

Strength

AMERICA'S FIRST MUSCLE MAGAZINE: 1914-1935

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In high school, we became a strength addict, and substituted the then small *Strength* magazine as an interesting insert in our Physics book, thus fooling the omnipresent educators, and incidentally learning more worthwhile things than are to be found in any school textbook. Now looking back upon those days with a supposedly mature mind, we are more and more certain that learning to care for and build your body is far more important than any subject we were supposed to study in school.¹

Harry Paschall, the famous weightlifting author and cartoonist, wrote these lines in the early 1950s. Paschall, who discovered "*Strength*" magazine shortly after it began publication in 1914, credits Alan Calvert (1875-1944), its founder, editor, and publisher, with introducing systematic weight training to America.² The belief here is that Paschall is correct. Alan Calvert is the unsung hero of the modernization of American weightlifting. Calvert began the Milo Bar-bell Company in 1902 in Philadelphia and introduced *Strength* magazine twelve years later, an act that helped weightlifting evolve as a sport, and inspired his readers to think rationally

about the healthful benefits of bodybuilding, the use of weights for sport training and, of course, how to maximize strength. Thirty-five years later, as Paschall noted, Calvert's advice on strength training was still valued, still sound.

If sport historians Allen Guttman and Melvin Adelman are correct, the opening of the Milo Bar-bell Company and its introduction of the first commercially manufactured barbell in North America placed weight training on the path to becoming a "modern" sport. Calvert's new barbells and dumbbells allowed lifters to know precisely what was being lifted and allowed comparisons from event to event, and town to town. This led to a standardization of rules, a common list of events for

contests, and the beginning of real weightlifting records in America.³ Adelman argues that public information, including specialized literature, is also necessary in order for a sport to be defined as "modern."⁴ This was precisely the role played by *Strength*, the focus of this paper.

While modernity represents a useful construct for studying sport history, the players involved in that process generally don't realize that they have set modernization in motion.⁵ Alan Calvert certainly didn't. When he began Milo Bar-bell he was simply pursuing his vision of the American dream through his newfound passion for muscular bodies and strength. When Calvert began *Strength* his primary motivation was not



Few photographs have survived of Alan Calvert, founder of the Milo Bar-bell Company and *Strength* magazine. This was taken near the end of his life; he died in 1944 at age 69.

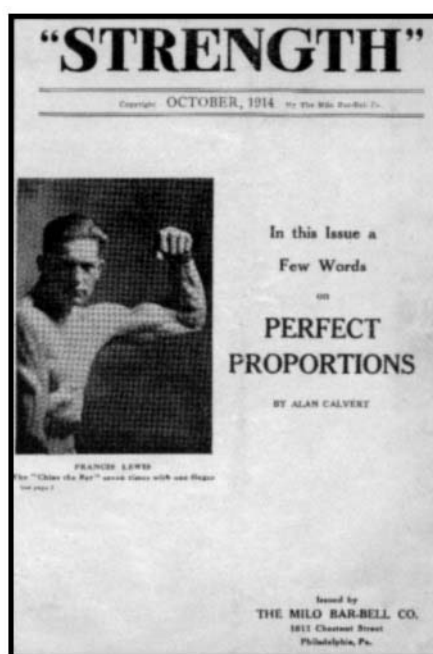
to launch a new competitive sport. He just wanted to increase the number of barbell sets he sold by increasing his customer base and giving his customers direction and motivation for their training. Calvert realized that Milo Bar-bell and its publications were but a small part of an emerging sporting goods industry which included Spalding in baseball, Pope in bicycles, and Remington in hunting equipment, but he could not have anticipated the impact his economic enterprises would have on America.⁶

As an impressionable boy Calvert witnessed the extremes of male physical development. At the circus and in variety theatres he saw large, muscular strongmen who exerted vast amounts of strength against

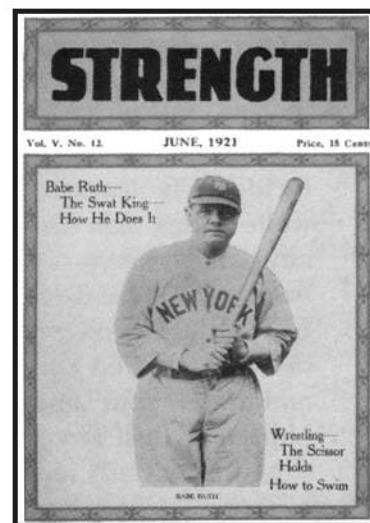
at a local Philadelphia gymnasium, such as Bill McLean's establishment at Arch and Ninth Streets, where professional boxers, wrestlers, gymnasts and acrobats worked out. But, the results of that training—his own body—left him vaguely dissatisfied. He wasn't really muscular. He wasn't truly strong. Calvert had an epiphany, however, when he saw Eugen Sandow at the Trocadero Theatre in 1893 while visiting the World's Columbian Exposition.⁹ The eighteen-year-old Calvert was entranced by Sandow's body. Unlike the bodies of lightweight trainers, Sandow's muscles were round, full, and symmetrical. His broad shoulders, thick legs, and defined abdominals reminded Calvert of statuary he'd seen in Philadelphia museums and at the Chicago World's Fair, and made



This 1914 pamphlet entitled "General Strength" was Calvert's first publication.



Vol. 1, No. 1 of *Strength* was printed in October 1914. Francis Lewis—able to chin seven times while using only one finger—was the first coverman.



After Alan Calvert sold the magazine, the new owners primarily used sport images on the front cover.

objects of formidable weight—their muscles round, full, and powerful.⁷ On the other hand, the city of Philadelphia was filled with neurasthenic office workers who performed physically non-challenging trades and suffered the diseases of the "modern man." Alan Calvert intuitively knew at an early age which physique he wanted for himself. He wanted to look, and be, strong.

At age ten he bought William Blaikie's *How to Get Strong and How to Stay So* and *Professor Dowd's Original Health Exerciser* and for the next several years he followed their written recommendations faithfully.⁸ He pressed, curled, and extended the light dumbbells that were advocated by these early training guides and as he grew older he probably trained with like-minded friends

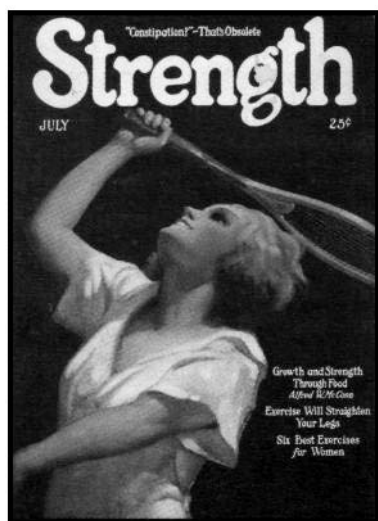
Calvert wonder how he could bring his own physique closer to this new ideal. He returned to see Sandow's exhibition several more times during his stay, and he paid to see the strongman again when Sandow played in Philadelphia the following year. Sandow became his obsession. Calvert began collecting cabinet cards and photographs of Sandow's inspirational body. "I couldn't get enough of them," he later wrote, "and I think that was because Sandow's figure appeared to be perfect no matter from what angle the picture was taken."¹⁰ Inspired by Sandow, as so many others were, Calvert found a new focus for his training. Calvert knew what was possible, even if his family thought he was wasting his time.¹¹

Calvert knew from watching Sandow's shows that lifting heavy barbells had to be part of the secret to the strongman's heavily-muscled physique. However, when the young Philadelphian tried to find information about how to do heavy training he could find no instructional information regarding the lifting of heavy barbells. While touring strongmen understood the need to lift heavy weights, they did not advertise the practice, or even suggest the use of heavy weights in the few mail-order courses published at this time. Calvert was further stymied by the fact that he didn't own a long-handled barbell like the ones Sandow used in his demonstrations. Furthermore, despite inquiries, he couldn't find any for sale in the United States unless he wanted to special

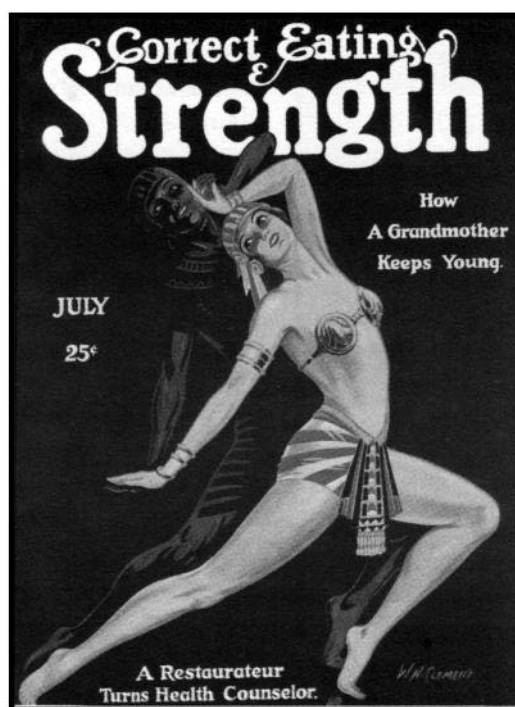
ed States before. Although Calvert had created the ideal product and was beginning to understand the best ways to use it, his own physique apparently never developed into anything resembling his idol's perfection.

Ottley Coulter, a magazine contributor and strongman friend, described Calvert as around five feet nine inches tall and with enough flesh to look good in his clothes.¹⁵ "He had a well proportioned forearm," Coulter noted, "but was not what I would call a muscular man."¹⁶ Though his physique wasn't "showy," Calvert eventually did become strong. Strength historian, David

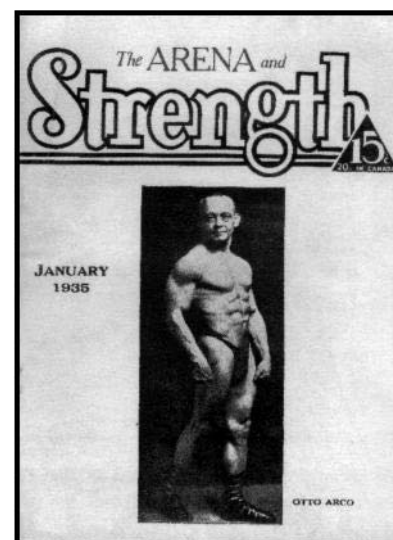
Webster, and magazine author, Ray Van Cleef, credit him with a sixty-five pound right-handed press when weighing about 135 pounds, a very



Colorful drawings of women athletes appeared frequently on *Strength* during the 1920s.



In May of 1930, *Strength* combined with the magazine formerly known as *Correct Eating*.



Otto Arco appeared on the cover of the combined *Arena and Strength* in January of 1935.

