank Thomas photograph, taken in 1954, was used on the cover of the 2009 pictorial history: *Los Angeles: Portrait of a City*. The photo perfectly captures the informal performance space where sand, sun, muscles and acrobatics became internationally famous as Muscle Beach.

three and a half miles south of the Santa Monica Pier, another beach-side exercise area favored by the bodybuilding fraternity later became known as “Muscle Beach-Venice.” What follows should not be considered as a complete history of Muscle Beach, but as an appetizer or *amuse-bouche* before the full meal to be prepared by future scholars.

BECOMING MUSCLE BEACH

In 1916, Santa Monica resident Charles Loeff, hoping to make his newly adopted city a more desirable tourist destination, opened a massive amusement pier immediately adjacent to the existing city pier.⁶ Loeff’s new “Santa Monica Pleasure Pier” featured carnival rides, a fun house, a bowling alley, a billiard parlor, and several restaurants.⁷ It also created space for fishing and walking, became a concert stage at times, and fundamentally changed the Santa Monica Beach experience. As had happened at Coney Island in New York, Loeff’s new pier proved to be a magnet for the building of restaurants, apartment buildings, and hotels in

its close proximity.⁸ Muscle Beach’s evolution was linked to the pier both because of the site’s proximity and because the pier proved to be an excellent vantage point for watching the action of the lifters and gymnasts on the mats and platform below it. Over the years, more than one new member found his or her way to Muscle Beach by being curious about the people they could see from the pier doing acrobatics. And, when Muscle Beach began hosting free public exhibitions on weekends, the amenities offered by the pier and the nearby cafes—where one could even buy Muscle Beach burgers—made this unusual outdoor gymnasium an attractive weekend destination even for those who never stepped on the platform.

The pier’s involvement in the founding of Muscle Beach is uncontested. Other parts of the story as to how Muscle Beach began have varied widely over the years. According to *Life* magazine in 1946, “Although uninhibited Californians had used the beach for years to display their muscles, it began to be invaded by professionals in 1931, when a Santa Monica high school

athletic coach, impressed with the local show of strength, installed playground equipment.”⁹ *Muscle Power* author Gordon L’Allemand had an entirely different take in a 1949 article, however. He claimed Muscle Beach started when Johnnie Collins and Barney Fry, “decided they wanted a place to lift weights, pose with bulging muscles . . . and toss their girlfriends around.”¹⁰ Another narrative (a variant on *Life’s* genesis myth) which is still common was first advanced by Joel Sayre in the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1957. According to Sayre, the prime movers who founded Muscle Beach were a “kindhearted widow” named Kate Giroux and a football coach named Vincent Schutt, who began organizing games for children at the beach around 1930.¹¹

Those who were actually there, however, tell a rather different story about how—and why—Muscle Beach began in the mid-1930s. According to Relna Brewer McRae, the impetus to gather on that hundred-yard stretch of sand just south of the pier and practice tumbling, acrobatics, and adagio was influenced by larger forces—the 1932 Olympic Games in neighboring Los Angeles; a massive 1933 earthquake centered just off the coast of Long Beach; and, of course, the shared need of many Americans to find ways to make ends meet during the Great Depression.¹²

Relna saw the Santa Monica Pier—and the sandy beach just south of it that would become known as Muscle Beach—for the first time in the summer of 1926. Her family was in the midst of a move to Northern California from Missouri, and they stayed for three months in Ocean Park, Santa Monica’s southern neighborhood. Six-year-old Relna and her nine-year-old brother, Paul, were entranced by the pier with its roller coaster and merry-go-round, and she spoke movingly 90 years later of how she loved playing in the sand and wading in the shallow surf under their mother’s watchful eye that summer.¹³ That same year, significantly, both the Los Angeles and Santa Monica school districts added gymnastics to their physical education curriculum and competitive sport offerings.¹⁴ This meant that when the Brewer family moved back to Santa Monica in August of 1929, 12-year-old Paul began learning rudimentary gymnastics and tumbling at John Adams Junior High School. When he entered Santa Monica High three years later he continued to be involved with gymnastics, even though the newly-built school had not yet built a boy’s gymnasium and the equipment they had to practice on was outdoors and consisted of only a set of parallel

bars, a horizontal ladder, and a simple horizontal bar.¹⁵ Although these were less than ideal training facilities, Paul and his friends remained committed to gymnastics and worked out frequently after school. “Paul didn’t have the right build for gymnastics,” Relna explained in 2016, “But he just loved tumbling and gymnastics, and later found he had better coaches at the beach than he ever did in the schools . . . but it was because of school that first he got interested, and his interest became my interest too.”¹⁶

Paul and Relna were not the only teens in Los Angeles interested in gymnastics in the early 1930s. As the City of Los Angeles began mobilizing to host the 1932 Olympic Games, the greater Los Angeles school gymnastics programs began to be viewed as potential sources of gymnasts for the American team.¹⁷ Part of the new enthusiasm for gymnastics was undoubtedly caused by the IOC’s decision to award individual medals in the sport for the first time. (Previous Olympic Games had only awarded team medals in gymnastics.) The Los Angeles Organizing Committee had requested the change and it had also asked to include three new gymnastics events in which Americans were expected to do well: Indian club swinging, rope climbing, and tumbling.¹⁸

As the Games drew closer, connections between the schools and the private Los Angeles Athletic Club (LAAC)—already heavily involved in helping prepare athletes for the Games—strengthened when LAAC athletic director, Al Treloar, let it be known that the club would train any high school boy who showed



Although Abbye “Pudgy” Stockton remains the most famous woman to have been part of the early days of Muscle Beach, Relna Brewer was the first female star at Muscle Beach. Brewer began going to the beach with her brother Paul after the 1933 earthquake damaged his high school.

real talent for the sport.¹⁹ In 1930, the LAAC also hosted the Men's National Gymnastics Championships and sold tickets through the schools at discount prices for students.²⁰ Student sales jumped significantly when the *Los Angeles Times* reported that two boys from Dallas, Texas—Roland Wolfe and Byrd White—would participate in the men's contest.²¹ Fourteen-year-old Roland Wolfe, emerged as a teen sensation from the 1930 Nationals. Wolfe easily won the tumbling competition although he was only 14, came back and took second in the nationals the following year; and then, at the 1932 Olympics, won the first and only gold medal ever awarded for tumbling, at age 17.²² Wolfe became a hero to most would-be gymnasts in the Los Angeles area—including Relna and Paul. Even though they did not attend the Games, the Brewers saw the newsreel released after the Games, which showed Wolfe's tumbling routine. "He inspired a lot of us," she reported, "and I remember us talking about the fact that he was a teenager like we were, and yet he had already done so much."²³

The final impetus for the founding of Muscle Beach arrived on 10 March 1933, when a massive earthquake shook Southern California for more than ten seconds. Centered just off the coast of Long Beach, the quake was followed by 34 aftershocks causing additional damage to many area buildings, including Santa Monica High School.²⁴ Santa Monica school officials closed several buildings at the High School be-

cause of quake damage, moved many classes into tents, and, not surprisingly, decided to hold off on its pre-earthquake plans to build a boy's gymnasium.²⁵ Harold Zinkin, whose memoir remains the best source on these events, wrote that the Long Beach earthquake was the precipitating event that caused Paul Brewer and some of his high school teammates to turn to the beach for a place to practice.²⁶ Relna agrees. It was not unusual, she explained in 2016, for Paul and some of his friends to horse around and practice some of the tricks he was learning in school when they would go to the beach before 1933. After the quake, however, when they could no longer practice at Santa Monica High School, he and several friends decided that the soft sand at the beach might be their best alternative. Paul and his friends found, however, that the sand got in their eyes when they tumbled. Relna cannot recall where they got it, or whose idea it was, but they acquired a long, heavy rug which they placed on the sand when they trained. According to Relna, the rug's arrival marked the real start of Muscle Beach.²⁷

THE MAGIC CARPET

The City of Santa Monica had dedicated an area just south of the pier as a children's playground in the 1920s, but in the early 1930s, with Works Progress Administration funding, they hired Kate Giroux as a playground supervisor.²⁸ In addition to swings, slides, a merry-go-round, and some child-sized gymnastics equipment,



In the beginning, Paul Brewer and his high school friends worked out at Muscle Beach on an old carpet they found, and its main function was to help keep the sand out of their eyes as they practiced gymnastics. As more young people began gathering at Muscle Beach and wanting to learn tricks, Paul and his friends added a tarp on another section of sand, and then, in 1935, after UCLA gymnastics coach Cecil Hollingsworth had also begun working at the adjacent playground area, the City of Santa Monica allowed them to build a low wooden platform, which is shown in this photograph. The platform turned Muscle Beach into a true performance space and soon people began gathering to watch the free shows.



While Pudgy Stockton's backbend and ability to support this "four-high" is amazing, she's actually not the most famous athlete in the photo. That designation belongs to the small girl seated on top, Patricia Keller McCormick, who grew up at Muscle Beach and was taught to lift weights by Relna Brewer while still a child. In an interview, McCormick told Jan Todd that she believed the weight training and gymnastics she did at Muscle Beach was enormously beneficial to her as a competitive diver. McCormick became one of the greatest women divers in history, winning both springboard and platform events at both the 1952 and 1956 Olympic Games.

Giroux kept bats, balls, nets, and horseshoes for pitching in an old piano box, which she padlocked at the end of each day.²⁹ As a playground supervisor in charge of small children, Giroux was not happy when Paul and his teen-aged friends began trying to do acrobatic stunts at the playground. Relna still takes umbrage when someone suggests Giroux was responsible for starting Muscle Beach and helping to get the first platform installed. In a letter to the *Smithsonian* following a 1998 article by Ken Chowder, Relna wrote, "Your article on Muscle Beach . . . was great and humorous, but not quite accurate. Muscle Beach was started in 1933 by Paul Brewer an acrobat and gymnast who wanted to practice on the sand. Katie Giroux . . . had no interest in the acrobats at all..."³⁰ In an in-person interview with the author in 1997 and again in 2016 on the phone, Relna claimed that Giroux's antipathy toward the teen-aged acrobats went well beyond disinterest. Giroux reportedly told Paul and his teammates, "We don't need or

want acrobats down here." Relna remembers her, in fact, as a "mean woman" who went to the city, demanded that acrobatics be banned at the city playground, and reportedly told the city fathers, "This is a children's playground; I want you to get those crazy acrobats off my beach."³¹

Giroux was also concerned, according to Relna, about the propriety of young men and women doing acrobatics together. The 1930s saw an enormous transformation in terms of what was acceptable as swimwear for both men and women. Both the 1932- and 1936-men's Olympic swimming teams, for example, wore one-piece suits with straps over their shoulders, even though simple trunks were beginning to gain ground. Women in many parts of the United States still wore knee length skirts over leggings when they entered the water in the mid-1920s, yet by the end of the 1930s the two-piece suit with bare midriff was increasingly accepted.³² At Muscle Beach, however, even in the photos from the mid-1930s, most men appeared shirtless and wearing simple trunks, while many of the young women, especially those who participated in acrobatics, wore two-piece bathing suits, with no attached legs, and without short skirts to supposedly preserve modesty. For Pudgy Stockton, who became the most famous of these pioneering women, the decision to wear a two-piece suit was based on the desire to be practical, not provocative, even though in Pudgy's case the distinction often had a lot to do with the eye of the beholder. In an interview in 2001, she explained that once she started acrobatics, she realized that one-piece swimsuits restricted her movement too much. "Since no one sold two-piece swim suits at that time," she recalled, "and I was hard to fit in any case, my mother took apart one of my older brassieres and used it to make a pattern. She made all my suits for me in the early days."³³ Relna remembers the exposed flesh of the Muscle Beach gang as a cause of concern for Giroux. "She didn't like us wearing bathing suits all the time," Relna explained, "and I think she didn't like it when the men lifted us and touched our legs and bottoms. She actually told me once that she thought what we were doing was immoral."³⁴

While it was not a baseball diamond in a field of corn, the rug on the sand just south of the pier did seem to have some sort of magic, for almost as soon as it was put in place other Los Angeles teens began showing up and wanting to participate. One of the first to arrive was

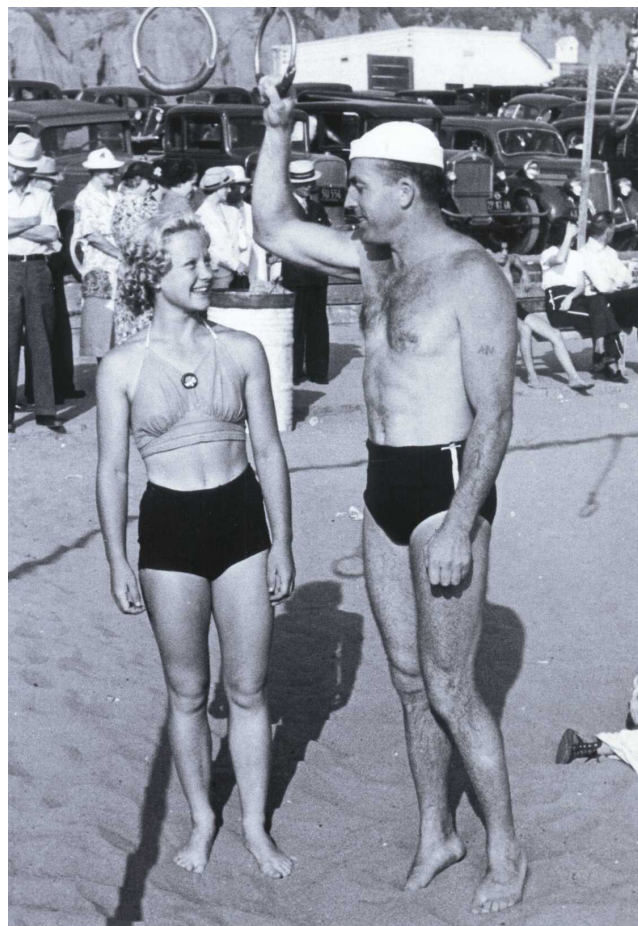
John Kornoff.³⁵ Kornoff was only 13 when he saw Brewer and a few other teens practicing on the rug, but after wandering over and meeting the group, Kornoff came to the beach as often as he could. According to Zinkin, Kornoff could perform tricks while he was in junior high school that no one at Muscle Beach had yet imagined. He was twice named best high school gymnast in the city of Los Angeles and received a football scholarship at Washington State University starting in 1939.³⁶

Randall (Ran) Hall also showed up that summer along with the professional acrobat, Johnnie Collins, who became the first unofficial coach at Muscle Beach. Hall had attended Hollywood High where his gymnastics skills brought him an invitation to train at the LAAC in 1931 as a prospective Olympic team member. Although Hall failed to make the Olympic squad, he became friends through the LAAC with a number of professional acrobats who trained there, including the older Collins. Hall and Collins and several other professional acrobats and pro wrestlers sometimes met for outdoor training sessions at the Crystal Pier in Ocean Park. However, after discovering the Brewers and their friends practicing at Muscle Beach in 1933, Collins and Hall became Muscle Beach regulars and Collins, in particular, began teaching the young teens more advanced acrobatics and adagio and encouraging them to think about becoming performers rather than competitive gymnasts.³⁷ Adagio is a form of partner acrobatics—often set to music—in which one or more acrobats are supported overhead while performing feats of flexibility or lifting another human. Adagio, hand balancing, and acrobatics are terms used somewhat interchangeably to describe the kinds of physical activities at early Muscle Beach where the building of human pyramids, hand to hand balancing, throwing (or catapulting using a teeter board) women through the air, and many other circus-level acrobatic stunts made Muscle Beach a mecca for photographers and “an attraction” that was beginning to draw an audience.³⁸

With Collins attending and happy to share his knowledge, interest in the idea of becoming professional acrobats mushroomed, and by the end of the summer there were about twenty men and boys—and Relna—regularly meeting at the playground.³⁹ One of the new group who found Muscle Beach that summer was a mid-twenties bus mechanic named Al Niederman, who worked for the City of Santa Monica. Niederman had also been introduced

to gymnastics in the public schools and he and Paul became the unofficial leaders of Muscle Beach in its first years.⁴⁰ It was Brewer and Niederman, for example, who decided to acquire a large tarp in 1934 and claim more of the playground for their training sessions as numbers continued to grow. And it was Niederman, with his carpentry and welding skills, who built most of the original gymnastics equipment as the Beach evolved.⁴¹

In 1935, Cecil C. Hollingsworth, then the gymnastics coach at The University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), was hired with WPA funds to teach children’s gymnastics classes during the summer.⁴² Having Hollingsworth involved with the gymnastics group was helpful on several levels. Kate Giroux liked having him around to keep eye on the teenagers; several of his UCLA gymnasts also began coming to the beach because Hollingsworth was there;



Relna Brewer wears one of the first two-piece bathing suits ever seen in America as she talks with master craftsman, Al Niederman underneath the gymnastics rings that he built at Muscle Beach. Niederman was a Santa Monica city bus driver and he designed, welded, and helped install the original rings, parallel bars and other adult gymnastics equipment that was added to Muscle Beach in 1935.



Over the years, the young men and women who attended Muscle Beach became incredibly adept at acrobatics. Pudgy Stockton's archive at the Stark Center, contains dozens of photos such as this one showing the Muscle Beach Gang, as they came to be known, in a variety of spontaneous demonstrations of strength and grace. In these five "two-highs," Pudgy and her husband Les Stockton, are the second couple from the left; Gloria Smith is the first top from the left; and Deforrest Most is the third bottom from the left.

and, most importantly, his presence at Muscle Beach gave Brewer and Niederman additional ammunition when they went back to the city and requested permission to build a small platform, flying rings, and parallel bars at the playground.⁴³ Although the same request had been turned down the previous year, this time the City agreed as long as Niederman did the welding and directed the construction of the platform. The small platform they built was only three feet by twelve feet and stood barely an inch or so above the ground. However, it was a huge improvement over the carpet and tarp, and when combined with the new 25-foot-tall set of rings and Niederman's parallel bars, an adult could at last practice real gymnastics on the beach.⁴⁴

By 1938, the number of people involved with Muscle Beach had risen to about 50 regulars and the group's training sessions, particularly on the weekends, had begun to attract

large crowds. Reporter Joseph Fike, trying to make sense of the rapid growth in the popularity of sport gymnastics in Southern California for the *Los Angeles Times*, wrote in 1938, "It is not altogether a coincidence that local interest in tumbling and apparatus work has grown as the playground has grown until the Los Angeles area today is probably the national center for this type of activity."⁴⁵ Fike believed this achievement was no accident and it was caused by the combination of the Los Angeles City Schools gymnastics program and what was happening at Muscle Beach where annual attendance at the Santa Monica Playground had jumped from approximately 3500 visitors in 1930, to 1.8 million individuals by 1937.⁴⁶

Despite this enormous growth, participation on the platform at Muscle Beach was still largely a white phenomenon. Historian Alison Rose Jefferson suggests that racial segregation was the norm on most California



This photo should be titled “Barbelles with Barbells,” as these Muscle Beach regulars are among the women most well-known for incorporating barbell exercises into their time at the beach. Les Stockton was the first person to bring barbells to Muscle Beach and for a time, he and his friends would carry them from his car out onto a hard spot in the sand so they could workout. Left to right are: Relna Brewer McRae, Vera Fried, Alyce Yarick, Pudgy Stockton and Lisle de Lameter.

beaches into the 1960s despite the fact that the California courts had upheld the rights of African Americans to use all beaches in California in 1927. According to Jefferson, African Americans, like other Angelinos, went to the beach in Santa Monica, but they normally gathered at a two-block-long stretch of sand at the end of Pico Boulevard in Ocean Park that was derogatorily called the “Inkwell.”⁴⁷ Although the Muscle Beach regulars welcomed Olympic Weightlifting Champion John Davis to the platform when he visited, there is no record of other Black men or women participating in the activities at the original Muscle Beach.⁴⁸ By the 1950s, when men’s bodybuilding contests began being held as part of Beach festivities on the Fourth of July, a few African-American men participated in those competitions but they were not “regulars” at Muscle Beach.⁴⁹

For most women, inclusion in the activities at Muscle Beach did not begin with learning gymnastics in school. There were no high school gymnastics programs for girls in the 1930s, the 1932 Olympics did not include women’s gymnastics, and the only report in the *LA Times* of women involved with gymnastics prior

to the beginning of Muscle Beach is coverage of a 1908 AAU tournament in which the girls’ club assisted and “augmented” the boy’s team as it competed.⁵⁰

Abbye “Pudgy” Stockton, for example, by far the most famous woman associated with Muscle Beach, had no experience with acrobatics until her steady boyfriend Les Stockton cajoled her into beginning to train to help her lose weight.⁵¹ She began working out about two years after her 1935 graduation from Santa Monica High School, and at first Stockton would only exercise in the privacy of her bedroom. After losing twenty pounds through a combination of calisthenics, dieting, and light dumbbell training, Pudgy—a nickname her father gave her when she was a small child—agreed to accompany Les to Muscle Beach now that she felt comfortable being seen in a bathing suit. Naturally reserved and somewhat shy, Stockton remembers being overwhelmed at first by the atmosphere at Muscle Beach. Knowing she had no gymnastics background, Stockton said she just tried to stay out of the way in the beginning and began her training by learning to do a handstand. In an autobiographical profile

from 1947, Pudgy described her mastery of the handstand as “the main turning point of my life, although at that time I didn’t realize it.”⁵² Years later, Pudgy explained that it took some time for her to get strong enough to hold herself in the handstand position but being regarded as part of the larger community at Muscle Beach had been her inspiration. Said Pudgy, “We may have been learning our acrobatics from each other, but we still wanted to do things perfectly—to make the movements impressive and beautiful . . . Everyone else was so good, I felt I had to be perfect, too.”⁵³

Relna Brewer, two years younger than Pudgy, was the first real female star of Muscle Beach and, like Pudgy, received a great deal of publicity before she married a fellow Muscle Beach regular, Gordon McRae, and moved away during World War II. Petite, blonde, and looking as if she was always just on the edge of mischief, Relna was 14 when she began tagging along with Paul to Muscle Beach where, rather than being seen as the nuisance “kid sister,” she became everyone’s favorite adagio partner and grew to become a woman who relished being strong and a focus of the public’s gaze. Like many of the young people who came to the Beach during the Depression, Relna dreamed of a career in show business, and was given permission by her mother to take lessons from an older, ex-circus acrobat named Barney Fry, who ran a gym on the second floor of the Elks Lodge in Ocean Park. Fry became a major influence in Relna’s life and taught her jiu jitsu, wrestling, wire walking, and the standard strongman tricks of bending iron bars, tearing phone books, and lifting weights. Strong, agile, and a bit of a showoff, Relna admits she loved the attention her participation in these new activities brought her. Although she was still a teenager, Fry began acting as her manager/publicist and soon she was appearing in variety benefits and other shows where she did strength stunts, performed acrobatics, and often finished by wrestling men much larger than herself. At 5’3” and 115 pounds, with a trim, lithe figure, Relna challenged popular conceptions about strength and femininity and, as would also be the case for Pudgy Stockton, it was her combination of strength, a shapely physique, and facial beauty that sold photographs of her to newspapers and muscle magazines. Often referred to as the “Strongest Girl in America” in the early days of Muscle Beach, Relna’s exploits were reported regularly by wire services and appeared as far away as Brazil.⁵⁴



Barney Fry poses with Edna Rivers in this photo taken at Muscle Beach in the late 1940s. Fry ran a gym near the beach and particularly worked with women who wanted to go into show business. He taught Relna Brewer to wrestle and to do strength stunts such as phone book tearing and iron bending that made her a favorite with photographers and helped her find work as a film extra. Rivers was known as one of the strongest women at Muscle Beach and also did stunt work to help support herself.

MUSCLE BEACH COMES OF AGE

The metamorphosis of Muscle Beach from teen hangout/sport camp to the cultural phenomenon that became known around the world began around 1938. It started with the Works Progress Administration’s willingness to help build a much larger platform that stood three feet off the ground and was ten feet wide and forty feet long.⁵⁵ The new platform with its nearby bleachers was no longer merely a practice space. It was clearly a stage—calling for an audience—and even higher levels of professionalism.⁵⁶ Like the rug and the small platform, the big stage at Muscle Beach attracted yet more professional acrobats, and would-be acrobats, so that by 1940 there were about 50 regulars at Muscle Beach and an increasing number of them supported themselves away from Muscle Beach as acrobatic entertainers or stunt performers in the film industry. A 1947 article discussing Muscle Beach as a desirable site for professional photography estimated that as many as 50 different acrobatic acts had emerged from Muscle Beach in just 13 years.⁵⁷

Another transformational figure at Muscle Beach was Canadian Russell (Russ) Saunders, a former diving and gymnastics champion from Winnipeg, Canada, who came to visit his

sister in Los Angeles in late 1939 and then never left. Saunders had heard of Muscle Beach before he arrived, but after meeting the people there and seeing how much fun they were having, he decided to find a way to stay. As he was debating whether to enroll in college and continue as a competitive diver, Saunders was offered a chance to play an acrobat in a film starring John Barrymore. That job led to another film job, and that to the next, so that by the time he retired, Saunders had worked as a stunt man in more than one hundred feature films, and he had doubled for nearly all of Hollywood's leading men.⁵⁸ The likeable Canadian became the unacknowledged leader of the acrobatic side of Muscle Beach. Saun-

der's acrobatic skills surpassed everyone else's at Muscle Beach. However, he was not a fan of weightlifting. When asked, his standard reply was always to say he would rather lift girls than weights.⁵⁹

Weight training was not fully part of the Muscle Beach scene until the late 1930s. Les Stockton, who married Pudgy in 1941, was among the first to bring weights to the beach but once he started, others followed his iron-booted footsteps. Stockton began weight training at UCLA and became a convert when he gained twenty solid pounds in six months.⁶⁰ The added muscle significantly helped his gymnastics and so Les began proselytizing about the benefits of the weight training to all who would listen. Soon most of the men and a surprisingly large number of women at Muscle Beach began incorporating weight training in their workouts and a separate, and lower platform with a locking storage box was created for the activity.⁶¹

Although it would be after World War



Although diminutive, both Relna Brewer and Pudgy Stockton—who were both under 5'3" in height and weighed 110-115 pounds in the early years—were very strong, as can be seen in this photo that appeared in newspapers across America. Photographers showed up at Muscle Beach frequently and often asked Pudgy and Relna to do something together and to “demonstrate” their femininity. On the same day that this shot was taken, they also posed while combing their hair and applying makeup. Sadly, modern women athletes are often asked to “demonstrate” their femininity too.

II before bodybuilding developed into a major activity at the Beach, the group still took pride in 1941 when Harold Zinkin—one of their regulars—was named the first Mr. California at a contest organized by Vic Tanny.⁶² Vic Tanny and his younger brother, Armand, were part of the Muscle Beach family, yet both were always more interested in weight training than they were in acrobatics. When he first arrived in Los Angeles to attend UCLA in 1939, Armand Tanny had his eye on making the 1940 Olympic team as a weightlifter, a dream he had to give up when the 1940 Games were cancelled. As for Vic, he moved to Santa Monica the following year and opened a small gym close to Muscle Beach.⁶³ To promote the gym, Vic began or-

ganizing strength contests and bodybuilding shows, and even large-scale physical culture variety shows. As Vic's gym business expanded, and as bodybuilding itself became more popular in the 1940s, the Tanny connection brought more lifters and bodybuilders to the Beach. By 1955 when the City required the Muscle Beach weightlifters to form an official club so they could purchase insurance in case of accidents, more than one hundred members signed up.⁶⁴

In 1947, a new era began at Muscle Beach with the introduction of the Mr. and Miss Muscle Beach contests. The idea for the contests came from DeForest “Moe” Most, another former LA high school gymnast, who was named playground supervisor in 1947.⁶⁵ Most wanted the new physique contests to serve as the centerpiece of special holiday extravaganzas on the Fourth of July and Labor Day that would showcase the Muscle Beach regulars. Although Most had envisioned both the Junior and Senior Mr. Muscle Beach contests as small, local events, an army of photographers and even a newsreel

crew showed up for the first one on 4 July 1947.⁶⁶

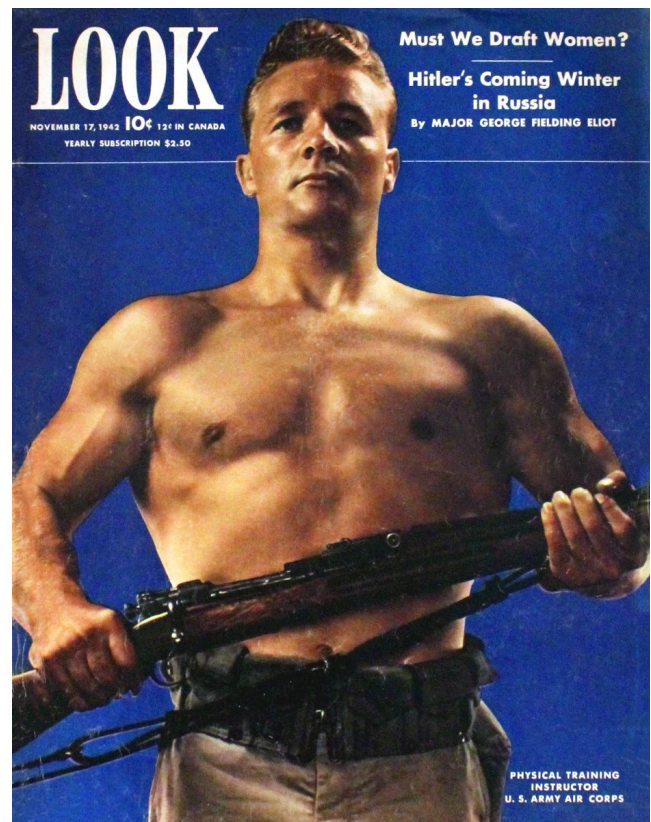
For the 1947 Miss Muscle Beach contest on Labor Day, Moe had invited neighboring towns to send a representative to the contest which resulted in some of the contestants being facially pretty but not necessarily in the best physical condition. The following year, Most restricted the contest to women connected to Muscle Beach and this produced a more fit-looking group.⁶⁷ Although referred to as a “beauty contest,” winning the Miss Muscle Beach title was predicated on the possession of a certain type of beauty. It was a “beauty-muscle” contest, wrote one journalist, and to win you needed to “pour beauty and biceps into the same bathing suit.”⁶⁸

Most’s decision to begin sponsoring physique contests was part of a post-War shift that made the appearance of the body and the ability to lift heavy weights increasingly important to the habitués of Muscle Beach. During World War II, many of the young men involved with Muscle Beach had enlisted in the various armed forces, where their muscular physiques and exceptional fitness caused some of them to be tapped as physical training instructors. Les Stockton, Harold Zinkin, Jack LaLanne, George Redpath, Bert Goodrich, and John Kornoff for example, all spent part of their war years helping new recruits get quickly into shape via barbell training.⁶⁹ The men of Muscle Beach introduced thousands of other men to the benefits of weight training and demonstrated that weight training did not make one “musclebound” as was commonly believed in this era. The military Beach bunch also helped build the mystique of Muscle Beach with their tales of the beauty, camaraderie, and great fun to be had just south of the Santa Monica pier.⁷⁰ The national impact of these early barbell advocates was further heightened when, on 17 November 1942, a full-color photograph of a formidable looking Johnny Kornoff, appeared on the cover of *LOOK* magazine. Harold Zinkin argued in his memoir that the *LOOK* cover marked a watershed moment in America’s understanding of physical fitness. “Shirtless, muscles rippling, and obviously fit to fight . . . Kornoff depicted the American ideal,” Zinkin wrote. “I believe that his photo on *LOOK*’s cover was the beginning of a change of attitude regarding fitness, an attitude that culminated years later in President John F. Kennedy’s focus on fitness, which even then seemed revolutionary.”⁷¹

Whether Kornoff’s cover had the impact Zinkin imagined is not clear. However, both

during and after the war dozens of servicemen stopped in Santa Monica on their way to and from the Pacific Theater, and some of them, including future Mr. Americas Steve Reeves and George Eiferman, decided to avail themselves of the military severance package of \$20.00 a week for 52 weeks and moved to Santa Monica so they could be part of Muscle Beach.⁷² The arrival of Reeves in the same year as the first Mr. Muscle Beach contest presaged a discernable rise in the interest paid to bodybuilding and heavy weight training at Muscle Beach.

