IRON GAME HISTORY

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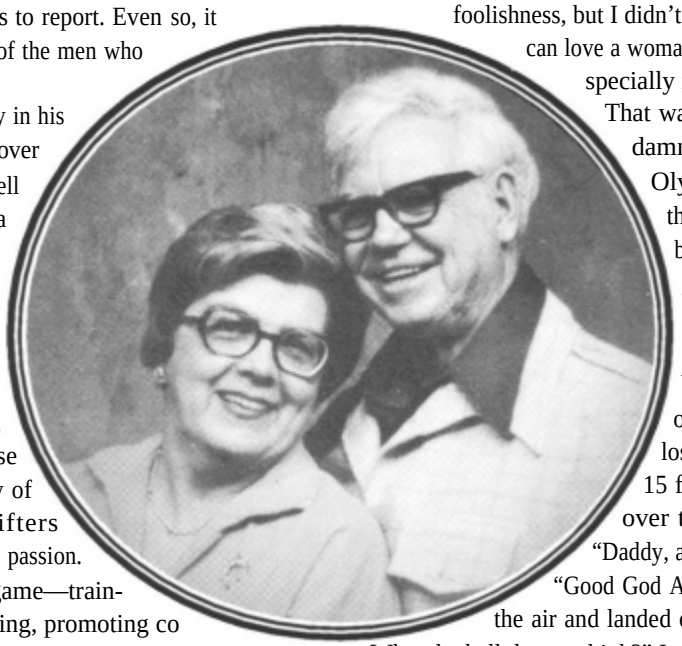
JIM WITT: A LIFE WITH TWO LOVES

It is, I suppose, in the nature of things that a journal devoted to the history of the iron game would report the deaths of those who had distinguished themselves in the field of physical culture. Our field is a large and growing one, and the focus of ***IGH*** is concentrated on people who made their primary contributions prior to 1960, so we often have many deaths to report. Even so, it is a hard thing, especially when one of the men who died was one of our oldest friends.



Jim Witt was a man already in his middle years when I first met him over 30 years ago, but although he was well into his fifth decade of life, he was a "young" lifter, having come to the game late. I've often thought, in fact, that his late introduction to lifting accounted for the depth of his love for the iron. I've known few men who loved lifting with such prolonged constancy. Perhaps because he realized that he lacked the luxury of time enjoyed by younger lifters approached the weights with a fierce passion. He enjoyed everything about the game—training, coaching other lifters, spectating, promoting co tests, serving as an administrator and, especially, competing.

Some years ago, I taped an interview with Jim, and the following excerpt from that interview reveals not only his love for lifting but also his unique, ornery personality.

"Well, I never touched a weight til I was over 30, but when I did touch one it damn sure touched me back. Lots of folks say I'm still a little touched. I was a boxer when I was young. Seventy-five amateur fights. I was in the paratroopers in the war and I got my knee all shot up over in Italy in 1944. Once I got on the weights, my knee got better. I entered my first lifting meet in 1962 in Tyler, Texas. I was 47. Lots of folks told me I was too old for such foolishness, but I didn't pay a bit of attention. An old man can love a woman just as much as a young man can, specially if he's never been in love before. That was how it was with me and these damned old weights. I even do the Olympic lifts. Not too damn well, though. But the powerlifts. They've been good to me and I've tried to be good to them. Lately, of course, I've had a few problems of one sort or another. That fall I had awhile back was the main thing. I was up on the gym roof with my son and I lost my footing and fell about 12 or 15 feet, right on my back. My boy ran over to the edge and hollered down, "Daddy, are you all right?" and I yelled back, "Good God Almighty, son, I fell 15 feet through the air and landed on my back and I'm 65 years old. What the hell do you think?" It was bad enough that I had to have a disc removed that September. Naturally, the doctor told me not to lift heavy anymore. Naturally, I'm not paying him any mind."

Several years after Jim took delivery on his first York Olympic set, he decided that he wanted to open a gym and make weight training and competitive lifting his life's work. Many wives

would not have supported such a risky career change for a man in middle-age, but Helen Witt was a woman who wanted what her man wanted and she gave him her absolute blessing. Thus it was that the Hercules Health Club was born, a club Jim operated until he died. The Witts had a marriage which was a source of wonder to all their friends—she always accompanied him to meets when he travelled outside Dallas, and she helped him organize and conduct the meets he promoted at home. When the Amateur Athletic Union began to break up and powerlifting earned the right to its own federation, Jim was chosen as the sport's first chairman, and Helen helped him run the show, handling a lot of the paperwork and keeping Jim from smacking as many people as he wanted to smack. Helen was as kind as Jim was tough. They made a wonderful team, and everyone who knew them at all well knew how hard it would be on Jim when cancer took Helen three years ago.

Helen's funeral was heartbreaking because Jim seemed so lost, but when he went to join her last month all his old lifting buddies agreed that Jim was ready to go. His Helen was gone and he had lost the hunger he had had in such full measure for so long. We all agreed that few men are fortunate enough to have a love which lasts undimmed for a lifetime, and that Jim had had two—his wife and his damned old weights.

We'd like to welcome Dr. John Fair to our Editorial Board. Dr. Fair is nearing completion of a book examining the life and influence of Bob Hoffman and the York Barbell Club on American weightlifting. A longtime weight trainer, Dr. Fair is the Chairman of the History Department at Auburn University at Montgomery, Alabama. He has written two excellent articles on weightlifting for the ***Journal of Sport History.*** He plans at least two other articles based on the Coulter-Jowett-Willoughby correspondence here at the Todd-McLean Collection. Watch for them in future issues of ***IGH.***

IRON GAME HISTORY **VOL.2 NO.6**
TABLE OF CONTENTS **May 1993**

Page:

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GEORGE JOWETT, OTTLEY COULTER, DAVID WILLOUGHBY AND THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN WEIGHTLIFTING, 1911-1924

I do not hesitate to say that the beginning was a very hard struggle, and that there were times when the outlook was dark, owing to the antagonism and disinterest evinced from certain quarters where such conditions should never have arisen.

