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Thomas Jefferson “Stout” Jackson: Texas Strongman



Strength—the ability to produce force. An often valuable, sometimes invaluable, tool in the evolution of our species. These days, men and women test their strength not against predators or other aspects of the natural world but against various types of weights. Around the world there are many sorts of strongman competitions—such as the Highland Games in

Scotland and various “Strongest Man” events. These two sports use iron weights very little, using instead objects found in everyday life, such as log poles (cabers), hammers, boulders, farmcarts, barrels, axes, planes, and trucks.¹ The Highland Games in one form or another have been in existence since at least the eighteenth century, but tests and demonstrations of strength have an even longer history: men have been lifting heavy objects as a form of physical display or training since ancient Greek times.² Milo of Croton, for instance, reportedly carried a four-year old heifer across his shoulders for six hundred feet, and Titormus, a Greek shepherd, was said to have lifted a boulder even Milo “could scarcely roll.”³ Whether Titormus did or did not lift this particular stone, there is archeological evidence that similar events not only happened but were considered important enough to be etched in stone. (At Olympia there is a block of red sandstone weighing 315 pounds bearing an inscription claiming that Bybon lifted it with one hand.)⁴ Sometimes, animals provided the resistance, and Polydimas was said to have resisted the pull of two horses driven by a man in a chariot.⁵

In more modern times, men were often famous for their strength at arms. In England and Scotland, for instance, several warriors gained fame by splitting opposing soldiers in two with their swords, using only one slice.⁶ Most cultures found in Europe during the middle ages—English, Scottish, Scandinavian and German—held physical power in high regard and honored those with an unusual capacity for doing difficult feats of strength. This attitude led, in time, to the age of the professional strongman. One of the most famous strongmen was Thomas Topham of London who performed during the first half of the eighteenth century, doing such feats as resisting the pull of a team of horses, breaking heavy ropes and bending iron rods.⁷

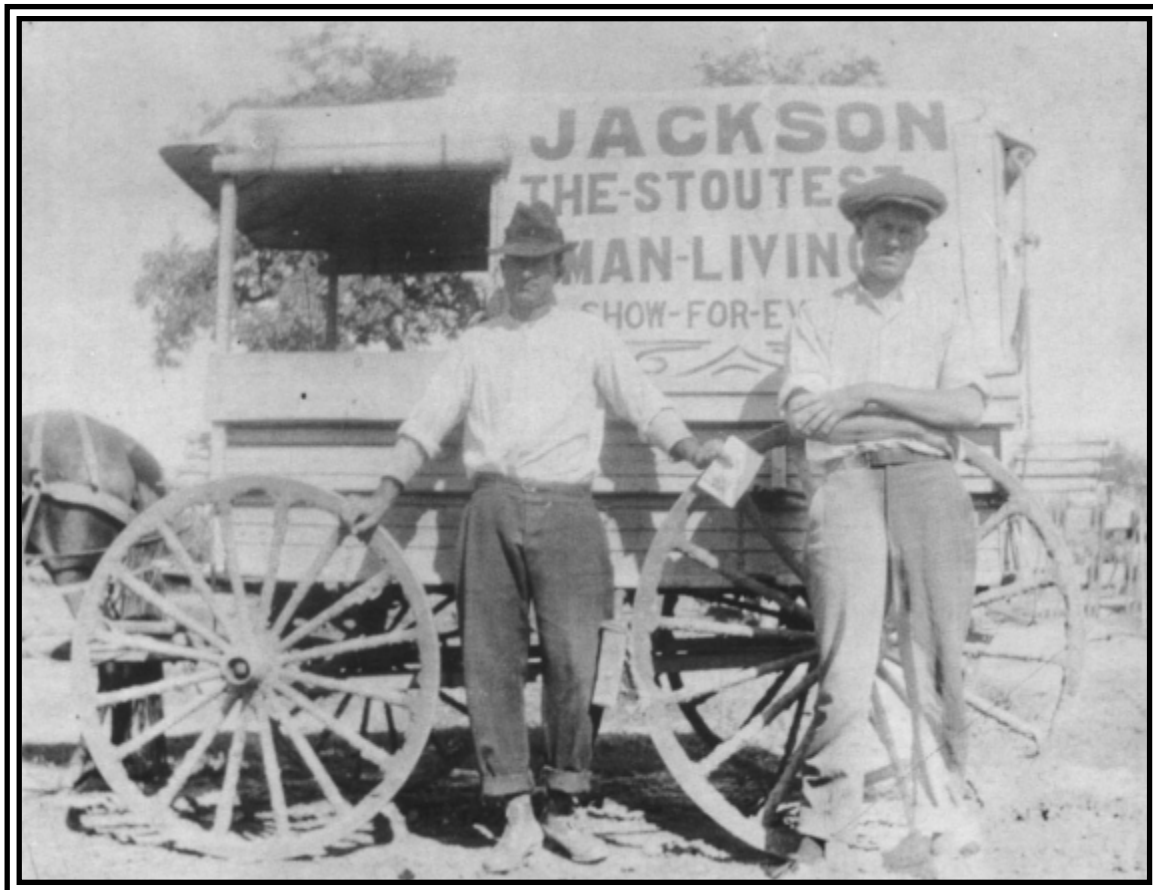
When the Europeans came to America they brought these attitudes and performances with them. For the most part, these groups

settled in the Northeast, and the larger population centers in that part of the country more easily supported the professional strongmen who began to appear in America in the latter half of the nineteenth century. For this reason, and because most of the major print media were located in that region, much more is known about the many traveling performers who exhibited their strength in that general area to earn a living. West of the Mississippi River, not much is seen in the literature about unusually strong men, except for legendary figures such as Pecos Bill and Paul Bunyan. The cultures that inhabited the area west of the Mississippi were different; being strong was still an advantage, of course, but unusual displays of strength were usually seen only in the context of physical labor.