Acrobatics did not suddenly disappear, of course, but a slow transformation was underway, a transformation precipitated by the fact that the original founders had grown older, married, begun careers, and in some cases no longer lived close to Santa Monica. The shift in emphasis was accelerated by specialized magazines like Bob Hoffman’s *Strength & Health* and Joe Weider’s *Your Physique* and *Muscle Power* that gave much more ink to competitive weightlifters and bodybuilders than they



Most of the Muscle Beach men served during World War II and Johnny Kornoff was chosen to exemplify all members of the military on the cover of *LOOK* magazine on 17 November 1942. Harold Zinkin argues in his book *Remembering Muscle Beach: Where Hard Bodies Began: Photographs and Memories*, that Kornoff’s muscular torso had a major impact on the growing acceptance of weight training after World War II.

did to pyramid builders in the 1940s and 1950s.⁷³ Although many of the original gang returned from time to time, and some—like Les and Pudgy Stockton, Moe Most, Paula Boelsems, and Russ Saunders—continued to live in Santa Monica and frequent the Beach, the influx of new people, new interests, and new forms of media, meant the sand on Muscle Beach had begun to shift.

In the 1950s the number of bodybuilders and competitive weightlifters associated with Muscle Beach continued to rise. Olympic champion Frank Spellman, for example, arrived in 1953 and took an apartment on the second floor of a building overlooking Muscle Beach.⁷⁴ Several years later, Isaac Berger, the reigning Olympic featherweight champion, and 1956 Olympic silver medalist, David Sheppard, moved west as well.⁷⁵ However, the increasing number of lifters, bodybuilders, and even pro wrestlers then associated with Muscle Beach began to concern some Santa Monica city fathers who viewed this generation of athletes and their bohemian lifestyle as undesirable. Tolga Ozyurtcu has written an excellent analysis of the various political, social, and commercial

forces that converged in 1958 to kill the original Muscle Beach. But the finger that pulled the trigger was Isaac Berger's and Dave Sheppard's involvement in a rape case involving two underage Black girls.⁷⁶ As Ozyurtcu demonstrates, the rape charges levied at Berger, Sheppard, and several of their male friends provided the city with a convenient "reason" to bring in bulldozers under cover of darkness—with no public notice or public hearing—and demolish the equipment at Muscle Beach. Although neither Sheppard nor Berger were found guilty of anything, their case became a tipping point for the raising of broader concerns about what some perceived as a new and inappropriately permissive culture evolving at Muscle Beach—a culture tolerant of out-of-wedlock sex, the use of marijuana, and perhaps even homosexuality. As Ozyurtcu ably demonstrates, the end of the original Muscle Beach is a far more complicated story than space permits here, but I would add that the increasingly prominent identification of weightlifting and bodybuilding with Muscle Beach in the 1950s was a precipitating factor. Consider the words of Mayor Russell K. Hart, who told the *Los Angeles Times* in 1959,



Muscle Beach at play. The rings and adult equipment built by Al Niederman changed Muscle Beach and made it a Mecca for those who wanted to learn acrobatics and simply have fun.

that the city planned to strictly enforce the new regulations they'd established for Santa Monica Beach so that "the weightlifters will go someplace else and the name Muscle Beach will be forgotten."⁷⁷

CONCLUSION:

Mayor Hart did not get his wish. Today, just south of the Santa Monica Pier, close to the sidewalk, is a sign which reads, "The Original Location of Muscle Beach . . . The Birthplace of the Physical Fitness Boom of the Twentieth Century."⁷⁸ There is, admittedly, no weightlifting there, but a large "weight pit" and performance space at Venice Beach is proud to be known as Muscle Beach-Venice, and that space stays firmly in the public's eye because of its close connections to bodybuilder and former California governor, Arnold Schwarzenegger.⁷⁹ Beyond Venice, however, the original Muscle Beach lives on in the hearts and imaginations of old and new lifters alike who, through the vast number of photos on the internet, continue to be inspired by what once was.

What the mayor didn't understand was that Muscle Beach wasn't so much about the space as it was about the symbolic importance of the able-bodied men and women who inhabited that space. Like the statues of ancient Greece, photographs of the men and women of Muscle Beach continue to be reinterpreted by new generations of viewers who read them as models for physical perfection and as blueprints for personal transformation. The iconic bodies produced at Muscle Beach, and the world-wide publicity it and its habitués received, created a paradigm for fitness—muscular, tanned, powerful—and every bit as relevant to the CrossFit/functional training generation as it was when the original Muscle Beach gang showed the world how much fun it was to be fit.

**An earlier version of this article appeared as: Jan Todd, "The Halcyon Days of Muscle Beach: An Origin Story," Sport in Los Angeles (Little Rock: University of Arkansas Press, 2017).*

NOTES

1. Mark Sarvas, "Muscle Beach Getting Back in Shape," *Santa Monica News*, 1 July 1988, 1.
2. Photo by Frank J. Thomas, attributed to 1954. Jim Heimann and Kevin Starr, eds., *Los Angeles: Portrait of a City* (Cologne, Germany: Taschen, 2009), cover.
3. Allen Trachtenberg, *Brooklyn Bridge: Fact and Symbol* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), ix.
4. David Webster, "Muscle Beach Comes to Aberdeen," *Health & Strength*, 30 September 1954, 9.
5. Academic scholarship on Muscle Beach remains limited to a single dissertation: Tolga Ozyurtcu, "Flex Marks the Spot: Histories

- of Muscle Beach," (PhD diss., University of Texas at Austin, 2014), and a small number of articles: Tolga Ozyurtcu and Jan Todd, "Critical Mass: Oral History, Innovation Theory, and the Fitness Legacy of The Muscle Beach Scene," *International Journal of the History of Sport* 37, no. 16 (2020): 1696-1714; Jan Todd and Michael O'Brien, "Breaking the Physique Barrier: Steve Reeves and the Promotion of Hercules," *Iron Game History: The Journal of Physical Culture* 12, no. 4 (August 2014): 8-29; Jan Todd and Terry Todd, "Steve Reeves: The Last Interview," *Iron Game History: The Journal of Physical Culture* 6, no. 4 (December 2000): 1-14; and Jan Todd, "The Legacy of Pudgy Stockton," *Iron Game History: The Journal of Physical Culture* 2, no. 1 (January 1992): 5-7; and Elsa Devienne, "Urban Renewal by the Sea: Reinventing the Beach for the Suburban Age in Postwar Los Angeles," *Journal of Urban History* 45, no.1 (January 2019): 99-125. Devienne, who lives in Paris, has also published in French a book on environmental issues related to California beaches entitled: *The Sand Rush: An Environmental History of Twentieth-Century Los Angeles Beaches (La ruée vers le sable: Une histoire environnementale des plages de Los Angeles au XXe siècle)* (Paris: Sorbonne Editions, 2020).
6. Fred E. Basten, *Santa Monica Bay: The First 100 Years* (Los Angeles: Douglas West Publishing, 1974), 68-73, 76-81; Elizabeth Van Steenwyck, *Let's Go to the Beach, A History of Sun and Fun by the Sea* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2001), 78-79, 89-92.
 7. James Harris, *Santa Monica Pier: A Century on the Last Great Pleasure Pier* (Santa Monica: Santa Monica Pier Restoration Committee, 2009), 65-66.
 8. *Ibid*, 33-38.
 9. "Speaking of Pictures ... Muscle Flexers Show Off Weekly at California Beach," *Life*, August 1946: 14-16.
 10. Gordon L'Allemand, "Muscle Beach," *Muscle Power* 7, no. 5 (April 1949): 30.
 11. Joel Sayre, "The Body Worshipers of Muscle Beach," *Saturday Evening Post*, 25 May 1957, 34-35. Sayre's version was retold in a *Smithsonian* retrospective on Muscle Beach in 1998. See: Ken Chowder, "Muscle Beach," *The Smithsonian* 29 (1 November 1998): 124-137.
 12. Jan Todd, telephone interview with Relna Brewer McRae, 20 February 2016.
 13. Paul Brewer, "Muscle Beach Memories: Paul Brewer and Relna (Brewer) McRae," *Santa Monica Muscle Beach Newsletter* 4 (Spring 1990), 1-2.
 14. The two districts are now combined in the Los Angeles Unified School District. Gary Klein, "The Best, Bar None," *Los Angeles Times*, 30 December 1999.
 15. Brewer, "Muscle Beach Memories," 1; see also: Harold Zinkin and Bonnie Hearn, *Remembering Muscle Beach: Where Hard Bodies Began, Photographs and Memories* (Santa Monica: Angel City Press, 1999), 18.
 16. McRae Interview, 20 February 2016.
 17. At the 1932 Olympics, American athletes won all nine medals in these new events. Frank Roche, "Los Angeles is Athlete's Mecca: Cream of Nation Head Here for Pre-Olympic Meets," *Los Angeles Times*, 8 February 1931, F-5; and "Gymnastics," *Games of the 10th Olympiad Los Angeles; 1932: Official Report* (10th Olympiad Committee, 1933): 653-654.
 18. "Gymnastics," *Games of the 10th Olympiad*; Roy E. Moore, "Report of the Manager of the American Olympic Gymnastics Team," *Report of the American Olympic Committee* (New York: American Olympic Committee, 1932), 164.
 19. Roche, "Los Angeles is Athlete's Mecca," and Larry Black, "Heroes Without Press Agents," *Los Angeles Times*, 24 December 1939, F-6.
 20. "Texas Youngsters Arrive for National Gym Meet at Olympics Next Friday," *Los Angeles Times*, 3 June 1930, A 17; Jim Thurman, 10; Joseph Fike, "Athletes Aren't Always Show-Offs!" *Los Angeles Times Sunday Magazine*, 7 August 1938, 9-10.
 21. "National Gymnastic Tourney on Tonight: Olympic Stars Show Wares," *Los Angeles Times*, 6 June 1930, A-13.

22. Nancy Flake, "Conroe Man's Life One for the Record Books," *The Courier of Montgomery County* (Texas), 16 November 2009, 14.
23. McRae Interview, 20 February 2016. The Wolfe newsreel does not appear in any film index searched by the author. To view go to: <http://www.topendsports.com/videos/76/sports/unusual/olympic-tumbler-rowland-wolfe/>.
24. Heimann and Starr, eds., *Los Angeles: Portrait of a City*, 183.
25. "Schools at Beach to be Remodeled: Santa Monica Closes Two Buildings and Will Make Structures Quakeproof," *Los Angeles Times*, 10 May 1933, 10.
26. Zinkin, *Remembering Muscle Beach*, 18; McRae Interview, 20 February 2016.
27. McRae Interview, 20 February 2016.
28. Rose, *Muscle Beach*, 23-25; Jan Todd Interview with Relna McRae, 24 October 1997; Zinkin, *Remembering Muscle Beach*, 21-22.
29. Sayre, "The Body Worshippers," *Saturday Evening Post*, 140.
30. Relna Brewer McRae to "Smithsonian Letters Editor," 1 February 1999, Xerox copy in author's collection.
31. McRae Interview, 24 October 1997; McRae Interview, 20 February 2016; and Zinkin, *Remembering Muscle Beach*, 23.
32. Catherine Horwood, "Girls Who Arouse Dangerous Passions," *Women's History Review* 9, no. 4 (2000): 653-673; Angela Latham, "Packaging Woman: The Concurrent Rise of Beauty Pageants, Public Bathing, and Other Performances of Female 'Nudity,'" *Journal of Popular Culture* 19 (Winter 1995): 149-167.
33. Jan Todd Interview with Abbye (Pudgy) Stockton, 10 May 2001.
34. McRae Interview, 20 February 2016.
35. Zinkin, *Remembering Muscle Beach*, 27-28.
36. *Ibid.*, 43; "Notable Athletic Alumni of the 1930s," Roosevelt High School website, viewed at: https://roosevelths-laused-a.school-loop.com/cms/page_view?d=x&piid=&vpid=1441094935558.
37. McRae Interview, 20 February 2016.
38. The modern sport of acrobatic gymnastics, now part of the World Games, is reminiscent of the kinds of adagio that happened regularly at Muscle Beach. See: "History of Acrobatic Gymnastics," at: <https://usagym.org/pages/index.html>.
39. Johnnie Collins's real last name was Kulikoff. Zinkin, *Remembering Muscle Beach*, 5, 39. See also Rose, *Muscle Beach*, 22-23. Oral history interview by Christine Lazzaretto with Paula Unger Boelsems, 7 July 2010, City of Santa Monica Beach Stories Initiative, typescript in author's collection.
40. Zinkin, *Remembering Muscle Beach*, 20-21, 27; McRae Interview, 20 February 2016.
41. McRae Interview, 20 February 2016.
42. Boelsems Interview; see also: Betsy Goldman, "Female Gymnast Once Flew Through the Air," *Argonaut Online*, 10 June 2009.
43. McRae Interview, 20 February 2016.
44. Paul Brewer, "Muscle Beach Memories," 1; Zinkin, *Remembering Muscle Beach*, 21.
45. Fike, "Athletes," 10.
46. *Ibid.*, 9.
47. Allison Rose Jefferson, "African American Leisure Space in Santa Monica: The Beach Sometimes Known as the 'Inkwell,'" *Southern California Quarterly* 91, no. 2 (Summer 2009): 155-189.
48. African-American John Davis lived in northern California for a time and lifted in at least one of the Muscle Beach holiday exhibitions based on surviving photographs. The Abbye (Pudgy) and Les Stockton Papers, H.J. Lutchter Stark Center for Physical Culture & Sports, The University of Texas at Austin.
49. Ken Johnson, an African American bodybuilder placed second in the 1951 Junior Mr. Muscle Beach contest, for example, while Leroy Williams was second in the men's contest in 1952. George Bruce, "Ken Cameron—Mr. Muscle Beach 1951," *Strength & Health*, December 1951: 10-11; Eugene Hanson, "Mr. Muscle Beach," *Muscle Power*, December 1952: 18-21.
50. "Gym Clubs to Travel North: L.A. High and 'Poly' Combined Teams to Leave this Week," *Los Angeles Times*, 5 April 1908, VIII-7.
51. Todd, "The Legacy of Pudgy Stockton," 6.
52. Pudgy Stockton, "Abbye (Pudgy) Stockton," unpublished typescript autobiography (1947), author's collection, 2.
53. Jan Todd Interview with Abbye (Pudgy) Stockton, 28 September 1991.
54. A full-page wire service article on Relna titled "Strong Women Aren't Freaks," with four photos appeared in many American papers in 1939 and was then translated and printed in Brazil. See: "Quando A Beleza Acompanha O Vigor," *Journal do Brazil*, 9 July 1939, Sec. 2; and Helen Welshiemer, "Strong Women Aren't Freaks," *The Salt Lake Tribune*, 7 May 1939.
55. Zinkin, *Remembering Muscle Beach*, 26-27.
56. The WPA's investment in the new platform was viewed as part of an upgrade of the entire beach area. The following year they built the long, wide sidewalk that runs all the way to Venice and resurfaced the pier. Charles Epting, "Santa Monica's Top Five Landmarks from this Era," *Santa Monica Mirror*, 4 November 2014.
57. Tom Barnett, "Muscle Beach," *U.S. Camera*, August 1947: 28.
58. Myrna Oliver, "Russell Saunders; Muscle Beach Acrobat, Stunt Double in More than 100 Movies," *Los Angeles Times*, 6 June 2001, B8.
59. Douglas Martin, "Russell M. Saunders, Stuntman in Movies is Dead at 82," *New York Times*, 17 June 2001, 45.
60. Abbye Stockton, "Glorious Health-Vitality Building," *New Physical Culture* 91, no. 6 (June 1947): 29.
61. Jan Todd Interview with Les Stockton, 28 September 1991.
62. Mary Rourke, "Harold Zinkin, 82, Muscle Beach Pioneer Invented Weight Machine," *Los Angeles Times*, 24 September 2004.
63. "Vic Tanny: America's Greatest Physical Educator," *Wisdom* 37 (May 1961): 3-6.
64. Rose, *Muscle Beach*, 127, and Transcript of Interview with Armand Tanny, June 1999, author's collection; see also Todd and Todd, "Steve Reeves," 5.
65. Valerie J. Nelson, "Deforrest 'Moe' Most, 89; Gymnast was Unofficial Ringmaster at Muscle Beach," *Los Angeles Times*, 8 September 2006.
66. Earle Liederman, "Mr. Muscle Beach," *Muscle Power* 3, no. 6 (November 1947): 10-11; McRae Interview, 20 February 2016.
67. Eugene M. Hanson, "Outdoor Health Show: Miss Muscle Beach 1948," *Muscle Power* 7, no. 2 (January 1949): 12.
68. "Bevy of Brawny Beauties to Vie for 'Miss Muscle Beach' Title," *Evening Outlook*, 28 August 1947, 1.
69. Les Stockton Interview, 28 September 1991; Zinkin, *Remembering Muscle Beach*, 63-68; see also "This and That," Washington State Gymnastics History, viewed at: www.wagymnasticshistory.com/history/thisandthat.html; and Al Thomas, "George Redpath: A Life in the Balance," *Iron Game History* 3, no. 1 (September 1993): 15-17.
70. Hanson, "Outdoor Health Show," 39.
71. Photo of John Kornoff by Leo Aarons, *LOOK* 6, no. 23 (17 November 1942): cover; Zinkin, *Remembering Muscle Beach*, 68-70.
72. Todd and Todd, "Steve Reeves," 5.
73. Rose, *Muscle Beach*, 119-123.
74. Jim Seip, "For 1948 Olympics, Gold Medal Dream Started in York," *York Daily Record*, 4 August 2012.
75. "Musclemen Held on Sex Charges," *Evening Outlook*, 10 December 1958.
76. See, "Chapter 2: The Short Goodbye: Scandal, Politics, and the End of Muscle Beach," in Ozyurtcu, "Flex Marks the Spot," 41-75; see also "Musclemen Held on Sex Charges."
77. "Muscle Beach Revival Banned," *Los Angeles Times*, 29 March 1959, WS1; Muscle Beach was referred to as "Santa Monica Beach Playground Number Four" in official correspondence after 1958.
78. "Muscle Beach to Receive Landmark After 30 Years," *Los Angeles Times*, 2 September 1989, 5-16.
79. See, for example, a Muscle Beach video tour Schwarzenegger filmed in 2014 at: http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x1ff6t_ar-nold-schwarzenegger-venice-muscle-beach-tour-guide-body-building-fitness-celebrity_sport.

“ON THE HORNS OF A DILEMMA”: THE BELEAGUERED LIFE OF HITLER’S GREATEST WEIGHTLIFTER

BY JOHN FAIR
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

On the eve of a dual encounter in Baltimore and New York between the five best weightlifters of Germany and those of the United States, Bob Hoffman, as editor and America’s weightlifting coach, published an article in the July 1938 issue of *Strength & Health* entitled “Can We Beat the Germans?” While American teams had improved steadily during the 1930s, Germany’s lifters claimed world supremacy by displacing the Egyptians just after the 1936 Olympics in Berlin and decisively winning the 1937 world championships in Paris. With the incorporation of Austrian weightlifters following *Anschluss* in March of 1938, Nazi Germany gained an even greater advantage at the forthcoming Vienna world championships in October. “At the present time the German Empire team has been in a class by itself,” Hoffman estimated. While his lifters could possibly achieve higher cumulative totals than their adversaries in the four lighter classes, he was unsure whether they could win by enough to make up for the “sure superiority” of Germany’s great heavyweight, Josef (Sepp) Manger, whom he regarded as “the greatest lifter in the world’s history in the three [Olympic] lifts.” Coached by Olympic and world champion Rudi Ismayr who was from his hometown of Bamberg, Manger was “boys champion of Germany. A gymnast, tumbler and lifter, fast, and active in spite of his great weight and bulk.” At age 24, he held world records in the press, at 315½ pounds (143 kilos), and the three-lift total. Overcoming Germany’s superiority in just one class, one individual, and one lift would be a formidable challenge for the Americans. Manger’s rise to international fame began when he earned second place at the 1934 European Weightlifting Championships in Genoa, Italy, with a 264-pound (120-kilo) press, a 253-pound (115-kilo) snatch, and a 324½-pound (147½-kilo)

clean and jerk for an 841½-pound (382½-kilo) total. A German report indicated that it was “his first chance to prove his worth in international competition. He proved that he had great possibilities. He appeared almost like a boy among the colossal heavyweights,” the lightest and youngest competitor at 216 pounds (98¾ kilos) and 21 years. At the 1935 European Championships in Paris, Manger made a 275½-pound (125-kilo) press to improve his total to 870½ pounds (395 kilos) with his German teammates claiming three of the four remaining weight classes.

Perhaps the most daunting indication of German superiority was a pre-Olympic calculation that America’s five best lifters trailed their adversaries in cumulative totals (3750½ to 3836) by 85½ pounds (38 kilos). This prediction was borne out by results from the 1936 Olympics in Berlin where German totals, though superseded by the Egyptians, far exceeded those of the United States. While this outcome could be attributed in part to Germany’s traditional passion for fitness, its work ethic, and Hitler’s autarkic rule, “German thoroughness has everything planned,” Hoffman observed. “Results are being had as best proven by Germany’s amazing success in the Olympics. Any other country, including our own, must use a similar program to keep up.” Manger was “lucky to win” with a 902-pound (410-kilo) total, Hoffman insisted, mainly by virtue of his 291½-pound (132-kilo) press. “It was the passing of his rather crude press that put his total beyond the reach of the other lifters present.” Sour grapes aside, it was for Hoffman “the greatest lifting the world had ever seen and the roof nearly fell with cheers when the German Manger was crowned in front of the Führer after he had won the world’s title with the greatest total ever made in weight lifting.” At the 1937 world championships, Manger extended his total to 924½ pounds (420 kilos), via lifts of 297½, 275, and 352. He proved to reporter

Correspondence to: Dr. John Fair, NEZ 5.700, Dept. of Kinesiology & Health Education, Stark Center, University of Texas at Austin, 78712. Email: john.fair@austin.utexas.edu.



In 1938, Bob Hoffman invited the five best weightlifters in Germany to travel to America and compete in what might be called a weightlifting double header. At the time, the German team was regarded as the best in the world, and in the two exhibition meets, in Baltimore and New York City, Josef Manger proved to be the not-so-secret ingredient to Germany's success. This photo shows the lifters and other men and women enjoying a final meal at the famous German restaurant known as Jaegers Hofbrau in New York City. At the first table in order are Karl Jansen, 148-pound German champion; George Liebch, German and world's champion; Tony Gietl, 181-pound German lifter; Joe Manger, World's and German 181-pound champion; and at the end of the table, John Terpak, Tony Terlazzo, and Steve Stanko. Also in the picture are John Grimek, Gracie Bard, and Rudy Ismayr, Olympic and world's champion. American team managers Dietrich Wortman, Bob Hoffman, and Dan Ferris of the AAU are also present.

Gord Venables, "in spite of his bulk of 240 lbs. that he could snatch and clean as fast as any featherweight." And in the press, he "didn't seem to extend himself. When Manger walks up to the bar his face has only the expression of contempt for the poundage he intends to lift, every movement is deliberate without waste motion." It is hardly surprising with the dual contest fast approaching that Hoffman regarded the Germans, especially with the help of their newly drafted Austrians, as "well-nigh unbeatable."

MANGER WINS FOR GERMANY!

Despite heightening world political tensions in late June of 1938 and high spirits on both teams, hospitality and goodwill prevailed during their two competitions over the next fortnight. The American hosts provided transportation, comfortable living quarters, and training facilities for their German guests at the York Barbell Clubhouse, located at Hoffman's property on Lightner's Hill in North York, often dubbed the Strength and Health Center of the World. "They will have the entire club to their own devices," boasted Hoffman, "with its showers, club room, kitchen, sleeping quarters, and spacious gymnasium. This club set in the

midst of beautiful countryside, gardens, pools, flowers, shrubs, with big porches, will be an ideal place for the German team, and for their visitors." Further perquisites would include a visit to the Gettysburg battlefield and other historic and scenic sites. The Germans would then be transported to their competitions in Baltimore and New York which would also feature hand balancing, tumbling, strength feats, and muscle control exhibitions by Siegmund Klein, John Grimek, and other American strength stars.

Hospitality prevailed throughout the planning and execution of these events. The first contest occurred on Sunday, the 19th, at the Derby Show Arena in Baltimore. As Hoffman expected, his lifters outlifted their German counterparts in the four lighter classes, 3,047½ to 2,986½ pounds (1382 to 1354½ kilos), but Manger surpassed America's best heavyweight, Steve Stanko, 946 to 847 pounds (429 to 384 kilos) to provide the visitors a winning edge of 38 cumulative pounds (17 kilos). "Leave the 'big boy' off and what have you . . . ?" observed Bob Hoffman. A modicum of consolation was possible, however, because of the friendships engendered between the teams. "They are a nice lot of fellows, they lived with us for a week, visited

our homes and we came to know them well. Friendships were created that will endure." Furthermore, Hoffman seemed pleased with the role played by his girlfriend Gracie Bard who "helped a lot in gathering funds for the future competition. But I believe that she unwittingly helped the Germans win. For they were out to her home for dinner several times, and as they lifted more than ever before, it might have been the splendid meals that Gracie prepared. Any way they'll go back to Germany, having a warm spot for America, the lifters and enthusiasts here, for Gracie and for her [baked] beans, and other gastronomic dainties." Despite losing to the Germans, Hoffman took pride in the seeds of international goodwill he had planted, even as war clouds loomed on the horizon.

The spirit of sportsmanship he helped foster carried on to the second team competition on 25 June at the 85th Street Turnverein in Manhattan. This time the Germans won by an even greater margin, owing mainly to the failure of featherweight John Terry to execute any of his clean and jerks, thus enabling his adversary to gain 253 unanswered pounds (115 kilos). Had Terry made his final lift of 264 pounds (120 kilos), the Germans still would have won overall by two pounds. Again, the winning edge was provided by Manger whose superiority, especially in the press, left little doubt about the ultimate outcome of the match. "Manger is such a powerhouse that he could have done more," Hoffman observed. "So, it's evident that Manger will soon score a greater total than the world has ever seen. Over a thousand being quite possible within a year." What especially impressed Hoffman was Manger's overall athleticism. "Turns a back flip as light as a feather," and as national heavyweight wrestling champion, he was expected to win titles in wrestling and weightlifting at the next scheduled Olympics in Helsinki. Hoffman also could not help but admire the personal qualities and friendship of the German visitors and the camaraderie that resulted from their encounters. "To sum up, there were two splendid, hard fought contests. The best of sportsmanship prevailed throughout."

AN ENDURING FRIENDSHIP

While scant information is available about the relationship between German and American weightlifters after the Vienna world championships in 1938 and during World War II, post-war evidence indicates that the friendship engendered by their dual competitions persisted. It stems from a series of letters exchanged

in 1946 between Sepp Manger and John Terpak, neither of whom had been engaged in actual fighting. On 1 February Manger responded "with much enthusiasm and deep gratitude" to a letter from Terpak. It confirmed that weightlifting "is a sport which reconciles nations with each other and that a fine spirit of comradeship has not ceased to exist in spite of six years of terrible war." Despite rumors to the contrary, he was not killed in combat but served in the Wehrmacht from May 1942 to December 1944 as an administrator at home and not at the front. Since September 1939 Sepp was happily married and the proud father of a "strapping son" whom he hoped someday would become a weightlifter.

Conversely, he was not so sanguine about his current situation and prospects of Germany returning to prewar normalcy. Owing to occupation by the American military government in Starnberg (Bavaria), Manger was "without bread" and was dismissed indefinitely from his position on the finance board on grounds that "I belong to the Nazi party, an action based on apparent paper evidence." As justification for the protest he was lodging with American authorities, he explained to Terpak that after Hitler's coup in April 1933 he was stigmatized by the Bamberger daily press as an enemy of the state and as politically unreliable, because I was a Nazi opponent and had publicly voiced my opposition in the inn, the Blue Bell, in Bamberg even after the usurpation of the Nazis, (Refusal to give the Nazi salute). Because of my objection to the national socialistic party I together with my trainer, Fritz Mueller, in Bamberg, Jew Street 9, was expelled from my sport association, the Hercules Athletic Club, in Bamberg in April 1933, a club in which since my eleventh year I had been trained with much labor for the 1936 Olympic games. In addition my expulsion from the Sports Association of Germany was demanded. At the last moment action on my expulsion was stopped by leaders of the sports association Roland Bamberg because then already I was classed as an international star in wrestling and weight lifting and as an athlete of the first rank for the Berlin Olympiad.

With official sanction, he moved to Freising to be trained for the Olympics by 1932 gold medalist Rudi Ismayr. After his 1936 victory, Manger was promoted to be an SA (*Sturmabteilung* or Storm Troopers) squad leader, even though he was not an SA member, and then with no effort on his part, to be chief squad leader. These promotions were purely a recognition of his weightlifting achievements, but he "never per-

formed any service in the SA," he said. His supervisor repeatedly urged him to join the Nazi Party, but Manger continued to refuse until he was confronted with the choice of either joining or giving up the work he was doing to train athletes in foreign countries as a representative of German sportdom. "Thus I became a party member, retroactive to January 5, 1937. I may add that I received no membership book, nor was I obligated to the party by oath. I received merely a so-called party candidate's card." It was imperative that American authorities know that he was never an active Nazi and "never agreed with the ideas of the former Nazi party." He had already enlisted the support of the Third US Army command in Bad Toeltz, and was hoping Terpak, "as my American sport friend," would write a letter confirming that "while living in foreign lands I have always borne myself as a truly democratic sportsman and never as a friend of Nazism, that, on the contrary, I with heart and hand worthily represented my beloved weight-lifting sport . . . just as you know me."