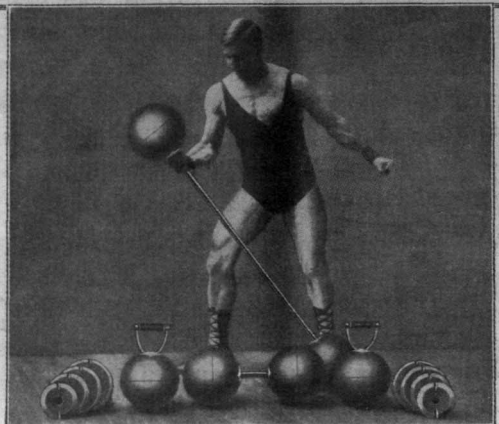
order them. There were several manufacturers selling dumbbells of various weights—generally topping out at forty or fifty pounds—but not a single equipment catalog advertised barbells.¹²

Calvert began tinkering, coming up with several home-made designs, and applied for his first patent in January 1902.¹³ He opened Milo Bar-bell Company shortly thereafter; by all accounts his were the first long-handled barbells commercially available to the American consumer. What was even more important than the length of the bar was that the barbells were adjustable; his first model could be loaded from 20 to 200 pounds.¹⁴ The fact that the weight could be varied was not only innovative; it made progressive resistance training possible in a way that had never been available in the Unit-

ed States before. Coulter claimed that Calvert later could press seventy-five pounds in strict one-arm military style at a moment's notice at a bodyweight of 175-180 pounds. Calvert was also a "very capable man at dipping on the parallel bars" in his younger and lighter days.¹⁷ Perhaps his genetics limited his potential or perhaps family and business obligations kept him too busy to train properly. In any case, Calvert's contribution to the Iron Game was not to be made through his body.

Once he'd gotten his barbell business well-established, Calvert turned his attention toward publishing. People needed to know how to use barbells and how to build real strength. Calvert moved in this direction because of the literally hundreds of letters he received from his customers asking for more informa-

64a PHYSICAL CULTURE'S ADVERTISERS—



WHAT IS A BAR-BELL?

A Bar-Bell is simply a long-handled dumbbell; it can be used for either lifting or developing exercises. In the above picture, the athlete is "up-ending" a Bar-Bell, while at his feet lie a Dumbbell and Kettle-bells.

WHY IS IT that a man who has been trained with heavy bells can perform feats of strength beyond the combined power of two or three ordinary men? Not alone because his arms are twice as strong—but because his back, hips and legs are FOUR OR FIVE TIMES AS STRONG as the average athlete's.

There is only one way to develop this phenomenal back and leg strength: and that is, by the use of a Bar-Bell. You cannot do it by practicing one-arm lifts with a short Dumbbell; you cannot do it by going through the old 5-lb. Dumbbell drill with a pair of 25 or 30-lb. Dumbbells; nor can you do it with a pair of Kettle-Bells. Kettle-Bells are primarily arm and deltoid developers.

In a combination outfit, the Dumbbell and the Kettle-Bells are subsidiary parts—the Bar-Bell is the great developing instrument. It is because they use Bar-Bells that OUR pupils can develop 45" chest, 16" hips, 24" thighs, etc.

The back and leg muscles are infinitely bigger, stronger, and more important than the arm muscles. After training thousands of cases, it is our conviction that the average man needs a Bar-Bell which can be adjusted up to 100 lbs., if he wants proper ALL-ROUND development.

We will be glad to assist and advise anyone in the selection of a combination bell of proper weight.

IN REGARD TO TRAINING

We believe we have the greatest course of training in the world—the BEST system. We have described it in some of our recent advertisements; but we want to say here that no system—however perfect—will exactly suit any and everyone. If YOU buy an outfit and enroll as a pupil with us, we have to adopt our system to your PARTICULAR INDIVIDUAL needs.

We can tell you a lot of interesting and instructive facts about body building and strength making; and we can also give you information about the largest and finest line of adjustable combination bells in the world.

Write for our booklet.

THE MILO BAR-BELL CO.
1011 Chestnut Street
PHILADELPHIA, PA.

We stand back of our Advertisers—Say "I saw it in Physical Culture"

Calvert had to educate his consumers on how to train and even on such basic matters as what a barbell was. This ad ran in *Physical Culture* magazine in December of 1913.

tion on how to use the new barbells. Family obligations—marriage to Mary Uhle Githens in 1906 and the birth of four children between 1907 and 1915—as well as financial considerations kept him from doing anything more than responding to the letters from his customers for the longest time. However, when Calvert's father-in-law died unexpectedly in 1910, leaving his wife a considerable inheritance, he decided to devote some of his time and energy to the production of a regular periodical.¹⁸

In the early twentieth century, *Physical Culture* was the primary magazine dispensing exercise information. However, Bernarr Macfadden's magazine wasn't just about exercise. It also covered many other aspects of healthful living—nutrition, vegetarianism, sexuality, fasting, alternative medicine, dance, and natural healing. While Macfadden used some pictures of muscular men

on his covers in the early days of his publication, his magazine was not really aimed at those who wanted to be strongmen. In fact, the closest example of "real weightlifting information" found in the first six years or so of *Physical Culture's* publication (1899-1905) involved an article by George Elliott Flint titled, "The Strength and Symmetry of Man Compared with Animals" in which Flint explained that heavy weights were needed in upper body training to match the symmetry of the lower body since the legs got more exercise during everyday activities. The only other weightlifting information was in an article on dumbbell training, which described numerous light weight (one to five pound) exercises and a single "heavy-weight" (eight to thirty pound) lift.¹⁹

There were other publications, of course. The *National Police Gazette* was a popular source for sporting news at the time. Although it did not print "how-to" articles, it took great pride in posting—and at times, hosting—challenges between touring strongmen. *Outing* magazine devoted considerable space to outdoor exercise—camping, cycling, equestrian events, fishing, hunting, yachting—and ran only an occasional article on physical culture or collegiate sports like football and track and field. If you were looking for barbell training information, *Outing* was not the right publication either.

To fill the void, Calvert decided to create a new kind of magazine, and in the beginning he kept it pretty simple. *Strength* began as a sixteen-page (including the front and back covers), 5"x7¼" pamphlet printed on off-white, high-quality coated paper, with the title "*General Strength*" and a simple copyright mark with month and year on the back cover.²⁰ With the second issue, in October 1914, Calvert changed to white, coated paper, increased the size of the magazine to 6" x 9", and shortened the name to just "*Strength*." The paper, measurements, and title in quotations continued until the May 1920 issue when new owners and editors dropped the quotations from the title, began to publish the magazine on much cheaper, uncoated paper, and expanded its thematic content.²¹

The seventeen issues published under Calvert's leadership, more or less on a bimonthly schedule, between June 1914 and January 1918 followed the same basic template—lots of pictures, a few informative articles, many testimonial letters, and no advertisements. Judging by comments made in a letter to Ottley Coulter a month after the October 1914 issue (the first with the *Strength* title), Calvert began the magazine in order to

publicize the amazing pictures sent in by his students and customers.²² Two years later Calvert boasted, "The readers of *Strength* have the opportunity of studying and admiring the pictures of the most perfectly developed class of men in the world—my advanced pupils."²³ Calvert devoted at least half of each issue to testimonial letters and photographs, and in the remaining space he wrote articles relating strength and muscular development to health, outlined his teaching methods and philosophy, and presented informative pieces on general anatomy and physiology.

In order to attract readers—and knowing from personal experience that viewing a well-developed body offered almost unlimited inspiration—Calvert used dramatic physique photos on the covers of each issue. The cover of the first issue, for instance, featured a Roman column superimposed on a photograph of Charles MacMahon, a Calvert student who would be made famous through his appearances in *Strength*. MacMahon is bent over, hands behind his head as if he, and not the column at his back, is supporting a massive piece of marble. Wearing only a posing jock and Roman sandals, MacMahon displays advanced development in his leg and back muscles. The use of Greek and Roman motifs, a common practice for strongmen and physique artists, played on the popularity of Greek Revivalism during this era.²⁴ The choice was not accidental; an art critic once compared his students to Greek statues, claiming Calvert was "turning out men whose perfection of figure equals that of the ancient classical Greek model."²⁵ Other *Strength* covers portraying a classical theme included Anton Matysek, probably the most famous of Calvert's pupils, who posed as "The Resting Gladiator" on one issue and as "Achilles" on another.²⁶

Although neo-classical images were widely used by magazines in the first two decades of the twentieth century, Calvert didn't rely strictly on copying ancient statuary. Other covers depict circus-type strongman stunts in which Charles MacMahon performed on a Roman Column, Charles Durner broke a piece of rope, Matysek lifted a heavy dumbbell, and Robert Snyder lifted a human partner overhead with one hand, all of which gave credence to the magazine's title. However, even in these photographs, clothing was kept to a minimum so that Calvert's readers could study the body as well as view the lift.

Opening the first issue revealed that half of the magazine's sixteen pages was devoted to testimonial letters and photographs of Milo Bar-bell students. Each of

the eleven physique photos was accompanied by a short analysis written by Calvert, with words of praise for what the man had accomplished. The remaining space was used to discuss such topics as: "General Strength," "The Importance of the Waist Muscles," "Concentrated Exercise," "The Twin Secrets of Strength," and "It is a Poor Rule that Don't Work Both Ways." In future issues of the magazine Calvert continued to use this basic format. He emphasized photography—as he believed it would inspire his readers—running an average of 1.26 physique photos per page for the first seventeen issues. His use of high quality, coated paper allowed the photographs to be clear and sharp. In comparison, Macfadden's publication, *Physical Culture*, used only 0.56 pictures per page and many of these photos featured things such as food, fashion designs, large group pictures, or other sports.²⁷ The physique images often appeared grainy and slightly unfocused in Macfadden's publication due to the lower quality, uncoated paper.