The present success is all due to the fact that my brother officials in the cause stuck to their guns and never quit, and I hope that our many members will never forget their efforts and the way that they helped myself make this organization what it is now, a power for good.[1]

—George F. Jowett, 1925

In the early 1920s a new era was dawning in American athletics. "Free from Europe's struggle to recover from the effects of war," writes a leading sport historian, "Americans enjoyed a golden age of sport."[2] Although those observations apply chiefly to such major spectator sports as baseball and football, weightlifting was undergoing a metamorphosis from the strongmanism of an earlier era to a more regulated and respectable status. At least since the turn of the century, American strongmen, imitating their old world counterparts, flaunted their might and muscle, often with considerable artifice, before unsuspecting audiences at circuses, sideshows, vaudeville performances, and other public displays. There were also some amateur weightlifting contests and—since the days when Richard Kyle Fox's ***Police Gazette*** made offers of medals, trophies, money, and a diamond-studded belt—frequent challenges between professionals. Ultimately at stake was the coveted title of "World's Strongest Man." But there was no reliable means to verify performances of American strength athletes, many of whom avoided actual competition and made exaggerated claims in order to promote the sale of physical development courses. What was needed was an organization that would systematize lifts and records, provide a more honest competitive environment, and enhance the credibility of the sport. David Webster, in ***The Iron Game,*** traces the formation of the American Continental Weight-Lifters Association (ACWLA) in the early 1920s by highlighting the contributions of George Jowett, Ottley Coulter, and David Willoughby.[3] More detailed information, largely from the Jowett-Coulter correspondence in the Todd-McLean Collection, reveals the many trials and tribulations they experienced in transforming weightlifting from a spectacle into a sport.

For decades prior to their collaboration there were countless appeals from aspiring champions for national competitive standards. That other amateur sports, especially track and field (and weightlifting in most European countries), were affiliated to an official regulatory body heightened such expectations. It was only natural that these hopes should converge on Philadelphia where Alan Calvert had founded the Milo Barbell Company in 1902. He disseminated information for barbell trainees first by means of a modest pocket-sized guide and then through ***Strength*** magazine, founded in 1914, which ultimately exercised the greatest influence on the development of an early iron game culture.[4] In 1911 Calvert published a book, entitled ***The Truth About Weightlifting,*** which recommended a standardization of procedures. He attributed weightlifting's lack of popularity to

> the very foolish and short-sighted attitude of the professional lifters in this country. These professionals have made a practice of deceiving and 'buncoing' the public for so long a time, that the public has become disgusted with their methods and has come to the conclusion, either that all weight lifters are fakirs, or else that weight-lifting is a peculiar kind of sport in which only a few men can excel.
>
> Probably you have noticed that every professional weight-lifter in America eagerly and earnestly proclaims himself to be 'the strongest man in the World.' They seem to have the idea that nobody will pay to see them perform unless they make this claim. Sometimes they qualify it by modestly stating that they are the strongest man in the world of their weight. Practically every one of these professionals claims to hold all the world's records. They know that the general public is not accurately informed as to the records and they take advantage of the fact by making all sorts of ridiculous statements regarding their own lifts.

To remedy this outrage perpetrated by money grubbers, Calvert recommended the certification of officials, the use of tested scales, lifts performed in the European manner, and the establishment of weight classes. Most importantly, he called for an American Board of Control to administer the sport permanently. Calvert was adamant that it be *"a board of amateurs, and no professional lifter should have a voice in selecting or interpreting a rule regarding lifting."* Recognizing that there were few men sufficiently competent to serve in this capacity, he suggested that they look to the large urban centers—New York, Chicago, and St. Louis—where hundreds of newly arrived Germans, Austrians, and Frenchmen, "fully conver-

sant with the European system of lifting," could "form a nucleus around which to build a national association."[5] But Calvert's idealistic appeal elicited no widespread response.

After 1914 there existed at least a possible mouthpiece upon which a national organization could be based. Yet for several years ***Strength*** was limited chiefly to articles on basic strength training and muscle moulding, accompanied by inspiring photos of the leading practitioners of the day. Then in the January 1917 issue Ottley Coulter, drawing on his experience as a circus and stage performer, published an important article on "Honesty in Weight Lifting and the Necessity of Making Lifters Prove Their Claims." The Parkman, Ohio, native pointed out that those sports which had fallen under the aegis of the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) since its founding in 1888 were properly regulated and thrived from "a greater *real* rivalry. There can be no *real* rivalry without a basis of equality." Like Calvert, he rebuked the claims of many professional strongmen whose "reputation for strength" was "more apparent than real." "The difficulty of gaining reliable information on strength feats during the strongman era," he later recalled, "was one of the reasons I wrote the first plea for regulation of weightlifting. However my interest was not entirely altruistic at that time. I believed that I could lift more pounds at a time than any man of my weight living at that time." Unfortunately, by the time "a lifting society with official status was finally organized, I had long left the heavy poundage lifting for hand to hand."[6] What Coulter envied most was the regulated lifting enforced by associations in Britain, France, Germany and Austria where "every city has its lifting club, the same as every college in this country has its track team, and the lifting rules are the same in each club." To attain international standing for American lifters, he hoped that Calvert who possessed "a greater knowledge of lifting than any man in this country," would "take the initiative" in forming a lifters' association. Although Calvert heartily endorsed Coulter's views, the Great War intervened, and the non-appearance of ***Strength*** for about two years effectively stymied whatever momentum Coulter's appeal had induced for organization.[7]

By 1920 ***Strength*** was back in business, and Calvert declared his intention, in light of the many letters he had received, to publish a list of records governing the various styles, classifications, and conditions of lifts that could be performed.[8] Such a compilation required painstaking care and accuracy as well as access to the most current information. Calvert, with the demands of his business, did not have sufficient time, so he delegated the task to Coulter, who was already supplying information for the magazine from his vast collection of domestic and foreign physical culture publications. Most importantly, Coulter was an avid correspondent, and in light of the relative absence of published information on lifting occasioned by the war, he remained in touch with Professor Edmond Desbonnet in France and with Theodor Siebert and Albert Stolz, the two most reliable sources on German records. "Up all night writing 'Records for Strength"' is Coulter's diary entry for October 1, 1920.[9] In the November issue was a full disclosure of European records in 46 different lifts and their American counterparts, so far as could be discerned. What hampered any definitive compilation, however, was the lack of any authoritative body in the United States that could verify lifters' claims. With the AAU preoccupied with track and field, Coulter advocated a separate organization for weightlifting. He received full support from Strength editor J. C. Egan, who believed that an association would settle the strongman controversies that plagued the sport. The chief dispute then raging was over Warren Lincoln Travis' $10,000 challenge to anyone to defeat him in a ten lift event. No agreement seemed possible over what lifts should be included and how they were to be performed. With greater regulation, Egan argued, "the real champion would obtain full credit for his lifts, and we would have real honesty in weight lifting, a thing that is absolutely impossible under present circumstances.