With regard to his weightlifting condition, Manger admitted that he was "not in very good shape." For three years he had not touched a dumbbell, and the desperate food situation in Germany would "not allow me to very quickly attain top form." Still, he was able to press 285, snatch 275, and clean and jerk 340 pounds. Otherwise, German sport was "dead," and it would take many years for German athletes to be able

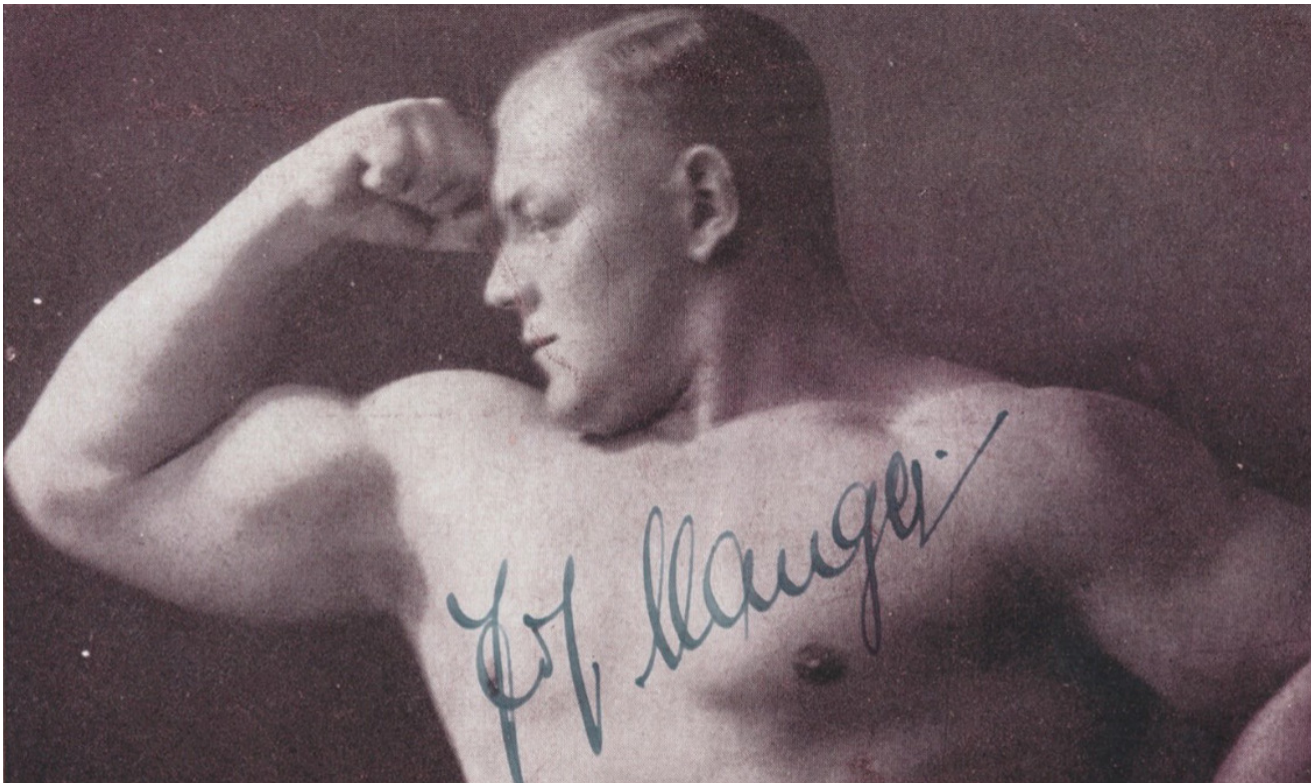


Josef Manger and his teammate Rudi Ismayr, middleweight Olympic champion, had plenty of reasons to smile as they left London on 23 March 1936 to head home to Germany. Both men gave exhibitions at the Holborn Empire Theater while in London, demonstrating once again why they were world champions.

to participate in international games. His trainer and friend, Rudi Ismayr, who was a pilot in the Luftwaffe, ended the war as a buck private and an English prisoner of war. Rudi was "not in shape." Manger believed he might still be able, as a featherweight, to press 200, snatch 210, and clean and jerk 270 pounds (90½, 95, and 122 kilos), but he was an unlikely contender in future international games. Of the other German weightlifters, "all were in bad shape," likewise with the current crop of recruits. Not for eight or ten years would Germany be able to produce weightlifters "fit for world competition," he predicted. American weightlifters, on the other hand, were excelling, as he recently read in a copy of *Life* magazine at Bad Toeltz, which featured pictorial sequences of John Terpak. "I was moved almost to tears. It showed me that you and your friends have not been asleep," but had raised the sport "to the top." Manger believed his friend would "go down in the history of weight-lifting as the American Ismayr."¹ He was no less complimentary about others, including Bob Hoffman and Steve Stanko, his former rival in the 1930s. He regarded America as "the land of weight-lifters" with "the finest man power in the world."²

Terpak responded to Manger's plea by writing letters to American authorities. "Nothing would please me more than to see you reinstated to civilian status," he assured his old friend. "Personally, I have always admired you and respected you for the person you were and as I knew you. To me, you were a true Sportsman . . . a fair and square competitor and a person who used his own better judgment to guide his destiny." Terpak was also pursuing the possibility of shipping parcels of food to Germany through the postal service to relieve Manger's desperate plight. Further to inform him and others of the current state of weightlifting, he was eager to have his fellow Iron Game enthusiasts in America correspond and send articles to their German counterparts. As for his own prospects for the forthcoming national championships in June, Terpak believed he was currently in "the best condition of my lifting career." He had recently pressed 251 pounds (114 kilos), snatched 251 pounds (114 kilos), and clean and jerked 330 pounds (150 kilos) in good form at 162¾-pound (73¾ kilo) bodyweight. At the forthcoming nationals, Terpak was hoping to make 250, 255, and 335 pounds (113, 115½, and 152 kilos).³

Other Americans also expected to do well. They included several other promising middleweights—Stanley Stanczyk, who at age



This 1936 autographed postcard was printed as part of an Olympic Games series in Germany and shows the roughly 240-pound Manger as he appeared at the 1936 Berlin Olympics.

22 and weighing 160 pounds (73 kilos) had done 240, 245, and 315 pounds (109, 111½, and 143 kilos); 17-year-old Peter George, weighing 155, who was pressing 220, snatching 240, and clean and jerking 330 pounds (100, 109, and 150 kilos); and Frank Spellman, who at age 24 had recently returned from the war and was pressing 250, snatching 240, and clean and jerking 310 pounds (114, 109, and 140½ kilos). Terpak was over ten years their senior and still quite capable of outlifting them, but he intended to retire immediately after the end of the 1948 Olympics in London.⁴

He admitted, however, that aside from its wealth in middleweights, America had uncertain prospects in the other classes. Its best heavyweight, John Davis, had recently made a 257-pound (116½-kilo) press, a 262-pound (119-kilo) snatch, and a 347-pound (157-kilo) clean and jerk at a bodyweight of 202 pounds (92-kilo), but "he does not possess the same interest as prior to the war so it is not predictable whether he will remain in competition or choose to withdraw." Pre-war featherweight champion Tony Terlazzo, of course, had retired from weightlifting and was constructing a health club in Los Angeles, "specializing primarily in reconditioning exercises for the business and professional men and women. . . . Tony hopes to develop a

lucrative business for himself and I sincerely believe that he will succeed."⁵

Meanwhile, in a strong appeal on 30 April to American commanding officers at Bad Toelz, Terpak confirmed Manger's innocence of any deliberate collaboration with the former Nazi regime. He explained that Sepp was a victim of his success as a champion athlete which was exploited by Hitler's totalitarian government for propaganda purposes. As a result of their interactions at various prewar weightlifting competitions at Berlin in 1936, Paris in 1937, and Vienna, Baltimore, and New York City in 1938, Terpak described Manger as "an amiable person" which made it possible for them to become intimately acquainted. "This fraternization rapidly developed into a friendship" that intensified "because of his admirable character. In athletic competition he exemplified the principles of good sportsmanship." Only recently had Terpak learned of his friend's predicament under the Nazi regime.

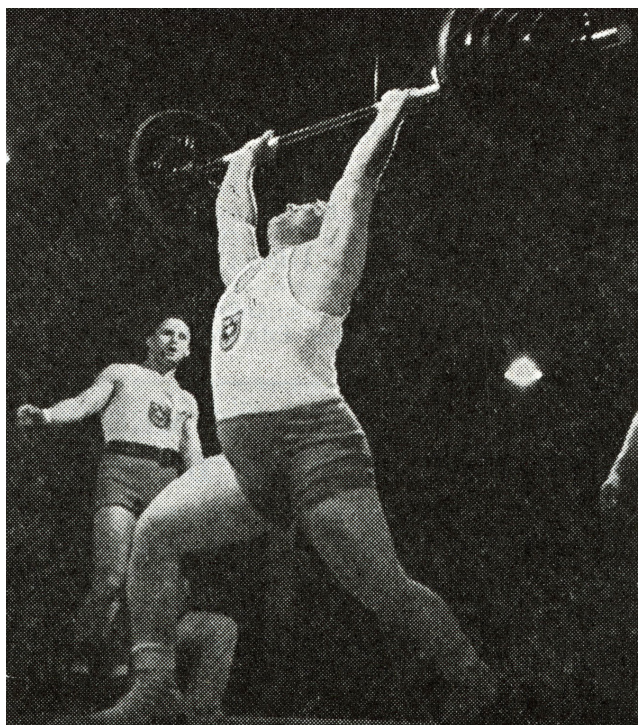
Being a democratic and humane person he was opposed to the Nazi doctrines. Despite his opposition he, like innumerable other persons, was enslaved [sic] to the ruthless government

dominated by Adolph Hitler. The fact that Manger was a distinguished person, being a champion athlete, exposed him to special pressure. Under the threat of persecution he was compelled to become a member of the Nazi party. His affiliation with this organization was a sham in view of the fact that he was not obligated to the party by oath and did not receive a membership book.⁶

Terpak assured his American overseers that Manger was seeking no special favors, only that his case was worthy of re-examination and that he be judged "on his true merits."⁷

ENDURING GOODWILL

On 24 June Manger responded to Terpak's efforts on his behalf "with much joy and gratitude." Although he was personally "rehabilitated" and financially secure, the food situation in Germany remained "terrible," and he hoped Terpak could send him several packages of food stuffs for which he could send him an appropriate reimbursement. Manger also expressed enthusiasm over his friend's latest performances and predicted he would win the middleweight class at the Olympics with a 253-pound (115-kilo) press, 253-pound (115-kilo) snatch, and 335-pound (152-kilo) clean and jerk, despite his advanced age. He reminded Terpak of others who were world and Olympic champions in their forties, including Josef Strassberger of Germany and Carlo Galimberti of Italy. "It is a fact that a weightlifter is strongest between 35 and 45 years." Manger sensed that interest in the sport was reviving in Germany, "but the terrible food situation is keeping the athletes from accomplishing anything worthwhile. Given proper nourishment, the German lifters might quickly play an important part in international competition."⁸ Rudi Ismayr was still being held in a British internment camp near Hamburg, and it seemed unlikely that he would ever return to international form again. Adolf Wagner, was in serious training and able to negotiate a 220-pound (100-kilo) press, a 220-pound (100-kilo) snatch, and a 297-pound (135-kilo) clean and jerk, which is less than he lifted to win a bronze medal at Berlin in 1936, the silver medal at Paris in 1937, or the gold medal at Vienna in 1938 where he made a 810-pound (367½-kilo) total. But, it was comparable to what the American middleweights were currently do-



Josef Manger's form was nearly perfect according to the March 1940 issue of *Strength & Health* magazine who used him as one of their examples on perfect technique in the "Weightlifting News, Shows and Events" section. "The pictures on these pages were not posed," they wrote, "they are actual record breaking attempts by each lifter in real contests." This photo, they went on to explain, "shows World Champion Josef Manger of Germany making a perfect jerk with 363 in Baltimore. Notice that he has thrown the bar directly overhead and made an even split fore-and-aft."

ing. As for his own marks, Manger claimed to be pressing 286½ pounds (130 kilos), snatching 275½ pounds (125 kilos), and clean and jerking 352½ (160 kilos) which, if performed altogether in competition, would be five pounds more than he totaled ten years earlier at the Olympics. "If Germany is permitted to take part in the next Olympics, I have no fears with respect to the defense of [my] Olympic title. Only 33 years of age I cannot yet reckon myself to the old iron. If I had the proper diet, I could today threaten to break many a world's record." For the time being, however, he could only cherish the hope of seeing his American sporting friends again and be able to "discuss the joys and worries connected with weightlifting."⁹

Josef Manger never regained his national title. It was assumed by Theo Aaldering who remained West Germany's post-war champion through much of the 1950s, and there is no evidence that he ever saw his erstwhile American friends again. But he was the first of the big heavyweights—the likes of Paul Anderson, Doug Hepburn, and Vasily Alexeev—who would

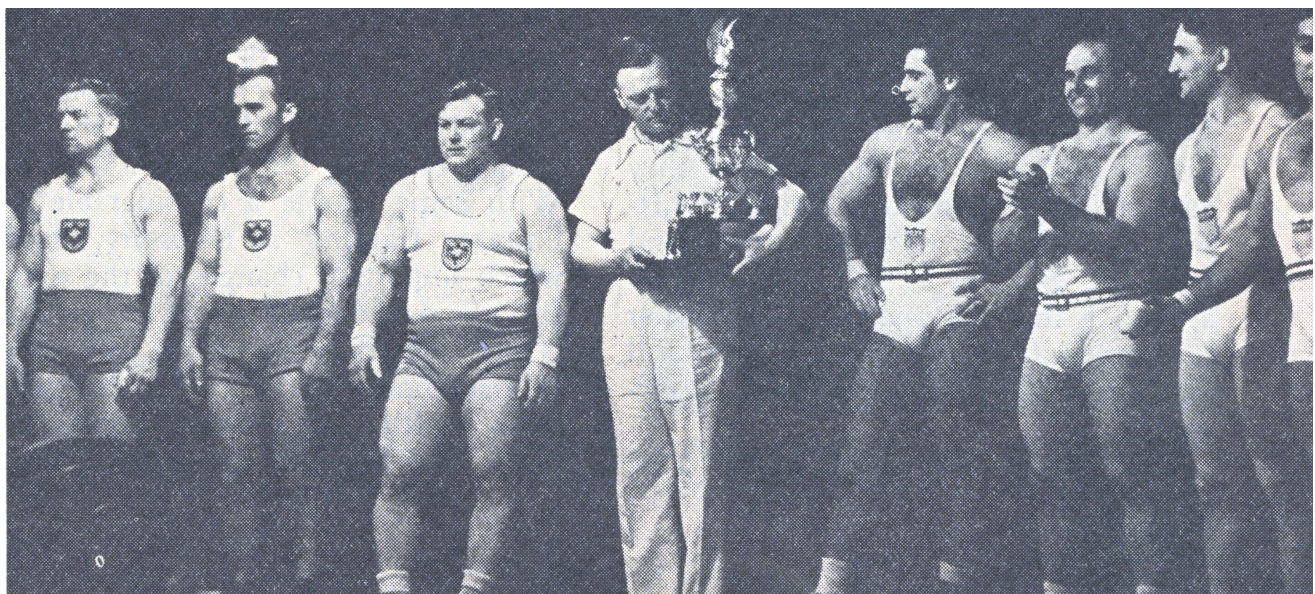
dominate the world stage in later decades. After the restoration of his civilian status, he resumed normal life as a tax collector and salesman in his hometown of Bamberg where a street was named for him. He died without fanfare on 13 March 1991, at age 77.¹⁰

However, Josef Manger's early life was full of drama associated with his becoming a weightlifting champion in the early 1930s, a feat that was complicated by Adolf Hitler's assumption of power and establishment of a totalitarian government. Ostracism from his athletic club and further participation in the sport would normally have resulted from his outspoken anti-Nazi views. But his Olympic and world championships victories as a heavyweight lifter, often associated with the reputation of world's strongest man, made him a valuable propaganda tool. Hence Manger never had to recant his early views. His dilemma was resolved by the regime overlooking his past and making him a Nazi by default, replete with a government position and entitlement to bring glory to the fatherland on the world stage. Manger judiciously avoided the limelight during the war as recollections of his past victories subsided. Afterwards, however, he encountered a second dilemma when American occupying authorities used his presumed Nazi status to deny him restoration to full rights as a German citizen. Seeking relief from this stigma and suffering from his homeland's desperate food shortage, Manger drew on the friendship engendered by his association with Americans in prewar competitions. John Terpak's unqualified endorsement on behalf of

American weightlifters not only provided leverage for Manger to escape the double dilemma posed by his role as a passive Nazi, but an illustration that weightlifting could be employed as an instrument to promote international goodwill.

NOTES

1. "Weight Lifting, 1,500,000 Brawny Americans Expect Their Sport to Boom," *Life*, 29 October 1945, 57-59.
2. Manger to Terpak, 1 February 1946, letter in author's collection.
3. At the subsequent national championships in Philadelphia, Terpak easily won the lightweight title with lifts of 220, 220, and 297, for a 737-pound total which was 27½ pounds more than that of runner-up Bobby Mitchell. "National A.A.U. Senior Weight Lifting Championship and Final U.S.A. Olympic Tryouts," *Strength & Health* 4 (August 1936): 30. Of America's much-vaunted middleweights, only Stanczyk, lifting as a lightweight, won a gold medal at the Paris world championships in 1946, while middleweights Terpak and Spellman took second and third, close behind Khadr El-Touni of Egypt. John Davis, despite Terpak's skepticism, easily won the heavyweight crown. David Webster, *The Iron Game: An Illustrated History of Weight Lifting* (Irvine, Scotland; by the author, 1976), 87.
4. Terpak to Manger, 14 May 1946, letter in author's collection.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Terpak to U.S. Army Commanding Officers, 30 April 1946.
7. *Ibid.*
8. As a heavyweight, Josef Strassberg won a gold medal at the 1928 Olympics in Amsterdam and the 1932 Olympics in Los Angeles. He also garnered first place at the 1929 European championships in Vienna and third place in Munich (1930), Luxembourg (1931), and Essen (1933). As a middleweight, Galimberti won a gold medal at the 1924 Paris Olympics and silver medals at Amsterdam (1928) and Los Angeles (1932). Webster, *Iron Game*, 75-76, 85-86.
9. Manger to Terpak, 24 June 1946, letter in the author's collection.
10. For a concise review of Manger's competitive life to 1941 see "Josef Manger (Germany)" at <https://chidlovski.livejournal.com/1039322.html> and "Theo Aaldering" at https://second.wiki/wiki/theo_aaldering.



The Bob Hoffman Trophy was presented to the Germans for their victory in the two special exhibition contests. It is held by Karl Herr, manager of the German team. Josef Manger stands immediately to his right.

“ON THE HORNS OF A DILEMMA”: THE POSTWAR CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN JOSEF MANGER AND JOHN TERPAK

JOHN FAIR, EDITOR

Editor’s Note: Historian John Fair has devoted much of his scholarly life to unpacking the impact of Bob Hoffman and the other men and women of York Barbell. At the fourth annual Physical Cultures of the Body Conference held at the Stark Center in January 2024, sport historian Jason Shurley gave a paper on the important contributions John Fair has made to the field of sport and physical culture history, and especially to the history of Olympic weightlifting. From his important 1999 book, *Muscle-town USA: Bob Hoffman and the Manly Culture of York Barbell* to these two articles on the great German weightlifter Josef Manger, Fair has probed the social and cultural history of strength and weightlifting and brought to life the men and women who form the foundations of the current Iron Game. His new book: *Tommy Kono: The Life of America’s Greatest Weightlifter* (2023, McFarland Press) solidifies even further the major contributions he has made to physical culture history.

Known as a meticulous researcher who has done personal interviews with dozens of twentieth century figures from the world of strength, Fair has also sought out and helped preserve many archival documents from our collective history. In this article, he relies heavily on letters between Josef Manger and York Barbell executive and former Olympian John Terpak. The letters, as Fair explains in the article, reveal the

privations and challenges that Manger faced after World War II because of his association with the Nazi party. After reading the original letters, I agreed with John’s suggestion that we publish the letters in full, so that others could

also have access to their correspondence. Letters such as these reveal more than just what the words on the page convey. The clear friendship between Terpak and Manger, and the intelligence and exceptional grace of Manger’s English prose suggest a man of unusual intelligence. These observations are revealed by reading the original letters in full; and it’s one of the reasons historians so highly prize letters as a primary source.

Manger’s situation was not unusual in post WWII Europe, of course. The surviving Saxon Brothers—Kurt and Hermann (Arthur died in 1921) ended up on opposite sides of the new “Iron Curtain” and also faced severe privations. Hermann Goerner similarly came out of the war years in sad condition. Even George Hackenschmidt, who spent the war years in France, lost about 25 pounds during the war from lack of food, and

had no funds with which to buy food, even if it could be found for sale. What made Manger’s situation more complicated, and Terpak’s involvement in trying to help him so surprising, was Manger’s status as a member (although not fully official) of the Nazi party. As John Fair notes at the end of his article, however, what happened to help resolve his situation was tru-



In 1936, Manger was included as a star athlete in several different sets of postcards and tobacco cards related to the Olympic Games. He is shown here in an official Olympic uniform that was worn by the German team when they marched into the stadium.

ly an act of sport diplomacy and demonstrated that "weightlifting could be employed as an instrument to promote good will." It's a story that needs to be remembered, and let's hope that weightlifting and the larger Iron Game can always continue to do so.

—Jan Todd



February 1, 1946

My dear John:

I received your welcome letter of Jan. 10, 1946, with much enthusiasm and deep gratitude through Sgt. Jackson Schaaf. Those lines confirmed to me that it is sport which reconciles nations with each other and that a fine sport comradeship has not ceased to exist in spite of six years of terrible war. This fact has really made me proud and happy. As you perceive, I am still living and was not killed in battle as rumor had it. I was a soldier from May 9, 1942, to Dec. 15, 1944. I was in the administrative service at home and not at the front. Since Sept. 1939 I am married and have a strapping son of five years who affords me much happiness, and, God willing, will perhaps some day also be a weight-lifter.

Since the occupation of Starnberg by your compatriots I am without bread and occupation, because the American military government in Starnberg indefinitely dismissed me from my position on the ground that I belong to the Nazi party, an action based on apparent paper evidence. Against this indefinite dismissal from my position with the finance board in accordance with the order of the military government, Detachment H 289 Starnberg, Cp F. 3 D Mil Govt Regt of August 25, 1945, I have lodged a protest, and here give you the following explanation.

After Hitler's coup (usurpation of power) I in April 1933 was stigmatized by the Bamberg daily press as an enemy of the state and as politically unreliable, because I was a Nazi opponent and had publicly voiced my opposition in the inn, the Blue Bell, in Bamberg even after the usurpation of the Nazis, (refusal to give the Nazi salute). Because of my objection to the national socialistic party, I together with my trainer, Fritz Mueller, in Bamberg, Jew Street 9, was expelled from my sport association, the Hercules Athletic Club, in Bamberg in April 1933, a club in which, since my eleventh year, I had been trained with

much labor for the 1936 Olympic Games. In addition, my expulsion from the Sports Association of Germany was demanded. At the last moment, action on my expulsion was stopped by leaders of the sports association Roland Bamberg because then already I was classed as an international star in wrestling and weight-lifting and as an athlete of the first rank for the Berlin Olympiad. In August 1934 I moved to Freising, in order to be trained for the Olympiad by Rudi Ismayr.

On the day of my Olympic victory, I was promoted by the staff chief of the former SA to be SA squad leader, even though I was no member of the SA. On November 9 of the same year, I was again promoted without any effort on my part, and this time to be chief squad leader. The promotions were purely recognition of my great international achievements in weightlifting. In this capacity I never performed any service in the SA.

The Freisinger circuit leader repeatedly requested me to join the Nazi party. I continued to refuse until finally the circuit leader forced me to join by giving me the choice of either joining or giving up my training work in the foreign field. The idea was to send me into foreign countries not only as a representative of German sportdom, but also as a representative of Nazi Germany. Thus, I became a party member, retroactive to January 5, 1937. I may add that I received no membership book, nor was I obligated to the party by oath. I received merely a so-called party candidate's card.

My dear John, I did not assume that the representatives of your country are removing me from the service of the state as an active Nazi, because it may be known that I never agreed with the ideas of the former Nazi party.

The CIC of the 3rd US Army Headquarters in Bad Toetz, where I have been engaged for some time as weight-lifting coach, support my protest, and have forwarded it to Frankfurt, Main, for decision.

My dear Friend John, I shall be very grateful to you, if you, as my American sport friend, would write a letter of confirmation to the effect that while living in foreign lands I have always borne myself as a truly democratic sportsman and never as a friend of Nazism, that, on the contrary, I with heart and hand worthily represented my beloved weight-lifting sport. (Along these lines, just as you know me).

I would be grateful to you also, if you would send this confirmation to the military government in Starnberg/See and to the CIC

of the 3rd US Army Headquarters in Bad Toelz. I would thank you for a copy of the same.

From the sport angle, naturally I am not in very good shape. For fully three years I have not had a dumb-bell in my hands, and the present food situation in Germany will not allow me to very quickly attain top form. Nevertheless, I am still able to do the following:

Druecken (press)	285	English pounds
Reissen (snatch)	275	" "
Stossen (clean & jerk)	340	" "

German athletic sport is dead, and it will take some years before a German athlete will be able to participate in international games.

Rudi Ismayr was never over England as a flier and was not shot down. He was an Obergefreiter (*Editor's note: translated as lance corporal or private first class*) of the Funkers (*Editor's note: translated as a radio operator*). From 1940 to the end of the war a buck private and is at present a prisoner of war in English hands. I hope that he may be released any day. Naturally, Rudi, too, is not in shape. He might be able to do the following:

Druecken	200	English pounds
Reissen	210	" "
Stossen	270	" "

Rudi will probably not be able to make much of a showing in future international games. He is also married and has two daughters.

Of the other German weight-lifters I cannot say much. They are all in bad shape and within a measurable space of time will play no role internationally. Of recruits we today cannot report a thing. As I see it, Germany may in 8 or 10 years again produce weight-lifters fit for world competition.

In Bad Toelz I was reading the American magazine *Life* and there saw you in a weight-lifting demonstration. I was moved almost to tears. It showed me that you and your friends have not been asleep but have raised the weight-lifting game in the land of sport-America-to the top. I am proud of you and your friends. You will go down in the history of weight-lifting as the American Ismayr. Bob Hoffman too, and the rest of the fellows deserve the highest commendation.

I feel very sorry for my friend, Steve Stan-ko. In my estimation he was the ideal heavy weight-lifter, the lifter who could equal my achievements. The feats of Davis I regard as im-

possible; his other achievements are credible.

I agree with you as regards the achievements of the Russian lifters. I regard them as superlatively colored. The Russians must first prove at international games that these feats are authentic. What nice work! That they have good lifters we, of course, cannot doubt.

My dear John, the achievements of the American second-string men (aftergrowth) are phenomenal. Keep it up! For me America is the land of weight-lifters and without doubt possesses the finest man power in the world. Undoubtedly you will win Olympic honors in London in 1948. Maybe I shall be able to admire your feats as a spectator.

I cannot yet send you any pictures, but I hope to send you some very nice ones of German lifters in my next letter.

I trust that for today I have given you enough news. I greet you and all my American sporting friends, especially also Bob Hoffman.

Your friend and faithful comrade,
Sepp Manger

My sister, Marie, is married, has a daughter of five years, and sends you hearty greetings.



May 14, 1946

Dear Sepp:

I hope you will forgive me for taking so much time in replying to your letter of 1 February. The entire industrial set-up in the United States is right in the middle of the reconversion period and with so many labor strikes and other difficulties arising all of which hinder the progress of reconversion, we are finding it rather difficult to get any material work accomplished. However, we are looking forward to rapid peaceful settlement between labor and industries, then we can get back to a normal life.

During all the hustle and bustle of this reconversion, I did manage to write the letter which you requested and addressed same to the Commanding Officer, CIC of 3rd U.S. Army Hqs., Bad Toelz, Germany, and a copy to Commanding Officer, Detachment, H 289 Starnberg, Co. F., 3 D. Mil. Govt. Reg't., Starnberg/See, Germany. I also mailed copies to you similar to the copy attached hereto. Nothing would please me more than to see you reinstated to civilian status. Personally, I have always admired you and respected you for the person you were and

as I knew you. To me, you were a true Sportsman . . . a fair and square competitor and a person who used his own better judgment to guide his destiny.

I shall make inquiry at our local Post Office regarding shipments of food and whether it is permissible to send parcels to Germany. If permission is granted, you will receive several parcels within the near future. My good friend, Jack Elder from Texas, has inquired about Tony Gietl's address. Is there any possibility that you can furnish his address? Jack Elder would be pleased to correspond with Gietl and also wishes to send him some articles.

Our National Championships are only 2½ weeks hence. At the present time I am in the best condition of my lifting career. In training on May 11, I made, in very good form, the following lifts at a bodyweight of 74 Kg.:

Press – 114 Kg.
Snatch – 114 Kg.
Clean & Jerk – 150 Kg.

At the National Championships in Detroit, Mich., if all is well, I should make 250, 255 and 335 pounds or approximately 114 Kg. Press, 116 Kg. Snatch and 152 Kg. Clean and Jerk.

We have several other excellent middleweights in this country. There is Stanley Stanczyk, 22 years of age, weighing 160 pounds (73 Kg.), who has done 240, 245 and 315 (109 Kg., 111½ Kg., and 143 Kg.) We also have a 17-year-old lad, Peter George, weighing 155, who presses 220, snatches 240 and clean and jerks 330 (100 Kg., 109 Kg., and 150 Kg.). A third middleweight is Frank Spellman, 24 years of age, who has recently returned from the war. He presses 250, snatches 240 and cleans and jerks 310 (114 Kg., 109 Kg., 140½ Kg.). I'm more than 10 years older than the up-and-coming middleweights but that does not seem to be any handicap. It is my contention that a man, providing he does not dissipate to excess, can remain in his prime insofar as lifting is concerned, until he is 40 years of age. I have no intention of remaining in com-



Josef Manger has no problem demonstrating perfect technique with this short exercise bar. This was one of many publicity shots taken of him in 1936.

petition until I reach 40 . . . if I can represent my country in the Olympic Games in 1948, I shall be happy to retire immediately [when] the Games come to an end in London.

We have no promising lifters as yet in any of the other classes. Last Saturday, John Davis competed in the Metropolitan Championships (New York and vicinity) and made 257 press . . . failing with 272, snatch 262 and 347 clean and jerk. His bodyweight was 202 pounds. He does not possess the same interest as prior to the war so it is not predictable whether he will remain in competition or choose to withdraw. It was rumored that

he retired from amateur competition but evidently that was false.

I hear from Terlazzo quite regularly. His building is still under construction (materials are difficult to obtain) but he hopes for its completion before the 1st of July. He will conduct a Health Club, specializing primarily in reconditioning exercises for the business and professional men and women. Very little interest will be devoted to Weightlifting. Tony hopes to develop a lucrative business for himself, and I sincerely believe that he will succeed. Los Angeles is a rapidly growing city (over 2,000,000 population at present) and from all indications it will continue to increase.

I shall write again, immediately upon hearing from you. Hereafter, there will be no more long delays between letters. Our work here is pretty well under control now and instead of having 10 working hours per day, 6 days each week, we're going on an 8-hour schedule, 5 days each week.