Careful examination of photos was important to Calvert, for it was during this activity, he believed, that his readers learned the most. His ultimate goal, he told Ottley Coulter, was to create a national contingent of amateur strongmen who could compete favorably against the European lifting clubs. To do this, he explained, every lifter must be smart in the ways of lifting as well as the development it produces.²⁸ His use of student pictures served two purposes: they provided actual proof of the results brought about by his equipment and training methods, and they encouraged careful observation. Calvert advised his readers to take note of every muscular connection and shadow so that they might educate themselves about anatomy and the nuances of bodybuilding, and so that their personal strength training would benefit. In an article on arm training, for example, Calvert made the connection to Charles Durner's photos:

I am glad to be able to show my readers pictures of my pupil, Mr. Durner...because it helps me to make more clear the points in my article on "Arm Development." In that article I referred to the picture...calling attention to the comparative size of the biceps and triceps muscles....Mr. Durner's right arm is wonderfully proportioned. The great size of the biceps is balanced by the equally large triceps and deltoid mus-

cles; the forearm is in proportion to the upper arm, and this gives the whole arm an appearance of tremendous power.²⁹

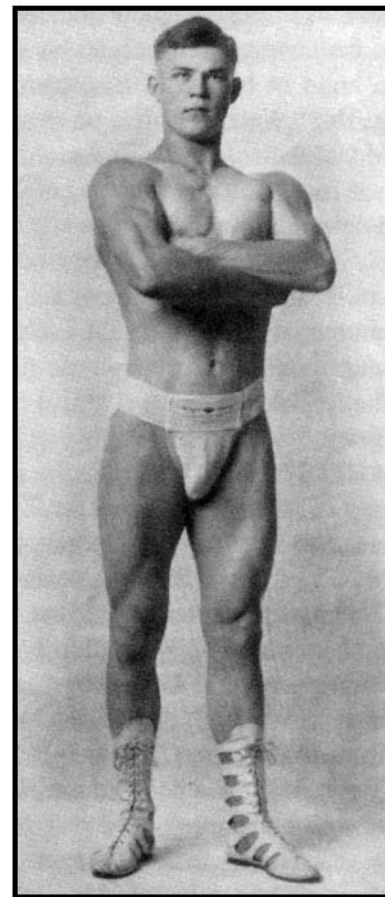
Proud of their training accomplishments, many readers made the trip to their local photographer to get pictures made specifically to send to the new publication. If a promising student made the trip to see Calvert in person, a trip to Scott of Philadelphia, Calvert's favorite photographer, was planned and paid for. His pupils all hoped to have their pictures published and to have Calvert say a few words about their progress, and he was only too glad to comply. Calvert supplied feedback on the photographs by critiquing the weaknesses and extolling the strengths of the physique photography supplied by his students:

I am describing the case of Mr. Paschall...because it furnishes an example of how much a man CAN develop. I think that any young man would be perfectly willing to practice for a year to obtain a build like Paschall's....His present measurements are not extraordinary, but even now he has the appearance of the finished athlete. The pictures...certainly make him appear a great deal stronger and better set up than the average 17-year-old boy. In fact, very few fully developed adult athletes have a build which would compare with Mr. Paschall's....In studying Mr. Paschall's picture, please note that there is nothing about his figure that makes him look heavy or clumsy. While the muscular development is pronounced, the muscles are of a shape that makes for speed as well as for strength.³⁰

Calvert wrote with the utmost sincerity and enthusiasm. He believed in giving his honest opinion, for that was how American lifters would learn and excel. If a letter-writer gave someone (including himself) too much credit, Calvert quickly corrected him, as Ottley Coulter found when Calvert chided him for statements Coulter had made about Robert Snyder, a fellow lightweight lifter and a Milo pupil. Although Coulter and Calvert had been corresponding for several years at the

time of this exchange, Calvert bluntly told him, "I think that you are too apt to give credit only to the people whom you have met personally. It is very risky to make sweeping statements. I consider Snyder to be a first-class lifter for his weight, but I would not venture to state that he was the best of his weight or the next best."³¹ When Coulter made reference to another entrepreneur's comments, Calvert cautioned him, "[Paul] Von Boeckman's praise is certainly great, but you must remember that when he says the 'finest ever produced' what he really means is the finest *he* has ever seen. It is very reckless to say that such and such a person is the finest, or the best, or the strongest, in the world. The world is a big place."³²

Calvert knew more about what was happening in the rest of the world related to strength than most American strongmen did. Calvert studied the methods of respected European trainers, such as Theodore Siebert of Germany, and he subscribed to some European lifting periodicals. Coulter would later describe Calvert as "the Desbonnet of [the] U.S.," a reference to Edmond Debonnet, the famous French trainer and historian, who for several decades was at the center of European physical culture.³³ The compliment was indeed an honor as Calvert considered Desbonnet to be "one of the best authorities on lifting, and certainly the very best authority on the French school of lifting."³⁴ To



Harry Paschall, author of the *Bosco* books, was one of Calvert's most ardent disciples. This photo, showing his admirable physique at age 17, appeared in *Strength* in 1915.

suggests that Calvert's magazine and writings had greatly enhanced his reputation and made him central to the American weightlifting scene.

Calvert wrote all but one article published in *Strength* while he was editor. He averaged four articles per issue, and after the first couple of years he generally included an editorial-like "Announcement" or "Notice." He wasn't opposed to other writers, he told Coulter after receiving an article to be published, but felt that he couldn't open the magazine to other writers until, "... I can make the magazine go on a big scale." His hope, he told Coulter, was to "get a good sized subscription list," which would allow him to bring in other authors.³⁵ So, articles such as "Perfect Proportions—How Much Should You Measure?" "More About Development - Train for 'Development' First," "What Does 'Muscle-Bound' Mean?" "Posing for Muscular Display," and "My Most Important Work is Body-building for Amateurs" all came directly from Calvert's creative mind.

An over-riding theme in Calvert's writing is that there are different types of strength. *General* strength, which Calvert favored, referred to the "strength of the body as a whole," whereas *special* strength was used to describe the athlete whose development is not proportional, such as the trapeze artist who develops only the upper body muscles. The man who had general strength had "well-knit" and "connected" development—each muscle of the body worked well with those nearby and all seemed to be developed to the same extent.³⁶ Calvert wanted the body to work as a unit, arguing that, "I am a great advocate of all-round development. I believe that symmetry means strength and that a man cannot be really strong unless he is harmoniously developed from head to heel."³⁷ But, adhering to similar physical culture mores of the era, his training reasoning had further unseen objectives:

I train the whole body. A man cannot build up a big muscular development unless his digestive and assimilative organs are put into a very vigorous condition, and the only way to do that is to improve the circulation of the blood around these organs, and to improve the tone of the organs themselves by giving vigorous but graded exercise to the great muscle groups of the back, sides, abdomen, hips and thighs. These mus-

cle groups are so large and powerful that it takes a fairly heavy amount of resistance to bring the muscles to their full and proper development.³⁸

Just as a keystone is the supporting structure in a building arch, Calvert argued that

...the small of the back is the keystone in the arch of a man's strength. If you are weak in the back, then you cannot be thoroughly vigorous and healthy no matter how big your arms and legs are. If you wish unusual vitality and endurance—if you wish to have a springy, graceful walk—the ability to lift and carry great burdens—coupled with amazing agility—then exercise the muscles of the small of the back, the loins and the thighs.³⁹

Training was for everyone. While he felt best results could be had by those between fifteen and forty-five years old, he had trained boys as young as nine and men as old as sixty-five. All he required were students with the "desire to be healthy and strong—and who are willing to practice and study." To obtain optimal development and strength he instructed his pupils to train once every forty-eight hours for twenty-five to forty minutes a session, "Short periods of vigorous exercise with moderately heavy weights develop a man's muscles and leave him feeling fresh and energetic..."⁴⁰ Although the length of Calvert's course depended on whether the pupil was of the slender "greyhound type" or the stout "bull-dog type," Calvert claimed that by the end of a course his students should be able:

...to "put up" a 150-lb. bar-bell, or tear two packs of cards (both of which tests are easy for a trained bar-bell lifter)—but what is more, I also expect him to have enough strength and endurance to: Clear a 5-foot fence at a bound; Lift 500 or 600 pounds deadweight; Lift one end of a 1500-pound wagon (using only hands.); Trot 100 yards with a man on

each shoulder, and row, walk or swim for miles without much effort or fatigue.⁴¹

With such high expectations some prospective students believed they had to be previously trained in order to become a Milo student. Of course it didn't help that other physical training entrepreneurs tried to cash in on Calvert's success by advertising that their light weight course prepared a person for Calvert's course. Calvert tried to explain, "My real business is taking the average man, or boy, and, by a few months' training, turning him into a perfect physical specimen." While Calvert felt that the other trainers validated his training system, he emphatically proclaimed, "that no one has to take a course to put himself in shape to enroll with me. I attend to that part of the business myself. Any man who is strong enough to exercise with a pair of 5-lb. dumbbells is strong enough to start immediately at my course—no previous experience is necessary."⁴² The prospective pupil simply sent in his measurements—height, weight, age, and present physical condition. Calvert compared these measurements with his standard proportions of a perfectly developed man or suggested, since he always strove to educate his students, they do the calculations themselves:

Normal Chest: 63 per cent. of height;
Waist: 8 or 9 inches less than chest;
Forearm: 1 7/8 times as much as wrist;
Flexed upper arm (biceps): 20 per cent. more than forearm;
Thigh: 35 per cent. of height;
Calf: 7 or 8 inches less than thigh.⁴³

Calvert stressed that one could not use the "Ideal Tables" found in various "How Much Should You Measure?" texts because they did not take into account the size of one's bones and would not describe what a muscular man should measure. According to Paschall, Sandow's "girths did not vary ½ inch in any respect from the figures given by Calvert as ideal. It is therefore quite easy to see that Mr. Calvert's ideal was Sandow."⁴⁴

Calvert then began his pupils with his developing, or "body-building," exercises, in which the pupil "uses the bar-bell apparatus adjusted to very moderate weights."⁴⁵ "Moderate" generally meant a weight proportionate to the pupil's size and strength.⁴⁶ Calvert

assigned the weight to be used, as well as the exercises needed, according to the measurement sheet. After the students had mastered these basic exercises and gained a modicum of strength, Calvert would then advance the student to the "Standard Lifts." These lifts, often referred to as "real lifting," represented the overhead lifts used in competitions. These required both strength and technique, so Calvert stressed that "the pupil has to report to me and show me that he has acquired a certain degree of strength and development before he is directed to start at the real lifting."⁴⁷

Calvert's training innovation was to use progressively heavier and heavier weight as one adjusted to exercise. A common theme was for him to belittle programs which advocated only light exercise:

I tell you, it is pretty discouraging when a fellow puts in an hour every morning before breakfast, pumping away with his pair of 5-pounders, and attends gym two or three nights a week—and then finds that another fellow who plays only outdoor games, can throw him in a wrestling match, or heave a ball farther; while the average day laborer will pick up and carry a heavy burden that the light-exercise lad can't even lift. Why is it? Because back and leg power make for GENERAL STRENGTH, and strong upper arms and shoulders are useless unless supported by strong back and legs. No wonder the out-door fellow calls the light-dumbbell boy a "Bed-room athlete."⁴⁸

Calvert believed that training with light weights all the time, which also included the "futile piffle" of group work performed at the local gymnasium, was just a step above a total waste of time. He often referred to it in demeaning terms: "...gymnasiums do a lot of good; they occupy the spare time of many otherwise intelligent men, who stand in rows before the instructors and wave their arms and legs about doing kindergarten calisthenics in a chirpy manner."⁴⁹ The popularity of these light-weight systems caused Calvert to observe, "If there were anything in light dumbbell exercise, the United States by