A response to Coulter's appeal was immediately forthcoming from George Fiusdale Jowett, a native of Bradford, England, who had migrated to eastern Canada during the war. Jowett expressed "great interest" in forming a lifters' association, explaining to Coulter that he had been appointed by Stanley Gullick of the British Amateur Weight-Lifters Association (BAWLA) to form a Canadian affiliate,

> but with the head body being so far away, & the prolonged wait for letters & replies going & coming, nothing could be accomplished.
>
> There is a lifters Assoc. here, called the Barbell & dumbbell lifters Federation, their headquarters are in Montreal, but the trouble is, no one but Frenchmen are wanted.

Jowett suggested that it would be much better to form an organization "for the whole American continent. We are in touch easier with each other & are more alike, & the conditions are more understood amongst us who live on the same continent than elsewhere." Already he was aware of some lifts exceeding those on Coulter's list, but there was no means of verification without an association. "Now you can bank on me doing all in my power to help you," he assured his American counterpart, "& let us get at it & make a darned good success out of it. I lift & wrestle, & always was, & hope to be, a great enthusiast for the iron."[11] Jowett's enthusiasm for sport for its own sake seemed a welcome change from other men of muscle whose primary motive was self interest. In an April 1921 article he deemed "the prospects for the establishment of an amateur weightlifting association" to be "particularly bright." He believed North American lifters should look to England for inspiration where BAWLA, under the guidance of Thomas Inch and W. A. Pullum, had made "tremen-

dous strides." Jowett sought to educate his new comrades on English techniques.[12] Clearly the English amateur tradition served as a model for American organizational initiatives.

During the next year the concept of a regulatory body gained a further English additive when Bernard Bernard, formerly editor of ***Health*** & ***Strength*** and president of BAWLA, assumed the editorship of a new journal called ***Health and Life*** in Chicago. He quickly seized on Jowett's idea, and the two of them laid the foundations for the "American Continental Weight-Lifters Association," the guidelines for which were promulgated in the July 1922 issue of Bernard's journal. There would be 49 competitive lifts, provisions for certification of referees and records, and a means for lifters to attain state, national, continental, and world titles. Bernard assumed the posts of president and treasurer, with Arthur Gay of Rochester as vice president and Jowett as secretary and technical adviser. Yearly membership was set at $3.00.[13] Jowett explained to Coulter that the ACWLA was

> patterned after the BAWLA for this reason. They are a powerful body & were the means of getting lifting included in the Olympic Games, & besides the European lifters endorse the rule, & it would be no use us making a set of rules contradictory to theirs, for we would not know how we would stand on our merits when comparing records on same lifts. The B.W.L.A. adopts the same rules also, & our work is to control both the amateur & profl: branches.

Though Bernard was the official head of the new organization, Jowett was viewed as its driving force-a man of action. 'Talking does not get anything anywhere," he told Coulter. "It is the initiative that counts, &we have got it." Jowett intended to tour the continent, with Bernard in tow, to promote the association by holding competitions, passing records, recruiting members, and demonstrating the latest in "scientific" lifting methods. He asked Coulter, then living in Pittsburgh, to serve as state organizer for Pennsylvania.[14] The latter could hardly restrain his enthusiasm, assuring Jowett and Bernard that he would do his "utmost" for the cause. "You really do not know how much of a weightlifting enthusiast I am. I am enthusiastic for the cause of weight lifting aside from any personal ambitions."[15] ***Health and Life*** underscored these optimistic sentiments. "Never before in the history of the game has there been so much promise of a mighty boom."[16]

Such apparent naivete all around, however, was not totally untempered by practical considerations. Coulter, realizing that publicity was critical to success and that ***Health and Life*** was a new and untested medium, expressed

Ottley Coulter holds aloft his handbalancing partner Charles Shaffer in a photograph taken at H. B. Barzen's gymnasium in Pittsburgh in the early 1920s.

Photo: Todd-McLean Collection

concern abut how ***Strength*** and ***Physical Culture*** magazines stood with regard to the ACWLA. The former he considered to have "the largest following of people interested in weight lifting in this country." Since ***Health and Life*** was the official organ of the association, he suggested that it might be a good idea to select Milo Barbell pupils as state organizers whenever possible. "It may serve as a 'whip' to bring the rest into line."[17] Jowett, admitting that Calvert and Egan had the potential to do "so much good & so much harm," took immediate steps to establish a dialogue with them. It was also obvious that he was having second thoughts about their affiliation with Bernard. Jowett was not impressed with his inaugural article on the association and even raised to Coulter the possibility that "if he falls down on his job, we want to hang together so that in future we can be organized by ourselves."[18] Coulter was displeased with erroneous statements in the September issue of ***Health and Life*** that he, not Warren Lincoln Travis, had won the Police Gazette Tourney in 1918 and that he was ACWLA organizer for Philadelphia.[19] "We have had a lot of trouble lately," Jowett admitted in October, but much of it appeared to be in spite of Bernard's handling of their affairs rather than because of it. A reorganization following the absconding by the managing editor, Percy Clark, with the magazine's funds held out some hope that Bernard would be able to make a more effective pitch for the association.[20]