Convey my best wishes to any of my German Weightlifting Friends. You may contact [me] personally or by letter and let me hear from you at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely your Friend,
JB Terpak



April 30, 1946

Commanding Officers,
CIC of 3rd U.S. Army Headquarters,
Bad Toelz, Germany

Dear Sirs,

It was with regret that we recently learned of the plight of our fellow weightlifter, (Joseph) Sepp Manger. From our understanding of his unfortunate situation, it appears that his success as a champion athlete has resulted in penalizing his present civilian status. It can be readily conceived how a person of such prominence could, under a totalitarian form of government, be a victim of the fame resulting from his outstanding accomplishments as an athlete. Believing that Sepp Manger is a victim of peculiar circumstances evolving from his athletic success, we feel morally obligated to express our evaluation of his character, particularly in regards to the former Nazi movement.

Our personal association with this athlete commenced just prior to the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin and continued throughout the duration of this huge tournament. This associ-



During the month of August 1936, Manger appeared on the cover of *Athletik*, the specialist journal for heavy athletics in Germany and abroad, for three consecutive weeks. Almost no athlete in Germany was as famous as he was and also so closely identified as being the ideal type favored by the Nazi party. Here, Manger receives the gold medal for his performance at the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin.

ation was resumed the following year in Paris when the world's weightlifting championships were held in the capital of France. We spent considerable time with Manger while traveling together in Europe. In 1938 Manger, as a member of the German lifting team, visited the United States and spent several weeks in this country while taking part in weightlifting contests. During his stay in this country, we again had considerable personal association with him. Later that year our association was resumed when we made a trip to Vienna, Austria, to participate in the world's weightlifting championships.

Sepp Manger, being an amiable person, made it possible for us to become intimately acquainted with him from the very outset of our association. This fraternization rapidly developed into a friendship. Our esteem of his friendship has been high because of his admirable character. In athletic competition, he exemplified the principles of good sportsmanship.

Through the medium of our friendship with (Joseph) Sepp Manger, we learned of his predicament under the Nazi regime. Being a democratic and humane person, he was opposed to the Nazi doctrines. Despite his opposition he, like innumerable other persons, was enslaved [sic] to the ruthless government dominated by Adolph Hitler. The fact that Manger was a distinguished person, being a champion athlete, exposed him to special pressure. Under the threat of persecution, he was compelled to become a member of the Nazi party. His affiliation with this organization was a sham in view of the fact that he was not obligated to the party by oath and did not receive a membership book.

In writing on (Joseph) Sepp Manger's behalf, we are aware that he is not seeking any concessions but only desires to be judged on his true merits. We sincerely believe that a thorough review of his case would serve to absolve him and warrant the restoration of his full rights as a civilian. Thus, we feel justified in urging that action be taken to re-examine his case.

Respectfully yours,
Bob Hoffman, Editor and publisher
of *Strength & Health*

John Terpak, 10 times National A.A.U.
Middleweight Lifting Champion

Tony Terlazzo, Olympic, World's and National lightweight lifting titleholder



Josef Manger
Starnberg/See,
Hauptstrasse 6

24 June 1946

My dear Johnny,

I received your welcome letter of 14 May 1946 with much joy and gratitude. The letter was long delayed, but in return my joy was the greater. I am especially grateful to you for your cooperation with CIC in Bad Toelz, and with the military in Starnberg/See. In the meantime, I became pretty well rehabilitated, and I hope because of your kind help to become free to resume my former occupation. The Third U.S. Army has been transferred to Heidelberg, and my friend, Sgt. Jack von Schaaf, has been dismissed to his home. His address is: Sgt. Jack von Schaaf 3402 6th Ave., CRT Chattanooga, Tenn.

Dear Johnny, I shall be more than grateful to you if you could send me several packages of food stuffs. The food situation in Germany is terrible. I shall, however, accept these packages only if I may pay for them. Financially I am so situated that even according to the German rate of exchange I can reimburse you for your expenses. I express my sincere thanks to you now for your efforts in this matter.

Fourteen days ago I met Toni Gietl in Munich, where he is living. In a few days I hope to send you his address.

I am enthused over your latest performances. If you can retain this form until the Olympics in London in 1948, I already know who will be the winner in the middleweight class. With a performance of

115 Kg. Press
115 Kg. Snatch
152 Kg. Clean & Jerk

no one at the present time nor in the near future will be able to beat you.

As far as your age is concerned, I can tell you that [Josef] Strassberger, Germany, [Carlo] Galimberti, Italy, and many others at the age of forty and over enjoyed the form of their life. It is a fact that a weightlifter is strongest between 35 and 45 years.

The reports about Russian weightlifters will first have to be proven in international competition. I do not believe in the correct work of the Russian weightlifters. As for you, I have seen you work, and can only say that you have always worked above criticism and cleanly. Your work has afforded the international judges only pleasure.

In Germany the sport is beginning to live again. But the terrible food situation is keeping the athletes from accomplishing anything worthwhile. Given proper nourishment, the German lifters might quickly play an important part in international competition.

Rudi Ismayr is still held by the British in an internment camp near Hamburg. But I hope that he will soon be set free. I fear that he will hardly attain international form again. The middleweight lifter, Wagner-Essen, is engaged in serious training, and has reached the following marks:

100 Kg. Press
100 Kg. Snatch
135 Kg. Clean & Jerk

I am proud of Terlazzo's initiative and ask you to convey to him my warmest greetings and best wishes for his success. While we are on the subject, may I ask you to extend my greetings to all of my American weightlifting friends. My own marks at present are: 130 Kg. Press, 125 Kg. Snatch, 160 Kg. Clean & Jerk.

If Germany is permitted to take part in the next Olympics, I have no fears with respect to the defense of Olympic title. Only 33 years of age I cannot yet reckon myself to the old iron. If I had the proper diet, I could today threaten to break many a world's record.

Dear Johnny, it is the wish of my heart to personally see you and all my known American sporting friends, and to discuss the joys and worries connected with weightlifting.

Johnny, if you could send me the address of Mr. Wortmann, I should be very grateful to you.

And now, dear friend, I greet you warmly, and sincerely hope that you will be able to retain your present form until the Olympics in London in 1948, in order to represent your country as the number one victor.

Your friend,
Sepp Manger



PHYSICAL EXERCISE AS PREVENTATIVE MEDICINE: LOOKING BACK AT COLONIAL BENGAL (1860-1947)

BY BASUDHITA BASU
THE AMITY UNIVERSITY, JHARKHAND, INDIA

In recent years, especially during and in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the role of physical activity as a proactive health measure has received substantial attention from scientific researchers, the media, and those who surf the web looking for healthful advice. Interest in the role that exercise might play in enhancing physical well-being is not new and can be traced back to ancient times and several different cultures. The people of the ancient Greek civilization were among the first to espouse sports as medicine. The ancient Greek physician Herodotus, who lived in the fifth century BCE, has been hailed as the father of sports medicine.¹ His disciple, Hippocrates, argued that “exercise contributed to the balancing of the four humours: blood; phlegm; black bile; and yellow bile.”² Centuries later, the public schools of Victorian England, believing in the concepts of social Darwinism and eugenics, forged a close connection with the nineteenth century health movement and a philosophical/pedagogical belief called Muscular Christianity.³ Physical exercise and sports were considered indispensable in sustaining the “planet’s largest Empire.”⁴ The British inclination towards physical exercise in the nineteenth century and its gradual dissemination in eastern India where West Bengal and Bangladesh, territories that before partitioning in 1947 were both part of what was called Bengal, predates the modern world’s aspiration of being physically fit.⁵ This article attempts to explore the complex relationship between physical exercise and health in Colonial Bengal, which was the nerve center of the British administration in nineteenth-century India. It delves into studying how the British considered physical exercise as preventive medicine in the metropole as well as in Colonial

Bengal. It also aims to study the British contribution to spreading physical exercises among the native youth of Bengal. The article argues that the British policies of spreading physical exercises in schools were part of their public health policies. How the British perception of physical exercise influenced the cognitive space of the Western-educated Bengalis is also considered. The “Colonial” period in India began in the eighteenth century as British East India expanded its operations and began introducing British ideas and practices and taking over governmental control of some areas of the peninsula. In regards to fitness, the British generally viewed the colonized Bengalis to be physically inferior as can be inferred from the following remark of British historian and Secretary at War, Thomas Babington Macaulay, in 1843: “The physical organization of the *Bengalee* is feeble even to effeminacy. He lives in a constant vapour bath. His pursuits are sedentary, his limbs delicate, his movements languid. During many ages he had been trampled upon by men of bolder and more hardy breeds. Courage, independence, veracity are qualities to which his constitution and his situation are equally unfavorable.”⁶

The larger, and more “muscular” British administrators were not superior to the various diseases like malaria, plague, and cholera that existed in that era. However, Bengali gentlemen of the same period indulged in physical exercise to maintain their health and even restored “lost masculinity” and worked to create a new “healthy” Bengali community. Even some Bengali women were similarly motivated to practice physical exercise regularly because of the belief that the Bengali mother was required to be healthy and hearty to successfully give birth to strong progeny. Thus, it can be asserted that both the “muscular” rulers and their “effeminate” subjects were reassured of the beneficial impact of physical exercise on human life.

Correspondence to: Basudhita Basu, The Amity University, Jharkhand, India, basudhitabasuju@gmail.com.

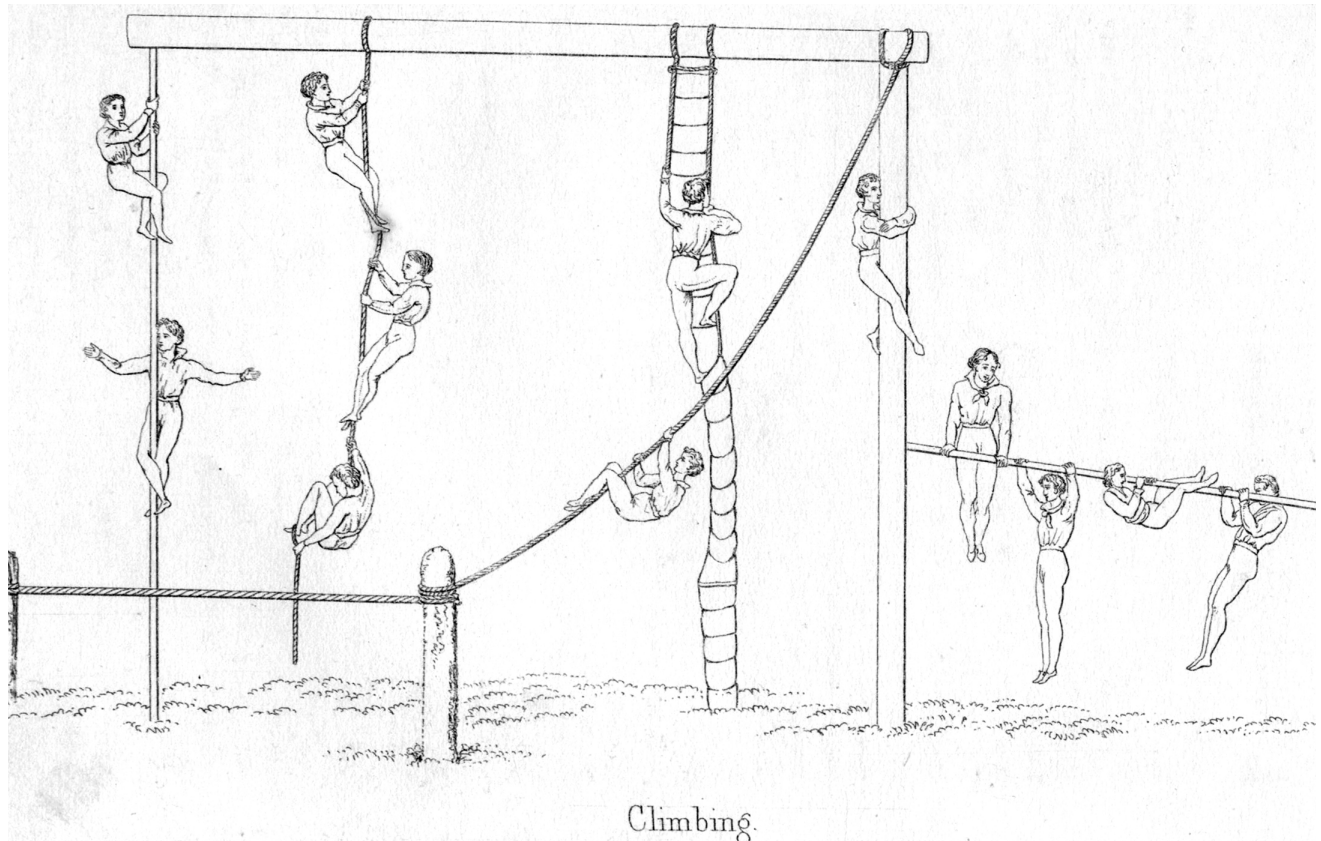
BRITISH PERCEPTIONS OF EXERCISE AS PREVENTIVE MEDICINE

In a 1959 article in *The Times of India*, author Harvey Day highlights the significance of Britain's colonial legacy for the development of global sporting practices writing, "Sport was Britain's greatest contribution to world culture for no one can dispute that she taught the world to play." Day claims that most forms of sports were innovated by the Britons, taken abroad, and popularized.⁷ Along with leisurely play, the British also played a significant role in popularizing exercise in their colonies.

Britain's early nineteenth-century obsession with fitness can be judged from the successful publication of Donald Walker's book "*British Manly Exercise*" in 1835.⁸ Walker wrote, "Exercise ensures, in particular, the development of the locomotive organs, and they prevent or correct all the deformities to which these organs are liable. They are best calculated to produce strength and activity and to bestow invariable health."⁹

Walker's book was filled with diagrams and illustrated techniques for rowing, fencing, and instructions on horseback riding, and provided detailed guidance on the procedure to lunge, vault, and wrestle. Walker included ideas from different cultures such as strength training using clubs imported from India, which according to a British officer stationed in the country was undoubtedly "the most effectual kind of athletic training known anywhere."¹⁰ The British military force adopted club swinging and took the exercise system back to Britain.¹¹

By the 1850s, participating in either games or physical fitness activities had become an integral part of Victorian values. The significance of physical fitness stemmed from various cultural trends, including Muscular Christianity—a concept that emerged in England in the mid-nineteenth century. The concept of Muscular Christianity permeated the new model of public schools. The young school preceptors displayed their affinity towards games, primarily team sports. The educators believed and



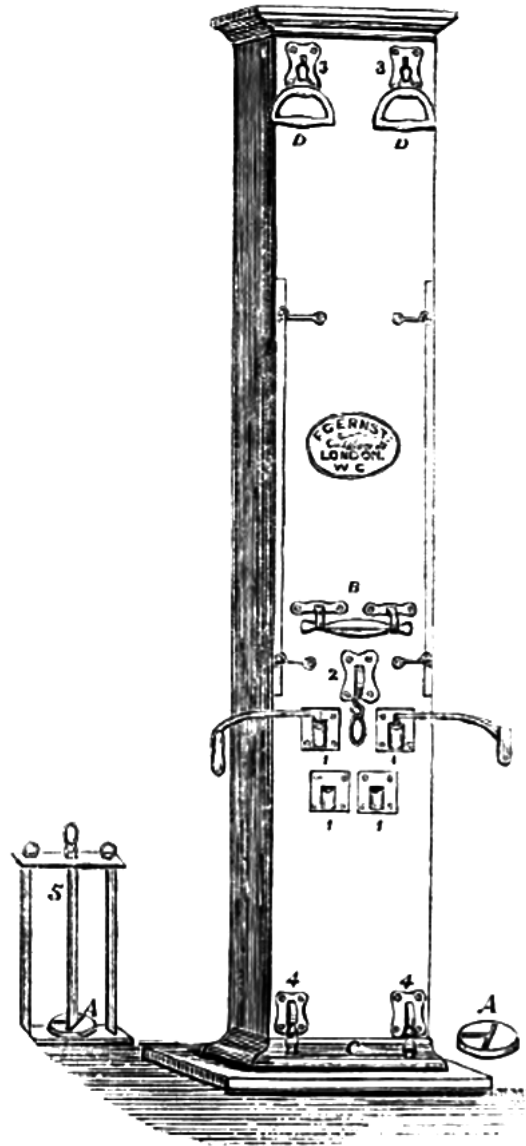
Walker's Manly Exercises, first published in London, in 1834, is famous for introducing Indian Club swinging to the British Isles. However, the book contained much more than club exercises and is regarded as one of the most influential fitness books of the nineteenth century. Written by Donald Walker and aimed at the upper classes, the book went through at least ten editions and travelled around the world as Britain's empire grew. Early editions are still frequently found in libraries in India, as well as other countries once part of the British Empire. This drawing, from the 1857 edition, shows climbing and bar exercises done on an outdoor apparatus. The image is copied from similar pictures in books on German Gymnastics and it is entirely likely that these exercises were also done in India.

preached to others that team sports taught morality and would mold the minds of young gentlemen into leaders who would be invariably imbued with patriotic, chivalric, and Christian values.¹² British school authorities increasingly recognized the importance of physical education and these ideas soon spread to America and other countries.

The other motivation for school physical education however was better health and hygiene. Allan Broman, a graduate of the Royal Gymnastic Central Institute of Stockholm, contemplated physical education as an essential component of school hygiene. He confined his unique research to the elementary schools of Britain and argued that muscular exercise was unambiguously necessary for the overall physical and mental growth of a child, both of which could be stunted by the regimentation of school routines. He advanced his ideas before the International Congress of Hygiene and Demography in 1891 and his paper was later published as *Physical Education in Elementary Schools - A Part of the School Hygiene*.¹³ Broman explained that when children start attending school their daily routine gets altered; the freedom of the child is hampered when they are asked by teachers to restrain themselves to the benches of the classroom. "This alone," Broman claimed, "would be sufficient to impede and prevent the natural growth and development of the child."¹⁴ In consequence, he argued, most children suffer from several physical deformities like stooping shoulders or narrow chests, combined with spinal curvatures of one form or other. Broman forewarned in his writing that all these physical defects would eventually strike the chest and thus critical organs, such as the heart and lungs. For Broman, the execution of physical exercise over a long period would invariably thwart all these blights and ward off spasmodic occurrences in the human body.

According to Broman, the hypothesis was proved by the experiences he gathered through his own research conducted over the years.¹⁵ Broman's view was that physical exercise directed blood from the central to the peripheral parts of the circulatory system of the human body. In students, the congestions to the brain and pelvic organs caused by intellectual work and the long span of sitting on the school bench were relieved by performance of regular exercise. Thus, Broman argued, physical exercise is advantageous to both the mind and the body conclusively.¹⁶

Broman's theories were similar to those



Ernst's portable gymnasium was made for home use and consisted of a weight stack inside this wooden case with a variety of handles. In addition to normal pulley exercises, a chinning bar could be attached. Ernst's machine is a close copy of the Polymachinon, invented by exercise expert Captain Chiosso, who published an illustrated instructional manual in 1855—which may have inspired Ernst.

espoused in the writing of Gustav Ernst. *The Portable Gymnasium*, Ernst's 1861 book, touted that "the beneficial effects resulting from the employment of Gymnastic Exercises, as a curative agent in cases of spinal deformity, or other bodily weakness and contraction, are so generally known and appreciated that an advocacy of the system is here quite needless."¹⁷ Ernst also discussed gymnastics in orthopedic practice. Interestingly, Ernst laid the foundation of an efficient "portable gymnastic apparatus"

which could be advantageous to the British to maintain their daily regimen of physical exercise. His endeavor was appreciated and ratified by the contemporary medical practitioners and patients who benefitted from it. The portable gymnasium was manufactured in the form of an oblong pedestal of either teak or mahogany wood, varied in height from six feet to nine-and-a-half feet, and was usually seven to nine inches deep by fourteen inches wide. The pedestal rested on a firm base proportionately larger than the apparatus itself. The whole machine was supposed to be attached to the wall of any sizeable room with strong iron brackets and screws in such a way that it might be removed at any point in time without damaging the wall.¹⁸

In Britain, sports were regarded as one of the important features of the public school system. The public schools particularly stressed the social values of team sports.¹⁹ At least two afternoons per week were allotted to sports and the number often went up to three or four afternoons. Intramural and inter-scholastic contests also gave a competitive edge to sports.²⁰ In the universities as well as the public schools, physical education and games occupied a prominent position. Gymnasia, swimming baths, and sporting fields provided students ample opportunities to indulge in physical exercise.²¹ In the public schools, a “love of exercising their muscles and training their bodies to physical endurance became a feature of the student life.”²² This attitude was further cultivated to keep students from “traditional” university recreations like gambling and drinking. It was noticed that in most schools cricket had increased in popularity, racquet courts had been established, and excellent gymnasia drew substantial support. In 1866, an anonymous contributor to *Blackwood’s Magazine* thought “the new gospel of athletics” at the universities was considered a splendid thing. It was believed “better to go to bed early tired out by cricket than to sit up drinking . . .”²³

The boons of physical exercise as preventive medicine were also disseminated among the British army and navy, who were responsible for the sustenance of the Empire in India. William Augustus Guy, a fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, highlighted the importance of physical exercise throughout his report, “On the Sanitary Condition of the British Army.” As the following passage suggests, he argued in the report that exercise is the secret to a prolonged and healthy life:

One of the classes to which I allude consists of men who work indoors with a great deficiency of exercise, at the same time that they inhale a close heated and impure atmosphere. This is the case of tailors and of compositors in printing offices, whose health is destroyed and their lives greatly curtailed by these causes. It is the case also of clerks, though they suffer more from want of exercise than from want of air. I might prove my position by figures; but I prefer stating in general terms that there is no doubt whatever that the lives of men who are thus employed are shortened by confinement and insufficient exercise.²⁴

Guy also advised that every soldier must participate in sword exercises or drills; they must be encouraged to take part in every manly exercise.²⁵ James Dunbar Campbell, in his 2003 doctoral thesis, mentioned that the Army Sanitary Commission in 1858 strongly recommended different forms of physical training for the armies to improve the overall health and physical condition of the soldiers. The recommendation was based on several findings: first, the recognized benefits of exercise in improving physical vitality and therefore augmenting their immunity towards various diseases, and secondly the increasingly lower physical standards found among recruits during the contemporary period.²⁶ Blake Knox emphasized in his 1911 publication, *Military Sanitation and Hygiene*, that a trained soldier must be fit and this fitness can be achieved by gymnastic exercises.²⁷ Therefore, as early as 1865 the Queen’s Regulation specified a required course of physical training to be taken by all recruits and older soldiers, backed by trained instructors at the battalion level. By the 1890s, virtually all British military installations had a gymnasium or other physical training facility and by the first decade of the twentieth century, most cantonments possessed standard athletic fields and football and cricket pitches.²⁸ In January 1907, the Army Council changed the entire system of physical training of recruits and young soldiers were introduced to the same system of physical training.²⁹ All these steps were undertaken under the impression that exercise as a preventive medicine would develop their immunity against the

diseases that were prevalent in the contemporary society of the metropole.

ENCOUNTERING THE TROPICAL DISEASES: THE BRITISH WAY OF KEEPING FIT IN BENGAL

Colonialism, if anything, whetted the British appetite for the sports that reminded them of England. The British officials who chose to settle in Bengal for their official assignments were disgusted and perturbed by the myriad diseases of this land of rivers and jungles. According to Sir Walter Raleigh, who published *History of the World in the Early Seventeenth Century*, “the Tropics” were “infested with the fearful and dangerous thunder and lightning, the horrible and frequent earthquake, the dangerous diseases, the multitude of venomous beasts and worms.” Thus, the Brits perceived Bengal weather to have an unhealthy effect on the European physical constitution. Malignant fever, liver complaints, dysentery, and diarrhea were common.³⁰



This large warrior/god stands at the entrance to a seventh century temple at the UNESCO World Heritage site known as Pattadakal in northern India. The ceremonial club with the arm resting on top is reminiscent of the pose of the Farnese Hercules statue of ancient Rome. This statue demonstrates that the Indian tradition of club swinging has a very old history indeed.

One of the most infamous diseases of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—cholera—broke out in Bengal in August 1817. Between 19 September 1817 and 17 July 1818, almost thirty-seven thousand people died from the disease in Calcutta alone. This particular outbreak continued to spread and by the 1820s reached the Mediterranean region of Europe. David Arnold estimated that between one and two million Indians died in this first of several cholera epidemics.³¹ Because cholera is a bacterial disease and is often spread by water, historian Tinni Goswami Bhattacharya argued that the public sanitation and bathing in rivers, such as the Ganges, helped spread the disease. The officials of the East India Company blamed the indigenous people for epidemics like cholera, malaria, plague, and kalazar.³² In 1831, an article published in *Gleaning from Science* profoundly described the mortality problems faced by British workers during this period.³³ The perilous situation not only affected the East India Company employees but also the British army. The mortality rates of the British colonists were a topic of great anxiety for the men responsible for their being in India.³⁴

To combat these problems, the medical men adopted various preventive medicines in India. It was argued that the Indian climate was not necessarily harmful to the Europeans if they were “disciplined and attentive to excess.” The naval surgeon Charles Curtis drew attention to the inappropriate diets of Europeans; he believed the overconsumption of meat was the root of many illnesses. He further added that Europeans injured themselves “from a kind of false bravado, and the exhibition of a generous contempt for what they reckon the luxurious and effeminate practices of the country.”³⁵ To save themselves from the wrath of tropical diseases, some Europeans embraced indigenous medical practices. European medical men from the early seventeenth century benefitted from the use of indigenous medical knowledge by utilizing local medicinal plants and consulting practitioners of Indian systems of medicine.³⁶ Some men also adopted physical exercise and sports as a means to develop their immunity and followed the phrase, “Prevention is better than cure.” This can be inferred from the 1863 *Royal Commission on the Sanitary State of the Army in India* that linked their “want of exercise” to the “high rate of sickness and mortality.” Thus, by 1880 sports along with other amusements, were utilized “to keep up the men’s cheerfulness . . . Fighting against the ennui that

is the breeding ground of sickness."³⁷

Europeans of different professions practiced physical exercise in Bengal to avert sickness. However, as noted, much of this keenness for physical exertion was fueled by the belief that such undertakings would help avert maladies in what was perceived as an extremely unhealthy and unclean environment. By the twentieth century, British women also participated in physical exercise nearly as much as their male counterparts. They used to play "violent-tennis" and later took to squash and courted exhaustion by galloping about on horseback in the hot weather.³⁸ In *Indian Memories*, Baden Powell wrote that there is no doubt that the best way to prevent disease in India is "plenty of work, occupation and exercise." Powell argued that polo and pig-sticking altered the lives and careers of young officers who had developed a healthy taste of exercise and gave up subaltern habits like drinking and betting. Exercise and sports also imbued them with moral values, and above all, the qualities to be a successful leader.³⁹ Zebina Griffin, a missionary in India for fifteen years, wrote, "The thing considered necessary for almost the very existence of Europeans in India is the early morning exercises. This is usually in the form of a drive or horse-back ride. A half-hour gallop on horseback sends the blood bounding through the veins, and makes one feel fresh and strong for the work of the day." He believed that unless duties were very pressing, most Europeans should spend between thirty minutes to an hour on exercise.⁴⁰

The British considered the greatest asset of their army was its fitness, stamina, and temperament. Their fondness for "manly" games helped them acquire these qualities. Members of the forces had always emphasized the benefits of partaking in games, especially polo and football. According to General Waghorn, president of the Railway Board of Simla, the Germans could have won the First World War if they had had the same sporting spirit as the British. Waghorn further exclaimed that the superior performance of British soldiers in the First World War owed considerably to their keenness for sporting activities.⁴¹ It was, in fact, quite important for the sustenance of the empire.

SPREADING THE BOONS OF PHYSICAL EXERCISE AMONG THE NATIVES

The British perception of "exercise as a preventive medicine" was not confined within the Europeans of Bengal, but also spread among

the native youth of Bengal. Public health, according to philosopher Michel Foucault, was a means often used by governments to know and control colonial subjects. It emerged from a reformist mode of governance that was part and parcel of British Imperialism.⁴² Historically, public health was confined to sanitary regulations and the organization of medical relief during the outbreak of epidemic diseases. However, by the twentieth century, its mandate included a lot more than appraising sanitation.⁴³ For example, several governmental policies were undertaken by the British to improve the health of the Bengali youth through physical education and sports.

Health education was defined in a contemporary educational survey of Bengal as "the sum of experiences useful for promoting vigorous health." The survey also considered that "these experiences may occur in the school or on the playground; or may be outside the immediate school environment."⁴⁴ Physical education, on the other hand, was the participation in adequate bodily activities that further improved human health. The programs of physical exercises were aimed at developing muscles and nerves, strengthening the vital organs and also developing certain social values like discipline, obedience, ready responses, and self-control. In other words—character building through athletic teamwork.⁴⁵ A 1927 article in *The Englishman*, claimed that physical education and medical examinations should become compulsory in the schools and colleges of Bengal; therefore, schools would actively support gymnastics, games, swimming, and other forms of exercise in the belief that it would improve the physical health of the students.⁴⁶

In 1931, colonial administrators described the significance of sports and physical exercise in academic institutions by claiming, "Physical culture has long formed an important subject in the curriculum of every public and secondary school in the most advanced countries of the world, and in India, where the climate is so often detrimental to physical development, the need for measures to combat climatic effects and build up young instinct with health and energy is far more urgent and vital. Schools in India have paid little attention to physical culture."⁴⁷ Prior to the advent of colonialism, schools in Bengal did pay little attention to physical education.⁴⁸ The *Report of the Indian Education Commission of 1882*, headed by Wilson Hunter, first mentioned the importance of physical training in its recommendations.⁴⁹ The report proposed that instead

of conducting just military drills in the native schools and colleges, emphasis should rather be on those exercises that would help in the exertion of all the muscles of the body.⁵⁰ A letter from the Government of Bengal in 1889 joined in the discussion by stating that since “Bengalis won’t go in for physical games, something in the way of the drill should be made compulsory.”⁵¹ During the 1880s, British administrators recommended physical development through native games, gymnasiums, and so on.⁵²

Reflecting the importance that colonial administration attached to the proliferation of sports and physical culture, the new post of “physical instructor” was instituted in schools and colleges in Bengal. In 1932, the Minister of Education of Bengal opened a new government training center to impart courses in Physical Education.⁵³ In this regard, a report in *The Times of India* wrote, “To leave nothing to chance in developing a strong and healthy race of Bengalis is the object of the scheme of physical education that the government of Bengal intends to put in operation from the beginning of the next month.”⁵⁴

Another report in the same periodical said similarly, “Educationists and those interested in the future of Indian youth have always expressed anxiety about the apathy towards sports and physical culture which characterizes the Indian school boy and college youths . . . The deplorable effects of this one-sided development upon the physique of the country’s manhood need not be emphasized . . . Government and the Universities have realised this, and for some time efforts have been made to introduce a scheme which may develop the student’s body together with his mind.”⁵⁵ With these steps, definite advances were made in the direction of inculcating awareness and interest in physical culture.

Schools in Bengal were frequently encouraged to arrange for annual medical examinations of the students. The results of these examinations were forwarded to the parents and guardians. Masters of each class were requested to maintain a health chart for each student which was appraised weekly by the headmaster. When students failed to achieve the required amount of exercise, their names were forwarded to physical instructors for further consideration.⁵⁶ On 22 February 1926, the Bengali Legislative Council passed a resolution making physical education compulsory for boys between the age of 12 and 18 in high schools. Complying with this resolution, a plan was laid

down by the Director of Physical Instruction of Bengal. A curriculum was framed for primary schools where drill was made compulsory for all five classes with the following program:

Class I - Marching, drill, simple movements and games.