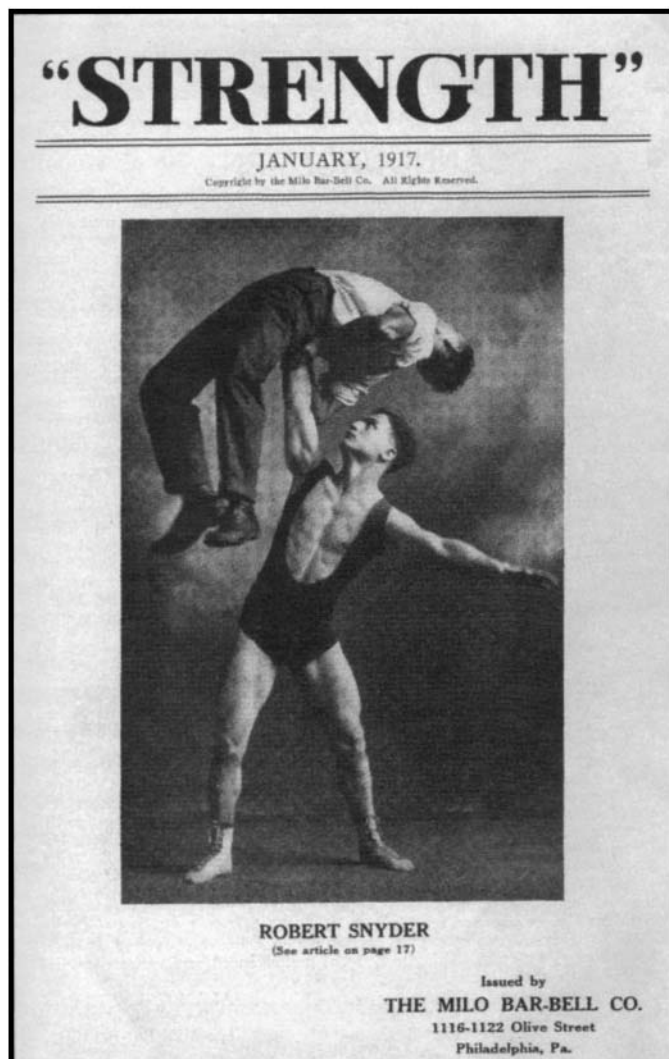
Calvert poses with a variety of globe-ended weights in this rare photo from the collection of Joe Weider. Calvert rarely used his own image in his publications.

this time would be the finest developed nation in the world; you would meet Samsons and Apollos in every block, for I suppose almost every man has, in his time, practiced light dumbbell exercises to some extent."⁵⁰ He did believe, however, that the light-weight exercises served a function for beginners, so he included a series of light-weight exercises in *Strength* and informed everyone that the "kindergarten exercises" created a knowledge and strength base which could be applied to the more important and results-producing activity of training with moderately heavy weights.⁵¹

Calvert had plenty of examples of light weight training to which he could compare his own methods. Nearly all early training courses advocated light weights. He thought of William Blaikie as "practically the originator" of the light weight training system, arguing that all the similar training programs of the day were simply copies.⁵² In reality there were earlier physical culturists, such as Diocletian Lewis (1823-1886), who advocated the use of light weights. Lewis's "New Gymnastics" movement in the mid-to-late nineteenth century recommended fairly rigorous exercises for men and women, but the exercises only required light-weight implements or just the use of the body's weight. Lewis compared the heavy weightlifter to a massive but slow draft horse and the New Gymnastics practitioner to a lighter, more agile carriage horse, arguing that "lifting great weights affects him as drawing heavy loads affects the horse. Surely it is only this mania for monstrous arms and shoulders that could have misled the intelligent gymnast on this point."⁵³ Even Eugen Sandow, Calvert's idol, advertised the use of light weights as he marketed a "spring-grip dumbbell" that could be easily mailed. Calvert allowed that Sandow, as many other weight-trained strongmen advertising similar light exercise systems had been, was "led astray by poor advice."⁵⁴ Calvert

claimed that the practice was done to fool people into believing that Sandow had acquired his physique through the use of the light dumbbells instead of heavy barbells.

Lewis' equating the "slow and plodding" draft horse with heavy weight work is one of the earliest versions of the "musclebound" myth which Calvert tried to dispel through the pages of *Strength*. Nearly all athletes in the early twentieth century were discouraged by coaches from using weights during their sports training



Robert Snyder was featured frequently in *Strength* magazine as Calvert believed Snyder's combination of strength and muscularity would inspire others to follow the Milo system.

for fear the large muscles they produced would make them slow and less flexible. Calvert received so many letters requesting the answer to whether weight training would hinder a man in sports that in March 1915 he wrote "What Does 'Muscle-Bound' Mean?" in which he argued valiantly in favor of weight training for athletes. He explained that there existed many sports in which the athlete must be fast and light on his feet as well as powerful, e.g. boxing. He described boxing champions James J. Jeffries and Stanley Ketchel as being very strong (from other activities), but also very quick and powerful, not slow and plodding. He also argued that if an athlete trained with heavy weights through full ranges of motion then he would actually increase his flexibility

instead of decreasing it as foretold by the sport coaches.⁵⁵ Milo pupils, such as Rufus Swainhart, submitted letters with comments from their coaches such as, "My sympathy is with the young man who takes up weight lifting. By the time he is 22 or 24 years old he will be in such a 'muscle-bound' condition that he can not help himself." Swainhart replied, "You do as you please, and I will do as I please. I know what I am doing. I am going to keep right on training under Alan Calvert's instructions."⁵⁶ Those who actually trained with weights in addition to participating in another sport soon realized the advantage they had gained. They understood Calvert's teachings and did their best to perform "missionary work" on weight training's behalf.⁵⁷

Calvert referred to his program as progressive weight lifting, progressive weight work, progressive exercise, or graded heavy work.⁵⁸ Regardless of what he called it the concept was the same—the muscles had to be progressively challenged by slowly adding weight to the barbell. He counseled his students on the importance of starting light and then gradually adding weight as their strength increased so injuries were prevented. Although Calvert wrote extensively on the subject, Ottley Coulter believed the extent of Calvert's knowledge of progressive training was "much more thorough than his course or writings even indicate."⁵⁹ Coulter claims Calvert had ideas about training which he never published in *Strength*.

When a man participated in training with at least moderate weights, he did not need any other form of exercise to stay healthy, for lifting was, according to Calvert, "concentrated exercise."⁶⁰ He believed, as had America's earlier heavy-lifting advocate, George Barker Windship, that physical strength was evidence of good health. Calvert focused his system on two physical objectives—building great strength and possessing an impressive physique. "There is no greater asset in the business world, and in the social world, than a fine physique," he wrote, explaining that the "possessor of a perfect figure almost invariably enjoys abounding health."⁶¹ Many of Calvert's early articles contain information which is consistent with modern exercise prescriptions. For example, he argued that flexibility could be built by using resistance training in which the muscles are taken through the full range of motion. And, even though Calvert provides no discussion of regular cardiovascular training, now so central to our modern exercise scene, he nonetheless recommended some rapid training

with little rest between sets, arguing that it would result in the ability to swim, row, or walk for miles without tiring.⁶²

The other way in which *Strength's* message differs from some other publications of this era is that Calvert's interest in strength and physical proportion are not couched in terms that promise readers they'll become "new men" or have greater "manliness." Calvert's dream was to create strongmen capable of competing on the same footing with Europe's great strength stars. He stayed away from the eugenic arguments so popular in the early twentieth century, and it is possible that this is why he also offered no training advice to women.⁶³ He equated strength with health, not with the preservation of Anglo-Saxon hegemony. Whether he intended it, however, *Strength* magazine had an impact on America's notion of manliness. If, for example, Calvert hadn't published Harry Paschall's picture and praised his physique, perhaps a young boy named Robert Hoffman wouldn't have started his own lifting career—a career that eventually included the founding of the York Barbell Company, the publishing of *Strength & Health* magazine, the coaching of many United States Olympic weightlifting teams, and, finally, the mainstream acceptance of weight training in America.⁶⁴ Perhaps, as Jonathan Kasson suggests about Sandow, the impact of *Strength's* pictures and personal stories served as a "reaffirmation of male identity at a time when it seemed to be losing authority and coherence. By stressing the potential for strength, control, heroism, and virility in the male physique, he [Sandow] reassured a broad public of the continuation of these qualities."⁶⁵ With American involvement in World War I, Calvert's readers no doubt needed similar reassurance and inspiration.

The one *Strength* article not Calvert's own, written by Ottley Coulter and titled, "Honesty in Weight Lifting and the Necessity of Making Lifters Prove Their Claims," may have been a product of the correspondence between the two men about the need to verify the actual lifts made by strongmen. Ottley Coulter's letters from Calvert reveal an on-going conversation about Max Unger—or Lionel Strongfort as he was known professionally—for neither Calvert nor Coulter believed Unger's strongman claims.⁶⁶ In 1916, Strongfort, one of Calvert's entrepreneurial competitors, apparently began an attack on Calvert. The exact nature of Strongfort's attack is unknown, other than the fact that Calvert did not give him credit for a particular pressing record.

Calvert felt the need to speak with a legal advisor about the situation and he also contacted Professor Titus, another physical culture entrepreneur in New York City, who had had similar dealings with Strongfort. Calvert's lawyer advised him to pay no attention to the attack and Titus supported a \$100 challenge to the man to prove his claims. Although Unger's name was never mentioned in the letters containing the information about the attack, a \$100 challenge was posted in the January 1917 issue of *Strength* directly after Coulter's article as Calvert said he would do.⁶⁷ A follow-up notice confirmed that Unger never responded to the challenge.⁶⁸

Coulter may have originally approached Calvert with the idea of writing the "Honesty in Weight Lifting" article because he truly believed he could compete with and beat anyone his size,⁶⁹ but in a letter Calvert suggested that Coulter should address the following points:

1. Lifting should be placed on the same strict basis as any other amateur sport;
2. But the rules and conditions should be framed by those familiar with lifting, and should include only real lifts, and all stage tricks and supporting feats should be barred;
3. Show how lifting is controlled by strict laws in England, France, Germany, and Austria; also how the rules in all the European countries (except England) are practically the same, so that international contests can be held, and yet the lifters of every country are familiar with the rules;
4. Speak of the desirability of such rules in this country;
5. Speak of your own personal experience with me; and I don't think I am saying too much if I say that you can truthfully state that I am heart and soul in favor of the strictest honesty regarding lifting, and that you know that I would not purposely exaggerate the feats of any of my pupils, nor depreciate the work of any stranger who lifted honestly. You might state that you have had opportunities to observe; that you know of cases where I have arranged for record-breaking feats by my favored

pupils, and that if the pupils happen to fail, no claim is made for a record, and no excuse made for failure.