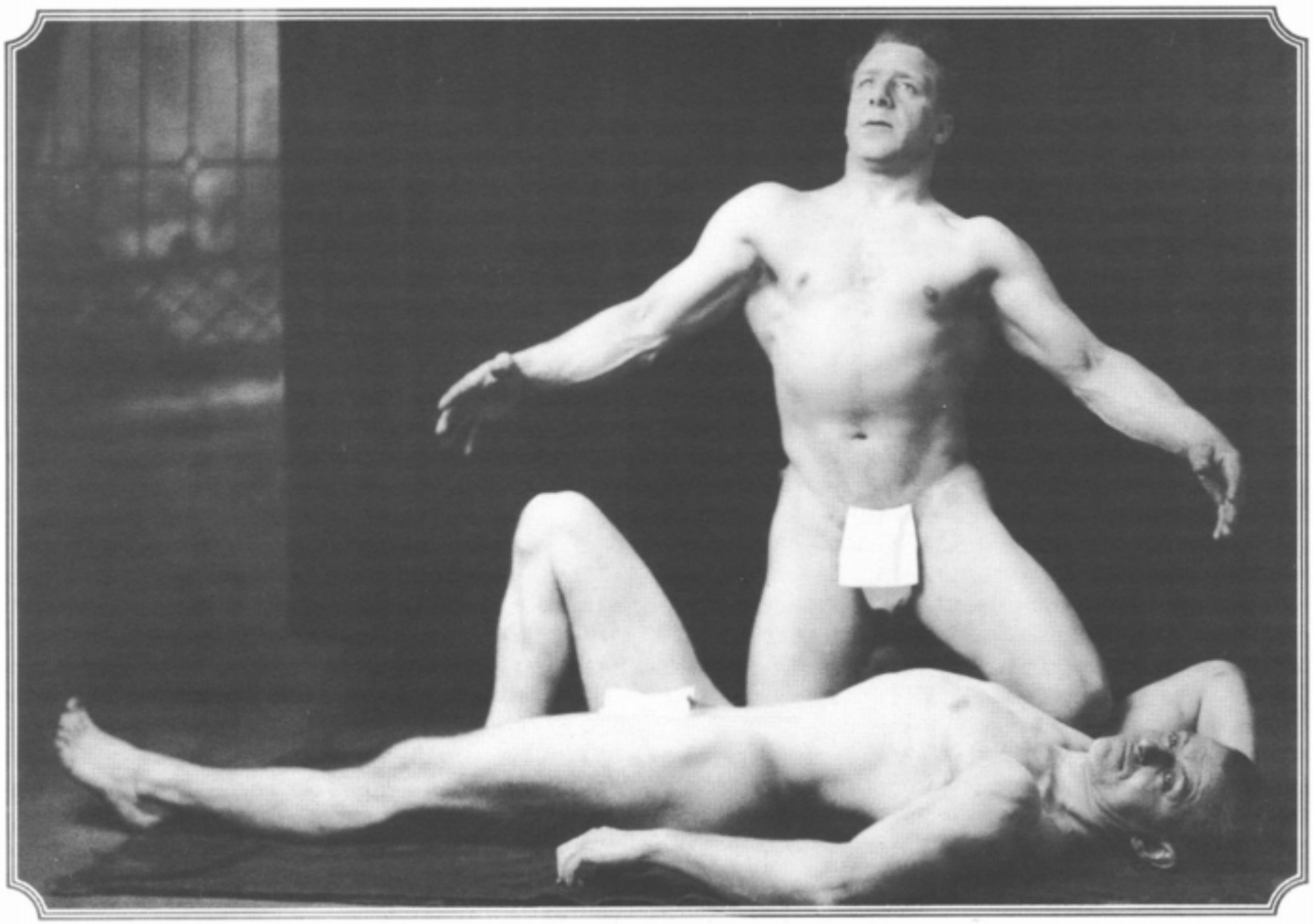
In the meantime chaos reigned as endless challenges and counter-challenges were exchanged between leading lights of the iron game—Arthur Gay, Robert Snyder, Warren Travis, Oscar Marineau, Arthur Giroux, George Weber, Antone Matysek, and even Coulter and Jowett—each jockeying for the most favorable conditions on which to stake a claim as the world's strongest man. And attempts to take credit for lifts that could not be verified continued unabated. "You will be surprised," Jowett told Coulter, "to see the offers I have had from some professionals who want to make some fake records for notoriety's sake, in order to gain publicity, & advertisement, but nothing doing on my part. Let them earn it."[21] More than ever, a regulatory body seemed necessary. "Oh! for such an organization on this continent," he exclaimed in ***Strength,*** "then an interest would be taken in lifting, we would know how we stood with other lifters and know real lifters from fakes."[22] Still Jowett, despite protestations to the contrary, was mostly talk, and the association, with only the meager resources of ***Health and Life*** at its disposal, made little headway.

In the fall of 1922 interest centered chiefly on an exhibition that was to be staged at New York's Madison Square Garden by Bernarr Macfadden, the acknowledged giant in the physical culture field. How little influence the ACWLA wielded in the iron game became quickly evident. Coulter asked Jowett whether their fledgling organization was going to participate actively in the strongman contest.

> Will the lifts conform to our rulings? If not do you think it would be setting a bad precedent for ACWLA members to enter that contest? I understand the object is for settling the question of who is the strongest man in America. I think that the methods for determining the strongest man . . . might not be the best for promoting weight lifting as a sport. Phy. Cult, I believe, has most influence among the general physical culture public than any other mag. and no doubt whoever wins this Contest will gain considerable prestige. If the contest is not under association rules I do not see how the association could recognize the winner, although he undoubtedly will be recognized as such by the general PC public and they would belittle the ACWLA Champion if it did not lead to a controversy between PC and the association . . . Is it possible for the association to negotiate with P.C. and request to formulate the rules? . . . I think best to avoid any opposition from P.C. or Strength else we might receive no recognition except from ourselves and the European associations.

Jowett acknowledged that his friend had "touched a delicate subject." Although Macfadden's organizers knew "little or nothing of lifting" and he had offered to judge and demonstrate proper technique, "the P.C. promotion would not consent to it." Yet he still intended to go as a spectator and to exercise all possible diplomacy. "I believe in taking all the experience possible," he rationalized, "& anyway it helps the game as it creates interest, & shows that we have no antagonistic views." He intended to talk with Macfadden about some future cooperation whereby the New York winner would defend his title against the ACWLA champion at a projected meet in Chicago the following year.[24] That neither of the large circulation physical culture magazines supported or publicized the ACWLA was an organizational flaw, perpetrated by Jowett in his early enthusiasm for a convenient sponsor.