One of the first men who broke this mold was Thomas Jefferson “Stout” Jackson. Jackson was a Texan, and he became a strongman and entertainer in the early twentieth century, touring the western states showing his strength. For the most part, Jackson’s acts were similar to those done by strongmen in the North, so that does not set him apart. What distinguishes Stout Jackson is his most famous feat—his claimed backlift in 1924, when he supposedly lifted more weight at one time than any other man had ever done before, more even than any man has done up to the present day.

The backlift, as it is commonly done, requires a specially-built platform or table, a smaller block or bench and some form of weight. The lifter will position himself under the table, which is loaded with weight of some kind, so that his back is against the underside of the table, his legs are slightly bent and his hands are placed on the small block. When the lifter is ready he straightens his legs and arms, supporting the table on his back so that all four of the table legs clear the ground. Some of the more notable backlifters include Louis Cyr during the 1890s, Warren Lincoln Travis during the early 1900s, Paul Anderson during the 1950s and Gregg Ernst of the 1990s. Jackson, if credited with his controversial lift, could also be added to this list.⁸ Records that have been claimed for the backlift include one in the *Guinness Book of World Records* (Anderson with 6,270 pounds) and one published in Ripley’s “Believe It or Not” newspaper column (Jackson with 6,472 pounds).⁹

Louis Cyr stood 5’10 and weighed 315 pounds in his prime. He was a French-Canadian professional strongman who gained the respect of the sporting world in the late 1800s. His more famous stunts were resisting the pull of four 1200 pound horses, lifting 553



STOUT JACKSON (LEFT) WITH AN UNIDENTIFIED MAN, STANDING ALONGSIDE HIS FIRST SHOW WAGON IN APPROXIMATELY 1907.
 PHOTO: THE TODD-MCLEAN COLLECTION. THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

pounds with one finger, lifting a 433 pound barrel of cement to his shoulders using only one hand, and backlifting 4,337 pounds.¹⁰ A smaller and slightly less powerful man was Warren Lincoln Travis, who backlifted 4,240 pounds while weighing 185 pounds and standing 5'8".¹¹ Paul Anderson is a strongman who came to fame in the era of organized weightlifting which allowed the strength of athletes to be compared. Anderson set several world records and won the gold medal for weightlifting at the 1956 Olympic Games. At a body-weight of 360 pounds, Anderson claimed a backlift of 6,270 pounds, as was noted in *Guinness*.¹² Another modern-day strongman, Gregg Ernst, a Nova Scotia farmer, just recently made an official record in the backlift at 5,340 pounds.¹³ Does Thomas Jefferson "Stout" Jackson belong on this list? This paper hopes to answer that question.

Thomas Jefferson Jackson was born in Jack County on the Lassater Ranch outside of Perrin, Texas on 22 January 1890, the last of five children. His father, William Nimrod Jackson, was a rancher and a Baptist minister. Jeff, as he was called by family and close friends, grew up sleeping under the stars, performing demanding ranch chores, and running back and forth to school. As a child, Jackson was considered a runt and was picked on by other children. After much taunting he decided he needed to become much stronger, so he started taking more exercise. He would finish his chores and then spend his time in the outdoors doing anything he could think of that would improve his strength — swinging through the trees,

running, and lifting heavy objects. Eventually, he talked his father into buying a barbell and dumbbell set. During the time Jackson was training his body through exercise he received regular doses of preaching from his father. His father believed in taking care of the body from the inside out, so no alcohol or tobacco was ever touched and good healthy food especially milk, was always consumed.¹⁴ These teachings stayed with Jackson throughout his entire life and were actually the basis for his wanderings, or so he said.

His first glimpse of a professional strongman came from a Ringling Brothers circus he attended when he was about twelve years old. After watching and analyzing everything the strongman did, Jeff went home, doubled his own efforts and was soon able to duplicate the strongman's act. At fifteen years of age Jackson could bend twenty penny nails and backlift fifteen hundred pounds. Always the showman he would put on demonstrations for the local townspeople, polishing the skills with which he hoped to turn professional at a later date. At seventeen, he wanted to travel and show people his strength.¹⁵

After convincing his parents that he could use his strength acts as a cover for spreading their good-living, Christian beliefs, Jackson put together a traveling outfit. A costume is always necessary for a good entertainer and Jackson had a small vest, knee-length pants, and a cap all made of silky material. His pants may have even had his show name on them—"Stout."¹⁶ While his mother may or may



not have had a part in helping with the costume, his father did have a part in providing transportation. In order to travel the country, as Stout wanted, reliable transportation was a must. In 1907 that meant a team of mules and a sturdy wagon, both of which were provided by his father. Stout painted on his wagon: "Jackson— The Stoutest Man Living—A Show for Everyone."¹⁷ In order to present a decent show, a traveling showman needed a movable stage, and in the early 1900s this was accomplished by using a "side-wall" —a wagon with canvas sides that opened on one side so presentations could be made.¹⁸ Stout bought his side-wall by chopping wood for one to two dollars a cord.¹⁹