Class II - Beginning of simple formal exercises and games.

Class III - Formal exercises, marching, drills and games.

Class IV - Formal drill exercises, complete syllabus of Dr. Gray’s drill book and several other games.

Class V - Revision of the syllabus of Class IV and Western games such as football.⁵⁷

Since 1920 reports of the Students’ Welfare Committee highlighted and classified the prevalence of physical defects and diseases among students. Thus, several recommendations were made concerning the development of physical training across schools:

1. Provision of adequate recreational ground.
2. Introduction of drills, gymnastics and organised games—both Indian and European—under the guidance of qualified instructors in several schools of Bengal.
3. Provision and equipment of gymnasiums in educational institutions.
4. Encouraging school sports as well as annual events along with sanction of liberal grants for inter-school tournaments.
5. More systematic medical examination of school students and as funds would allow, the appointment of qualified medical inspecting staff.⁵⁸

Members of the Physical Education Committee also directed school authorities to ensure proper nutrition for their students. Students were advised to bring *tiffins* (a light meal or snack) from home and eat them to be sufficiently energized to undertake physical exercise after school.⁵⁹

The Ministry of Education under the Government of Bengal realized that it was not sufficient merely to lay down a compulsory curriculum of physical education, but a meager amount of funds should be allocated to buy apparatus for physical training.⁶⁰ With the introduction of several policies, it was realized that a fund was required for the smooth functioning of the sporting activities of the schools and colleges in Bengal. The government, on several

occasions, offered monetary assistance for obtaining gym apparatus for the school athletic clubs or gymnastics programs. For them the foundation of playgrounds and gymnasia were objects no less worthy of public beneficence.⁶¹ At Dacca, the leading college in athletic matters, gymnastic apparatus was erected for 1,260 rupees and was restored in 1881 for 804 rupees. The cricket and lawn tennis club received an annual government grant of 100 rupees and an admission fee of one rupee was charged to the students of the college and two rupees to outsiders. The Krishnagar College Cricket Club received 50 rupees from the government.⁶² The Presidency College's gym apparatus was purchased at a cost of 611 rupees, of which 500 was paid by Maharaja Holkar. The gym apparatus in the Hare School was acquired for 666 rupees, the cost being charged from the surplus funds of the school.⁶³ The spread of physical education and sports was perceived by Bengali youths with considerable enthusiasm, and they started believing in the boons of physical exercises.

HEALTHY BODY, HEALTHY NATION: ADAPTATION OF PHYSICAL CULTURE BY THE BENGALI YOUTHS

*The amusements of numerous people that do not supply the British with a single sepoy (Colonial soldier) cannot be expected to bear a military character. The god did not make him warlike. Possessed of lax nerves, of a feeble body and of a timid soul, nature has not meant him to handle a gun, or wield a sword.*⁶⁴

Most of the Bengali intellectuals who were influenced by Western education subscribed to the colonial notion of exercise as a preventive medicine. With the help of this medicine they tried to regenerate their lost vitality and aimed to decolonize their "effeminate" bodies. The Bengalis were convinced of their physical degeneration and tried to develop their physical strength through physical exercise along with other Western sports. They used the sports field as a place where they could challenge the British at their sports and the *akhsharas* (gymnasiums) became a new space where they aimed to rejuvenate their "lost masculinity" and strove to create a "new" and "healthy" Bengali community. The concern was that their personal "physical degeneration" would result

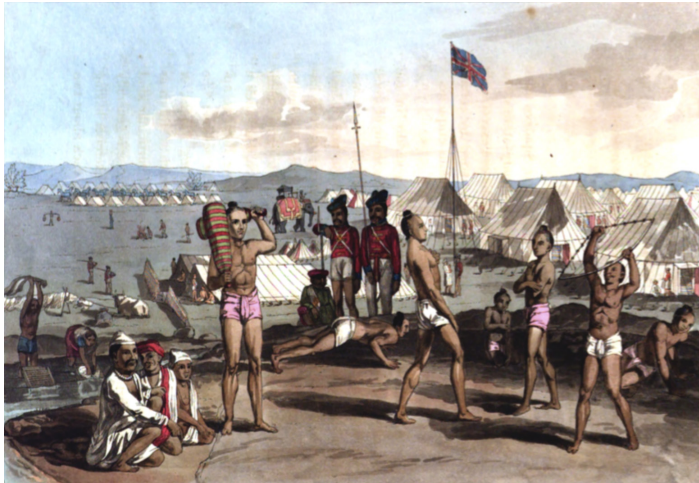
in political degeneration. This perception, coupled with the Western cultural emphasis on physical strength, urged the community to create a strong, masculine Bengali race.

Grave concern over the degenerating health of the Bengali youth had reverberated time and again in contemporary writings in the early twentieth century. It was considered that "files and machines dictate our work; cinemas and theatres determine our leisure." Therefore, young boys were advised to indulge in sports which were considered essential for healthy living.⁶⁵

Vernacular print media took up the responsibility of disseminating knowledge about the boons of physical exercise through their articles. Many contemporary journals, like *Swastha Samachar*, highlighted the importance of *byam* (physical exercise) or exercise. One such article mentioned that a person must exercise regularly to stay healthy. It also mentioned that the lack of exercise would ultimately make muscles and ligaments weak and that if somebody desires a healthy body, he should not compromise with his daily *byam*.⁶⁶ Another issue stressed the role of exercise and games in a child's life. It also warned the reader that some kinds of exercises were not beneficial for everybody; an exercise benefiting a child may not be beneficial to an adult. Swimming and walking were beneficial to all, but unfortunately, the pressure of the school curriculum made it difficult for students to exercise which in turn took a toll on their health.⁶⁷

Various contemporary articles advised Bengali youth to develop their physical strength. Writer Hemendra Kumar Roy in *Bharati* (a vernacular newspaper) lamented the fact that Bengali parents always tried to inculcate a feeling among their progeny that education was the most significant component in living a materially fruitful life. Unfortunately, the parents failed to realize that physical development through exercise is equally important. Roy further pointed out that the "weak and fragile" health of Bengali youth was considered deplorable. In his opinion, a casual visit to College Street in Calcutta in the afternoon would reveal how the Bengali student community had become physically weak due to the burden of the university syllabus. This was alarming since they were the future of the nation. They had developed unhealthy habits and consequently lost proper digestive capacity. This accounted for the prevalence of diseases and premature deaths in Bengal. Roy believed that political

propaganda and the movement for *Swaraj* (independence) was a hollow struggle because even if the Bengalis earned independence, they would not be able to enjoy it. He further commented that a good physique was of immense importance and in this sphere, Bengalis would have to bow down before the people of all independent nations. He claimed that Bengalis believed that the attainment of *Swaraj* would enable them to protect the nation, but unfortunately, they were not even physically capable of protecting their own houses.⁶⁸



In 1809, English soldier Thomas Broughton wrote admiringly of the Indian troops' physical culture practices, concluding that not only were such exercises beneficial, but those undertaking them were extraordinarily athletic. The above sketch by Broughton illustrates such practices. 'Daily Exercise, Mahratta Camp,' Thomas Duer Broughton, *Letters Written in a Mahratta Camp During the Year 1809* (London, 1813), 218.

An article in *Sakha* (a vernacular newspaper) reiterated the necessity of exercise for becoming healthy. It advised Bengalis to undertake regular exercise not only to keep fit and healthy, but also to become self-sufficient in coping with adverse situations.⁶⁹ Education, which was considered an essential precondition for manhood, promoted the harmonious development of the body and mind. The inclusion of physical education makes education holistic by the reasonable cultivation of all the forces and qualities of which a man is comprised. The moral consequence of physical education was axiomatic, granting self-mastery, moral elegance, and equilibrium.⁷⁰

Several challenges were voiced regarding the development of the physical health of students. Advocates of the idea that school life had bad repercussions upon the normal posture of the body believed that all the studying hampered the proper flow of lymph and blood and the functioning of the systems. They ar-

gued that studious and sedentary habits result in some degree of contortion of the spine. This deformity of the spinal column would distort the spinal marrow, which is the source of the nerves, muddling the operation of other organs and leading to shortness of breath and palpitations of the heart, which were common in schools.⁷¹ It was mentioned in contemporary literature that the Bengali parents usually devoted their complete attention to the cognitive development of their offspring, but they displayed no interest in their psychomotor development which was important for their health. Being unaware of the influence of physique over mind, Bengali parents led their offspring to the impairment of health and fitness causing the breakdown of their health.⁷² Contemporary vernacular literature like *Alaler Chorer Dulal* argued that as far as the children were concerned, it should be ensured that they study and play games simultaneously.⁷³

Several devotees of physical exercise in Bengal shared their experience about the positive influence of exercises on their health. Nirmal Chandra Sarkar, a resident of Calcutta, started exercise under Balaram Shill in Vivekananda Byam Samiti. With the help of exercise, he succeeded in overcoming his physical disabilities.⁷⁴ Bodybuilder Balaram Babu had been afflicted by asthma and typhoid at a young age, which had taken a toll on his health. However, he started working out and gradually gained strength and vitality.⁷⁵ Another interesting example of a person who used exercise remedially was Aruna Bandopadhyay. She had been affected by pneumonia, typhoid, and several other diseases that had made her grow weak. After recovering from the disease, she started regular exercise and made considerable progress in regaining health and mobility.⁷⁶

BENGALI WOMEN AND PHYSICAL FITNESS IN COLONIAL BENGAL

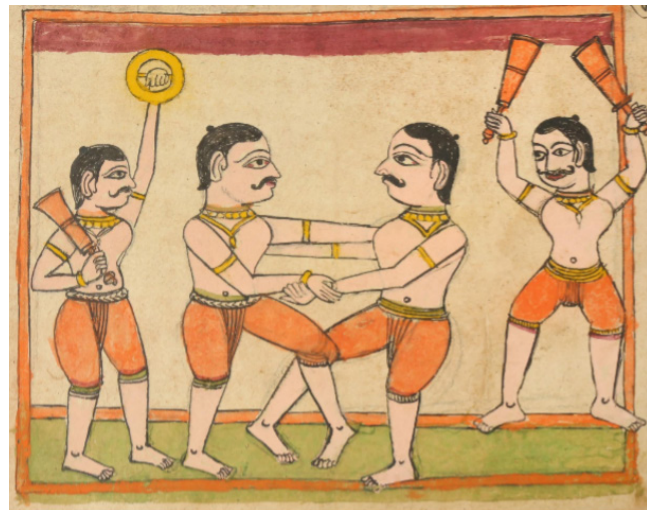
Bengali women, who in the nineteenth century preferred to confine themselves within the *zenana* (the inner quarters of the house), were also advised to indulge in physical activities. However, they embraced exercise so that they became physically strong in the service of motherhood, since it was believed that only a strong mother could give birth to strong male progeny.

Nineteenth-century Bengal witnessed the emergence of a new form of patriarchy that

molded the educated woman according to male preferences. This patriarchy required an educated wife who would fulfill their husband's demands and organize their family's domestic life. These women were also advised to take part in physical exercise. It was believed that physical exercise would make them strong and that their strength could mean their children would be stronger and healthier. Samita Sen believed that the infant mortality rate, together with the British notion that Bengalis were "effeminate" and unhealthy, made the Bengali nationalists emphasize the need of having an enlightened mother.⁷⁷ Similarly, derogatory comments of British overlords concerning the lack of physical strength of the Bengalis convinced the nationalists to take the culture of physical fitness seriously. The situation was so critical that it became a national concern when the rising statistics of infant and maternal mortality rates came to the forefront. After the corroboration of the Census of 1872 and 1881, the Dufferin Fund was established in 1885 to address the situation.⁷⁸

Patriarchal messages involving exercise as a means to eugenic supremacy were also reinforced in the Bengali newspapers. The messages were consistent and clear. Each child was a miracle of creation that needed to be handled gently. Bengali mothers needed to be schooled to make them aware of their responsibility as mothers.⁷⁹ Thus, women should participate in physical exercise to secure a healthy and prosperous child. In an article published in the magazine *Cooch Behar Darpan*, Jaitindra Bhusan Ghosh pointed out that strong women would become wives, then mothers. The health of the future citizens of the country depended on the physical health of the women; therefore, like their male counterparts, they should be allowed to do physical exercise.⁸⁰ An article published in *Bharatvarsha* (a vernacular newspaper) repeated a similar sentiment that women who intended to become mothers in the future should ensure their proper education and be taught the significance of physical fitness.⁸¹ Both of the authors advocated the participation of women in exercises like skipping and drill. Playing *lathi*, sword fighting, and swimming also provided enhancement of the women's physical strength.⁸² Dr. Ramesh Chandra Roy also advised women to be conscious of the fact that they were the procreators of the next generation, as well as the future of the nation. If weak mothers could not produce healthy generations, the Bengalis would consequently lag behind the people from other states.⁸³ Sarojini Devi advised ev-

ery Indian girl to take part in sports to attain strength, bravery, independence, beauty and to bear physically healthy sons for the greater glory of the motherland.⁸⁴ In her speech at the Mahila Vidyapith in Uttar Pradesh, Sushoma Devi, niece of Rabindranath Tagore—the 1913 Nobel Prize winner in literature—emphasized the importance of physical training for every female child as the mother of the future race.⁸⁵ Sarala Devi Chaudhurani, the founder of Bharat Stri Mahamandal, introduced games with batons and swords among women, thereby encouraging physical culture among women.⁸⁶ However, in retrospect, it must be mentioned that the protectors of patriarchy, with their inclination towards future generations of healthy male children, actually paved the way for women's emancipation. To fulfill their selfish desires to acquire educated wives with healthy wombs to bear their progeny, the Bengali males had to loosen their firm hold over the *antarmahal* (inner quarters of Bengali households) that allowed women to step into the light and make themselves stronger, both physically and mentally. This would ultimately culminate in women getting a stronger foothold in the public realm to assert their rights and voice their opinions.



This drawing is believed to be from the latter part of the nineteenth century and was hand drawn. It depicts an akhara, or gymnasium, and shows two wrestlers training in the center, another wrestler holding two clubs and, on the left, a man holding one club and a weight overhead. Artist unknown.

CONCLUSION

Mark Harrison believes that it is beyond anyone's capacity to give a comprehensive account of public health in British India in a single volume.⁸⁷ Corroborating his viewpoint, this article unearths an aspect of the British public health policy that remains outside the sphere of

prior scholarly writing. It can be argued that exercise and physical culture were utilized by both the colonizers and colonized to stay healthy. It was used by both for the prevention of disease and to develop their immunity towards the malicious diseases of the region. Initiatives of the British evoked a positive response from Bengali youth as they realized that physical fitness was important to remove the stigma of effeminacy and to reconstruct a healthy Bengali nation. Thus, in Bengal, the adoption of Western sport and physical culture by the Bengalis was inextricably linked with the idea of colonial masculinity. According to Jaya Chatterji, the *Bhadraloks* (Western-educated gentlefolks) of Bengal were experiencing a steady decline in self-esteem and confidence during the early twentieth century owing to various factors. First, the decline of the *zamindari* system impeded the continuation of existing economic heft. Second, the exclusion of Bengalis from the Congress high command exacerbated anxieties among the middle-class Bengalis.⁸⁸ By now, internalizing the imperial discourse of physical determinism, the *bhadraloks* readily identified various perceptions of physical deficiencies as the source of the sociopolitical crises that they were experiencing. Concepts of deterioration and degeneration served as powerful models explaining everything that was perceived as wrong with the Bengalis. As an author in *The Statesman* wrote, “We Bengalis are not today what we used to be. We are no longer in the forefront of things and I think a great deal of this is due to our physical deterioration.”⁸⁹

Thus, the importance of physical exercise and sports as preventive medicine was accepted both by the colonizers and colonized. But their means of usage were different. While the British administrators utilized exercise to develop their immunity to avert the diseases of the tropics, the colonized Bengalis aimed to practice exercise to create a physical fit Bengali *jati* (community).

NOTES

1. Anastasios D. Georgoulis, Irini-Sofia Kipidou, et al., “Herodicus, The Father of Sports Medicine,” *Knee Surgery, Sports Traumatology, Arthroscopy* 15, no. 3 (March 2007): 315-318.
2. Dominic Malcolm, *Sport, Medicine and Health: The Medicalization of Sports* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2017), 35.
3. Don Hall, ed., *Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
4. Malcolm, *Sport, Medicine and Health*, 28.
5. For more information on the history of the Bengal territories see, Nitish Sengupta, *History of the Bengali-Speaking People* (New Delhi: UBS Publishers’ Distributors, 2001).
6. Peter Van Der Veer, *Imperial Encounters: Religion and Modernity in India and Britain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 95.
7. Harvey Day, “Britons Have Taken Soccer to Ends of Earth,” *The Times of India*, 4 October 1959.
8. James Stark, “Fitness Gurus and ‘Muscular Christianity’: How Victorian Britain Anticipated Today’s Keep Fit Craze,” 9 January 2020, https://theconversation.com/fitness-gurus-and-muscular-christianity-how-victorian-britain-anticipated-to-days-keep-fit-craze-129522_.
9. Donald Walker, *British Manly Exercise* (London: T. Hurst, 1835), 2 and 14.
10. Simon D. Kehoe, *Indian Club Exercise: Explanatory Figures and Positions* (New York: Frederic A. Brady, 1867), 7.
11. For more information on Indian Club swinging in Colonial India see: Joseph S. Alter, “Indian Clubs and Colonialism: Hindu Masculinity and Muscular Christianity,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 46, no. 3 (July 2004): 497-534; and Conor Heffernan, *Indian Club Swinging and the Birth of Global Fitness: Muggars, Masculinity and Marketing* (London: Bloomsbury Academic Press, 2023).
12. For details see Derek Birley, *Sports and the Making of Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), 238. See also Stark, “Fitness Gurus.”
13. Allan Broman, “Physical Education in Elementary Schools—A Part of the School Hygiene,” a paper read before the International Congress of Hygiene and Demography, 12 August 1891.
14. *Ibid.*, 3.
15. *Ibid.*, 4.
16. *Ibid.*, 5.
17. Gustav Ernst, *The Portable Gymnasium: A Manual of Exercises, Arranged for Self-Instruction in the Use of the Portable Gymnasium* (London: by the author, 1861), 2. Illustration of machine on page 9.
18. *Ibid.*, 6-7.
19. Brian Stoddard, *Sports, Culture and History: Region, Nation and Globe* (London: Routledge, 2008), 119.
20. J. A. Mangan, *The Games Ethic and Imperialism: Aspects of the Diffusion of an Ideal* (Portland: Frank Class, 1998), 29.
21. Broman, “Physical Education,” 3.
22. To the Editor, “Military Training at Public Schools,” *The Times*, 30 December 1859, p. 9, as quoted in J. A. Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School* (New York: Routledge, 1981), 122.
23. “Light and Dark Blue,” *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* 100, no. 612 (October 1866): 448, as quoted in Mangan, *Athleticism*, 122.
24. William Augustus Guy, “On the Sanitary Condition of the British Army; and Especially on the Want of Space in Barracks,” *Royal United Services Institution Journal* 2, no. 5 (1858): 10.
25. *Ibid.*
26. James Dunbar Campbell, “‘The Army Isn’t All Work’: Physical Culture in the Evolution of the British Army, 1860-1920,” (PhD diss., University of Maine, 2003), 34.
27. Ernest Blake Knox, *Military Sanitation and Hygiene* (London: Bailliere, Tindall and Cox, 1911), 284.
28. Campbell, “‘The Army Isn’t All Work,’” 4.
29. Knox, *Military Sanitation*, 293.
30. Sujata Mukherjee, “Environmental Thoughts and Malaria in Colonial Bengal: A Study in Social Response,” *Economic and Political Weekly* 43, no. 12-13 (22 March 2008): 54-61, 54-55.
31. David Arnold, *Colonizing the Body: State Medicine and Epidemic Disease in Nineteenth-Century India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 15. See also Mark Harrison, “A Dreadful Scourge: Cholera in Early Nineteenth Century India,” *Modern Asian Studies* 54, no. 2 (March 2020): 502-553; and Henry W. Bellew, *Cholera in India, 1862 to 1881* (Calcutta: Bengal Secretariat Press, 1884); and *Medical and Sanitary Report of the Native Army of Bengal, 1876* (Calcutta: Office of the Superintendent of

- Government Printing, 1877) at: <https://digital.nls.uk/74996914>.
32. Tinni Goswami Bhattacharya, "Revisiting Health in Colonial Bengal: A Literary Overview (1880-1930)," *Journal of Social and Development Sciences* 3, no. 11 (November 2021): 374-377.
 33. "To The Editor—On the Duration of Life in the Bengal Civil Service," *Gleanings from Science* 3, no. 33 (September 1831): 273.
 34. Conor Heffernan, "What's Wrong with a Little Swinging? Indian Clubs as a Tool of Suppression and Rebellion in Post-Rebellion India," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 34, no. 7-8 (2017): 560.
 35. Mark Harrison, *Public Health in British India: Anglo-Indian Preventive Medicine, 1859-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 39.
 36. *Ibid.*, 40.
 37. Tony Mason and Eliza Reidi, *Sports and the Military: The British Armed Forces 1880-1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 33-34.
 38. Charles Allen, "Hazard and Sports" in *Plain Tales from the Raj: Images of British India in the 20th Century* (London: Abacus, 1975), 109-110.
 39. Robert Stephenson Smyth Baden Powell, *Indian Memories, Recollections of Soldiering, Sport, Etc.* (London: Jenkins, 1915), 106.
 40. Zebina Flavius Griffin, *India and Daily Life in Bengal* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1912), 57.
 41. From General Waghorn (President, Railway Board, Simla) to General Traffic Manager, Calcutta, Railway Department (Railway Board), GOI November 1920. File Nos. 293T/20 B 1-11, Proceeding 5, Calcutta, 2 May 1920, National Archives of India, New Delhi, India (hereafter NAI).
 42. Michel Foucault cited in Biswamoy Pati and Mark Harrison (ed.), *Social History of Health and Medicine: Colonial India* (Delhi: Primus Books, 2013), 2.
 43. Pati and Harrison, *Social History of Health*, 2.
 44. From E.F. Oaten, Esq., Director of Public Instruction, Bengal, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, File No. 1-U-27(5).
 45. Correspondence from E.F. Oaten, Esq., Director of Public Instruction, Bengal, to The Secretary to the Government of Bengal, File No. 1-U-27(5), Proceeding Nos. 30-32, No. 598, Calcutta, 6 June 1927, Education Department, Proceedings of the Government of Bengal, December 1927, West Bengal State Archive (WBSA).
 46. "School Health Problem," *The Englishman*, 21 April 1927.
 47. Serial No. 24, From the Chief Commissioner, Delhi, No. 8597-EDN, 28 September 1931, Department of Education, Health and Lands, Education Branch, File No. 79/32-E, NAI.
 48. Serial Nos. 1-37, From the Chief Commissioner, Delhi, No. 8597-EDN, 28 September 1931, Department of Education, Health and Lands, Education Branch, NAI.
 49. William Hunter, *Report of the Indian Education Commission* (Calcutta: Office of Superintendent of Government Printing, 1883), 127.
 50. *Ibid.*, 325.
 51. "Discipline and Moral Training in Schools and Colleges in Bengal," Home Department, Education Branch, October 1889.
 52. "Discipline and Moral Training in School," Program Nos. 36-39, MLA Records, Home Department, Education Branch, January 1888.
 53. "Physical Education in Bengal—Government's Move," *The Times of India*, 27 July 1932.
 54. "To Develop Strong Bengali Race—New Institute," *The Times of India*, 22 June 1932.
 55. "Physical Education," *The Times of India*, 27 July 1932.
 56. Correspondence, Oaten to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, 6 June 1927.
 57. File No. 1-U -27(5), Proceeding Nos.30-32. Dr. J.H. Gray was the American national physical director for the YMCA in India, Ceylon, and Burma.
 58. "Physical Culture of Students Reading in Schools Recognized by or Affiliated to the Calcutta University," No. 5368 E., Shillong, 1 December 1926, Correspondence from G.T. Lloyd, Esq., I.C.S., Second Secretary to the Government of Assam, Education Department, to The Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Education Department, in *Education Proceedings*, December 1927, File No. 1-U-27(1), WBSA.
 59. "Physical Culture of Students Reading in Schools Recognized by or Affiliated to the Calcutta University," in *Education Proceedings*, December 1927, File No. 1-U-27(3), WBSA.
 60. Letter from the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, "Character Training of India Youth," File No. 79/32 E, 1932, Department of Education, Health and Lands, Branch of Education. Series Nos. 1-37, Edn A, May 1930, Nos. 20-28. Serial number 7, Education Department, NO-606-EDN, Calcutta, 14 February 1930, NAI.
 61. Correspondence from A.P. MacDonnell, Esq., to All Local Governments and Administrations, Calcutta, 31 December 1887, No. 10/382-91, MLA Records, Home Department, Education Branch, Proceedings, January 1888, NAI.
 62. Notes from Charles H.Tawney to the Secretary of the Government of Bengal, Calcutta, 23 July 1889, No. 3672, Calcutta Records, Home Department, Education Branch, Oct 1889, NAI.
 63. *Ibid.*
 64. Horatio Smith, "Bengali Games and Amusements," *The Calcutta Review* XXX (June 1851): 334-336.
 65. K.N. Roy, "Unemployment and Health," in R.M. Roy, ed., *Report of the All India Educational Conference*, Calcutta, 26-30 December 1937, 267.
 66. *Swastha Samachar* 1, no. 1, Baishak (April-May 1912).
 67. *Swastha Samachar* 9, no. 1, Baishak (April-May 1920).
 68. "Bahute Dao Ma Shakti," *Bharati* 45, no. 5, Bhadra, 1328 (August-September 1921).
 69. "Bat-Ball Khela," *Sakha* 4, no.1 (January 1890).
 70. Radharam Sarkar, "The Science of Physical Education," *The Modern Students* 3, no. 2 (February 1935): 697-699.
 71. *Ibid.*
 72. "Notun Byam Padhati," *Bharati* 48, no.3, Aashar, 1328 (June-July 1921).
 73. Tekchand Thakur, *Alaler Ghorer Dulal* (in Bengali) (Kolkata: Manti Book House, 2012), 21.
 74. Anil Chandra Ghosh, *Byame Bengali* (Calcutta: Presidency Library, 1927), 55.
 75. *Ibid.*, 54.
 76. *Ibid.*, 62.
 77. Samita Sen, "Motherhood and Mothercraft: Gender and Nationalism in Bengal," *Gender and History* 5, no. 2, (Summer 1993): 231-243, 235.
 78. Srirupa Prasad, *Cultural Politics of Hygiene in India, 1890-1940: Contagions of Feeling* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 62.
 79. Geraldine Forbes, *Women in Modern India* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 170.
 80. *Cooch Behar Darpan*, 1349 (B.S.) 1942, *Paila kartik*, as cited in Basudhita Basu, "Gendering Sports in Colonial Bengal," *Economic and Political Weekly* 52, no. 35 (2017): 32-33.
 81. *Bharatvarsha*, 1339 (B.S.), December-January 1933.
 82. *Ibid.*
 83. Dr. Ramesh Chandra Roy, "Narir Swastha," *Bangalaxmi* 6, no. 10 (July 1931), #1338.
 84. S. Sarojini Devi, "Women's Part in Physical Culture," *The Modern Student* 3, no. 7 (July 1935): 428.
 85. Madhurima Mukhopadhyay, "Constructing Self—Bengali Women's Travel Accounts: 1885-1947," (PhD diss., Jadavpur University, 2015), 217.
 86. Prasad, *Cultural Politics*, 65.
 87. Harrison, *Public Health in British India*, 1.
 88. Jaya Chatterji, "The Decline, Revival and Fall of Bhadrakol Influence in the 1940s: A Historiographic Review" in Sekhar Bandyopadhyay, ed., *Bengal: Rethinking History: Essays in Historiography* (Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 2001), 299.
 89. "Bengalis Not What They Were: Physical Weakness," *The Statesman*, 19 December 1930.

BRITAIN'S THOMAS INCH: MORE THAN A DUMBBELL

BY LUCY BOUCHER & JAN TODD
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

Thomas Inch was an influential British physical culturist and weightlifter in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Described in 1920 in *Health & Strength* magazine as “the worthy figurehead of weightlifting,” Inch was highly regarded in that era for his strength and the role he played in organizing and promoting weightlifting. In more recent years, Inch has been primarily remembered for the large, heavy dumbbells he owned that are often referred to as Inch’s “Unliftable” Dumbbells.¹ In this profile of the early pioneer we attempt to unpack some of the stories surrounding his life and lifting accomplishments in the hope that Inch’s true legacy can be better understood.

Thomas Inch was born on 27 December 1881, in Scarborough, a small seaside town in the Northern part of Yorkshire. His interest in strength began at an early age. Reflecting on his life in physical culture, Inch declared that he began digging holes in his back yard “with the sole object of developing muscle” at eight years old. He was fascinated by the music hall strong men and read everything he could find on strength training. At the age of 12 he claimed he set himself a series of ambitious goals, including becoming the strongest man in Britain and possessing 17-inch biceps.²

The goal-oriented 12-year-old acquired his first set of dumbbells that same year and began researching what he later described as “various important works on physical culture.”³ One of these texts might well have been Professor Josef Szalay’s mail-order strength training course. In 1912 Szalay, a former performing strongman who ran an important gym in London, claimed that he gave Inch his first postal instructions for physical development while he was still living in Scarborough.⁴ Inch, like many

commercially minded physical culturists, however, later claimed that he was entirely self-taught and had “never had a lesson from any man.”⁵

In an autobiographical article published in 1933, Inch wrote that by age 13 he had acquired a set of both 5-pound and 56-pound dumbbells; a set of Indian clubs; a chest expander; and that he trained in the attic of his family home until his mother couldn’t stand the noise anymore. He reputedly then took over a gymnasium in Scarborough even though he was only 15 years old.⁶ In a census report from 1901, when he was approximately 20 years old, he is listed as still living at home in Scarborough with his mother, Hannah, his younger brother, George, and sisters, Blanche and Mabel. His profession is listed as “Physical Drill School Master,” and he is listed as self-employed.⁷ How successful his gym was at the early time in his life is not known as no records of his various businesses survive.⁸

Inch apparently began competing in lifting contests at age 16. In 1897, he won the first contest he entered, a strand-pulling (chest-expander) contest in Bradford, England. Author Gilbert Odd, in a retrospective piece on Inch published in *Health & Strength* in 1960, claimed Inch performed feats of strength at a circus in Scarborough when he was 17, and by age 19 was known as “The World’s Strongest Youth.”⁹ W.J. Lowry, the renowned chronicler of the early days of British lifting, explained in a 1960 article that because there were no official weightlifting organizations at this time, it was common for both amateur and professional lifters to claim records and make up titles for themselves.¹⁰

As “The World’s Strongest Youth” Inch held some impressive records. He was reported to have raised two 56-pound weights above his head with one hand, supposedly jumped over a chair while holding 120 pounds (probably two 60-pound dumbbells) in his hands, and

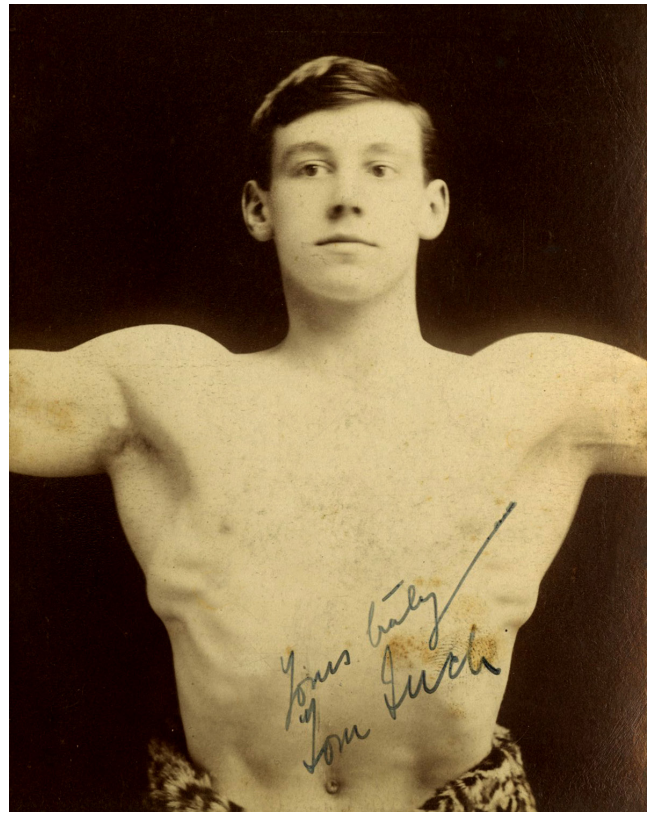
Correspondence to: Dr. Jan Todd, NEZ 5.700, Dept. of Kinesiology & Health Education, Stark Center, University of Texas at Austin, 78712. Email: jan@starkcenter.org.

he could perform a right-handed bent press of 204 pounds. He also worked hard on his grip and began to be recognized for his unusual hand strength.¹¹ Whether Inch really deserved the “World’s Strongest Youth” title, however, remains a question.