Now he sought to remedy it. At Macfadden's show in late October, Jowett and Coulter met each other for the first time. In a week their friendship deepened as they shared some "laughs and thrills" at New York's night spots, recruited members for the ACWLA, and established connections in the iron game. Both were dismayed that Antone Matysek had won a belt and the title of "World's Strongest Man," with disappointingly low lifts, against almost no competition, and in the absence of ACWLA regulations, thereby stirring up an even greater hornets' nest of controversy.[25] With the need to promote their cause in the mainstream of the lifting community more obvious than ever, Jowett decided to stage an approach to ***Strength.*** He asked Coulter to write to its publisher, D. G. Redmond, "& speak a good word for me & ask to see more of my works, & state that you



This unusual photograph of George Jowett and Ottley Coulter was taken for possible inclusion in The Apollo Course shortly after Jowett's arrival in Pittsburgh. It was common in the early days of physique photography to attempt to strike classical poses rather than to simply exhibit the muscles. In this attempt to mimic statuary, the difference between Jowett's and Coulter's bodies is dramatically evident.

Photo: Todd-McLean Collection

hope to see us co-operate, as you are convinced of my integrity."[26] After Coulter obliged, Jowett explained that he was "working slowly to get Calvert's co-operation" with the ACWLA "& the one big reason I desired you to send that letter was to keep the fact before their eyes, of my ability to help the game, & by making them desire to have more of me." To this end Jowett proposed, as he had done earlier with Bernard, "to run a 'Strength' campaign, holding demonstrations & exhibitions in every city, & boost physical culture, & getting in touch with all lifters, & other athletes. . . & have them all exhibit, & thus build up 'Strength' & the game." While Calvert lectured, Jowett would "lift, balance, and wrestle," and thus make the tour pay for itself. ***Health & Strength*** in England and ***Physical Culture*** in America had engaged in similar successful promotions. ***Health & Life*** had expressed "a wish to do the same . . . but unless they handle things better I would not dream of going." What Jowett desired more than anything, he confided to Coulter, was to "bring 'Strength' into the game to help us." He wanted Calvert to

> issue diplomas for merit in strength feats, providing that they are performed according to official standards. With the fee of 50 cents to accompany each application for record. This will give our members more pep, & get hold of all the Milo pupils, & will make them eligible to send them to the [Olympic] Games . . . We will then gradually draw Calvert in, & make him a president of the assoc. That is my outline & fundamental ideas of soliciting Strength into my programme . . . Oh, Lord, Ottley, if we could only get going. . . . What we want now is publicity, & we must boost each other. Always be before the public eye.[27]

By no means clear in these propositions, perhaps not even to Jowett himself, was the extent to which his personal ambitions went beyond those he professed for the sport.

Unfortunately Calvert had no intention of king drawn in by any grandiose plans for a lifters' organization. "To be perfectly frank with you if there is one thing I dread, it is to start up a lifting association," he told Jowett, "for I know it means an incredible amount of work and yet I am getting letters all the time from people urging me to take this step." As for Jowett's proposal of a lecture tour he was equally adamant. "I do not say that the idea is a bad one," he

stated "but personally there is nothing that would induce me to go around making speeches or delivering lectures on lifting or on any other subject. I am at my very unhappiest when I am facing an audience," The only portion of Jowett's scheme that Calvert found attractive was his idea of collaborating on a booklet for the physical culture public. Struck by Jowett's claim of the popularity of weightlifting in Quebec, he was willing to produce a 48 page booklet in French, half of which would be pictures of prominent strongmen with the remainder devoted to an explanation of barbell use.[28] Such booklets had originated prior to the mail order era of the twenties as a means of purveying physical culture knowledge and, of course, turning a profit.

Stung by this rebuff and increasingly aware of the need for a more substantial commercial base, Jowett and Coulter began to advance their own plans for financial independence. "One contemplating a mail order business always should have the future in view," Coulter advised. "That is the reason that my writings in 'Strength' were general rather than definite as I realized that it would be difficult to sell something that had already been given away." He sought to imitate Earle Liederman, the most successful "muscle peddler" of this era who started as "practically unknown. . . He had no pupils to advertise . . . and started with a little ad and a small booklet with a few pictures of himself in it."[29] Jowett was equally enthusiastic about their capitalizing on a how-to-do-it booklet and again raised the notion of a cross-country tour, as he had done with Bernard and Calvert. "We both are showmen," he reminded Coulter. "Why cannot we work up an act, & work at fairs for free performances before the grandstands etc. & also make a deal with them to cover a concession . . . &[I] will demonstrate, or you can, & I lecture, & then sell our booklets, & photos, & also magazines." With the addition of mail orders that would be forwarded to them, Jowett was confident that they would be able to "do big business."[30] The principal effect of these designs to get rich quick, however, was to distract them from any constructive endeavors relating to the association.

This lack of progress made it exceedingly difficult for ***Health and Life*** to report and promote the activities of the ACWLA. There were none. But Coulter and Jowett attributed this failure to Bernard rather than themselves. The former surmised that Bernard was simply too busy trying to get the magazine "on its feet" and that the success for the association was not his foremost concern. "Judging from the unsold copies at news dealers here, I think it is doubtful if it is making expenses. You know it takes time to build up a new magazine." Knowing how vital a monthly organ was to their organization, Coulter intended to write a "diplomatic" letter to stimulate Bernard into action.[31] Jowett, however, was less delicate. "I have a lot of trouble with Bernard. He never answers my letters re membership blanks or record certificates, & he has all the money," he told Coulter.

> It seems to me he is only using the asso for the subs he gets out of it, & does not give a damn for the rest. I told him straight in my last letter that he had hurt the asso bad, & that members were feeling sore about it. I lied, but I believe I am justified & I am confessing only to you as I know you will believe my motive, & keep it quiet. I told him members were asking if it was only a money grab, & would be wanting their money back, & what was I to do if they did, as he had it. . . . I told him I could not be writing letters the way I am, as I have no time for anything else, but answer queries about the asso, & H & L, & where the money was. . . . I told him I could not be telling them all the time he was rushed with work & could not get the certificates off the press.. . . He will have to do something, or else I will have a proposition to put up to you members.