The first stop of his lifelong career as a showman and entertainer was Joplin, Texas where he made \$15.15 in one day by charging fifteen cents a person, big money for those days. His act included tight-rope walking, bending sixty-penny nails into staples, pulling cars with his teeth, resisting the pulling of a team of horses or cars, breaking half inch manila ropes, and driving nails through boards using only his fist.²⁰ Stout Jackson, as he came to be called professionally, also performed back-lifts using men from the audience as the resistance on the table, sometimes lifting as many as twenty people. To add to the show in those non-litigious days, he would often shake the platform after he cleared it from its supports so that the men either fell or jumped off the platform?²¹

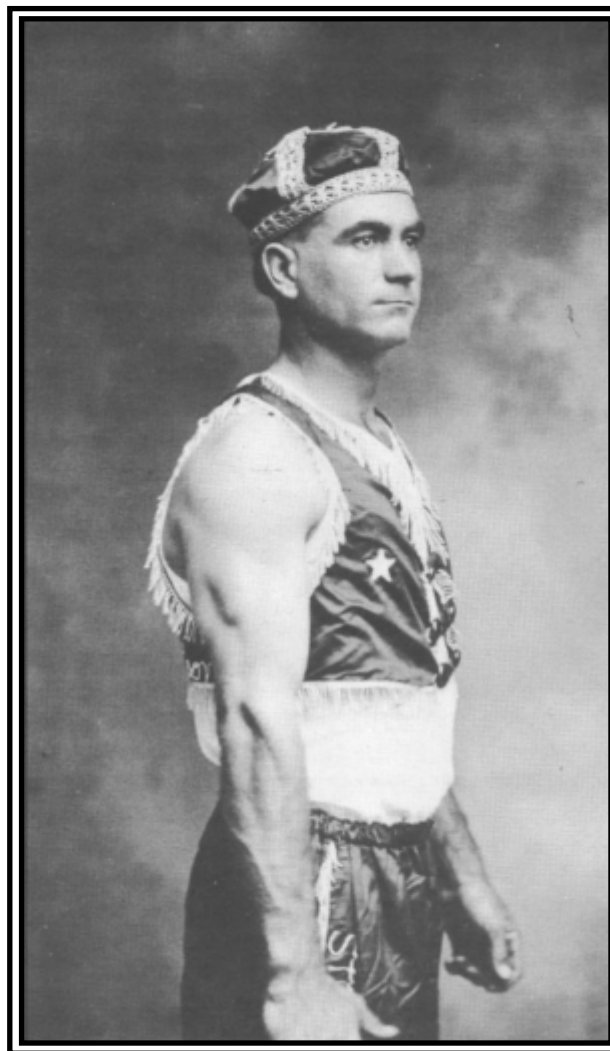
For a year or two he traveled around Texas and Oklahoma demonstrating his strength and lecturing to people on body care and living a clean life. As Jackson got older he would also show people how to strengthen their own bodies. He had inner-tubes that he would stretch in different directions.²² He told people they could do the same exercises and make themselves stronger just like he had done. In those days most traveling shows included, or were primarily, a type of medicine show. Medicinal mixtures, or cure-all liquids, were the

main sellers at these shows.²³ The only things that Stout sold at his traveling shows, however, were math pamphlets that explained a method of performing "fast math" he had discovered.²⁴

Jackson traveled with circuses to Canada and around the United States and even into South America. In 1910 he signed with a circus headed to Brazil; he made eighteen dollars a week putting on his act at the many small stops they made.²⁵ Stout soon tired of this and caught a boat back to the States and began to travel with a circus that ended up in Canada. He claimed that during this trip he met and challenged Louis Cyr to a back-lift and won. From this time on Stout called himself the "World's Strongest Strong Man."²⁶ The sport historian Terry Todd rejects this claim because the two men were not really contemporaries.²⁷ Cyr's last professional appearance was February 26, 1906 and he died on November 10, 1912.²⁸ It is highly unlikely that Jackson and Cyr ever met, much less competed against each other. In any case, Stout now threw challenges to anyone who could outdo him on one of his lifts. He was known to offer as much as \$1,000 to the owner of a team of horses that could out pull him, or to someone who "indulged in smoking" yet could still equal what he did. According to Jackson, he never had to pay.²⁹