Finally, don't attack anyone - you can imply that there are others who are not strict about their claims, and who attempt to deceive the public, but you must speak in the most general terms.⁷⁰

Ottley wrote the article using Calvert's guidelines, almost verbatim. For example, the last paragraph of the article addresses the honesty of Calvert (fifth point):

I think we all see the need of a lifters' organization in this country, and I have wished for some time to see Mr. Calvert take the initiative in the movement, as I have known him personally for some time, and know him to stand for the strictest honesty in lifting. I know he would not purposely exaggerate the feats of his pupils, or belittle the lifting of any stranger who lifted honestly. I have lifted before him personally, and have seen some of his star pupils attempt a lift and fail, and no claim was made for a record and no excuse offered for failure. He has a greater knowledge of lifting than any man in this country that I have ever associated with, and I am acquainted with the best. He has done more for legitimate lifting in this country than anyone else. I feel sure he is heart and soul in favor of the sport, and will do all in his power to promote honesty in lifting.⁷¹

The idea of honest lifting was not new for Calvert. He had published a book in 1911—*The Truth About Weight-Lifting*—in which he explained many of the strongman's "tricks of the trade." He warned the early weight trainers and strongmen-to-be about faulty claims and what to look for in their opponents. He described many of the common lifts and began one of the first calls, if not *the* first, for a national organization to standardize competition within the United States. The early 1920s saw the fruition of his foresight when George Jowett, Ottley Coulter, and David Willoughby

created the American Continental Weight Lifting Association (ACWLA).⁷² Although the name has changed several times over the past century, the organization which started because of Coulter's article in *Strength* is now known as USA Weightlifting and serves as the modern affiliate of the U.S. Olympic Committee.

The Great War caused a drop in Milo's business since "...it is a very bad time to launch a new proposition like this. Every young man thinks he is going to be among those selected, and they are not making any investments in exercising apparatus and I do not know whether one can blame them."⁷³ Eventually war activities evolved to the point that Calvert had to shut down Milo Bar-Bell and quit publishing *Strength*. His last issue was a double issue which appeared in January 1918. He included a small article titled "Hints on Posing," but the majority of the issue was devoted to Milo students, including several that managed to train while on military duty. In his "Notice to Readers" he does not hint that it will be his last issue and he actually declares that a return of the "editorial articles on anatomy and special training" will occur with the March issue.

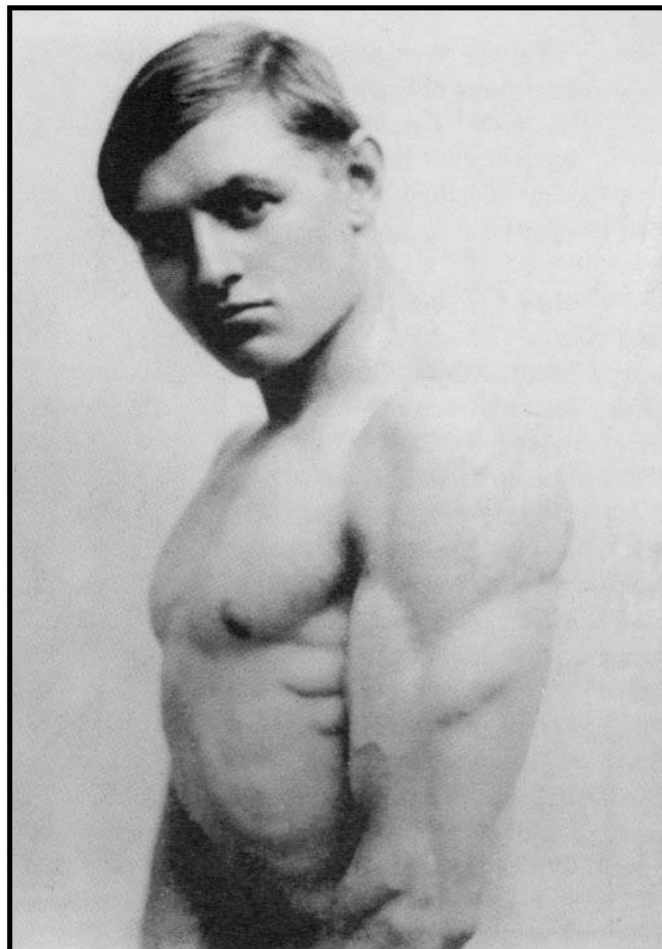
As the American involvement with the War escalated, however, Calvert had trouble getting iron and paper to support his businesses. In mid-1917, as paper costs rose, he began charging five cents for the magazine which had heretofore been sent for free to his subscribers. In March 1918, when his next issue should have appeared, Calvert wrote to Coulter that he was "gradually losing interest" in the magazine and "in the subject of lifting in general. No one could now call me an enthusiast on the subject."⁷⁴ By May he wanted out of the business altogether, "It is my earnest desire to retire from this business at the first possible moment ... I have utterly lost interest in weightlifting and everything connected with it, and I never expect to resume this business."⁷⁵ Why Calvert was so disenchanted with his companies and with lifting in general is not clear from his surviving letters. What is known is that in July of 1918, he submitted an itemized list of Milo holdings valued at over \$10,000 and offered to sell everything to Ottley Coulter for \$5,000.⁷⁶ Calvert offered it again to Coulter for \$3,000 cash in September.⁷⁷ Coulter didn't have the funds so Calvert sold the barbell company and *Strength* magazine for an undisclosed amount in early January 1919 to Richard L. Hunter and Daniel G. Redmond, the son of the man who owned The Fairmount Foundry—the same foundry which supplied Milo Bar-Bell with its plates and bars.⁷⁸ In doing so Calvert "agreed never to

re-enter the bar bell business, so all my connection with the P.C. game is at an end."⁷⁹

Calvert's career in physical culture was far from over, however. While he never again sold equipment, Calvert continued to be associated with *Strength* until 1924. The new owners, with encouragement from the old Milo students, resumed the manufacture of barbells in March 1919 and began publishing *Strength* again in November with J.C. Egan as editor. They decided to broaden the scope of the magazine and asked several "Milo Finished Products," including Ottley Coulter, to submit articles for publication.⁸⁰ Articles about diet, speed and vitality, and the psychology of lifting appear alongside two articles by Calvert—one on arm training and another on his old standby, "All-Round Strength." For three issues Redmond and Egan retained most of Calvert's previous practices: they used high quality paper, a number of photographs showcasing Milo students, and a number of informative articles in each issue. The big difference, of course, was that now most articles were written by someone other than Calvert.

Dramatic changes in the physical appearance of *Strength* occurred with the May 1920 issue, however. Cheaper, uncoated paper took the place of the high quality paper and the number of photographs declined by fifty percent or more.⁸¹ For the next two years Calvert appears to have simply contributed sporadic articles on strength and training, and at first they were placed prominently near the magazine's front. Following the December 1921 issue, however, he assumed a more active role, penning the magazine's lead editorials in January, February and March of 1922. Shortly afterward, he was listed as one of three editors for the magazine, beginning in July of that year. It is worth mentioning that by this time Calvert had become a convert to Edwin Checkley's training program, a system of exercise that required *no* equipment.⁸² In *Strength*, Calvert placed ads for *Checkley's Natural Method of Physical Training*, which he sold privately.⁸³ It was an amazing, and puzzling, departure for this former champion of heavy weight training.

Readers continued to clamor for Calvert's inspirational writings on weightlifting, and when *Strength* editors began a Prize Award Contest in 1922 in which the readers voted on the most popular article of the issue, Alan Calvert won three of the five times the results were published. When Carl Easton Williams, a former editor for *Physical Culture*, joined the staff in October 1923, Williams broadened the magazine's editorial focus even



Ottley Coulter befriended Calvert and was asked by him to write one of the most important articles in the history of weightlifting. The article, entitled "Honesty in Weight Lifting and the Necessity of Making Lifters Prove Their Claims," appeared in *Strength* in January 1917. It argued for the keeping of records and the formation of an official weightlifting association. The result was the creation of the American Continental Weightlifting Association and the birth of the modern era of weightlifting in the United States.

further. He expanded both the number of pages and the coverage of general physical culture topics, but the new approach was still not successful.⁸⁴

It seemed as though Redmond and Egan did not know which direction they wanted to take with the magazine. The October 1920 editorial had declared that they would make:

very little change in the policy of *Strength*. It will always be primarily a man's magazine, and we are going to try to make it of real interest to every red-blooded man in the country. It will

always be devoted to weight lifting—the best form of exercise ever devised for the male of the species—but will also have articles from time to time dealing with wrestling, boxing and other forms of sport appealing to red-blooded men.⁸⁵

However, the November 1920 issue contained only two, out of seven, articles that directly related to weight lifting, "Chest Development" and "Concerning Lifting Records" and one more that indirectly spoke to weight training—"Can We Build a Reserve of Energy?" The four other articles consisted of two Olympic Games pieces and one each on camping and wrestling—not exactly a magazine "devoted to weight lifting."⁸⁶ Over the next months, weight work played an even less prominent role in the magazine's editorial thrust. Physique and strength photographs, always seen on the covers under Calvert's guidance, disappeared under the new ownership. For ten consecutive issues, however, May 1920 to April 1921, a classical template involving strongmen and columns was used to highlight the issues' table of contents. Beginning in 1921, in line with the general move toward traditional sports during the Golden Era of the 1920s, *Strength's* covers began to portray photographs of men and women from other sporting events—baseball, boxing, rowing, tennis, football, ice skating, and even skiing.⁸⁷ However, in 1922 commercial illustrators were employed for the duration of the magazine. A woman first appeared on the cover of *Strength* in December 1921. Over the next year, five covers illustrated women skiing, golfing, diving, playing tennis, and dancing. In 1925 and 1926 every cover featured a woman's figure. Although a few issues portrayed men between 1927 and 1929, women rose to 100% coverage again in 1930.