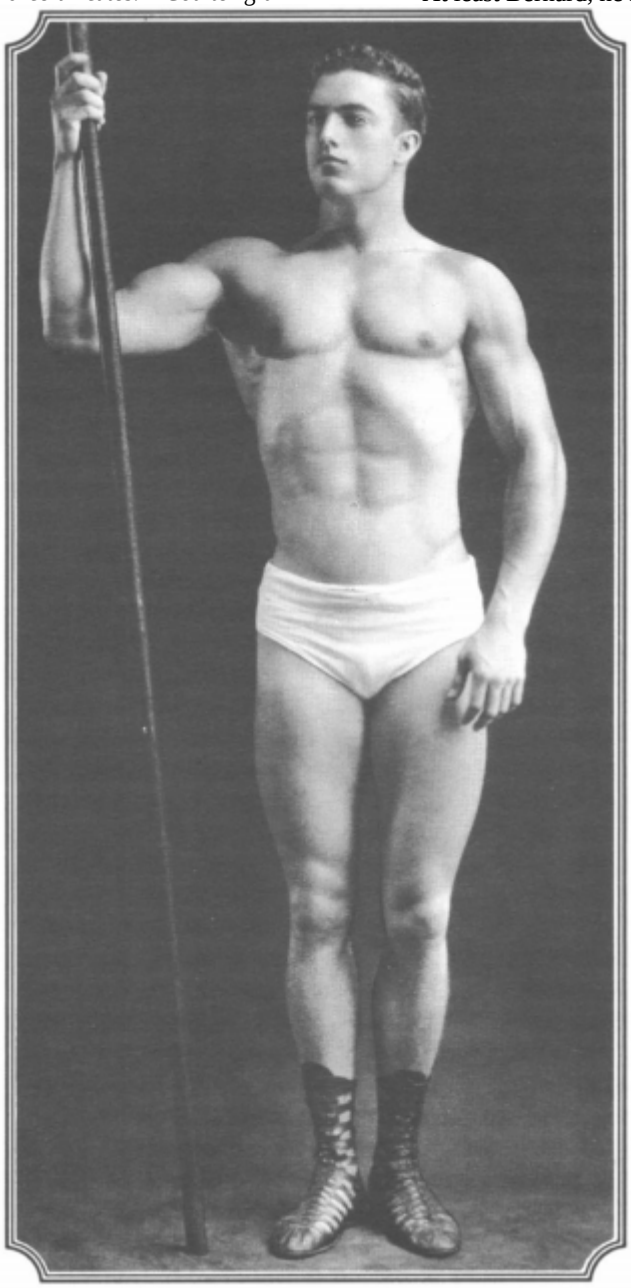
Jowett also professed special insight into Bernard's English temperament which seemed to explain his inability to adapt to the more market-oriented conditions in America. "'His British ideas are alright in Britain, but no good here." Success in the United States, Jowett believed, required a greater sensitivity to commercial considerations. "I was hoping that we would have grown big, & we would have had all the names of our members in our own hands & could have canvassed them direct with anything we had to sell. As it is he is hurting his mag: & us also."[32] It seems never to have occurred to Jowett that his organization's affiliation with ***Health and Life*** could be perceived in an exact opposite way by Bernard; that far from yielding any tangible benefits, it was proving to be a liability to the magazine. What's more, it could readily be seen that it was only by dint or Bernard's largess that the ACWLA had experienced even a modest measure of success.

Thus Jowett's bluff and bluster tactics elicited an immediate reaction from Bernard who was more than willing to withdraw from his original commitment. Though agreeing to continue giving publicity to the ACWLA, in early 1923 he severed all business connections with it and returned all records and cash. Only ten members had enrolled since the previous fall. Jowett was "bitterly disappointed to see how small the list is, after all the work I have done." He was even "wondering if it was worth while to go on with it," **but** on reconsidering their predicament, he decided they had still not taken full advantage of their appeal to ***Strength*** and that he would like to see the association "last a little longer," at least for them to be able to set some records and receive some "official recognition and prestige."[33]

But any affiliation with ***Strength*** was not a realistic possibility at this time, and the ACWLA organizers were forced to fall

back on their own meager resources-consisting of little more than the strength of their personal friendship. So Jowett appointed his friend to be the new secretary-treasurer and expressed the hope that they could survive on the sale of record certificates.[34] Coulter graciously accepted the position and reflected on their lonely plight. He had initially favored affiliating with ***Strength,*** but he did "not think they are interested in sport for sport's sake but only for its money making value to them."

> They are business men and the mag is run for business reasons. If the organization did not increase their circulation or give their pupils publicity it would not benefit them. . . Many they advertised were considerably overrated. About all the proof they required from a pupil was a testimonial letter. They all do this it is a matter of business but men who have an exaggerated reputation do not desire to have it destroyed or lessened by a lifters association. I know many Milo pupils who are considerably overrated. . . In other words the organization appears to benefit only the real honest to goodness lifters who really can lift and are modest enough to publicly admit that they cannot lift [sic] only what the scales and correct rules show. Now an organization affording proper competition would increase the standard of the lifts in course of time and naturally the standard of the competitors so that the average standard of all competitors would gradually increase. The individual members seems too selfish for the proper working of this plan.



David P. Willoughby at the age of 25 in 1926. Willoughby weighed 185 pounds in this photograph at a height of 6'1 1/2".

Photo:Todd-McLean Collection

At least Bernard, he reckoned, had given the association a "definite try which is more than 'Strength' did." In the meantime, Coulter recognized that the ACWLA "must be kept going by us personally, if necessary, as our time for action is getting less each year."[35]

Jowett concurred with the assessment by Coulter of Calvert's business proclivities and his explanation of why so few lifters were attracted to their movement. On a more philosophical level, Jowett could view their plight in light of the age-old conflict between idealism and the power wielded by vested interests.