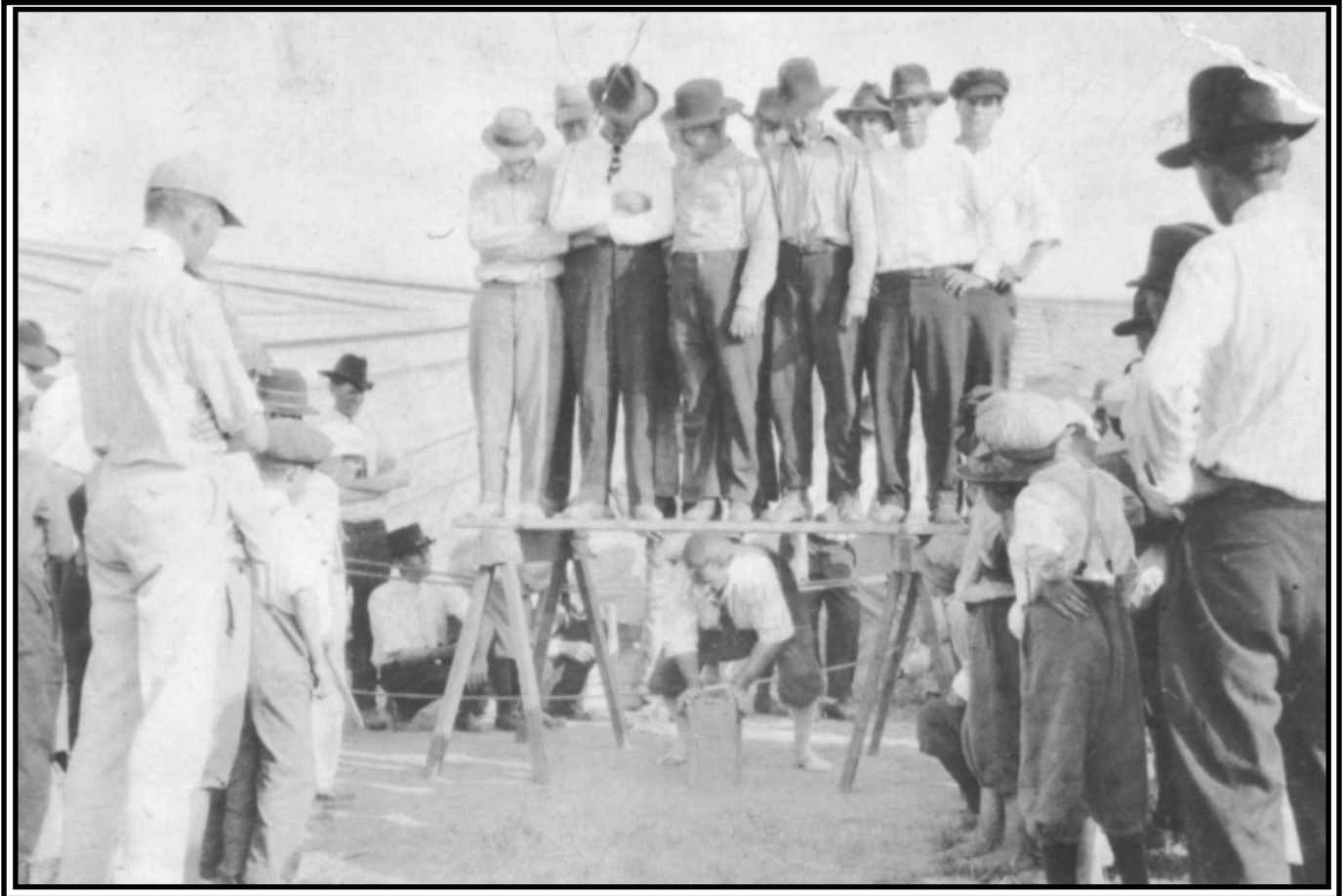
When automobiles became available, Jackson bought a 1913 Model T roadster. He was then able to travel further with his eight hundred pounds of equipment and, in the process, make more money. He claimed to have sometimes made over one thousand dollars a day when he worked by himself putting on four shows a day at fairs.³⁰ His auto had his show name on the side, "Stout Jackson: World's Greatest Strong Man, Greatest One Man Show on

Earth."³¹ One year, Stout performed in every state west of the Mississippi, doing his own act as well as sponsoring several other acts, such as wrestling and boxing. Stout was said to be a good wrestler, and he had such well-known wrestlers in his group as Everett Mar-



DRESSED FOR WORK, STOUT JACKSON MODELS HIS LIFTING COSTUME IN THIS STUDIO PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN EARLY IN HIS CAREER.

PHOTO: THE TODD-MCLEAN COLLECTION



BACKLIFTING PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN STOUT'S TRAVELLING SHOW. THIS PHOTOGRAPH, TAKEN IN 1916, SHOWS HIM POSITIONING HIMSELF TO BACKLIFT TEN MEN.

PHOTO : THE TODD-MCLEAN COLLECTION , THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

shall, Railroad Rout, and Bobby and Chick Dude.³² Stout often wrestled with them but he could not last for more than thirty minutes. He did not like to box, but his son, Thomas Jefferson Jackson, Jr., never saw him hit a person more than once before they were knocked unconscious.³³ Once when traveling through South Dakota, Stout received the chance to perform before President Calvin Coolidge. He offered to pull the President's car, but the President's advisors did not think it was a good idea.³⁴ He also gained attention when he saved a pilot from a wrecked plane at an air show by picking up the plane so the pilot, Ed Stinson, could get out.³⁵