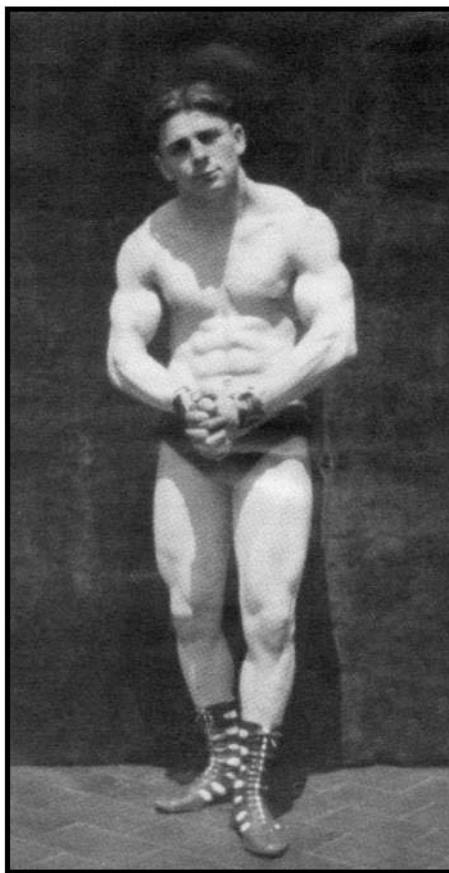
Another major change in *Strength* after the sale to Hunter and Redmond was the introduction of advertising. Calvert had managed to produce the magazine without ads because it was the mouthpiece for Milo Barbell Company. Readers occasionally found inserts added to the magazine announcing new Milo products, such as the September 1916 issue's announcement of the arrival of the 1917 Milo-Duplex Combination Bell. The only other items that would remotely be considered advertisements were notices about the availability of prints of Anton Matysek, Calvert's star pupil, or photos of other Milo students. However, beginning in July 1920, *Strength* began carrying ads for other vendors.

Matysek's Muscle Control Course and The Wizard Company, which sold shoe repair tools, were the first advertisers. In August, the Marshall-Stillman Company advertised a series of "how-to" books about boxing, wrestling, and self defense in August. Earl Liederman began advertising his training courses the same month. Several issues later, Bernarr Macfadden placed an ad for his book, *Vitality Supreme*, and wrestling experts—Farmer Burns and Frank Gotch, the current world heavy-weight wrestling champion—advertised their Farmer Burns Wrestling School.⁸⁸ Within two years, roughly 30% of the magazine—which was now up to sixty-four pages—contained ads, a fact which no doubt helped foster the growth of mail order courses on physical culture. People such as Charles Atlas—"the 97-lb. weakling"—and Earle Liederman became commonplace figures in the field of mail-order training with the help of advertisements in periodicals such as *Strength*.

As for Calvert, his popularity remained undiminished with readers and in March of 1923, *Strength* began a question and answer forum called "The Mat." Described as "a department where you can fight for your views or where you can sit in the reserved seats and watch your fellow readers 'go to the mat' in defense of their convictions."⁸⁹ The forum was a chance for Calvert to respond to readers' questions and to comment in areas of health, muscular development, sports, and athletics. Calvert continued the forum until the December 1924 issue when he declared that he was resigning from "The Mat" and turning it over to George F. Jowett because there were too many letters on too many subjects and he had "a rooted objection to any one else writing letters over my signature."⁹⁰ George Fuisdale Jowett had recently begun the American Continental Weightlifting Association, the first national weightlifting organization in the United States, in Pittsburgh, with the help of Otley Coulter and David P. Willoughby. Calvert helped hire Jowett in an effort to restore some of the weightlifting appeal of the magazine, and almost immediately thereafter he severed all connections with the Milo Barbell Company. The company retained the rights to his publications including his new book, *Super Strength*, regarded by many as his life's work.⁹¹ A culmination of all he knew and believed, *Super Strength* was an instant bestseller in weightlifting circles. After all, Alan Calvert "stood alone in his genius for writing the most interesting and helpful lessons on physical training and development."⁹²

As Calvert moved on to other pursuits, *Strength* continued its path into the realm of general physical culture. In May 1930 it combined with *Correct Eating*, which aimed at being "an improved magazine of practical value to the sincere seeker after physical and mental efficiency and the perfect health with which they should be accompanied." Older readers of *Strength* "will be given an opportunity of having the latest ideas on dietetic science."⁹³ This association lasted for two years; in May 1932 *Strength* combined with *The Arena*, a boxing magazine. During this final partnership the magazine returned to themes closely related to strength—weightlifting, boxing and wrestling—even going so far as to use physique photographs on the final two covers. However, Milo Bar-bell no longer enjoyed an open market as several other companies also sold barbells, and some customers began to question Daniel G. Redmond's business ethics.⁹⁴ As Milo customers became dissatisfied, they took their business elsewhere. Milo Bar-bell went bankrupt in 1935 and Robert "Bob" Hoffman of York, Pennsylvania, bought the remains of the business, including the rights to the books authored by Calvert, Earle Liederman, and Charles MacMahon, which had been published by the Milo Company.

Alan Calvert did his best to share with other men his enthusiasm for strong, well-developed bodies. He believed that all men had a right to create a new version of their body with a sound and effective program. He felt that if he provided men with the education and tools to improve not only their physical body, but also their anatomical and physiological knowledge, then he had accomplished something important. A major reason for Calvert's overall success was linked to his sincere enthusiasm and passion for the developed body. Like Peary Rader, the founder of *Iron Man*, Calvert was influential not because of his own physique, but because he really saw himself as an educator. As a teenager, Calvert had been awed by Sandow, and had then figured out how



This photo of Siegmund Klein appeared in *Strength* in October of 1922. He later wrote that his appearance there meant he had finally made it to the "inner circle of Strongmanism."

Sandow had achieved his "look." He knew that form follows function and so he urged men to build *real* strength, not just work on appearance. He believed that America could compete with European lifters if given the same opportunities and training information, so he devoted a number of years of his life to the development of an American crop of amateur strongmen. He succeeded in his goal first by manufacturing barbells, and then through the pages of *Strength* magazine. Although the magazine headed in a different direction after its sale, its earliest form served to inspire future generations of Iron Game greats.

Calvert also motivated Sig Klein to open one of the most prominent and respected gyms in New York City. Klein claimed that Calvert's article in October 1922, "Klein, the Latest Addition to the 'Perfect Men'" was "the actual turning point of my life, for then and there I decided that I would devote my future to teaching bar bell training."⁹⁵ The publicity Klein received in *Strength* meant, he wrote late in

his life, that he'd finally gotten into "that inner circle of Strongmanism."⁹⁶ For fifty years, Klein's love for the game brought many physical culture adherents to the way of the barbell between the 1920s and the 1970s. Harry Paschall also became a proselytizer for the barbell movement. He authored many books and published his own training course. He is probably best remembered for "Bosco," his popular German cartoon strongman featured for years in *Strength & Health*.⁹⁷ In his formative years, Bob Hoffman established contact with Alan Calvert. In 1932, before purchasing Milo Bar-bell in 1935, Hoffman began his own publishing career—geared toward the American weightlifting movement—by starting *Strength & Health*. After the acquisition of Milo Bar-bell, Hoffman began his own equipment company, York Barbell, which cornered the iron-weight market in America. Just north of the border, a young Canadian weight trainer and bodybuilder named Joseph Wei-

der also studied *Strength* magazine. Weider followed some of the routines put forth by Calvert, but he wanted even more muscle.⁹⁸ His desire for the largest, most beautiful bodies, along with his ability to see genetic potential for muscular growth in his students, created modern bodybuilding and, over time, an immense business empire. Weider's publications primarily dealt with the sport and fitness activity of bodybuilding and men's and women's health and fitness in general, and they sold for \$350 million in 2003.

As European proponents of the competitive sport of weightlifting struggled to organize an acceptable international governing body in order to indicate weightlifting's emergence as a modern sport, the various countries kept their lifters and lifting clubs informed of current events by publishing information in periodicals such as *Internationale Illustrierte Athleten-Zeitung* (*The International Illustrated Athlete's Newspaper*) and *Kraft und Gewandtheit* (*Strength and Skill*) in Germany and *Neuigkeits Welt-Blatt* (*Piece of World News Newspaper*) in Austria, fulfilling Adelman's requirement that a modern sport required a specialized literature.⁹⁹ Although America was several years behind the European nations in organizational authorities, *Strength* magazine became "the pioneer weight lifting publication" in America.¹⁰⁰ Calvert began *Strength* magazine in 1914 to further advertise his barbell company. Sporting entrepreneurs intuitively understood that part of the equation for success involved creating customers and adherents for the emerging field of strength athletics in America.¹⁰¹ In an era in which brand recognition became the advertising objective, Calvert established Milo Bar-bell as a name associated with standards of quality and expert instruction.¹⁰² For years, the magazine served as the lone American voice of the barbell industry; it highlighted Calvert's barbells and showed the kinds of results one could expect by training with the Milo brand. *Strength* featured instructive articles on training and muscular development, publicized record attempts by amateurs and professional lifters alike, announced competitions and their results, and created the "only contact with the world of strong men."¹⁰³ With its multitude of physique pictures and advice on physical development, it became a much sought-after magazine for the dedicated lifter; it created motivation for serious training and increased the need for Milo barbells—which was what Calvert had hoped. Although it was not necessary to be a Milo customer in order to receive the magazine, readers most assuredly became loyal fans through the motivation pro-

vided by the magazine. Referred to as a barbell magazine by those who waited anxiously by the mailbox or at the newsstand during its days of publication, *Strength* was the first of its kind in America.

Notes:

[The abbreviation "TMPCC" is used for items contained in the Todd-McLean Physical Culture Collection at the University of Texas at Austin.]

1. Harry B. Paschall, *Development of Strength—a Bosco Book* (London: Vigour Press Ltd., undated), 19.

2. When Alan Calvert began publishing *Strength* magazine in October 1914 he actually put the title in quotations ("*Strength*"). He used this same format along the top heading line of every page and continued to do this until he sold the magazine in 1919. The new owners continued with this practice until they changed the look and content of the magazine in 1920 at which time they dropped the quotations from the title. Due to current referencing methodologies and to keep confusion to a minimum we have elected to use the title without the quotations even in its earliest version.

3. According to Allen Guttman, *From Ritual to Record: The Nature of Modern Sports* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 40-44, standardization of equipment and rules were grouped together under the concept of "rationalization" in his theory of modern sport. Melvin L. Adelman, *A Sporting Time: New York City and the Rise of Modern Athletics, 1820-70*, Illini Books ed., *Sport and Society* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 6, described the standardization of "Rules" and "Competition" as important to the modernization of sports. Although not a trained historian, Gottfried Schoedl in his book, *The Lost Past* (Budapest, Hungary: International Weightlifting Federation, 1992) addressed the International Weightlifting Federation's early attempts at standardizing rules, equipment, and competitions in its effort to be recognized as a modern sport.

4. Adelman, *Sporting Time*, 6. Adelman included the requirement of specialized literature in his "Public Information" theoretical model of a modern sport.