> Before the assoc. was ever founded I knew we would be up against this proposition, believe me, I have had so much to do with lifting organizations that I did not go into this with eyes shut. It is what I expected, & got. But I stood for the game & its honesty, & the growing lifters, who would be free from this contamination, & relied upon their enthusiasm to build us up, & knew this was necessarily slow work, but Ottley some one must pioneer, & give the sacrifice of time & other denials, so I blazed the trail, & you & I & others, but I am afraid we can only say, you Willoughby & I, can be always termed the trail blazers of lifting organization in America, even if we do fail, the seed

is sown, others will spring up, & we will have done our part.

He thought ***Strength,*** despite its mercenary ways, would at least publish ACWLA records in its club news section.[36] A glimmer of hope was also evident in the activities of some of their state representatives, most notably David Willoughby of Los Angeles who had attracted Jowett's attention as "a good organizer."[37] Indeed Willoughby had achieved national visibility from a series of articles he authored for ***Health and Life*** on "Strong Men of the Far West." In stark contrast to the inactivity of eastern groups, a heading in the May 1923 issue featured "Plenty of Weightlifting Action in California."[38]

Throughout 1923 Jowett and Coulter, forced to come to terms with the real world, pursued two almost paradoxical courses. First, in accordance with their condemnation of leading strongmen and the need to adhere to national and world standards, was their emphasis on honesty in lifting. Jowett wrote in February that he had just returned from a Montreal meet where Arthur Giroux had performed a limit deadlift. While the lifter's friends "tried to make a record of it," Jowett would "not allow it, as it was not so. . . & a row was the result. We had lots of fun over those excitable, gesticulating Frenchmen."[39] Reinforcing this strict adherence to standards was Willoughby, who told Coulter in March that "I frequently get myself into 'hot water' by insisting that every detail of a lift be performed in the correct manner. . . in strict accordance with BAWLA Rules; therefore they should be accepted *anywhere.*"[40] And Coulter, suspicious of the ulterior designs behind Arthur Gay's much publicized "Strongest Man" challenge, reminded Gay in April what constituted a real record-a written application to the secretary, the appointment of an official referee and witnesses, and the selection of an inspector of weights who must test the scales, weigh the record, and sign a certificate. Both the lift and the barbell had to conform to ACWLA regulations.[41] But Charles Atlas and Antone Matysek were the most important targets for the proselytizing efforts by Jowett and Coulter. In succeeding months the latter pair continuously expressed indignation that leading strength stars, fearing loss of ill-gotten claims to fame and fortune, refused to subject their lifts to official scrutiny.

The second initiative undertaken by Jowett and Coulter seemed somewhat ironic in light of the altruistic tone of their designs for the ACWLA and their criticisms of ***Health and Life*** and ***Strength*** for their preoccupation with money. They became deeply involved in plans for capitalizing on their physical culture knowledge. Virtually no scheme for turning muscles into money—books, pamphlets, courses, circuses and fairs, Coney Island and Atlantic City shows, exhibition tours, chest expanders, etc.—was overlooked. Eventually they settled on a mail order scheme, and both agreed that for collaboration, as the "Vulcan Brothers," it would be necessary for Jowett to move to Pittsburgh. If Coulter could find him a job, Jowett reasoned, "we can study together, work up acts, & prepare our way for the course. The course is the big thing to look to."[42] Coulter too was convinced that only by such means would they be able to build their personal fortunes and those of the ACWLA. "What we need most now is cash. Really I don't think you know how badly we (I especially) need it. My finances are at ebb tide." Coulter worked for a collection agency at $22 per week. "At present my expenses are a little heavier than usual and it takes about all I make to pay expenses." Nevertheless he was prepared to offer his friend, even with the birth of a son in January, free food and lodging in his home until he got established.[43] Jowett agreed with Coulters view. "It is money we want, & lots of it, & we will do our best to get it on the level, I am out for it, as I am not satisfied with a bare living." An indication of Jowett's priorities was his comment that "for the benefit of our cause," he wanted the association "to be a success."[44]

By early spring Jowett was in Pittsburgh where Coulter had lined up a position for him at Donahoe's department store. It was arranged through a cheese buyer named H. B. Barzen who was a lifting enthusiast and personal friend of P. J. Donahoe, the president. So interested was Barzen in securing Jowett, Coulter told him that he was willing "to let some one go to make room for you."[45] Jowett quickly made his presence known. Coulter spoke of how he had "created a great lifting boom since he became a resident amongst us" and ***Health and Life*** highlighted his new situation with the headline "Jowett Sets Pittsburgh Alight."[46] But his foremost interest was the establishment, with Coulter and Barzen, of a mail order business called the Apollo System. "A New Era Dawns" was the opening pitch of their first advertisement in ***Health and Life.*** Despite their erstwhile criticisms of the false and exaggerated claims of other mail order strong men, no effort was spared to portray this system and its authors in the most glowing terms. So, as a result of "the unanimous vote of their controlling board" and supposedly "inspired by requests from thousands of physical culturists," the Apollo System offered "the life-long experience of two of the greatest geniuses of physical knowledge that the world has ever produced." Also featured was a full-body pose of Jowett, alleged to be 'the winner of the 'Best Developed Man Contest,' open to the world. . . . He is the greatest athlete in physical prowess the world has ever known."[47] Subsequent advertisements and articles in leading physical culture journals extolled the virtues of Jowett, even at the expense of the system itself! A lengthy self-serving article entitled "The March of a Great Athlete" no doubt removed for readers every possible doubt about the assertion made in a later ad that he had "won and defended the title of the "STRONGEST MAN IN THE WORLD."[48]

Such outlandish claims, devoid of any evidence, had the unwelcome side effect of taunting other mail order strongmen. Soon the columns of ***Health and Life*** were ablaze with charges, challenges, and counter-challenges. "The whole of the iron world seems alive

with challenges," observed Bernard. 'What we want to see now is *action*, and these giants of strength battling together in the same ring for the World's Strength Supremacy."[49] Mainly what emerged however, was more hyperbole, with the expansive Jowett claiming to be "the world's strongest athlete, the world's greatest teacher," and now "the greatest producer of champions." In the latter capacity he listed the names of the champions he had trained with the Apollo System, including (with his consent!) the name of David Willoughby. For sheer zeal and effrontery, the later promotional techniques of Bob Hoffman and Joe Weider hardly surpassed those of Jowett. As the late Charles A. Smith, who perused the Jowett-Coulter correspondence, once wrote—Jowett was "notorious for drawing the long bow." What he said was "of little value and not to be relied on. He always told it to the advantage of George Fiusdale. Nothing he claimed was so. No titles. No awards. No nothing."[50] Such an indictment seems a bit harsh, but it would be hard to imagine a greater contrast than the huckster image Jowett conveyed to the public, on the one hand, and the strict code of ethics he was attempting to enforce on other strongmen through the ACWLA.