Stout performed many of the same strength feats as other strongmen have done, but his most famous lift will always be a matter of dispute. On March 19, 1924 at a Lubbock cotton gin, so Jackson claimed, he lifted twelve cotton bales in a backlift. A cotton bale weighs around five hundred pounds, and the total for this lift was given as 6,472 pounds. Ripley's "Believe it Or Not" gave him cred-

it for this lift in 1949.³⁶ In order to validate the lift, Stout had to send affidavits from several witnesses, the official weigher of the bales, a local news photographer, and himself. When Terry Todd sent a request to Ripley's for copies of these affidavits and the picture they used in their record books, Ripley's sent their file on Stout but the crucial affidavits were missing. The file did include a 1949 letter from the Lubbock Chamber of Commerce stating that the affidavits had been gotten and were enclosed. When the photographer of the official picture was traced down it was found that the negatives of this picture had been destroyed in a fire.³⁷ Although Todd does not consider the lift to have been impossible, he considers it improbable. Todd is suspicious of the grainy photograph, in which the platform appears to be five or six inches off the supports. Todd also argues that the supporting sawhorses were the only things bearing the burden of over six thousand pounds, and that it would be too dangerous to crawl under such a heavy, poorly supported load.³⁸ Neither



Joe Roark nor David Willoughby, both of whom are historians of physical strength, give Stout credit for the lift.³⁹ In Jackson's defense, Todd points out that exaggeration of poundages by professional strongmen was almost universal and that at any given time in the early part of this century there were dozens of men claiming to be the world's strongest man.⁴⁰

Another lifter whose famous backlift is sometimes discredited is Paul Anderson. His backlift of 6,270 pounds was listed in the *Guinness Book of World Records* for thirty years, 1956-1986, and is in direct conflict with Stout Jackson's backlift.⁴¹ Following a request for specific details from Terry Todd, *Guinness* checked their files and decided that supporting information for the record was not up to their normally high standards, and so they now no longer list Anderson's record.⁴² Todd says that Anderson's lift was easier to accept because of his many other record lifts. The record may now be held by Gregg Ernst of Nova Scotia for his August 1993 lift of 5,340 pounds. One of the reasons Stout's lift never got into the *Guinness Book of World Records* may be that Stout never sent in the paperwork when the McWhirter twins first began compiling records for Guinness in 1954.⁴³

Exaggeration in the realm of professional strongmen was not limited to Jackson's and Anderson's era. The historian Leo Gaudreau believes many proclaimed strongmen were not quite as strong as they claimed. He describes horseshoes being bent in impossible directions and impossibly heavy anvils being used, both stunts being used to increase publicity.⁴⁴ Many strongmen exaggerated to add flair to their show and to attract crowds. Circus strongmen were known to fill, or not fill at all, their hollow-ended barbells with light weight so they were lighter than advertised. They also often used "trick" photographs. For example, Jackson performed a backlift for a photograph using what appeared to be a load of bricks as the weight. He claimed the load consisted of 1045 bricks at five pounds each for a total of 5,375 pounds.⁴⁵ Closer examination of the photo reveals approximately 605 bricks (11 bricks x 5 bricks x 11 rows) for a maximum weight of 3,025 pounds.⁴⁶ This figure is a far cry from 5,375 pounds, but the disparity went much further still, as his son said the photo was taken for publicity purposes and the actual load consisted of an empty shell sur-

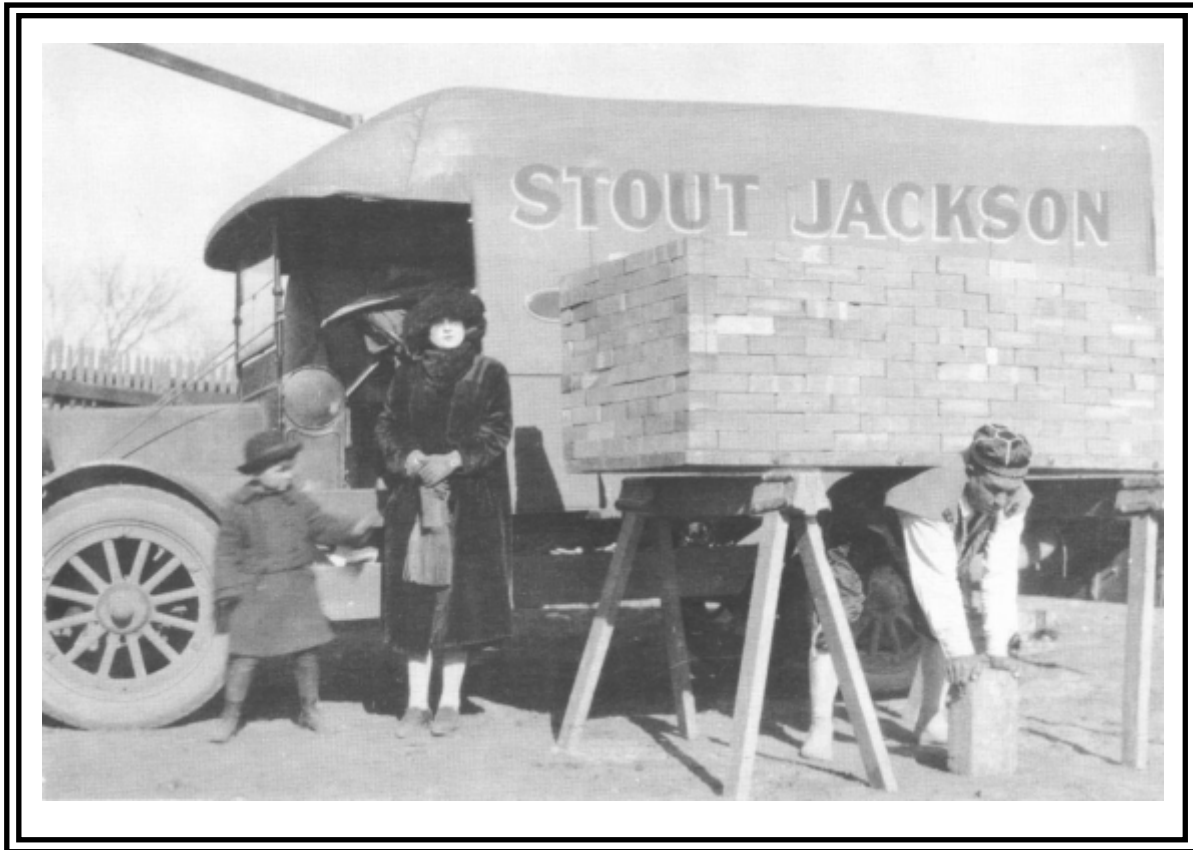
rounded by one layer of bricks.⁴⁷ Witnesses remember seeing Stout backlift five cotton bales later in his life, but the claim of twelve bales may possibly have been a way to attract attention. Because of the affidavits and letters Ripley received attesting to the authenticity of the 1924 backlift, however, it cannot be stated categorically that Jackson did not make the lift, even though the affidavits were sworn twenty-five years after the fact.