5. Besides the above texts on the relationship between sport and modernization theory, see also Mark Dyreson, "Nature by Design: Modern American Ideas About Sport, Energy, Evolution, and Republics, 1865-1920," *Journal of Sport History* 26 (Fall 1999): 447-69; Mark Dyreson, "Olympic Games and Historical Imagination: Notes from the Faultline of Tradition and Modernity," *Olympika: the International Journal of Olympic Studies* 7 (1998): 25-42; Allen Guttman, *A Whole New Ball Game: An Interpretation of American Sports* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988); Stephen Hardy, "'Adopted by All the Leading Clubs': Sporting Goods and the Shaping of Leisure, 1800-1900," in *For Fun and Profit: The Transformation of Leisure into Consumption*, ed. Richard Butsch (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), 71-101; Stephen Hardy, "Entrepreneurs, Structures, and the Sportgeist: Old Tensions in a Modern Industry," in *Essays on Sport History and Sport Mythology*, ed. Donald G. Kyle (College Station, TX: Texas A & M University Press, 1990), 45-82.

6. Stephen Hardy argues that 1860-1880 "saw the clear emergence of the sporting good industry," but that it also required "husbandry and cultivation" in Hardy, "Adopted by All the Leading Clubs," 77-78. Although established, the sporting goods industry was still young with more equipment suppliers, such as Alan Calvert, emerging as new sporting activities became an avenue for entrepreneurship.

7. Joshua M. Buck, "The Development of the Performances of Strongmen in American Vaudeville between 1881 and 1932" (Master's thesis, University of Maryland at College Park, 1999).

8. Alan Calvert, "Light Dumbbell Exercise - Has It Any Real Value in Developing Muscle and Creating Strength?," *Strength* (September 1916): 4.

9. For more information about Sandow see David L. Chapman, *Sandow the Magnificent: Eugen Sandow and the Beginnings of Bodybuilding, Sport and Society* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994).

10. Alan Calvert, "Am I Fully Developed? - How to Find Out," *Strength* 9(May 1924): 66; Alan Calvert, "Waldon R. Adams," *Strength* (July 1916): 12.

11. Many weight trainers recall their early experiences of hiding weights in their rooms or in the attic and having to be very quiet when lifting so that no one would know. Harry Paschall, one of Calvert's early testimonials, labeled these athletes as members of the "Lonely Hearts Club" and humorously describes his own experience: "I had to hide the weights from all the rest of the family because they thought I was even weaker in the head than I was in the biceps. I lugged them up to my room one plate at a time, and tacked the instruction sheet on the inside of my closet door. The instructions said

that 9 P.M. was the very best time to work out, and believe me, that chart was law to me." See, Harry B. Paschall, "Behind the Scenes," *Strength & Health* (September 1952): 19.

12. Jan Todd, "From Milo to Milo: A History of Barbells, Dumbbells, and Indian Clubs," *Iron Game History* 3 (April 1995): 12. Although dumbbells of seventy-five, one hundred, and even one hundred fifty pounds occasionally could be found in some catalogs, no barbells appeared for sale anywhere. Calvert stated that less than 100 barbells were sold annually for an "absurdly high" price "in all the foundries and sporting goods dealers, who made them" prior to his opening Milo Bar-bell Company. See Alan Calvert, *An Article on Natural Strength Versus "Made" Strength* (Philadelphia: the author, 1925), 3.

13. U.S. Patent #702,356, "Bar-Bell", 10 June 1902, Alan Calvert, Philadelphia, PA.

14. Calvert's contemporaries in the "iron game" mention Milo Bar-bell Company as the first source of barbells and heavy dumbbells in the United States. See Siegmund Klein, "Strength Magazine as I Knew It in It's[sic] Glamorous[sic] Past of Years Ago," *Strength & Health* 3(July 1935): 65, 92; Raymond Van Cleef, "Builder of Men," *Your Physique* (December 1944): 10-12; David P. Willoughby, "A History of American Weight-Lifting: Alan Calvert and the Milo Bar-Bell Company," *Your Physique* 11 (August 1949): 8. Current strength historians also credit Calvert as being the first barbell manufacturer, see David Chapman, "Making Muscles, Part 2: Bodybuilding before the Weider Principles," *Muscle & Fitness* 49(August 1988): 146, 238; Todd, "Milo to Milo," 12-13; David P. Webster and International Weightlifting Federation, *The Iron Game: An Illustrated History of Weight-Lifting* (Irvine, Scotland: Webster, 1976), 114.

15. A young, 140-pound strongman who aspired to tour with a circus, Coulter tried to improve his strength and therefore his performances by sending his measurements and personal feats of strength to Calvert in 1910. Although Coulter's bodily measurements weren't up to the standard of Calvert's "perfectly developed man" he found an authority figure with whom he could correspond. (For bodily measurements letter see Alan Calvert, Personal letter to Ottley Coulter, 22 September 1910, from Ottley Coulter Milo Scrapbook in the TMPCC.) Coulter bought his first Milo barbell and continued writing Calvert through the next decade, especially with regards to the abilities of various famous strongmen. Coulter invested in many early twentieth century lifting programs hoping to distinguish himself from his peers. Through the years this habit developed into one of the most respected physical culture collections, which is now housed at the Todd-McLean Physical Culture Collection. For a more detailed treatment of Ottley Coulter's early career see, Jan Todd, "Portrait of a Strongman, the Circus Career of Ottley Coulter: 1912-1916," *Iron Game History* 7 (June 2001): 4-21.

16. Ottley Coulter, Personal letter to David P. Willoughby, undated, Willoughby Collection—TMPCC.

17. Ibid; Van Cleef, "Builder of Men," 11; David Pirie Webster, *Bodybuilding: An Illustrated History*, 1st Arco ed. (New York: Arco Publishing, 1982), 54.

18. Genealogical data was found in both the Philadelphia City Archives (June 2004) and through the Joseph B. Handy family files. Calvert's father ran his own tin-smithing business for at least thirty-eight years, but he only had \$298 in his final estate. Mary's father presided over the Corn Exchange National Bank in Philadelphia before his untimely death in 1910. He left over \$100,000 in his estate; Mary received a lump sum of \$35,000 and \$1,000 monthly.

19. George Elliot Flint, "The Strength and Symmetry of Man Compared with Animals," *Physical Culture* 3(August 1900): 222-223; Benarr A. Macfadden, "Physical Culture with Dumb-Bells," *Physical Culture* 3(September 1900): 248-251.

20. "General Strength" had at least two printings in 1914 since the authors found two copies with different months listed with the copyright.

21. As described in footnote number two, we have elected to use the title of the magazine without the quotation marks for clarity and to follow current standards.

22. Alan Calvert, Personal letter to Ottley Coulter, 7 November 1914, from Ottley Coulter Milo Scrapbook—TMPCC.

23. Calvert, "Adams," 12.

24. R. Hinton Perry, "The Relation of Athletics to Art," *Outing* 40(July 1902): 456-62; Jan Todd, "The Classical Ideal and Its Impact on the Search for Suitable Exercise: 1774-1830," *Iron Game History* 2 (November 1992): 6-16.

25. Alan Calvert, "Owen Carr," *Strength* (July 1916): 10.

26. Alan Calvert, "Achilles," *Strength* 3(January 1918); Alan Calvert, "The Resting Gladiator," *Strength* 3(May 1917).

27. Photographs or reproductions of photographs (no pen and ink drawings) from every page of *Strength* magazine for the first seventeen issues were counted since it did not contain advertisements. Only the photographs found on the pages of articles, special features, or departmental columns for issues of *Physical Culture* (for the same month and year as those counted for *Strength*) were counted; again, no drawings or

photographs found in the advertising section were included unless the page was the continuation of an article or column. Macfadden often concluded articles and especially the departmental columns in the advertising section; it was in these pages that many of the physique photos sent in by the readers appeared.

28. Alan Calvert, Personal letter to Ottley Coulter, 22 December 1913, from Ottley Coulter Milo Scrapbook—TMPCC.

29. Alan Calvert, "Chas. W. Durner," *Strength* (September 1915): 14.

30. Alan Calvert, "Harry Paschall," *Strength* (September 1915): 6.

31. Alan Calvert, Personal letter to Ottley Coulter, 10 August 1915, from Ottley Coulter Milo Scrapbook—TMPCC.

32. Alan Calvert, Personal letter to Ottley Coulter, 9 November 1915, from Ottley Coulter Milo Scrapbook—TMPCC.

33. Although the letter is undated due to the loss of the first page, a postcard, postmarked September 1916, filed with the letter indicates that Otto Arco had visited Calvert while in Philadelphia as Coulter suggested. Ottley Coulter, Personal letter to Otto Arco, undated, from Ottley Coulter Correspondence Files—TMPCC.

34. Alan Calvert, Personal letter to Ottley Coulter, 30 June 1914, from Ottley Coulter Milo Scrapbook—TMPCC. In David Chapman, "Physiques for La Patrie: Edmond Desbonnet and French Physical Culture" (paper presented at the North American Society For Sport History Annual Meeting, Seattle, WA, 1999), Desbonnet is described as "renowned as a gymnasium operator, journalist and athlete in France of the *Belle Epoque*. His training techniques, literary output, and efforts to improve the physical condition of his fellow citizens brought Desbonnet to the forefront of sporting and literary France."

35. Alan Calvert, Personal letter to Ottley Coulter, 18 June 1917, from Ottley Coulter Milo Scrapbook—TMPCC.

36. This idea first appears in Alan Calvert, "General Strength," *General Strength* (June 1914): 6. It appears again in Alan Calvert, "My Most Important Work Is Body-Building for Amateurs," *Strength* (July 1916): 4.

37. Alan Calvert, "More About Arm Development: the Triceps Muscle," *Strength* (January 1916): 20.

38. Calvert, "My Most Important Work," 3.

39. Alan Calvert, "The Importance of the Waist Muscles," *General Strength* (June 1914): 8; Calvert, "Light Dumbbell Exercise," 4.

40. Alan Calvert, "It Is a Poor Rule That Don't Work Both Ways," *General Strength* (June 1914): 14; Alan Calvert, "Perfect Proportions," *Strength* (October 1914): 7, 10.

41. Alan Calvert, "The Twin Secrets of Strength," *General Strength* (June 1914): 10.

42. Calvert, "My Most Important Work," 2.

43. Alan Calvert, "Acquiring Perfect Proportions," *Strength* (January 1917): 3; Calvert, "Perfect Proportions," 7; Harry B. Paschall, *Muscle Moulding—a Bosco Book for Advanced Body-Builders* (London: Vigour Press Ltd., 1950), 31.

44. Paschall, *Muscle Moulding*, 31.

45. Calvert, "My Most Important Work," 2-4.

46. Ibid; Calvert, "Perfect Proportions," 12.

47. Calvert discusses his training methodology in many articles, but the two that seem to be rich in information are the following: Alan Calvert, "Development First - an Argument in Favor of All-Round Body Building," *Strength* (January 1916): 2-3; Calvert, "My Most Important Work," 2-4.