Not content with being just Scarborough’s strongest man, Inch decided to move to London, the epicenter of late nineteenth century weightlifting, to pursue his dream of being known as Britain’s Strongest Man. In a 1912 article in *Health & Strength*, Inch reported that he first visited the capital city in 1899 when he was 18 years old. He gravitated to Professor Szalay’s gymnasium where he was introduced to plate-loading barbells for the first time.¹² Szalay was an important figure in Britain’s fledgling Iron Game and was an influential coach, performer, and gym owner in the *fin de siècle* era. A 1912 newspaper article, in fact, described Szalay (not Sandow) as “The Pioneer of Weightlifting.”¹³

Whether he visited the offices of *Health & Strength* magazine on that trip is not known, but shortly after he returned to Scarborough, he published his first article in the magazine. “A Lecture on Physical Culture,” appeared in December 1900 and it detailed his recovery from scarlet fever through physical culture.¹⁴ The sickly youth who rebuilt his health by lifting was a much-used trope in the early days of physical culture. Sandow and Macfadden both told comparable stories.

Wishing to view himself as a writer and expert, Inch moved permanently to London in 1902 and began selling a physical culture training course through the postal service. It appears that Inch was also performing in stage shows at this time, since he was ordered by the courts to pay a debt of 37 shillings for the printing of stage programs in 1902. Inch fought the charge, claiming he was still legally a minor and could not be prosecuted, but the court found against him.¹⁵ Shortly afterwards, in 1903, he began appearing in advertisements for products such as Grape Nuts cereal, a sign of his rising popularity.¹⁶ That same year he opened an office at 60 Bishop’s Road, Fulham, and began selling his own shot-loading barbells and dumbbells.¹⁷ Although he was still in his early twenties, and had yet to win a major amateur contest, let alone a professional one, Inch’s self-confidence was unwavering and, according to *Health & Strength* author Lowry, the launch of Inch’s physical culture business went well and soon had a big impact on the Iron Game in Britain.¹⁸



Thomas Inch claimed that he decided to become The Strongest Man in Britain when he was just 12 years old. By the time this photograph was taken, at age 17, he had made considerable progress toward that goal and had won a strand-pulling contest at age 16 and had begun performing feats of strength in a circus in his hometown of Scarborough, England. On the back of this cabinet card someone has written, “Thomas Inch aged 17 – when he claimed the world’s junior championship.” As noted by the authors, “it was common for both amateur and professional lifters to claim records and make up titles for themselves.” They found no evidence of a “world junior championships” in weightlifting, but clearly Inch is already a strong man.

A large part of that impact came from Inch’s advocacy of heavy weight training. In his first book, *Scientific Weight-lifting*, released in 1905, Inch laid out his belief in the positive benefits of lifting heavy weights. The book was viewed as “unusual” and yet “authoritative” for its emphasis on heavy weights.¹⁹ While physical culturists such as Eugen Sandow had published manuals on exercise, Sandow, and most other early physical culture authors, took the safe course of recommending light dumbbells and calisthenics to their readers. The heavy-lifting craze, inspired by George Barker Windship of mid-nineteenth century America, had not yet fully migrated to the United Kingdom, and so Inch’s advice in *Scientific Weight-lifting* signaled a paradigm shift as it is one of the first descriptions of heavy weight training practices published in Britain.²⁰ In the years ahead, Inch would publish several other books. *The*

Art and Science of Lifting was released in 1910; *Inch on Fitness* existed by 1923; *Thomas Inch on Strength* appeared in 1932, and *Developing the Grip and Forearm* was released in 1955 in which he talks specifically about the Inch Challenge Dumbbell and how he trained to lift it.

Inch also helped shift the paradigm for lifting in Britain by his early sale of plate-loading barbells. As historian Jan Todd explained in her article on the history of barbells and dumbbells, the use of spherical plates on the end of barbells was relatively rare in the late-nineteenth century. Most barbells had globes of either solid iron or they were made hollow so they could be filled with lead or sand. However, in Germany, in the 1880s, there were at least two companies selling globe barbells that could be loaded with discs inside the spheres.²¹ In Britain and America, the use of plate-loading barbells was not well known until the early twentieth century when Alan Calvert founded the Milo Barbell Company and manufactured a plate-loading barbell/dumbbell combination he called the Milo Triplex in 1908.²² Inch also began selling a plate-loading barbell in approximately 1908, and wrote in 1933 that “I suppose I may take a little credit to myself for popularising the disc bell, as I stocked them and supplied them well over a quarter of a century ago.”²³ Who manufactured the barbells and dumbbells he sold is not known, but their sale became a major part of his income stream. This was especially true after 1909 when he began advertising that barbells and dumbbells could be purchased on the instalment plan. While instalment plans were not unknown during this period, they were certainly not the norm, and Inch’s adoption of selling on credit is another indication

HEALTH & STRENGTH Sept. 19, 1908.

DISC BAR-BELLS FREE!



INCH'S ADVANCED

- SYSTEM -

To all pupils enrolling for my advanced course I present, gratis, a set of disc weights value 30/-

METHODS OF FAMOUS STRONG MEN.

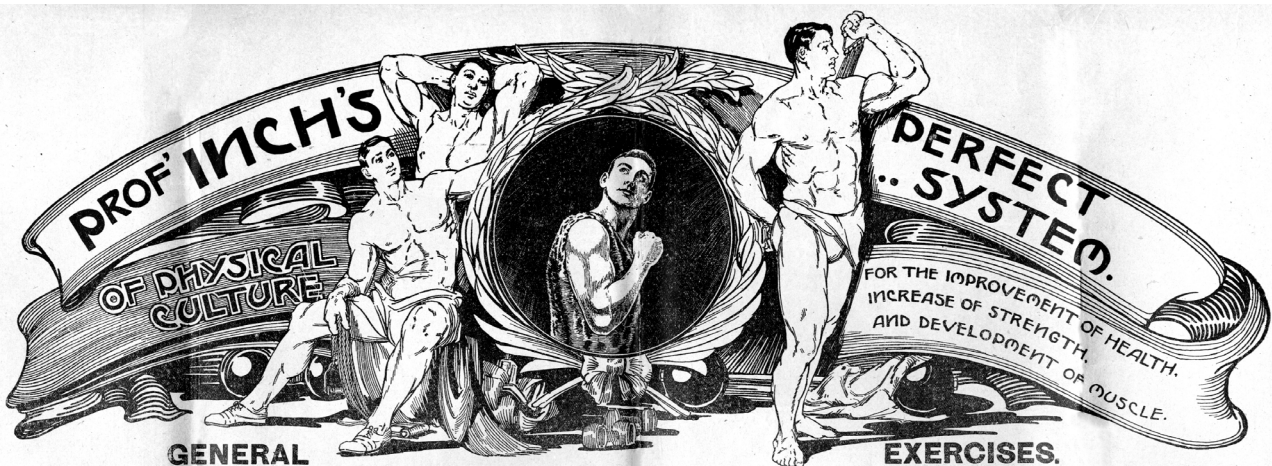
Georges Hackenschmidt, the world's most famous wrestler, and Arthur Saxton, the strongest man on earth, both say plainly that the best method of training, if huge strength and development is desired, is by gradual progressive movements with a special barbell of gradually increasing weight. They further claim that the reason other strong men have put on the market patent developers and asserted that such developers are the proper way to train for strength, is because there is more money in developers than in weights. It has been left to me to so perfect a method of bone training, called "Advanced Training," that there is absolutely no danger of strain and no monotony. For perfect muscular development and increased strength there is no method known which can possibly come up to my latest special course, the use of which led to my winning the world's middle-weight championship at weightlifting. I have over 15,000 pupils, many of them world's record holders, and to such a point have I brought my system that every pupil is enrolled under guarantee. Any person desiring further information and to know my terms is strongly urged to write at once to:

T. INCH, Physical Culture Expert
DEPT. "H"

The Broadway, Finsbury, London, S.W.
for "A Quick Route to Strength" which will be sent gratis and post paid by return mail. This book contains some startling information, and is most interesting and fully illustrated.

By 1908, Inch was selling plate loading barbells as well as training courses. In the hope that he'd sell more courses, he gave away free barbell sets to those students who signed up for his advanced course. It was a bold move but didn't work financially. He ended up moving back home for a time to recover, before returning to London during the war years.

of his entrepreneurial spirit.²⁴ Inch even advertised in September of 1908 that he would give a set of free disc barbells (worth 30 shillings) to those who signed up for his “Advanced System” mail order course. In that same ad in *Health & Strength* he claimed to have 15,000 students.²⁵



After Inch moved to London in 1902 he began to build his business empire. The first step was to claim to be a “professor” as countless other physical culturists did, after which he began selling mail order courses and, eventually, barbells and dumbbells. This image is from the top of an Inch training course poster, circa 1905.

THE PROFESSIONAL STRONGMAN

As part of his plan to sell courses and equipment, it was important for Inch to be seen as a champion of some sort and so his early years in London were filled with heavy training, exhibitions, and contests as he worked toward being known as Britain's Strongest Man. To launch his campaign, Inch placed a challenge in *The Sporting Life*, a newspaper that ran classified advertisements in which strongmen, boxers, wrestlers and other professional athletes set up matches by public challenges in the pages of the paper. In his notice, Inch declared he would meet "any man in the world for the Middle-Weight Lifting Championship," and offered a prize of £100 to the winner—the equivalent of \$3000 today. Inch hoped that his challenge would allow him to compete against Leon See, the French 12-stone (168-pound) champion, who in 1904 had won the British Amateur Championship for his weight class.²⁶ However, See did not rise to the bait. Lowry speculated that it may have been because Inch wanted to use the bent press as one of the six challenge lifts. The reason for these negotiations was that lifting competitions in this era were not run by national governing bodies that had set rules and lists of lifts. In early professional challenge matches, both athletes submitted lifts they wanted to include in the contest, they then negotiated terms, and generally were able to agree on a set of lifts that was unique to each engagement. The bent press inclusion may well have influenced See's unwillingness to meet with Inch, as the lift was not common in France and the rest of Europe.²⁷

Having published the challenge, however, it was still "out there" and on 20 April 1907, Inch competed against a little-known lifter named Bill Caswell at the German Gymnasium in St. Pancras, London. The contest consisted of six lifts; Inch won them all for a total of 1211.5 pounds to Caswell's 829 pounds. On closer inspection, however, Inch's claim that his win made him Britain's Strongest Man was a hollow victory. Caswell was suffering from an injury and only managed to perform four of the lifts. Caswell was also a decade Inch's senior and six inches shorter than the 5"10" Scarborough Hercules.²⁸

As Inch continued training, he outgrew the middle-weight division. In July 1908 he announced the results of a wager in which he set out to prove that a fully developed man could still "mould his body . . . [and] reduce or increase his weight and measurement at will."²⁹ From

November 1907 to July 1908, Inch improved his expanded chest size from 46½ to 50 inches while his biceps swelled from 16½ to 18 inches. He credited his transformation to a diet of porridge, brown bread, and mutton chops, and a varied training regime which alternated days of light dumbbell training with heavy weights, mixed with days of cardiovascular work such as walking, cycling, and boxing.³⁰ Inch was aware of the efficacy of light dumbbell work for muscular endurance, but he also believed it was not useful for building real muscle. As Inch put it, "such muscle will not have strength in proportion to its size unless heavier work is also tried."³¹

While Inch was bulking up, Max Sick, the German weightlifter, had set his sights on Inch's middle-weight title and challenged Inch to a contest in 1909. Inch weighed in at 186 pounds (13 stone, 4 pounds) that October, far above the 161 pounds (11 stone, 7 pounds) weight limit. The two men haggled over the details of the contest in the pages of *Health & Strength*. Inch asked

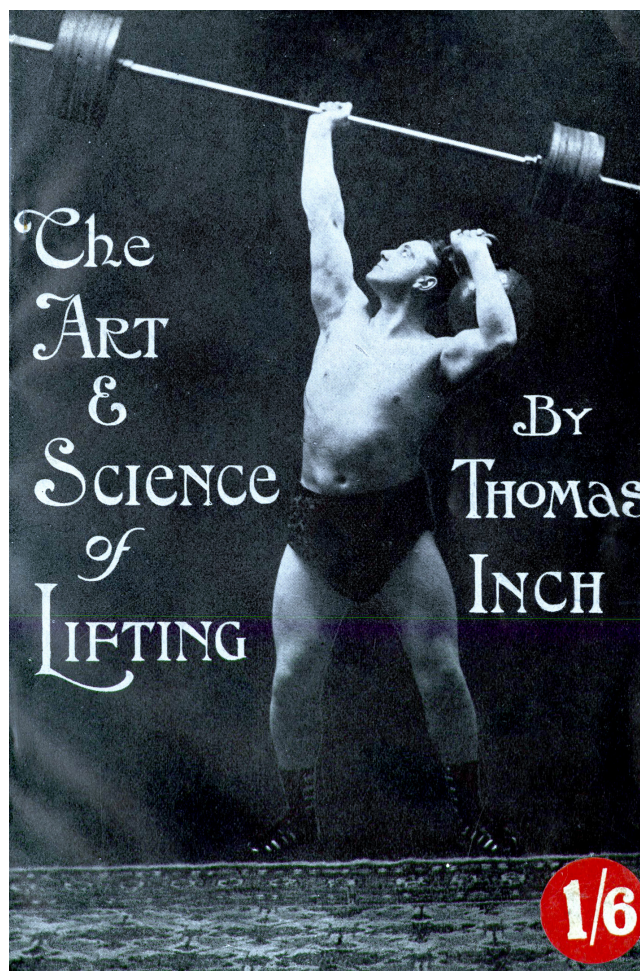


Thomas Inch also appeared as a professional strongman and at times would demonstrate his strength by lifting unusual things—such as this man and bicycle. While an impressive feat of strength, the man in the photo is fellow weightlifter W.L. Carquest who weighed normally under 130 pounds. As the bicycle probably weighed no more than 35 pounds, the total weight lifted was probably around 160 pounds.

Sick to allow him a period of several weeks to diet down and practice his lifts at a reduced weight. Sick was adamant that the competition should take place in two weeks—despite Inch's offer to pay him four weeks' expenses if he would postpone the contest.³² By November, Inch had decreased his weight to 181 pounds (12 stone, 13 pounds) in anticipation of a competition that never took place. Inch began to realize that he would lose too much strength with the weight loss and so bowed out. Having outgrown this classification, Inch set his sights instead on winning Britain's heavyweight title.

Inch announced his intention to be declared "Britain's Strongest Man" in the January 1910 edition of *Health & Strength* magazine.³³ The competition for the title took place on 10 June of the same year between Inch, Thomas Cressey, and another lifter known only as Tevidale. Unbeknownst to his competition, Inch was secretly struggling with an injury that happened during a snatch lift ten days before. *Health & Strength* magazine noted that Inch was not in top form as he failed at many of his lifts and even had one lift disqualified. Despite this, he still managed to outlift his competition and received a standing ovation for his 230.8-pound "one-handed-anyhow."³⁴ Inch's other winning lifts were listed as an impressive 213.14-pound one-hand clean; and a 250-pound two-hands clean.³⁵ The author of the *Health & Strength* report was rhapsodic in his praise of Inch, writing "his development is remarkable . . . it has been acquired by persistent scientific endeavour . . . Before the contest he was beyond question the most scientific lifter in the land; he is now the champion lifter of the land, thereby eloquently vindicating the controlling power of science over sheer brute force."³⁶

This competition was important not just for Inch, but for the future of British weightlifting as well. Reporting for *Health & Strength* magazine, an enthusiastic writer declared, "[Inch] has brought weight-lifting into the forefront . . . and laid the foundation of an organisation that is destined to place this sport of strong men upon a firm foundation."³⁷ As Boucher and Heffernan document in their 2023 article titled, "A Great Weight Lifted: The History of the British Amateur Weight-lifting Association," the June 1910 contest played a significant role in the formation of the British Weightlifting Association—the first organization in Britain set up to regulate both amateur and professional weightlifting.³⁸ According to Boucher and Heffernan,



Thomas Inch published a number of training courses and several longer books. Among the most popular, however, was *The Art and Science of Lifting* published in England in 1900.

The contest came about when weight-lifter and strongman performer Thomas Inch issued a challenge to determine the British Heavy-Weight Champion. *Health and Strength* eagerly reported the dawn of a new age for British weight-lifting, claiming that the "immediate result of the great tournament" must be the "exaltation" of weight-lifting to its "proper place among our British sports." . . . After the initial meeting in October 1910, BAWLA decided that there would be two BAWLA branches—one governing professional and one amateur athletes. The amateur versus professional split was not, of course, uncommon in British sport and could be found everywhere from football to lawn tennis. What dis-

tinguished British weight-lifting was that it was, largely, free of class connotations. The amateur weight-lifter was not praised for their “love of the game” in the way that the amateur footballer was. The bifurcation between amateur and professional had far more to do with the chicanery and showbiz often associated with professional strongmen. . . . The separation between amateur and pro-fessional was a shrewd move by BAWLA to help legitimize amateur weight-lifting—free from the music hall—with popular strongmen.³⁹

Inch became a central figure in the development of BAWLA. He served as treasurer for the professional branch and was reportedly generous with both his time and money. He often announced at amateur contests and donated certificates, trophies, and medals to meet promoters.⁴⁰ He also helped establish the rules governing competition lifts and he personally believed that the one-handed barbell clean; the two-handed barbell clean; the one-handed barbell anyhow; and the two-handed anyhow, should be the lifts used in contests. He described this set of exercises as a fair test of strength, equally suited to the “scientific lifter” and the strongman.⁴¹

Inch held the heavyweight title for only a year before being defeated in 1911. Despite bulking up to an impressive 16 stone (225 pounds) and measuring 53” around the chest, Inch was outlifted by his smaller, former pupil, Edward Aston. This contest was held at the International Athletic School on Tottenham Court Road, London. On the six lifts done in this contest, Inch totaled 1167 pounds for his lifts, while Aston managed an

impressive 1215 pounds.⁴² Audience members travelled from far and wide, including Max Sick and the famous Arthur Saxon to watch the two men battle.⁴³ While Inch was defeated, he still made history at that contest by becoming the first British man to exceed 300 pounds in an overhead lift.⁴⁴

While Inch never reclaimed his heavy-weight title—a crown held by Aston for the next thirty-four years—Inch did continue competing and setting records well into his later years. In 1912, at age 29, he broke Eugen Sandow’s long-standing record of 269 pounds in the Bent Press by lifting 271.5 pounds.⁴⁵ One admirer reported that while preparing for the challenge, Inch warmed up with a 246-pound barbell and then proceeded to juggle a 301-pound barbell from one hand to the other as if it were “nothing more than a mere walking stick.”⁴⁶ According to strength historian David Willoughby, Inch’s professional records also include a 304.5 pound Right-Hand Press from Shoulder made in 1913 and the Two-Hand Anyhow with 356.5 pounds made in 1915. He also did a Right-Hand Military Press with 112 pounds and a Side Press (a form of bent press performed with straight legs) of 201 pounds.⁴⁷



Thomas Inch (in Homburg hat) was good friends with Arthur Saxon and his brothers, Hermann on the far left, and Kurt on the far right. Although the Saxons were born in Germany, Arthur married an English woman and made Britain his home base until World War I forced him to return to Germany. Inch met the Saxon Brothers shortly after he arrived in London and he and Arthur became good friends. They even trained together and Inch claimed later in his life that he had learned how to bent press from Arthur and how to jerk and press by watching Hermann and Kurt.

A HEAVY WEIGHT BUSINESS

As was the case with other physical culture entrepreneurs in this era, Inch's mail-order business—even though he claimed to have thousands of students—did not allow Inch to become a financial success. In 1913, Inch left London and returned to Scarborough for a time—the move he told a reporter was because of his wife's anxiety to return home, but may have also been driven by financial concerns. Where he had once been proprietor of a booming postal training business that employed as many as 50 clerks, he filed for bankruptcy in 1915. Inch told a reporter who covered his appearance in court that his financial problems were caused by the war and his loss of pupils.⁴⁸ In America, Alan Calvert faced similar economic challenges during World War I because of shortages of iron and paper and the widespread economic depression on both sides of the Atlantic.⁴⁹

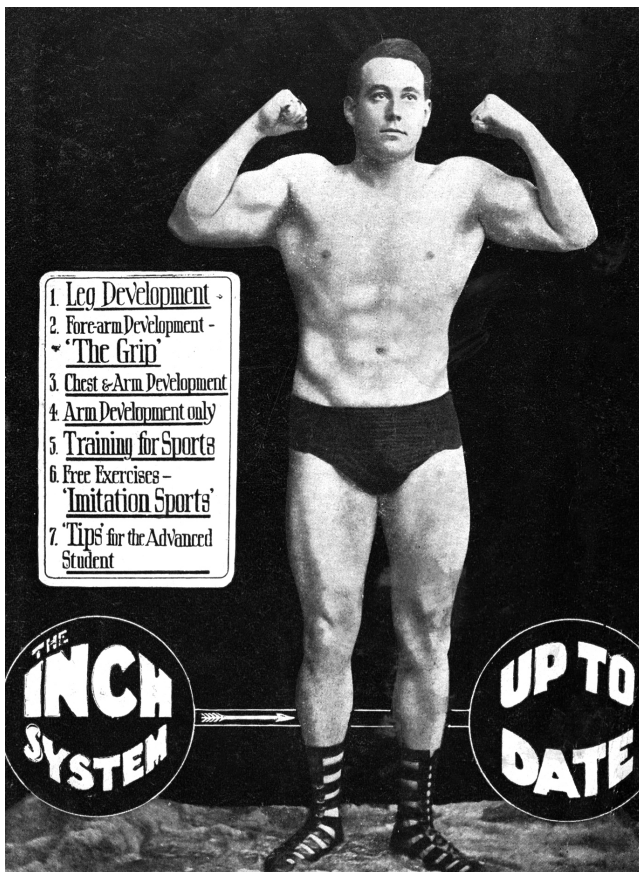
At some point during the War, Inch returned to London and began working as a therapist in Fulham Hospital. There he treated wounded soldiers with remedial exercises, mas-

sage, and bone manipulation in a rudimentary form of physical therapy.⁵⁰ He apparently had especially good luck working with “shell-shock” patients. An article in *Health & Strength* called him a “Health Hero” and explained that doctors at the hospital “used to hand Mr. Inch shell shock cases to deal with, and always with the happiest results.”⁵¹

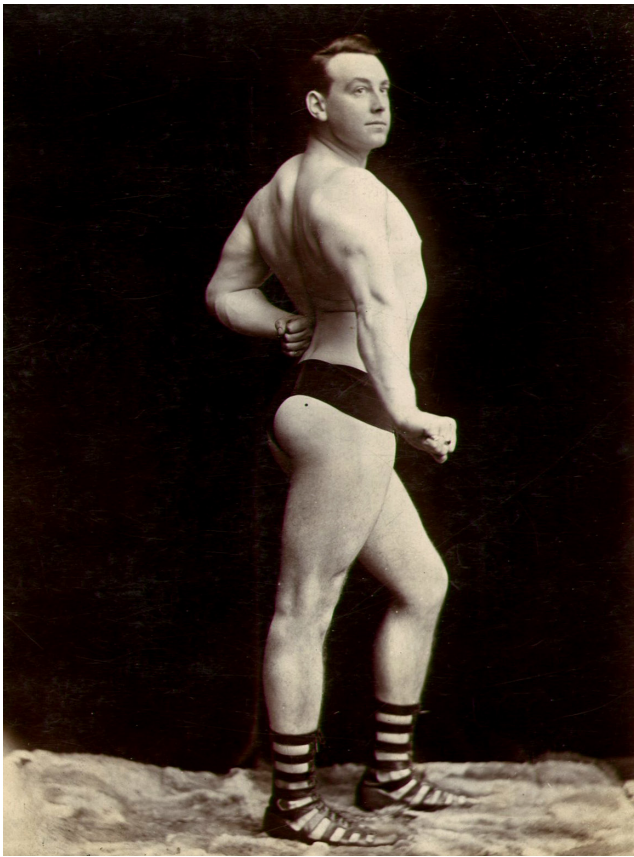
After the War, Inch stayed in London and began rebuilding his business. He was discussed in such non-lifting business magazines as *Method*, *Smith Premier Magazine*, and *Advertising World* where he was described as an innovative and remarkable businessman. One even lauded him for his color-schemed filing system that was “up to date, novel and instructive.”⁵² With Sandow's reign as Britain's leading physical culture expert in decline after the war, Inch was increasingly regarded as “England's authority on physical culture.”⁵³ By the mid-twenties his business encompassed such diverse fields as health care, the training of prize athletes, the selling of exercise equipment, and the selling of his books and his mail-order courses, although he reframed some of the courses that formerly had advocated heavy lifting for those seeking less muscular goals.⁵⁴ He also continued to train famous professional athletes such as W.L. Carquest, the lightweight lifting champion; Gunner Moir, a boxer who lasted ten rounds against Tommy Burns; champion boxer Bombardier Wells; and the 1908 Olympic champion in wrestling, George de Relwyskow, the son of Russian immigrants who also had a distinguished military career in the British army.⁵⁵

Inch also returned to professional weightlifting after the war.⁵⁶ In 1919 he beat his own world record of 163.5 pounds on the “arm push” with an excellent 190-pound lift.⁵⁷ In 1947, at the age of 66, Inch set a record on a hand-grip machine to claim a new world record of 556 pounds.⁵⁸ In 1949, at the age of 68, he set another record on the machine with a phenomenal 560 pounds.⁵⁹ Sadly, there is no information given in the articles on the mechanics of the hand-grip machine.

The feats of grip-strength Inch is best remembered for, however, are the lifts he made using what were called at various times Inch's “Unliftable” or “Challenge” dumbbells. Inch owned three dumbbells of different weights although they all looked remarkably similar. The first was manufactured before Inch left his native Scarborough for London around 1899. He had commissioned his local foundry to man-



In his early years in London Inch, like other physical culture entrepreneurs, struggled to make ends meet. He spent a great deal on advertising his courses and as can be seen in this advertisement he wanted people to know that he was on the cutting edge of strength knowledge.



Inch developed a fine, muscular physique and did not hesitate to display it. Photographing the body was an important part of being a showman and Inch had dozens of cabinet cards made over the years. This card reads at the bottom, "T. Inch, World's Middle Weight Champion Lifter. Poole & Co. Putney."

ufacture a weight for him, but when he went to pick it up, he found the weight considerably heavier and thicker than anticipated. According to historian David Willoughby, ". . . it was a heavy, unwieldy, cast-iron dumbbell having a short and thick handle." When he first got it, Inch could not lift this bell off the ground with one hand but began practicing with it virtually every day until he could do so. After he discovered that none of the men that he knew could lift the bell, "he offered increasingly higher amounts, up finally to £200 (then nearly \$1000) to anyone who could do so." According to Willoughby, "For over 50 years, it would seem, no one appeared who could lift Inch's 'Challenge Dumbbell.'"⁶⁰

During those long years, the measurements of the dumbbell were never disclosed by Inch, and it was never seen in public where others could try it. However, before his death he sold the dumbbell to Reg Park's Barbell Company, and they brought it to a weightlifting "sport revue" in Aberdeen, Scotland, organized by David Webster, who was good friends with Park.

There the bell was fully weighed and measured. It was 172 pounds in weight and 20 inches long. The diameter of the globes was 8.5 inches and the handle was 2.47 inches in diameter (almost the same size as a modern soda can.) But the most important measurement, Willoughby explained as to why the dumbbell was so difficult to lift, was that the length of the handle between the globes was only four inches. The significance of this, Willoughby wrote was that the four-inch handle would "stop any really large-handed lifter from picking up the bell, since anyone having a hand much wider than 4.5 inches could not get his fingers to fully encircle the handle." This, Willoughby continued, could explain why both of the strongest men living in Britain in the early twentieth century, Arthur Saxon, and Edward Aston, failed to lift it; both were known for having enormous hands. Clearly not impressed with Inch's stance on all this, Willoughby then added, "The idea that Arthur Saxon's gripping strength is inferior to Inch's is unthinkable."⁶¹

In the long passage in *The Super Athletes* about the Inch Dumbbell, Willoughby almost gleefully notes that at the Aberdeen Sport Review on 26 October 1956, when the dumbbell was first openly available for public trials, three men succeeded in lifting the Inch "unliftable" dumbbell.⁶² Inch also had a second dumbbell made that looked like the original and had the same thick, four-inch handle, however it weighed only 153 pounds. There was an even lighter one weighing 130 pounds, but it naturally appeared smaller.⁶³ Willoughby and others questioned whether some of Inch's famous lifts were made with the lighter dumbbell.⁶⁴ In our modern era, replicas of the big dumbbell have been made and sold and the lifting of the dumbbell is no longer regarded as impossible.

Sadly, Inch's legacy as a strongman has been riddled by concerns that he exaggerated claims and at times used weights that were not as heavy as announced. For historians such matters are nearly impossible to judge, especially when more than a century has passed. We cannot re-weigh the plates, photos were then quite rare, and lifting was not usually covered in the daily newspapers that are now digitized in growing on-line archives.