Always the entertainer, Stout was on the lookout for new forms of entertainment to add to his show. When silent films became popular, he bought circus tents, set them up in the towns where he stopped for his strength act, and showed movies. This business was quite profitable because it was the only form of entertainment in many small communities. Throughout most of this time, 1919-1935, Stout and his family, a wife and son, were more or less based in the Lubbock area; they traveled primarily during the summer months, sometimes following the migrant workers from the Valley region of Texas to the northern states.⁴⁸ When the Depression hit, Stout's strongman business suffered. He was then staying in the South Texas area, in Robstown, so he decided to stay for the winter. What he discovered there would define his footsteps for most of the rest of his life —poor, Mexican migrant workers.

According to the 1930 U.S. Census, over sixty percent of the Mexican residents in Texas were born in the United States; they called themselves Tejanos.⁴⁹ The ratio of Tejanos to Anglos in the Robstown area during this same time was thought to be sixty to forty. The present day ratio is approximately ninety to ten.⁵⁰ When Jackson arrived, Robstown was controlled by Anglos, and racial discrimination was the order of the day where Tejanos were concerned. There were separate living areas in town: Anglos usually within the city limits, Tejanos across the railroad tracks; there were two Catholic churches: one for Anglos, another for Tejanos; many businesses did not allow Tejanos in their stores; and the schools were segregated.⁵¹ Most of the Tejanos at this time in Robstown were migrant workers. They had to migrate with the growing season because most could not afford to live in the area once the crops were harvested.⁵²

These migrant workers labored in the cotton fields surrounding the Robstown area all day for nine dollars a week.⁵³ They generally had large families so they had little left on





STOUT'S SON, THOMAS JEFFERSON JACKSON, JR., IS SHOWN STANDING NEXT TO HIS MOTHER, MRS. BEATRICE JACKSON. THIS PUBLICITY PHOTOGRAPH, TAKEN IN THE EARLY 1920s REQUIRED STOUT TO BE ABSOLUTELY MOTIONLESS. A HOLLOW BOX WAS PLACED ON THE TABLE AND BRICKS WERE STACKED AROUND IT AND ON ITS TOP. THE CLAIMED LOAD WAS 1,045 BRICKS FOR A TOTAL OF 5,375 POUNDS.

PHOTO : TODD-MCLEAN COLLECTION , THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

payday for entertainment. Talking movies were then being made in Spanish and Stout decided to do something for the families in South Texas, and for himself. He began showing Spanish language films, and he began his new business with several large circus tents. He traveled to Mexico frequently to buy Mexican films and later, as more money came in, to bring Mexican artists into the United States. In those days the Hotel Brindel in Robstown would not accept Mexicans, so Stout built a two-story building that acted as both a dressing room and sleeping quarters for the artists.⁵⁴ The Tejano workers would flock from all over the countryside to the tent theaters on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights, often carrying torches, candles, or lights of some sort.⁵⁵ Stout charged ten cents for children and fifteen cents for adults and once he built his permanent theaters, he could seat two to three thousand people.⁵⁶ Soon he expanded, adding theaters in Alice, Falfurrias, and Kingsville. For several years, Jackson's son would collect the money every night from the distant theaters and return to Robstown. He recalls several chases from would-

be thieves, who never caught him thanks to his "souped-up" Lincoln.⁵⁷ The theater staff and Beatrice Jackson, Stout's wife, would often be up until two or three in the morning counting and rolling all the coins they had collected the night before. It was a common sight to see Stout carrying a valise filled with two to three hundred pounds of coins to the bank on Mondays.⁵⁸