48. Calvert, "General Strength," 7.

49. Alan Calvert, "Body-Building—Showing That Results Come from the Right Kind of Exercise Not from the Quantity of Exercise," *Strength* (May 1916): 3; Calvert, "Perfect Proportions," 13.

50. Calvert, "Light Dumbbell Exercise," 4.

51. For Calvert's discussion on the importance of light weight exercises for beginners, see Alan Calvert, "The Average Man, How Much Strength Has He, and How Much Can He Acquire?," *Strength* (March 1917): 3. His series of "Light Dumbbell Exercises" is found in the September 1916, January 1917, and March 1917 issues.

52. Calvert, "Light Dumbbell Exercise," 4; Calvert, "Perfect Proportions," 10.

53. Jan Todd, *Physical Culture and the Body Beautiful: Purposive Exercise in the Lives of American Women, 1800-1870* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1998), 252. For more information on Dio Lewis see Chapters 8-10 in Todd's *Physical Culture*; Harvey Green, *Fit for America: Health, Fitness, Sport, and American Society*, 1st ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), 185-90; and James C. Whorton, *Crusaders for Fitness: The History of American Health Reformers* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1982), 275-82.

54. Calvert, "Light Dumbbell Exercise," 3-4.

55. Alan Calvert, "What Does 'Muscle-Bound' Mean?" *Strength* (March 1915): 4-5.

56. Rufus Swainhart, "Swainhart, Rufus," *Strength* (January 1916): 5.
57. Calvert, Letter to Coulter, 18 June 1917.
58. Alan Calvert, *The Truth About Weight Lifting* (Philadelphia: By the author, 1911). The subtitle on the title page reads "Originator of Progressive Weight Lifting in America." The other phrases can be found throughout *Strength*.
59. Ottley Coulter, Personal letter to Jack Kent, 17 August 1961, from Michael Murphy Collection—Xerox copy in TMPCC.
60. Alan Calvert, "Concentrated Exercise," *Strength* (July 1914): 8-9.
61. Calvert, "Perfect Proportions," 13. For information on Windship see Joan Paul, "The Health Reformers: George Barker Windship and Boston's Strength Seekers," *Journal of Sport History* 10 (Winter 1983): 41-57; Jan Todd, "Strength Is Health: George Barker Windship and the First American Weight Training Boom," *Iron Game History* 3 (September 1993): 3-14; George Barker Windship, "Autobiographical Sketches of a Strength-Seeker," *Atlantic Monthly* 9 (January 1862): 102-15.
62. See, for example: Calvert, "Development First," 2-3; and Calvert, "My Most Important Work," 2-4.
63. For information on the early-twentieth century connections between exercise and the eugenics movement see: Jan Todd, "Bernarr Macfadden: Reformer of Feminine Form," *Journal of Sport History* 1987, 14(1): 61-75; Stephen Riess, "Sport and the Redefinition of American Middle-class Masculinity: 1840-1900," *Major Problems in American Sport History* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1997), 188-198. See also: Caroline Daley, *Leisure and Pleasure: Reshaping and Revealing the New Zealand Body 1900-1960* (Auckland, NZ: Auckland University Press, 2003).
64. For information on Bob Hoffman's career, see Fair, *Muscleman, USA*.
65. Jonathan Kasson, *Houdini, Tarzan, and the Perfect Man: The White Male Body and the Challenge of Modernity in America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001), 76.
66. Alan Calvert, Personal letter to Ottley Coulter, 21 April 1913, from Ottley Coulter Milo Scrapbook-TMPCC; Calvert, Letter to Coulter, 30 June 1914.
67. Alan Calvert, "An Offer to Max Unger," *Strength* (January 1917): 16; Alan Calvert, Personal letter to Ottley Coulter, 19 December 1916, from Ottley Coulter Milo Scrapbook-TMPCC; Alan Calvert, Personal letter to Ottley Coulter, 28 December 1916, from Ottley Coulter Milo Scrapbook-TMPCC.
68. Alan Calvert, "Notices-Mr. Unger Didn't Accept," *Strength* (March 1917): 5.
69. Todd, "Portrait of a Strongman," 5.
70. Calvert, Letter to Coulter, 19 December 1916.
71. Ottley Coulter, "Honesty in Weight Lifting and the Necessity of Making Lifters Prove Their Claims," *Strength* (January 1917): 15.
72. For the history of the ACWLA see the series of articles: John D. Fair, "Father-Figure or Phony? George Jowett, the ACWLA and the Milo Barbell Company, 1924-1927," *Iron Game History* 3 (December 1994): 13-25; John D. Fair, "From Philadelphia to York: George Jowett, Mark Berry, Bob Hoffman, and the Rebirth of American Weightlifting, 1927-1936," *Iron Game History* 4 (April 1996): 3-17; John D. Fair, "George Jowett, Ottley Coulter, David Willoughby and the Organization of American Weightlifting, 1911-1924," *Iron Game History* 2 (May 1993): 3-15.
73. Calvert, Letter to Coulter, 18 June 1917.
74. Alan Calvert, Personal letter to Ottley Coulter, 20 March 1918, from Ottley Coulter Milo Scrapbook—TMPCC.
75. Alan Calvert, Personal letter to Ottley Coulter, 1 May 1918, from Ottley Coulter Milo Scrapbook—TMPCC.
76. Alan Calvert, Personal letter to Ottley Coulter, 15 July 1918, from Ottley Coulter Correspondence Files—TMPCC.
77. Alan Calvert, Personal letter to Ottley Coulter, 5 September 1918, from Ottley Coulter Milo Scrapbook—TMPCC.
78. Advertisements for Fairmount Foundry Co. begin to appear in *Strength* in April 1922 and indicate the address as located on Fifteenth Street and Indiana Avenue, but Reuben Weaver, "The Jackson Mother Load!," *Muscle Museum Forum*, January 2003 indicates that Andrew Jackson, proprietor of Jackson Barbells in the 1930s-1970s, had acquired the Duplex Barbell patterns from the Fairmont Foundry in Hamburg, Pennsylvania, so it is likely that the two companies are not related or that it moved.
79. Alan Calvert, Personal letter to Ottley Coulter, 31 January 1919, from Ottley Coulter Correspondence Files in the TMPCC.
80. R.L. Hunter, letter to Ottley Coulter, 18 September 1919, from Ottley Coulter Correspondence Files—TMPCC. Technically, Coulter was not a Milo student and never considered himself one. He had already been an accomplished strongman when he first corresponded with Calvert. Although Calvert provided him publicity, he never called him a Milo pupil. The new owners did not make the same distinction.
81. Only twenty-four photos were used in May and fifteen in July. Each issue contained thirty-six pages (up from the twenty-four pages previous). This results in averages of 0.66 and 0.42 photos/page.
82. Edwin Checkley, *Checkley's Natural Method of Physical Training* (Philadelphia: The Checkley Bureau, 1921).
83. The first ad appeared in the February 1922 edition of *Strength* on page 64. By this time Calvert was running what he called the "Checkley Bureau" as well as selling Checkley's book.
84. Fair, "Jowett, Coulter, Willoughby, 1911-1924," 13.
85. J.C. Egan, "Editorial," *Strength* 5(October 1920): 3.
86. Ibid.
87. For covers portraying sporting photographs see the issues between May 1921 and January 1922.
88. Farmer Burns, "Advertisement," *Strength* 5(November 1920); The Wizard Company, "Advertisement," *Strength* 5(July 1920); Benarr A. Macfadden, "Advertisement," *Strength* 5(October 1920); Anton Matysek, "Advertisement," *Strength* 5(July 1920); Marshall Stillman, "Advertisement," *Strength* 5(September 1920).
89. Alan Calvert, "Advertisement," *Strength* 8(December 1923): 82.
90. Alan Calvert, "The Mat," *Strength* 9(December 1924).
91. Alan Calvert, *Body-Molding* (Philadelphia: by the author, April 1925), 42.
92. Calvert, "Ad - December 1923," 82.
93. Correct Eating, "Correct Eating Combined with Strength" 15(May 1930): 21.
94. Alan Carse, "The York Barbell Company," *Strength & Health* (September 1941): 27. Carse attributes the fall of Milo to the 1930's Depression and to "competition of another company [York Barbell], the faulty business methods, unfair treatment of purchasers the old Milo Company pursued over a decade ago." Hoffman complained about Milo's 1930s owners in Bob Hoffman, "A Great Strong Man Needs Our Help," *Strength & Health* 2(December 1933): 10-11.
95. Klein, "Strength Magazine as I Knew It," 92.
96. Siegmund Klein, "My Quarter Century in the Iron Game, Second Installment," *Strength & Health* (April 1944): 17.
97. The Bosco cartoons appeared in nearly every issue of *Strength & Health* published between March 1945 and January 1958. For many years, Paschall also authored a column for *Strength & Health* called "Behind the Scenes."
98. For Weider's comments about Calvert's simple, uncomplicated programs, see Dick Tyler, "Editorial—and Giants Shall Walk Upon the Land," *Muscle Builder/Power* 11 (March 1970): 8-9; Joe Weider, "Training 3 Times a Week Is Bunk!," *Muscle Power* 19(March 1956): 16-7; Joe Weider, "The Weider System," *Flex* 13(May 1995): 154-60.
99. See images of periodical front pages on the unnumbered pages between 20 and 21, and after page 32 in Schoedl, *The Lost Past*.
100. Van Cleef, "Builder of Men," 12.
101. Stephen Hardy, "Adopted by All the Leading Clubs," 145-146.
102. For information on advertising and the use of brands see Flemming Hansen, ed., *Branding and Advertising* (Denmark: Copenhagen Business School Press, 2003), 12-21; T.J. Jackson Lears, "American Advertising and the Reconstruction of the Body, 1880-1930," in *Fitness in American Culture*, ed. Kathryn Grover (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1989), 50; James D. Norris, *Advertising and the Transformation of American Society, 1865-1920, Contributions in Economics and Economic History, No. 110* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990), 95-126; Richard M. Ohmann, *Selling Culture: Magazines, Markets, and Class at the Turn of the Century* (London; New York: Verso, 1996), 62-80. For information about authorities and experts see, Thomas L. Haskell, *The Authority of Experts: Studies in History and Theory, Interdisciplinary Studies in History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984).
103. Leo Gaudreau, "An Old-Timer Recalls the Past" in Letters to the Editor, *Muscle Builder* 8(August 1966): 50.

Ed Note: Kim Beckwith, IGH's Business Manager, is writing her doctoral dissertation on Alan Calvert and the Milo Barbell Company. If anyone has memories of Calvert they'd like to share, or any letters, photos, or other materials related to Calvert, his family, or his various businesses, please contact Kim at: 512-560-2522; via email at: beckfish@ev1.net; or by mail at the main IGH address. She'd be most grateful.