However, in Inch's case, he left behind two fascinating sources that suggest he was not above chicanery. The first is an early, silent newsreel, made in 1915, titled *The Light Lady Heavyweight*.⁶⁵ It opens with Inch on a stage with three kettlebells surrounding him. He is in a



In 1915, Inch participated in a short film made by the British Pathé company called *The Light Lady Heavyweight*. The film opened with some standard lifting stunts such as this showy lift involving two women, a barbell, and a kettlebell.

singlet and looks big and strong, but his body is not as lean and impressively built as those of his contemporaries Sandow and Hackenschmidt. He hits a single, and then a double biceps pose—but it is unlikely that any maidens in the audience swooned at this muscular display. The film then shifts and there are six men on stage with him and they are purportedly attempting to pull a giant spring expander. On each side, one man holds the expander's handle, the man behind him holds that man by the waist, and the third man holds the waist of the second man in an awkward tug-of-war. With their dress shoes slipping on the stage, they fail to extend the springs and the screen becomes cloudy before, almost like magic, we see Inch, holding the springs behind his head with his arms already fully extended. In his hands, along with the expander's handles are kettlebells of unknown weight. The men are gone from the stage in this scene and two small women stand behind him. Then, with his arms outstretched, the two women jump up, grab around his arms, and lift their feet from the ground. The scene ends and a black slide appears proclaiming, "The human barbell—two lively ladies and a ring weight—total 340 pounds!" The expander is not mentioned—nor is the other kettlebell. (Minor details, of course.) Inch does nothing in this part of the film except to stand with this "great weight."

The next segment shows him lifting the same small women in a Sitz apparatus in which the women sit on webbing seats attached to the end of the barbell.

Inch cleans the bar to his chest and pushes it overhead with a mighty jerk. He then walks toward a kettlebell on the floor while holding the women and bar overhead. Then, cautiously, he slides one hand toward the middle so he can free his other hand to reach down and pick up the kettlebell. It is an impressive feat, and he is able to stand back up and with his left hand presses the kettlebell to arm's length four times. Without the kettlebell, we can only guess at the weight that he is holding overhead, but it is probably about 250 pounds, at most. Two male spotters then grab the women and assist them to the floor, as Inch falls forward as if he is collapsing from exhaustion as the scene ends.

The third and final segment of the film involves Inch's attempts to lift the female vaudeville star known as "Resista."⁶⁶ Resista, we learn from the black slide that then appears in the movie, weighs only seven stones (98 pounds) and she should be light as a feather for a strongman like Inch. However, Resista's stage claim is that she can "alter her weight at will," so can only be lifted if she wants. Inch begins by taking her at the waist and easily lifting her over his head. The movie then explains that on the next attempt she will change her weight to 14 stones (196 pounds) and when he tries to lift her this time, Inch appears to struggle until he finally lifts her fully overhead again. As the movie continues, she then "changes her weight" to 28 stones (392 pounds) and he can only lift her to the height of his head. He barely manages to lift her off the ground when she has magically become 35 stones (490 pounds), and for the fi-



The second part of *The Light Lady Heavyweight* showed Inch attempting to lift the "unliftable" woman who claimed that, through mind control, she would weigh over 400 pounds. Even with this cheesy grimace, Inch was not believable, as the movie shows him unable to lift the woman.

nale, and despite Inch's "great effort" made evident by the closeups of his face, he is unable to lift her as she has now made herself weight 40 stones (560 pounds)! The film, and Inch's participation in it, is a farce on any number of levels, and it is hard to understand how the film would have helped Inch's reputation as he does not emerge victorious. In fact, the last slide in the film suggests that we must question who is really the weaker sex.⁶⁷

Unlike the silent film of 1915, *Inch by Inch!* made by the British Pathé Company in 1939, has sound and so we hear Inch prevaricate in his own voice regarding the weights he is lifting. "Allow me to present the famous Inch Challenge Dumbbell," the 58-year-old Inch says to open the film, although the dumbbell on the floor in front of him is a large globe weight with protruding caps on the ends. It is not the 172-pound Inch Challenge dumbbell. "Over a period of forty years," Inch continues, "the bell has never been raised an inch from off the ground by any strongman, although thousands have tried." World's Strongest Man Arthur Saxon, he says in his narration, "tried for fifteen years, off and on," and never succeeded. Maurice Deriaz, he adds, "came all the way from Paris to try it." Lionel Strongfort, whom he calls the Champion of Denmark, and even the great wrestler Ivan Poddubny of Russia, he explains, could never even break it from the floor. They were all "defeated" he tells the camera by the Inch Challenge Dumbbell.

After this introduction, two purported strongmen in street clothes attempt to lift the large globe weight, and although they appear to strain, the dumbbell does not move. Next a newspaperman comes out to verify the truthfulness of the dumbbell, takes a carpenter's hammer, and taps on each globe to "prove" that it is made of "genuine iron." We can concur that it is at least metal.

Looking straight into the camera, Inch then explains that he will next attempt to lift the dumbbell overhead with one hand and then reach down and grab a second dumbbell so that together the weight he will be lifting overhead is 276 pounds,

which beats "the record held by the late Eugen Sandow." He then reaches to the floor, swings the big dumbbell easily with one hand to his shoulder area, adjusts it higher, and then almost bent presses it overhead to arm's length. He then reaches down to bring the second dumbbell up, which is also unusual looking since you cannot see all the plates because of a shell that covers part of the area where plates would normally sit. He pulls this dumbbell from the floor to his knee, kicks it upward with his knee, and then easily presses it overhead as well. The announcer proclaims the lift "A Magnificent feat—and a World's Record" and the film closes.⁶⁸ But, of course it is not a magnificent feat or a world record. It is a fake record; this is not the Inch Challenge Dumbbell that he is lifting.⁶⁹ It is also not the most weight put overhead in a "two hands anyhow." Arthur Saxon officially lifted 445.33 pounds in Leipzig on 3 November 1905 and it remains the official record to this day.⁷⁰ Inch's participation in the film and the false statements he gives voice to make us wonder (as we often do, actually) whether as strength historians we can ever really know the truth. How many other lifts that he claimed in these early times might have also been fake?



In 1939, Inch again stepped before the cameras to make a film showcasing his ability to lift the dumbbell that came to be known as "The Inch." Again, however, the public is being tricked. The dumbbell used in the film was not "the" Inch dumbbell as the real Inch is a brutish thing cast as a single piece of iron and has no silver caps on the end. Sadly, Inch even states in the film that the dumbbell he's pressing in this photo is "the" Inch dumbbell.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Thomas Inch died in 1963 at age 81. He and his wife, Annie, were then living in Cobham, a village in Surrey, on the outskirts of London. Mrs. Inch, like Sandow's wife, was apparently not happy with her husband at the time of his death.⁷¹ Annie destroyed all of Inch's professional effects and papers and would not even let an obituary be published about him. Little is known of Inch's marriage, although they were married in Scarborough before he first moved to London, and she was a year older than he was. They had one daughter. In census records Annie is described as an "unpaid domestic," which probably suggests she was a "housewife," but she does not seem to have participated in his work.⁷² Inch praised her in an article for her "care, cooking and company, [without which] the name of Inch might never have been so well known," but she is not frequently mentioned in his articles.⁷³ Although not a full obituary, a death notice did appear in the *Surrey Advertiser*, titled "Death of Champion Weightlifter." The article contains scant information except to say that Inch died suddenly on 12 December 1963. He had been living in Cobham for some years and he had "conducted courses in weight lifting and physical culture for local teenagers and others with great success."⁷⁴ His funeral was held in Putney, England.

While Inch's contributions to the evolution of weightlifting (beyond his owning of the Challenge Dumbbell) may not be well known in our modern era, he was certainly an important figure during his time. W.J. Lowry credits the growth and legitimization of weightlifting as a sport in the United Kingdom principally to Thomas Inch. And, unlike other strongmen-turned-physical-culture-entrepreneurs before him in the British Isles, Inch always advocated the use of heavy dumbbells and barbells. Eugen Sandow had popularized training, but he urged the use of only light dumbbells. Bernarr Macfadden was never a heavy weight fan, and Charles Atlas, in America, promoted "Dynamic Tension" an exercise system that required no equipment.⁷⁵ Inch, however, "throughout his long and successful career . . . stuck loyally to the use of weights for all purposes." He should also, and rightfully, be credited with the popularization of the disc-loading barbell in the United Kingdom.⁷⁶ It is no understatement to say that without Thomas Inch, the sport of weightlifting might not have gained so much prominence and esteem in the United Kingdom as it did during the years when he was one of its

most important figureheads.

Separating the man who so clearly helped birth British lifting from the man who exaggerated his personal lifts and disparaged contemporaries such as Arthur Saxon, however, will require further excavation. The volume of coverage he received in the leading physical culture magazine, *Health & Strength*, is clearly evidence that Inch "mattered," and deserves to be remembered as part of the arcana of physical culture. We use "arcana" purposefully here as much of lifting history is both myth and fact. Inch's life, if we discovered anything of significance in the writing of this profile is precisely that. His is a mythic history that has been retold by others, and like myths the central truths are already somewhat obscured by time and the oral tradition. However, thinking about his story and how he will be remembered is yet more proof of why physical culture scholarship matters, and why we should interrogate the past.

The authors would like to thank Joe Roark of the Iron History Forum for his assistance with our research.

NOTES

1. "The Editor Chats," *Health & Strength*, 15 May 1920: 307.
2. Thomas Inch, "A Weight-Lifter's Romance," *Health & Strength*, 1 January 1910: 2.
3. *Ibid*, 3.
4. Professor Szalay, "An Impression of Inch's Lifting," *Health & Strength*, 28 December 1912: 649.
5. Inch, "A Weight-Lifter's Romance," 3.
6. See Thomas Inch, "Thirty-Three Years in Physical Culture," *Health & Strength*, 11 December 1926: 603; and "How I Retained Fitness for 33 Years," *Health & Strength*, 1 January 1910: 3.
7. 1901 England Census for Scarborough, Yorkshire, viewed at: https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/28917116:7814?tid=&pid=&queryId=6ebf90cc6a847e29fc55f1999d03adb6&_phsrc=LrP14&_phstart=successSource.
8. Following his death, Inch's wife Annie, destroyed all his personal and professional papers and refused to have an obituary printed.
9. Gilbert Odd, "The Mighty Inch," *Health & Strength*, 19 May 1960: 6.
10. William J. Lowry, "The Professional Era in British Weightlifting," *The British Amateur Weight-lifter & Body-builder* 3, no. 1 (January 1949): 21.
11. *Ibid*, 24.
12. Thomas Inch, "My Memories of Szalay," *Health & Strength*, 2 March 1912: 214.
13. "The Benefit to Professor Szalay: Pioneer of Weight Lifting," *Boxing World and Mirror of Life*, 2 March 1912.
14. Thomas Inch, "A Lecture on Physical Culture," *Health & Strength*, December 1900: 14.
15. "An 'Infant' Hercules," *The Weekly Dispatch*, 26 October 1902, 5.
16. "Remarkable Vigour Secured from a Scientific Food," *Coventry Herald and Free Press*, 5 June 1903, 6.
17. Advertisement in *Health & Strength*, September 1903: 338.
18. W.J. Lowry, "The Professional Era in British Weight-Lifting: Inch," *The British Amateur Weightlifter and Bodybuilder*, January 1949: 21.

19. Thomas Inch, *Scientific Weight-lifting* (London: the author, 1905).
20. Lowry, "The Professional Era," 24. Strongman Arthur Saxon's book, *The Development of Physical Power*, carried a similar theme and was published that same year.
21. Jan Todd, "From Milo to Milo: A History of Barbells, Dumbbells and Indian Clubs," *Iron Game History* 3, no. 6 (April 1995): 12.
22. Kim Beckwith and Jan Todd, "Strength: America's First Muscle Magazine: 1914-1935," *Iron Game History* 9, no. 1 (August 2005): 11-28; and Osmo Kiiha, "Collector's Corner," 29 December 2013, at: <https://www.naturalstrength.com/2013/12/collectors-corner-by-osmo-kiiha.html>.
23. Thomas Inch, "Famous Strongmen I Have Met, Part One," *The Superman*, June 1933: 20.
24. Instalment buying became popular in the 1920s. Selling on credit before then was exceedingly rare. "Instalment Buying, 1920-1930," *CQ Researcher* (Thousand Oaks, California: CQ Press, 1930), <https://doi.org/10.4135/cqresrre1930010100>.
25. "Disc Bar-Bells Free!" *Health & Strength*, 19 September 1908: 260.
26. At this time, the Continent did not acknowledge the "Middle-weight" class, but the 1905 World Championships in Berlin had just included the Middle-weight class for the first time, perhaps influencing Inch's ambitions.
27. Ibid, 26. See also: Lucy Boucher and Conor Heffernan, "A Great Weight Lifted the History of the British Amateur Weight-lifting Association," *Sport in History* (2023), <https://doi.org/10.1080/17460263.2023.2270946>.
28. W.J. Lowry, "How Thomas Inch Won the 1907 Professional Middle-Weight Title," *The British Amateur Weightlifter and Bodybuilder*, February 1949: 18.
29. Thomas Inch, "Weightlifting in the Open Air," *Health & Strength*, 4 July 1908: 18.
30. Ibid, 19.
31. Ibid.
32. See "Thomas Inch v. Max Sick," *Health & Strength*, 30 October 1909: 464, and "Inch and Sick," *Health & Strength*, 6 November 1909: 488.
33. Thomas Inch, "A Weight Lifter's Romance," 2.
34. Ibid, 654.
35. Thomas Inch, "How I Won," *Health & Strength*, 19 June 1910: 654.
36. Ibid.
37. "Among the Lifters," *Health & Strength*, 25 June 1910: 677.
38. "The Proposed Weight-lifter's Association," *Health & Strength*, 1 October 1910: 330. See also: Boucher and Heffernan, "Great Weight Lifted," 15.
39. Boucher and Heffernan, "Great Weight Lifted," 15.
40. See "Among the Lifters," *Health & Strength*, 8 April 1911: 343; Thomas Inch, "The Amateur Weight-Lifting Championship," *Health & Strength*, 1 July 1911: 10; "Lifting at Scarborough," *Health & Strength*, 7 December 1912: 548.
41. "Among the Lifters," *Health & Strength*, 26 November 1910: 552.
42. "Inch-Aston Match," *Health & Strength*, 6 January 1912: 6.
43. "Very Strong Man Wanted," *Daily Herald*, 20 January 1934.
44. W.J. Lowry, "Thomas Inch's Defeat by Aston in 1911," *B.A.W.B.*, March 1950: 20.
45. Professor Szalay, "An Impression of Inch's Weight-Lifting," *Health & Strength*, 28 December 1912: 649.
46. "Lifting at Scarborough," 548.
47. David P. Willoughby, *The Super Athletes* (New York: A.S. Barnes and Company, 1970), 163; and "Sporting Paragraphs," *Nottingham Evening Post*, 18 January 1913; and "Sporting Paragraphs," *Nottingham Evening Post*, 15 December 1913.
48. *Health & Strength*, 13 September 1913: 274; see also: "Physical Culture Expert's Failure," *Daily Mail*, 12 January 1915. David Webster claimed Inch gambled away the £80,000 he had generated from his business ventures. See: David Webster, *The Iron Game: A Worldwide Review of the Strongest Men Throughout the Ages* (Irvine, Scotland: Webster, 1976), 42.
49. Nicholas Crafts, "Walking Wounded: The British Economy and the Aftermath of World War One," *VOX Eu*: 2014, viewed at: <https://cepr.org/voxeu/columns/walking-wounded-british-economy-aftermath-world-war-i#:~:text=Britain%20incurred%20715%2C000%20military%20deaths,Broadberry%20and%20Harrison%2C%202005>. See also: Beckwith and Todd, "Strength," 22.
50. "Strong Man Act," *Fulham Chronicle*, 17 October 1947.
51. "A Health Hero," *Health & Strength*, 22 May 1920: 332.
52. Ibid, 327.
53. During WWI, persons of German of descent, even those who had lived in Britain as long as Sandow, were viewed more skeptically by the public. In his biography of Sandow, historian David Chapman chronicles the decline of Sandow's various business ventures in the 1920s before his surprising death at age 58 in 1925. David Chapman, *Sandow the Magnificent: Eugen Sandow and the Beginnings of Bodybuilding* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1994 and 2006).
54. "A Health Hero," 327. For example, see *Inch on Fitness*.
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid.
57. "New World's Weightlifting Record," *Daily Herald*, 16 October 1920; and "Unbeatable Inch—New World's Record," *Health & Strength*, 2 October 1920: 217.
58. "Strong Man Act."
59. "Grip Record—New World Figure," *Daily Mail*, 27 October 1949.
60. Willoughby, *Super Athletes*, 163.
61. Ibid, 164.
62. Willoughby ended that sentence with an exclamation point.
63. "The Hundred Year History of the Inch Dumbbell," on *Gripboard*, posted 29 October 2001, at: <https://www.gripboard.com/topic/312-question-for-joe-roark/>.
64. Willoughby, *Super Athletes*, 164. See also: W.A. Pullum, "The Famous Inch Dumbbell," *Health & Strength*, 10 July 1952: 24; Thomas Woodcroffe, "Inside Sport," *Sunday Dispatch London*, 4 December 1938; and Edward Aston, *How to Develop a Powerful Grip* (London: The Mitre Press, 1946), 34.
65. *The Light Lady Heavyweight*, 1915. This British Pathé newsreel can be viewed on YouTube at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qrWuhtm__5A.
66. See "Resista—The Girl that Can't be Lifted" viewed at: <https://vaudevilleamerica.org/performance/resista-3/>. See also: "Resista," *Variety Magazine* 58 (October 1920): 22.
67. *Light Lady Heavyweight*.
68. *Inch by Inch!* Can be seen at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dnh9f1106_Q. It was probably filmed at the Pathé studio in London. Made in 1939, Inch was then 58 years old.
69. Strength historian and grip expert David Horne has also written about this film and the deceptions inherent in it. David Horne, "Strongmen on Film - *Inch by Inch!*" at: <http://davidhorne-grip-master.com/historyarticles1.html>.
70. Saxon's lift was done using a barbell and kettlebell. Willoughby, *Super Athletes*, 79.
71. Mrs. Sandow would not allow a tombstone to be erected at Sandow's grave and also destroyed many of his papers. Joe Roark conversation with David Webster, 10 June 2001, at <http://www.ironhistoryarchives.com/InchTotal.pdf>.
72. "1939 English and Wales Registry," viewed at: <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/4266271:61596>.
73. Odd, "Mighty Inch," 18.
74. "Death of a Champion Weightlifter," *Surrey Advertiser*, 21 December 1963.
75. Lowry, "The Professional Era," 20.
76. Ibid, 21.

EDUCATING BODIES THROUGH A TRANSNATIONAL PEDAGOGY: PHYSICAL CULTURE CINEMA IN ARGENTINA, ITALY, AND SPAIN: 1934-1944

BY EDUARDO GALAK
THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF LA PLATA, ARGENTINA

The aim of this paper is to question the usefulness of informative cinema as a pedagogical device. A set of Argentinean, Spanish, and Italian newsreels filmed in the second quarter of the 20th century is analyzed to understand how a notion of symmetrical aesthetics was formed to narrate an ideal of physical culture. The short informative Argentine main newsreel, *Sucesos Argentinos*, which was broadcast between 1938 and 1972, shows familiarity with other European newsreels, such as *Giornale LUCE* and *No-Do*, filmed in the decades of the 1930s and 1940s in Italy and Spain. Argentina, Italy, and Spain had strong economic, political, and cultural connections because of historical immigration. As a result, these countries also exchanged ways of narrating state-organized physical activities. Through the analysis of newsreels, it is shown how sports and mass gymnastics exhibitions operated as a governmental technique to show the strength, virility, and healthiness of individual bodies in symmetry with collective bodies. Based on the nationalist rhetoric characteristic of the interwar period and of the Second World War, it can be said that there was a transnational aesthetic for narrating bodily and cultural techniques. Therefore, by analyzing the images shown in these three countries between 1934 and 1944, what one finds is a decade of political and aesthetic affinities in the construction of a national image of the “correct body.”

A COMMON HISTORY

In most Western countries between 1930 and 1940, there was a popularization of in-

formative documentary films known as newsreels. The newsreels expanded the schooling processes outside school walls by combining an important educational task in transmitting ways of doing as ways of being. This occurred by combining the passivity of the viewers in the theater with the dynamism of the moving image, showing ‘correct’ and ‘incorrect’ ways of doing and being.¹ That is to say, the images of bodies educated through physical culture in the newsreels made ways of doing analogous to ways of being by linking images and movement to become one inseparable thing. This is what Gilles Deleuze called the “movement-image.”² According to Deleuze, cinema is not merely images and movement as two separate things, but rather they have an indivisible association—a “movement-image.” In this sense, it cannot be understood only as the linking of reel images. Rather, cinematography’s creative act is to have invented the fusion between “movement-image” and a new scientific-rational technology that operates on the transmission of motion pictures.³

The informative documentary film, particularly the newsreel genre, consisted as a vast media resource for communicating national and international cultural, social, and political activities. This is especially visible in the Inter-war and the Second World War periods.⁴ The filmed media productions between 1934 and 1943 in Italy, Argentina, and Spain, present strong case studies for the influence of the newsreel, both because of their historical immigration connections and also because of their common methods of narrating physical activities organized by the States.⁵ Newsreels were developed in the years that mass media func-

Correspondence to: Eduardo Galak, The National University of La Plata, Argentina, eduardogalak@gmail.com.

tioned largely as a propaganda device for these three countries.

Before undertaking an analysis of physical culture newsreels, it is important to understand the shared starting point for cinematography and mass physical activities. There is a common history in the scientific advancements of the technologies that allowed the passage of the stationary image to the moving image—cinema—and the governmental uses of physical culture. As modern devices, cinema and physical culture emerged in parallel in the second half of the 19th century.

“Physical education,” known in the 19th century and earlier as “gymnastics,” was born from the hand of the state and the practice of science as two correlated processes. On the one hand, physical education was a state mechanism to educate its citizens about their bodies, mainly through military and scholarly establishments. The two most significant objectives in the 19th century were training soldiers and forming citizens through an ‘integral’ pedagogy that involved intellectual, moral, and physical matters. The traditional, educational idea in most Western countries was to teach what it meant to develop simultaneity and symmetry as values. State educational systems, therefore, created a school subject aimed at using the hygienic senses as a scientific resource, teaching games mainly for moral improvement and gymnastics for character-building and as a source of useful knowledge at the end of the 19th century.⁶

On the other hand, scientific positivist debates of the late 19th century took the body and its movement as their objective through a rhetoric focused on anatomy, physiology, and hygienic matters. Thus, a reform in traditional gymnastics was born in Europe, and it aimed at distinguishing which methods had to be followed to properly exercise the body. By establishing a close connection between strengthening the bodies and perfecting the homeland, an international dispute developed between the emerging nation-states to see whose bodies were the strongest and most resistant, and therefore whose nation was the fittest. Gymnastics reformers, therefore, began to discuss which scientific methods were the most effective and efficient for exercising healthy, vigorous, docile, strong, and controlled bodies.

At roughly the same time, an argument about how to measure the performance of the body and its movements evolved.⁷ This situation generated an exponential growth of scientific equipment surrounding measure-

ment. Physiologists such as Fernand Lagrange, Philippe Tissié, Georges Demenÿ, and Étienne Jules Marey created scientific apparatus to reform anatomical and physical gymnastics while adhering to the common concepts of simultaneity and symmetry. Two topics of Étienne Jules Marey’s (1830-1904) research are especially important for the present paper. First, there is Marey’s *l’appareil chronophotographie*, or chronophotography, a photographic process he created in the 1880s that captured several photographs at regular intervals. It was initially used for the scientific study of locomotion, especially in humans and animals. This invention allowed the passage of stationary images to moving images, the first step toward motion pictures, by a regular sequence of camera shooting. The chronophotographer developed an important characteristic of modern science: order and method, with symmetry as its result.⁸ In addition to being the inventor of the *l’appareil chronophotographie*, Marey was one of the fathers of what is known in France as “scientific physical education.” Several of the classic images of Marey’s chronophotographer were made with Georges Demenÿ, recognized as the founder of scientific physical education. Marey and Demenÿ developed what is known as *La Station Physiologique de Paris* in 1882; it was supported by the French State to study the human and animal locomotion. Many of their images were taken at the *École Normale Militaire de Gymnastique de Joinville-le-Pont*, a military-based gymnastics and fencing school established in 1852; it was known as the first French Physical Education school to create teachers and served as a model for other institutions outside France.⁹

Hence, the chronophotographer, when used in conjunction with the “scientific physical education” of the 19th century, created a relationship between cinema and modern rational gymnastics. Both the movement-image and systematized corporal practices were influenced by the same scientific perceptions to attach movements to techniques that interpreted the body as its objective.¹⁰ In the late 19th century, bodies, movements, and images were used for scientific purposes, developing different physiological apparatus for the analysis of locomotion, allowing for the creation of cinematography and motion pictures. The concept of ‘movement-images’ was established to point out the indivisible nexus between image and movement in films. This analogy between the movement of images and the movement of bodies is the primary reason why the birth of documentary cinema and

the field of physical education have a common history in scientific rationality.

A (TRANS) NATIONAL IMAGE

A half-century later, the relationship between physical culture and motion pictures continued, but on different levels. During the 1930s and 1940s, audio-visual mass media was developed, which resulted in the exponential growth of filming records and cinema theaters. As a result of the Interwar period's cultural and economic globalization, the cinematography industry emerged as one of the most important social influences.

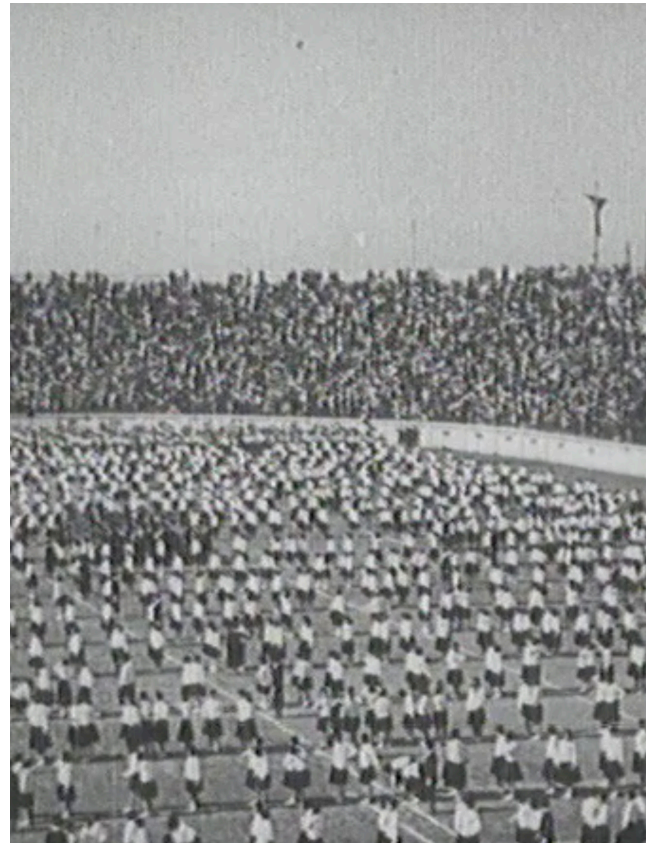
A technical and technological revolution took place during the first third of the 20th century. This revolution reconfigured the film industry with regard both to film production and the spectators of those films. Aside from private film companies, various governments with varying political ideologies used fictional and non-fictional cinematography to disseminate news and specific points of view. It is for this reason that the Italian fascist leader Benito Mussolini claimed cinema as a weapon: "*la cinematografia è l'arma più forte dello Stato*" (Cinematography is the most powerful weapon of the state.)¹¹ Such weaponization of film happened primarily through the dissemination of newsreels.¹² This technology existed in almost all Western countries, often with state support, allowing cultural events to be shown in cinemas prior to the start of the commercial films.

As this paper aims to show, the newsreels of Italy, Argentina, and Spain during the 1930s and 1940s, had an especially strong influence on the political, aesthetic, and ethical discourses on physical culture in the second quarter of the 20th century. Through analysis of newsreels from these three countries, one can identify a transnational dialogue, which presents movement-images as state propaganda productions in three different totalitarian governments during weak, but peaceful times.¹³

Images of mass gymnastics exhibitions are especially influenced by the *L'Unione Cinematografica Educativa* (Luce), a state Italian propaganda official organ founded in 1924. As a part of the fascist Italian educational ministry, the Luce institute was explicitly established to educate through moving images. Three years later, in 1927, it began its newsreel production with the *Giornale Luce*, the official mass media outlet for informative documentary cinema. This audio-visual experience was followed between 1940 and 1943 by the newsreel of the

Gioventù Italiana del Littorio—the Cine G. I. L.—the Italian fascist youth movement, which gave enormous space to physical culture on cinema screens. The archives show 26 films produced in 35mm format made by the *Opera Nazionale Balilla*, a youth organization with strong state support from Benito Mussolini, that developed massive physical activity events favoring militaristic training for young people using chauvinist discourses.¹⁴

A good example of the use of physical culture as public policy in Italy can be seen in the newsreel, *Roma. Stadio del P.N.F. Il Duce Assiste all'Annuale Saggio Ginnico dell'Opera Nazionale Balilla* (Giornale Luce n° B1010, 1932). This newsreel shows hundreds of young people forming lines and marching in symmetrical geometrical shapes with a military soundtrack in the background. The music stops when Benito Mussolini enters the stadium and salutes. Then students begin to do calisthenic physical exercises, all simultaneously, separated first by boys and then by girls, all dressed the same ac-



This screenshot from the 1932 Italian newsreel titled: "Roma. P.N.F. Stadium, The Duke Attends the Annual Gymnastics Performance of the Opera Nazionale Balilla" shows a mass gymnastics display and a small part of the full stands in the stadium. Mussolini, referred to as Il Duce or the Duke, favored these mass displays of nationalistic patriotism as did Hitler, in Germany.

ording to gender. The twelve-minute film closes with military marching, the applause of the public, the image of Mussolini, and an artillery demonstration by the Italian army. This is just one example of the consistency between both Italian newsreels, the *Giornale Luce* (1931-1940) and the *Cine G.I.L.* (1940-1943): the presence of organized youth, separated according to gender, obeying the orders of a teacher/commander, performing choreographed drills with military music in the background, and the image of *Il Duce* in a long-angle shot to give a final grandiloquent image.¹⁵

One of the main objectives of the documentary films was to develop an Italian image abroad, especially in countries with strong heritage influences. One can see this influence in Argentinian newsreels beginning in 1938, when the newsreel became part of state policy because of two factors. First, National Deputy Matías Sánchez Sorondo proposed to create the *Instituto Cinematográfico del Estado*, the State Cinematographic Institute. As Clara Kriger pointed out, when Sánchez Sorondo travelled to Italy in 1937, he met with Mussolini himself to discuss the idea of copying the *cinogiornale* in Argentina.¹⁶ According to Paulo Antonio Paranaguá, Sanchez Sorondo preferred the Italian experience to the German one due to the excessive centralization and propaganda of the Reich, in addition to criticizing the loss of talent caused by Nazi racial legislation.¹⁷ Paranaguá continued his analysis, arguing that the proposal for the *Instituto Cinematográfico del Estado* had a virtual and ephemeral existence because the Argentinean military of the 1943 *coup d'état* preferred to ensure strict control of news and fiction production in private hands, instead of assuming an educational mission at the state level with no short-term results. In general, authoritarian regimes privileged propaganda over information and the media over education. These same ideas were continued by the following Argentinean President, General Juan Domingo Perón, although with a different strategy about educational cinema, through the organization of the *Departamento de Radioenseñanza y Cinematografía Escolar* in 1948, the Department of Radio Teaching and School Cinematography.¹⁸ This political position was reflected in 1944 in the promulgation of a national decree that established the official character of the cinematographic media.¹⁹ Although the ten newsreels released in Argentina during those years were produced by private companies (except for the *Noticiero Bonaerense*, which was

dependent on Buenos Aires' province), they had to pass through government censorship eyes, becoming a vehicle for national propaganda.²⁰

The second relevant fact of 1938 for the influence of newsreels in Argentina was the birth of the most important Argentine newsreel: *Sucesos Argentinos*. "Argentinean Events" was a private mass media company run by Antonio Ángel Díaz that created radio, film, and magazines. Their newsreel was released on 26 August 1938 and remained in production until 1972, when it stopped because it could not compete with other technologies, like television. Although it called itself the "First Latin American Film Weekly," the truth is that it was not the first in Latin America, and not even in Argentina. Experiences such as the *Argentina Actualités* developed by Max Glücksmann in the 1910s or the *Film Revista Valle* produced by the Italian immigrant Federico Valle in the 1920s prove that *Sucesos Argentinos* was not the first one.²¹ However, it can be assured that it was the most representative of all Argentine newsreels, due to its more than three decades on cinema theater screens and due to a cultural significance that transcended generations.