During their years in Robstown, Jackson and his wife did much to alleviate some of the suffering that the Tejanos felt due to discrimination. Not only did they provide close and inexpensive forms of entertainment in the Tejanos' own language, but they also worked closely with the Catholic church. It is said that Beatrice was a midwife for hundreds of women (there are apparently hundreds of Tejano women named Beatrice in Robstown).⁵⁹ She was also well known for lining cardboard boxes with material for dead babies' coffins since the families could not afford anything else.⁶⁰ The Jackson household was believed to have owned one of the first telephones in Robstown, and they willingly let Tejanos use it in times of



need.⁶¹ Stout also often bailed the Tejanos out of jail.⁶² When the Tejano children had fundraisers they never left the Jackson residence without some sort of help, and a few promising children were helped through school and college with the Jacksons' support.⁶³

When Stout moved to Robstown in 1935, he retired as a professional strongman, although he still put on small demonstrations in Robstown, sometimes in connection with his films. A few people remember seeing him do a backlift using five large cotton bales, and he was also observed lifting one bale directly onto his back using cotton hooks, breaking a half inch manila rope, driving nails into boards using his fist and then pulling them out with his teeth, and pulling his seven-passenger Lincoln sedans with his teeth.⁶⁴ At the age of fifty-nine, Stout started taking more exercise and decided to stage a comeback into the world of the professional strongman, beginning with a tour of the West Coast. He found he could do just about everything he did as a young man, but he decided to stay away from draft horses and heavy backlifts.⁶⁵ It is thought that he just did a few shows in South Texas, but not on the West Coast.⁶⁶

Stout was strong mentally as well as physically. Architecture fascinated him and he was always trying to invent some new type of building. He started with large permanent theaters that had canvas walls which could be rolled up in the summer or let down in the winter. Over the years he designed and built permanent structures in Robstown, Kingsville, Falfurrias, and Alice. Unfortunately, the Alice city officials drove Stout out of town by making and enforcing building regulations after Stout threw one of the city officials' rowdy sons out of the theater and into a ditch by his hair one night.⁶⁷ The theater in Robstown burned down in 1966, but the theater structure is still standing in Kingsville.⁶⁸ Other structures that Stout was famous for are drive-in movie screens that can withstand hurricane-force winds. He constructed several screens in West Texas but never made money with them because of timing; he began building them just as television was killing the drive-in movie industry.⁶⁹ Even so, he continued to design buildings that were bomb-proof and fireproof; he had patents for many discoveries.⁷⁰

Stout was strong until his very old age. He never drank liquor or smoked or took anything that was habit-forming. He was never sick a day in his life, or so he said. For a man who did so my stunts with his teeth, he died with a full set and not a single cavity.⁷¹ Stout died in an Austin, Texas nursing home on 6 January 1976.

Thomas Jefferson "Stout" Jackson played numerous roles in the lives of many Texans—"strongman, showman impresario, inventor, builder and humanitarian."⁷² For many people, he was living proof that the weak can improve themselves through clean living and exercise. For others, he was a figure who could be looked upon as almost a saint—an exceptionally strong man who helped people with darker skin during times of discrimination and hardship. Mainly, though, Stout was an entertainer. He started his career with strength acts for fifteen cents a person and finished by making con-

tracts for the first Mexican artists who toured the western United States. Many people, of course, will remember him for his famous, if disputed, backlift, but the people of Robstown, Texas will remember him best because he gave them entertainment in their native tongue and treated them as equals. Perhaps this was his greatest strength.

Endnotes

The author would like to thank Dr. Mary Lou LeCompte and Dr. Terry Todd of The University of Texas at Austin for their guidance in the preparation of this manuscript.

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²Webster, *Scottish*, 10-11.

³David P. Willoughby, *The Super Athletes* (South Brunswick and New York: A.S. Barnes and Co., 1970), 30-31; Rachel Sargent Robinson, *Sources for the History of Greek Athletics* (Cincinnati: by the author, 1955), 88, quoted in Terence Todd, "The History of Resistance Exercise and Its Role in United States Education," (Ph. D. diss. The University of Texas, Austin, 1966), 30.

⁴Norman E. Gardiner, *Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals* (London: MacMillan & Co., Ltd., 1910), 82-83, quoted in Todd "Resistance Exercise," 30.

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⁸Joe Roark, "The Roark Report: Backlifting," *Iron Game History* 2(January 1992): 8-9.

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¹⁰Ben Weider, *The Strongest Man in History: Louis Cyr* (Vancouver: Mitchell Press Ltd., 1976), 102.

¹¹Willoughby, *Super Athletes*, 81-82.

¹²McWhirter, *Guinness*.

¹³Terence Todd, "Gregg Ernst: Bringing Back the Backlift," *Iron Game History* 3(September 1993): 1.

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¹⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁶Photo, Thomas Jefferson (Stout) Jackson, Scrapbook No. 1, Todd-McLean Collection, The University of Texas at Austin.

¹⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁸*Ibid.*

¹⁹Kermit, "World-traveling", 1.

²⁰*Ibid.*

²¹Interview with Thomas Jefferson Jackson, Jr., 4 November 1993, Austin Texas.

²²*Ibid.*



²³David Armstrong and Elizabeth Metzger Armstrong, *The Great American Medicine Show* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1991), 173-184.