As María Florencia Luchetti explains, just five years after the 1938 decree and the birth of Antonio Ángel Díaz's film company, *Sucesos Argentinos* won 70% of the movie theater screens.²² According to Argentinean law, this priority was based on the idea that this newsreel better reflected the national image, leaving the remaining 30% for the *Sucesos Panamericanos* (Pan American News.) In a more political reading of this situation, the preference for *Sucesos Argentinos* can be explained by the fact that Raúl Apold was one of the greatest beneficiaries, a public server linked to this company until 1946, who had strong connections to important Argentinean politicians. For example, he was the director of the first Peronist government documentary, entitled *The First Five-Year Plan* (Rodríguez, 2002), and in 1949, Apold worked as director of the *Sub-Secretaría de Informaciones*, the powerful Undersecretariat for Information, from which he became a strong political figure in entertainment and journalism. Years later, Apold earned a suggestive nickname—the Argentinean Goebbels—because he became the mass-media hand of the Juan Domingo Perón government's propaganda. This is why, despite Antonio Ángel Díaz's company being a private media company, *Sucesos Argentinos* was often considered an official state voice used by informative documentary cinema.

BODIES AND IMAGES OF MOVEMENT

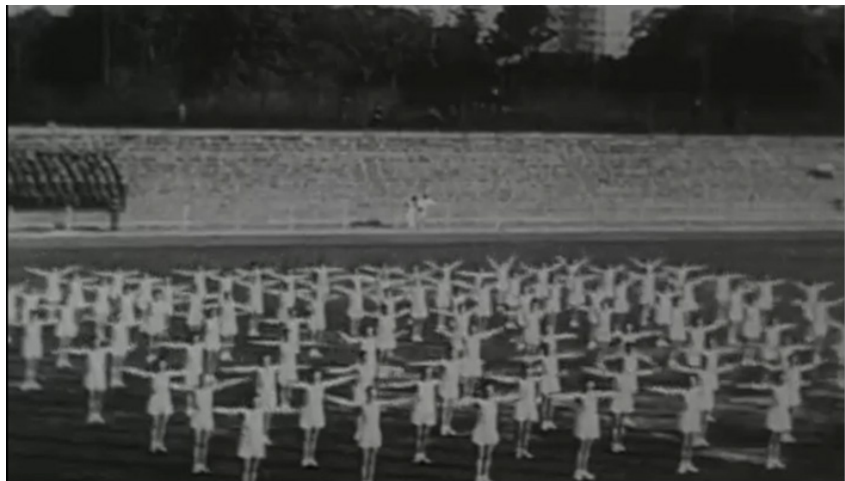
The 1930s is one of the most important decades in cinematography history because cinema theaters and the filming industry grew exponentially as an instrument for media massification as a political nationalist device. Furthermore, as Clara Kriger explained, cinema had become a form of cultural entertainment for the popular masses who could afford cinema tickets in many countries.²³

The use of informative cinematography as a government propaganda device potentially made the newsreel a pedagogical tool, not only as a way of educating beyond the schooling processes, but also informing and forming the “national interests,” as the Argentinean 1943 national decree explicitly states.²⁴ This chauvinistic intention to transmit patriotism through newsreels is a good example of Italy’s historically enormous influence on Argentina, which can be explained by the significant immigration between the two countries in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, but also by the legacy of Latin-American lifestyles. The impact was also strong on political ideologies.²⁵ This is especially clear in physical culture and Argentinean history since the first gymnastics and fencing teachers of the *Escuela Militar de Gimnasia y Esgrima*, the first higher education institution of physical culture in Argentina, were mostly Italians.²⁶ Like mass immigration, there was a colonization process from Europe to South America about the movements of bodies and images.

At the same time that images flowed from Europe to South America, one can also observe a “reverse colonization” process when it comes to newsreels in Spain, which I was able to discover thanks to an academic stay in 2015 at the Filmoteca Española in Madrid Spain.²⁷ The most important Spanish newsreel appeared in 1943 as a public state cinematographic media production—the *No-Do*—as it is popularly known, an acronym for *Noticiario y Documentales* (Cinematographic News and Documentaries). The *No-Do* were part of the *Dirección de Cinematografía y Teatro* (Cinematography and Theater Directorate), which reported to the *Vicesecretaría de Educación Popular* (Vice-secretary of Popular Education) and depended on

the *Ministerio de Educación Nacional* (National Ministry of Education). As an official state voice, *No-Do* functioned as a propaganda cultural artifact of Francisco Franco’s government.²⁸ It began on 22 December 1942 as a result of a decree regulating the projection of filmed news as a mandatory and state responsibility, but its first edition was released on 4 January 1943.²⁹ Although every informative-documentary film is, at some point, a pedagogical tool, it is understood that the *No-Do* was born as an official device of the schooling process as part of the popular educational system.³⁰

Like the Italian newsreels of *L’Unione Cinematografica Educativa* and similar to the *Sucesos Argentinos*, a huge number of phys-



In Spain, dictator Francisco Franco, also supported the concept of mass sport displays as a way to show his country’s superiority. He backed the making of what we now regard as propaganda documentaries such as this 1943 film called simply *Sports. Deportes – No-Do nº 16 (Spain), 1943*.

ical culture images can be found on *No-Do*, principally sporting events, mass gymnastics demonstrations, dance lessons for women, military training for men, and physical education school classes, among others. Many such images appeared in the early editions of *No-Do* in January 1943, but, surprisingly, on 19 April 1943 in *No-Do* edition number 16, a few Argentinean physical culture shots entitled “School Gymnastic Championship” appeared. These images exhibit the story of a schoolchildren’s tournament in the province of Buenos Aires, organized by the *Departamento de Educación Física* (State Department of Physical Education), in which student delegations are shown. Marches and choreographed gymnastic exhibitions by male students from the “Mariano Acosta” school are portrayed for almost the entire length of that particular news event.

Despite its brief duration, it is intriguing to consider why those images would be shown in Spanish cinemas. The important thing to remember is that this footage was shown on 22 September 1942 on the *Sucesos Argentinos* newsreel, following the subtitle “La Juventud Argentina Perfecciona su Educación Física” (Argentine Youth Perfect their Physical Education). Seven months later in Europe the same Argentine school championship was shown as news, but with a different storyline. In Argentina, it was shown as a recent news story because the images illustrated the past week’s events about a new policy, such as the inter-school championships. In Spain, however, it was presented in order to highlight the possibilities of physical culture as a political tool, as an important part of the totalitarian government machine. But why does a Spanish newsreel about an Argentine physical culture event represent “news”?

Unfortunately, tracing the path of these images is nearly impossible, but three things can be hypothesized. First, the nationalist ideas of the Spanish government were articulated into an ideal of international propaganda. For Francisco Franco’s administration, the transnational image of Juan Domingo Perón as Argentinean President was held as a paradigm for a peaceful totalitarian leader after World War II. Second, *No-Do* used those clips quite possibly because the producers didn’t have any other images at the time. The Spanish newsreel was released on 4 January 1943 just 13 days after it was announced on 22 December 1942. Therefore, it was probable that for its sixteenth edition the *No-Do* producers could not prepare the most interesting local news. The printed program that was distributed in Spanish cinemas and that announced the upcoming news proves that half of the news was imported from abroad. In the particular case of *No-Do* No. 16, there was footage from Germany, Italy, Greece, France, Hungary, and Argentina. Third, those images were part of the cinematographic traffic between Argentina and Spain.³¹ Borders are erased, however, in this traffic from South America to Europe and from a private company supported by state resources (symbolic and financial) to an entirely public entity. Thus, the

“official” character of the narrative about physical culture, prescribing the correct ways of doing and being, whether in Argentina or Spain, presents a similar transnational political agenda.

FINAL REMARKS

How do the movement-images constitute a trans-nationalization in newsreels? Was there a specific cinematographic technique for showing physical culture techniques? Those images display similar ways of narrating mass gymnastics exhibitions because they depended on totalitarian military governments. Or was there simply a universal method of showing physical culture footage? Moreover, in a more particular sense, is it possible to think of the colonization of cinematographic and corporal techniques from Italy to Argentina, and from there to Spain? There is no specific answer to all these questions, but I would like to close with three final considerations.

First, I would like to conclude by pointing out that movement-images and body technique images show that there were transnational ways of how to narrate what it is to *do* and to *be* “correct.” Even if it is paradoxical, it became a government policy to develop “a strong and healthy people” by using a relatively universal mode of nationalistic speech, whose rhetoric crossed many borders. That is to say, while arguments and images of the health of the people were particular to the *Italian, Spanish, or Argentinean* nations, what was promoted was relatively universal. In addition, whether



The making of nationalistic documentaries also spread to South America as can be seen in this screenshot from “Argentine Youth Perfect Their Physical Education,” released in 1942.

these three examples of cinematography news were produced by government offices (such as *LUCE* or *No-Do*) or by a private company (such as *Sucesos Argentinos*), the truth is that in all cases, they reproduced what Pierre Bourdieu calls the “rhetoric of the official.”³² Bourdieu refers to those speeches whose performative announcement makes them official by practical use, even if they are not enunciated by a government entity.

Second, the analyzed images make explicit a conceptual link between cinema and physical culture’s common history; sequence and symmetry are presented through the exhibited body and cinematographic techniques. On the one hand, sequences of images are used

as a narrative method, produced by the montage technique in the different newsreels, with parades of schoolchildren’s delegations marching combined with shots of the expectant passive audience. A similar effect is produced when the newsreel displays collective bodies doing the same thing at the same time, albeit men separated from women and boys from girls. These images of bodies also are associated to cinematographic techniques which combine high-angle shots of mass activity, alternated by short-angle shots to prioritize the individual facial expressions—a technique commonly used to prioritize the masses over individuality.

On the other hand, physical culture newsreel movement-image exhibits symmetry as a method of sensibility education. That is, the massively developed technical gestures are almost the same in Italy, Spain, and Argentina, with small local particularities. It is possible that the differences aren’t between the newsreels of those three countries, but rather within each country’s physical culture policies, as evidenced by the distinction between men’s and women’s exercises. In those images, men are carrying out activities in which strength is prioritized as the motor capacity, distinct from the women’s footage, which exhibits plasticity, grace, and dexterity as the most salient features of their movement. The male/female distinction could function in those years as a way to shape appropriate images of masculinity and femininity, and define gendered sensibilities associated with physical culture techniques.

The frames exhibiting explosive and fast physical exercises on the one hand and the passive, soft, and slow ones on the other are examples of the formation of gendered meanings. Although there is no clear definition through the images of physical exercises of what *is* masculine and what *is* feminine, the truth is that in the decade of 1934 to 1944 a clear differentiation of two distinctive gendered methods was developed. Characteristic of the time, more than a sex-gendered reaffirmation, the distinction was based on the intention of configuring a corporal homogenization.³³ After all, if it is possible to do the same, it is possible to be the same, even if that means a differentiation between the masculine and the feminine.

Once again, newsreels displayed a way of *doing* as a method to delineate ways



As can be seen in this advertisement, the Spanish documentary titled *Sports*, appeared as part of a larger cinema project created by the Franco-led government. Known as the *No-Do* an abbreviation of *Noticuario y Documentales Cinematograficos* (*Cinematographic News and Documentaries*), these news “documentaries” were also a form of propaganda and began to be shown in Italian theaters and some schools in 1943. *Deportes – No-Do nº 16* (Spain), 1943.

of *being*. It is interesting to observe the clothing they used, not only because all men and all women used the same between them, but also because they wear very similar clothes among Italian, Argentine, and Spanish men, and among Italian, Argentine, and Spanish women. However, beyond this difference, there seems to be a common idea—to use calisthenics as the appropriate movement technique. Everyone in lines and rows is doing the same action at the same time in front of a commander/teacher who demonstrates the *correct* exercise to do while students repeat it. Attractive to the cinematographic camera because of its symmetry, the calisthenic technique displays the image of everyone doing the same thing at the same time—individual bodies functioning as a collective national body.

The images then reproduce an idealized body, an iconic construction about something transcendental that is the effect of belonging to the collective body. In other words, the Argentine, Spanish, and Italian newsreels did not present a specific type of “correct” body with a defined ideology, but they did exhibit and masify the importance of the national, subsuming the individual will to the destiny of the collective. In any case, the “correct” thing for the body was to do what the rest did, although a specific gymnastic method was not defined as was common at the beginning of the 20th century.

The idea of a “correct” body is based on the work of Georges Vigarello, who explained that the passage from the Renaissance to modernity brought with it a series of characteristics that physical activities reproduce, as can be observed in these historical films.³⁴ There is a “showdown,” a “frontality,” and a “dramatization” of bodily practices when dozens of people synchronously move together. The “correct” body functioned as a fiction, as staging a “geometrization of gestures;” conceiving symmetry as a modern value, the gymnastic harmonic movements were a synonym of being equal.

Finally, it is worth considering the paradox of passivity of the spectators sitting in movie theaters observing bodies move while listening to narratives about physical culture’s scientific importance, augmented by patriotic rhetoric. Passivity and dynamism in equalized balance presents the cinema as an extension of the schooling process, reinforcing the discourses otherwise held by the State through the school, but through mass-scale audio-visuals. As Walter Benjamin has noted, cinematography is a powerful *weapon* because it can replace free

imagination with a pre-configured image.³⁵ The movement-images in newsreels thus operate as a didactical tool not only for school students but also for the adult population. Newsreel work is therefore a key factor in the context of the cultural expansion of cinematography as a mass-media industry.

As a part of this cinematic mass-media process, Benjamin identifies in the 1930s the rise of the intimate relationship between propaganda and the mechanical arts of photography and film. In a historical framework characterized by totalitarian political governments, as happened in Italy, Argentina, and Spain, Benjamin points out the risk of art politicization, which ultimately impoverishes the aesthetic experience. The politicization of art produced a gradual but sustained replacement of the imagination by mechanical images, and that, in turn, reduced political speeches to form with little substance. As an effect of the characteristic technical reproducibility of the mechanical arts, its propagandistic use produces a political reproduction perpetuated by images.

Benjamin’s critique of the early 20th century does not lose historical relevance in times like the present, when one can observe patriotic nationalist extremism returning, once again with movement-images as its *weapon*, using technologies to standardize sensibilities. As a constant reminder of its potential consequences, images like those in Italian, Argentinean, and Spanish newsreels show the danger of totalitarian ideologies, body homogenization, and aesthetic universalization.

NOTES

1. Mike Huggins, “The Sporting Gaze: Towards a Visual Turn in Sports History—Documenting Art and Sport,” *Journal of Sport History* 35, no. 2 (Summer 2008): 311–329; Barbara Keys, “Senses and Emotions in the History of Sport,” *Journal of Sport History* 40, no. 1 (Spring 2013): 21–38.
2. Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema I: The Movement-Image* (London: Continuum, 2004).
3. This analysis can be followed in Eduardo Galak, “¿Una Gramática de lo Corporal? Lo Visible, lo Invisible y lo No-visible en el Fundamento de las Imágenes y Cuerpos en Movimiento,” *Saberes Y prácticas. Revista De Filosofía Y Educación* 5, no. 2 (2020): 1–13. Also, it can be seen in Mike Huggins, “The Visual in Sport History: Approaches, Methodologies and Sources,” *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 32, no. 15 (2015): 1813–1830.
4. Mike Huggins, “Projecting the Visual: British Newsreels, Soccer and Popular Culture, 1918–39,” *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 24, no. 1 (2006): 80–102.
5. For further analysis, see Emeterio Díez Puertas, *Cine Español y Geopolítica Fascista: España y sus Relaciones Cinematográficas con la Argentina (1939-1943)* (Madrid: Síntesis, 2019).
6. Roberta Park, “Science, Service, and the Professionalization of

- Physical Education: 1885–1905,” *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 24, no. 12 (2007): 1674–1700.
7. Roberta Park, “Physiologists, Physicians, and Physical Educators: Nineteenth Century Biology and Exercise, Hygienic and Educative,” *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 24, no. 12 (2007): 1637–1673.
 8. Christian Pociello, *La Science en Mouvements: Étienne Marey et Georges Demeny (1870-1920)* (Paris: University Press of France, 1999). Jacques Gleyste and Gilles Bui-Xuân, *L’Émergence de l’éducation Physique. Georges Demeny (1850-1917) et Georges Hébert (1875-1957)* (Paris: Hatier, 2002).
 9. Jean Saint-Martin and Michaël Attali, “The Joinville School and the Institutionalization of a French-Style Physical Education, 1852–1939,” *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 32, no. 6 (2015): 740–753.
 10. For further information, see Eduardo Galak, “Educar (con) la Mirada, Discursos Políticos y Sentidos Estéticos sobre la Cultura Física en Noticieros Cinematográficos,” in Gabriela Ossenbach Sauter, *Gregorio Weinberg: Escritos en su Honor* (Buenos Aires: CLACSO, 2017), 55–74.
 11. Stephen Gundle, *Mussolini’s Dream Factory: Film Stardom in Fascist Italy* (New York: Berghahn Books: New York, 2016).
 12. Mark Dyreson, “Selling Olympic Pictures: The Commercial Wars Between Host Cities and the American Media During the 1920s,” in *Cultural Relations Old and New: The Transitory Olympic Ethos*, eds. Kevin Wamsley, Scott Martyn and Robert K. Barney (London, Ontario: International Center for Olympic Studies, University of Western Ontario, 2004).
 13. A conceptual development about the national/transnational character of bodily practices can be seen in the special issue “Transnational Sport History,” *Sport History Review* 52 (2021); see especially, Robert J. Lake and Simon J. Eaves, “Exploring Issues in Transnational Sport History,” *Sport History Review* 52 (2021): 141–150. The *Journal of Global History* also published a special issue in 2013: “Sport, Transnationalism and Global History,” *Journal of Global History* 8, no. 2 (July 2013); see especially, Matthew Taylor, “Editorial,” 199–208. doi:10.1017/S1740022813000181. Also, the special issue “Size Matters: Scales and Spaces in Transnational and Comparative History,” *The International History Review* 33, no. 4 (2011) brings together different works that analyze international exchanges from globalized meanings in reference to physical activities. See Bernhard Struck, Kate Ferris & Jacques Revel, “Introduction: Space and Scale in Transnational History,” *The International History Review* 33, no. 4 (2011): 573–584.
 14. Gigliola Gori, “Model of Masculinity: Mussolini, the ‘New Italian’ of the Fascist Era,” *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 16, no. 4 (1999): 27–61.
 15. Similar aesthetic experiences can be seen in the work of Leni Riefenstahl’s *Olympia* (1938), which inaugurates a new dimension of the filmic narration of sports and physical culture. For further information, see Graham McFee and Alan Tomlinson, “Riefenstahl’s *Olympia*: Ideology and Aesthetics in the Shaping of the Aryan Athletic Body,” *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 16 (1999): 86–106; and Eduardo Galak, “The Trained Eye: Sportivization and Aestheticization Processes of the Olympic Games Through the Lens of the Cinematographic Documentary Perspective,” *Sport, Ethics and Philosophy* 16, no. 4 (2021): 476–488.
 16. Clara Kriger, “Gestión Estatal en el Ambito de la Cinematografía Argentina (1933-1943),” *Anuario del Centro de Estudios Históricos “Prof. Carlos S. A. Segreti”* 10, no. 10 (2010): 261–281.
 17. Paulo Antonio Paranaguá, *El Cine Documental en América Latina* (Madrid: Cátedra, 2003).
 18. Eduardo Galak and Iván Orbuch, *Políticas de la Imagen y de la Imaginación en el Peronismo. La Radioenseñanza y la Cinematografía Escolar Como Dispositivos Pedagógicos para una Nueva Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Biblos), 2021; Eduardo Galak and María Silvia Serra, “Educating Bodies and Sensibilities Through Cinema in Peronist Argentina: Sports, Politics and Aesthetics” in Tim Allender, Inés Dussel, et al, *Appearances Matter: The Visual in Educational History* (Boston: De Gruyter, 2021), 109–125.
 19. Argentina, *Fomento a la Producción de Noticieros en Argentina*, Boletín Oficial de la República Argentina, Decreto Nacional no. 18.405, 13 January 1944.
 20. Irene Marrone and Mercedes Moyano Walker, *Imágenes e Imaginarios del Noticiero Bonaerense, 1948-1958* (La Plata: Asociación Amigos del Archivo Histórico de la Provincia de Buenos Aires, 2007).
 21. Eduardo Galak, “Luz, Cámara... Educación del Cuerpo y del Carácter en el Cine Documental Informativo de Max Glücksmann (1913-1915),” *Educar en Revista* 37 (2021): 1–17.
 22. María Florencia Luchetti, “¿Qué Sucedió en la Semana, Eh? El Noticiero Cinematográfico en Argentina. Aportes para la Construcción de un Objeto” (Master’s thesis: Universidad de Buenos Aires, 2011).
 23. Clara Kriger, *Cine y Peronismo: el Estado en Escena* (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2009).
 24. Argentina, *Fomento a la Producción*.
 25. Lilia Ana Bertoni, “Soldados, Gimnastas y Escolares, La Escuela y la Formación de la Nacionalidad a Fines del Siglo XIX,” *Boletín del Instituto de Historia Argentina y Americana “Dr. Emilio Ravignani”* 13 (1996): 35–57.
 26. Ángela Aisenstein and Pablo Scharagrodsky, *Tras las Huellas de la Educación Física Escolar Argentina, Cuerpo, Género y Pedagogía 1880-1950* (Buenos Aires: Prometeo, 2006).
 27. See Eduardo Galak, “Argentina y España: Representaciones de la Juventud y la Cultura Física Argentinas en Imágenes del No-Do Español,” *Historia y Memoria de la Educación* 13 (2020): 579–609.
 28. This thesis can be seen in Rafael Tranche and Vicente Sánchez-Biosca, *No-Do, El Tiempo y la Memoria* (Madrid: Ediciones Cátedra, 2006). Also, just three years later, on 4 March 1946, a legal-economic regulation established that everything about the *No-Do* (furniture, production elements, machinery, produced films, and so on) was property of the State and assigned to the service of the Ministry of National Education. See Spain, *Decreto de 22 de Febrero de 1946 por el que se Regula el Régimen Jurídico-Económico de Noticieros y Documentales Cinematográficos (No-Do)*, Boletín Oficial del Estado, 4 March 1946, 1697–1698.
 29. Spain, *Disponiendo la Proyección Obligatoria y Exclusiva del Noticiero Cinematográfico Español y Concediendo la Exclusividad Absoluta de Reportajes Cinematográficos a la Entidad Editora del Mismo, Noticiero y Documentales Cinematográficos (No-Do)*, Boletín Oficial del Estado, 22 December 1942, 10444.
 30. Nuria Álvarez Macías, “Cine y Educación en la España de las Primeras Décadas del Siglo XX, Tres Concepciones del Cine Educativo,” *Tarbiya, Revista de Investigación e Innovación Educativa* 31 (2002): 39–66.
 31. Josefina Martínez, “La Incidencia de la Segunda Guerra Mundial en el Comercio de Películas Entre España y Argentina, La Búsqueda de un Acuerdo Imposible,” *Bicentenario, Revista de Historia de Chile y América* 7, no. 2 (2008): 35–64.
 32. Pierre Bourdieu, *On the State: Lectures at the Collège de France 1989-1992* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015).
 33. Eduardo Galak, “Por una Epistemología de la Imagen-Movimiento del Cuerpo, Homogeneización, Universalización, Estética y Política de lo Corporal,” *Tempos e Espaços em Educação* 12, no. 28 (2019): 33–48.
 34. Georges Vigarello, *Le Corps Redressé: Histoire d’un Pouvoir Pédagogique* (Paris: Arman Colin, 2004). Georges Vigarello, Alain Corbin and Jean-Jacques Courtine, *Histoire du Corps* (Paris: Seuil, 2005).
 35. Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” in *Illuminations*, ed. H. Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1977). It is important to point out that Benjamin originally wrote this in 1936 in a text that was contemporary to the analyzed images, before Italian and German fascism led to the tragic experiences of the *Shoah* and the Second World War.

IRON GAME HISTORY: THE JOURNAL OF PHYSICAL CULTURE

IRON GAME HISTORY IS PUBLISHED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF
THE H.J. LUTCHER STARK CENTER
FOR PHYSICAL CULTURE AND SPORTS



DEPARTMENT OF KINESIOLOGY AND HEALTH EDUCATION
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN



U.S. SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

Two issues — \$25.00 Four issues — \$45.00

FOREIGN SUBSCRIPTIONS:

Two issues — \$30.00 Four issues — \$50.00

PATRON SUPPORTER:

\$50.00 or more
(does not include subscription)
Listed as Patron Supporter for Four Issues

Please indicate type of subscription:

Two issues (USA):	\$25.00 _____	Renewal? Yes _____ No _____
Two issues (Foreign):	\$30.00 _____	
Four issues (USA):	\$45.00 _____	
Four issues (Foreign):	\$50.00 _____	

IRON GAME HISTORY

H.J. LUTCHER STARK CENTER
NEZ 5.700, D3600
403 DELOSS DODDS WAY
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78712

MAKE ALL CHECKS PAYABLE TO: UT-AUSTIN

NAME _____ TELEPHONE _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____

COUNTRY _____ EMAIL _____

SUBSCRIPTION FORMS AND MORE INFORMATION ONLINE:

WWW.STARKCENTER.ORG/RESEARCH-2/IRON-GAME-HISTORY/

MANY IGH SUBSCRIBERS MAKE FINANCIAL DONATIONS BEYOND THEIR SUBSCRIPTION TO SUPPORT THE CONTINUED PUBLICATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF IGH AS A PRINTED MAGAZINE:

\$50 OR MORE:

- WILL BE LISTED AS A PATRON FOR 4 ISSUES OF IGH
- DOES NOT INCLUDE A SUBSCRIPTION

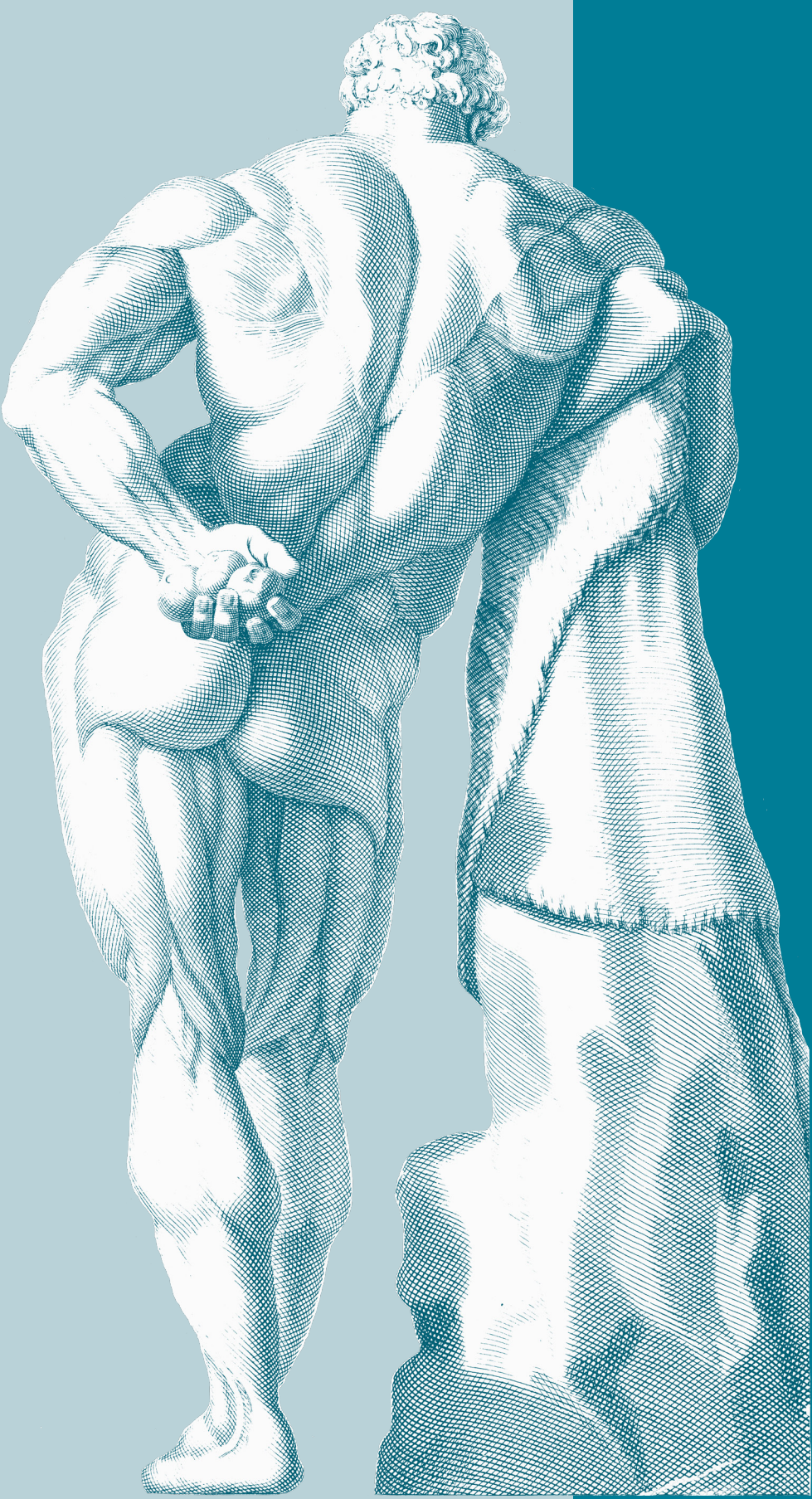
PATRON SUPPORTER: \$ _____

THIS MUST BE A SEPARATE CHECK.

IT CANNOT BE COMBINED WITH SUBSCRIPTION PAYMENT.
PAYABLE TO: UT-AUSTIN ("IGH DONATION" ON MEMO LINE)

IRON GAME HISTORY

H. J. LUTCHER STARK CENTER
NEZ. 5.700, D3600
403 DELOSS DODDS WAY
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78712



NON PROFIT ORGANIZATION
US POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT NO. 391
AUSTIN, TEXAS