²⁴Interview with Jackson, Jr., 4 November 1993; and Stout Jackson, "Arithmetic Condensed or Figures Made Easy", Jackson Scrapbook No. 1.

²⁵Kermit, "World-traveling", 1.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Interview with Terence Todd, 4 November 1993, Austin, Texas.

²⁸Weider, *Strongest Man*, 89 & 93.

²⁹Poster, Thomas Jefferson (Stout) Jackson Memorabilia Collection. Todd-McLean Collection, The University of Texas at Austin.

³⁰Kermit, "World-traveling", 1.

³¹Photo, Jackson Scrapbook No. 1, Todd-McLean Collection, The University of Texas at Austin.

³²Kermit, "World-traveling", 1; and interview with Jackson, Jr., 4 November 1993.

³³Interview with Jackson, Jr., 4 November 1993.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Unknown newspaper clipping, Bill Walraven, "Stout Jackson leaves behind legend of superhuman strength", Jackson Scrapbook No. 1, Todd-McLean Collection, The University of Texas at Austin.

³⁶Ripley, 5 July 1949, (9-A).

³⁷Interview with Todd, 4 November 1993.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Roark, "Backlifting," 8-9.

⁴⁰Interview with Todd 4 November 1993.

⁴¹McWhirter, *Guinness Book of World Records, 1956 - 1986*. ????

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⁴³McWhirter, Norris & the editors of the *Guinness Book of World Records, Guinness: The Stories Behind the Records* (New York: Sterling Publishing Co., Inc. 1982), 112-114.

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⁴⁵Photo, Thomas Jefferson (Stout) Jackson Scrapbook No. 1, Todd-McLean Collection, The University of Texas at Austin.

⁴⁶Photo, Thomas Jefferson (Stout) Jackson Scrapbook No. 1, Todd-McLean Collection, The University of Texas at Austin.

⁴⁷Interview with Jackson, Jr., 4 November 1993.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Arnoldo De Leon, *Mexican Americans in Texas: A Brief History* (Arlington Heights, Illinois:

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⁵⁰Interview with Osvaldo Romero, 29 October 1993, Robstown, Texas.

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⁵²Douglas E. Foley and Clarice Mota and Donald E. Post and Ignacio Lozano, *From Peones to Politicos: Ethnic Relations in a South Texas Town, 1900 to 1977* (Austin: Center for Mexican American Studies of the University of Texas at Austin, 1977), 83-91.

⁵³Interview with Juan Salinas, 29 October 1993, Robstown, Texas.

⁵⁴Interview with Romero, 29 October 1993.

⁵⁵Interview with Sam Keach and Katie Marie Crane, 29 October 1993, Robstown, Texas.

⁵⁶Interview with Jackson, Jr., 4 November 1993.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Interview with King Copeland 29 October 1993, Robstown, Texas.

⁵⁹Interview with Romero, 29 October 1993.

⁶⁰Interview with Crane, 29 October 1993.

⁶¹Interview with Romero, 29 October 1993.

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Interview with Jackson, Jr., 4 November 1993.

⁶⁴Interview with Salinas, Olaf Hefte, Cruz Gonzalez, 29 October 1993, Robstown, Texas.

⁶⁵Poster, Jackson Memorabilia Collection, Todd-McLean Collection, The University of Texas at Austin.

⁶⁶Interview with Jackson, Jr., 4 November 1993.

⁶⁷Interview with Salinas, 29 October 1993.

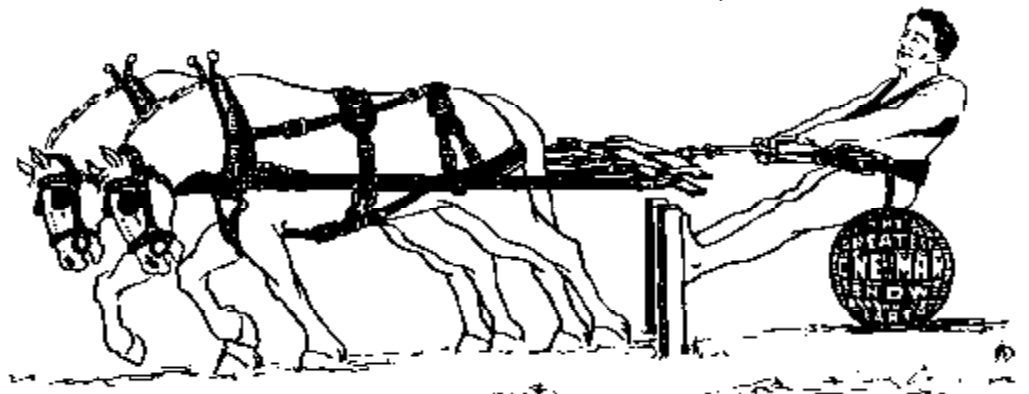
⁶⁸Joe Ocanas, "Teatro Lost in Blaze", *Robstown Record* 48(11 August 1966), 1.

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⁷⁰Patent certification, Jackson Memorabilia Collection, Todd-McLean Collection, The University of Texas at Austin.

⁷¹Interview with Jackson Jr., 4 November 1993.

⁷²Clifford Edge, "Robstown's 'Stout' Jackson A Legend in his Own Time," *Robstown Record* 58(5 February 1976), 1.



STOUT JACKSON'S LOGO.