Yet for all of Jowett's artistry with facts, his commercial venture could not be long sustained. The Apollo System ran aground not because he misrepresented himself and his product. Outlandish claims by mail order courses were commonplace in the 1920s, and there were no governmental regulatory agencies poised to protect the consumer. It foundered, as so many others did, on a lack of response from the public, a failure to recover the money originally invested, and eventually indebtedness. Lacking sufficient wherewithal to launch the venture, Jowett (with Coulter) had tapped the enthusiasm and financial resources of their friend Barren who also agreed to manage and promote the system. When predicted enrollments did not materialize and Barren requested more support from his partners, Jowett accused him of financial peculation. "I was not interested in his debts," he told Coulter, "as I know what he spent in the System & know that he borrowed money for his own use, & told people it was for the System, &that he also misapplied funds we gave him, that made him indebted to us."[51] With Barzen unwilling to commit any more of his resources, and with Jowett and Coulter unable to support the venture independently, the partners abandoned it and split up. Coulter moved on to greener pastures by early 1924 to pursue police work in Uniontown, Pennsylvania. Jowett, checked in his ambitions in the strength world, remained in Pittsburgh in a state of restlessness. And his attempts to achieve instant fame, while netting no monetary reward, succeeded throughout the following year in miring him in controversy over his lifting reputation.[52]

George Jowett prepares to lift Charles Shaffer during a handbalancing session in 1925. Jowett's unusual thickness is apparent.

Photo:Todd-McLean Collection

It is hardly surprising under these circumstances that virtually no progress was made in advancing the cause of the ACWLA. Despite constant publicity and expressions of good intentions in ***Health and Life,*** there were hardly any additional subscribers, no championships conducted, and only a few records were set, chiefly in Pittsburgh by Coulter's protégés Charles Schaffer and George Dembinski. What rescued organized weightlifting in the United States was the independent initiative taken by Dave Willoughby in distant California. Like Jowett, he sensed the need for publicity and official standards, but he was far less reckless in promoting his own claims. In 1923 and 1924 ***Health and Life*** carried regular reports of the achievements of Los Angeles lifters sent by Willoughby. Contrary to the unfulfilled promises of Jowett and Coulter in the east, Willoughby and his confreres were holding real contests and setting real records. The May 1923 issue featured a report of the annual city gymnastic championships at the Los Angeles Athletic Club (LAAC). In the weightlifting event three lifters—Willoughby, A. L. Martin, and Albert Bevan—contested six lifts. Willoughby easily bested his competitors with a 1069 pound aggregate to their respective totals of 983.5 and 920. The importance of this three person contest, however, was its strict adherence to official standards. The judges, boasted Willoughby, were Noah Young and Mark Jones, both "previous champions of national reputation.

All lifts were weighed on an accurate scale, which was conspicuous by its absence in former contests," and the lifts "were all made under the most stringent rules, similar to those of the B.A.W.L.A."[53] The other interesting aspect of this competition is that it was held under the auspices of the Amateur Athletic Union. Although Coulter did not think "that organization understands weightlifting," Jowett took a pragmatic view.[54] "Willoughby wrote me that unless we co-operated with the A.A.U. out there we would get no Cal. members, as he said they always promoted the tourneys out there . . . He said that they lifted exactly as the B.A.W.L.A. ruling called for. I answered that under these conditions we accepted them."[55] Imagine-this modest affair, which has as much right as any other to be called the first weightlifting contest in the United States held under official conditions–was inspired by the ACWLA, sanctioned by the AAU, and conducted under BAWLA rules!

That it was held in one of the most remote and still quite undeveloped regions of the country was greeted with surprise and even dismay. Bernard wished that "reports from other state representatives would be so full of inspiring news," but he was pleased that weightlifting "is evidently gaining the popularity it deserves as the king of games."[56] Coulter expressed concern to Willoughby that his group's success might be detrimental to the association by discouraging others from setting records. "The poundages that many of you Los Angeles lifters do are so high that many men will be completely without a chance for any glory right at the start." He feared that "others would have no especial incentive to join the Assn. and right now we need memberships to increase the influence of our Assn."[57] Yet it was obvious that, outside the efforts of Willoughby, little was being done to further the ACWLA cause. "I am glad that you are giving the Assn. such hearty co-operation," Coulter told him in August 1923.

> Confidentially the other representatives have accomplished practically nothing so far as the organization is concerned. You and I are about the only rep. that bothered about getting members . . . The organization is functioning though even if membership is small and finances low (This is confidential between you and me—for the good of the cause). As you have real ability, you can gain real everlasting recognition through the Assn as a medium and your efforts will not have been in vain.[58]

Willoughby's ability as an organizer was further manifested on November 21 when he conducted a contest between Martin and Bevan at the LAAC "under strict A.C.W.L.A. rules." It was the first time that the best lifts of each lifter were weighed on a tested Fairbank scale and compared with British records.[59] "A big success" is the way Willoughby described it to Coulter, noting that weightlifting was about to experience a "big boom," there being "hundreds of enthusiasts in L.A. alone." He then spoke frankly about the moribund state of organized weightlifting elsewhere.

> Say, Coulter, how is it that the A.C.W.L.A. is progressing so slowly? I hope that your business does not prevent you (as secretary) from boosting things along. Maybe I am too impatient, but you know, as well as anyone, what enthusiasm is! For example, I am very anxious to see the Asso. issue a list of recognized records on the 49 official lifts . . . in this way, we could at least get the thing started, & the 'A.C.W.L.A. Record Book' could be issued in a form that permitted revisions being made, as soon as any lifts were bettered. . . Come on Coulter! lets make this proposition an actuality!

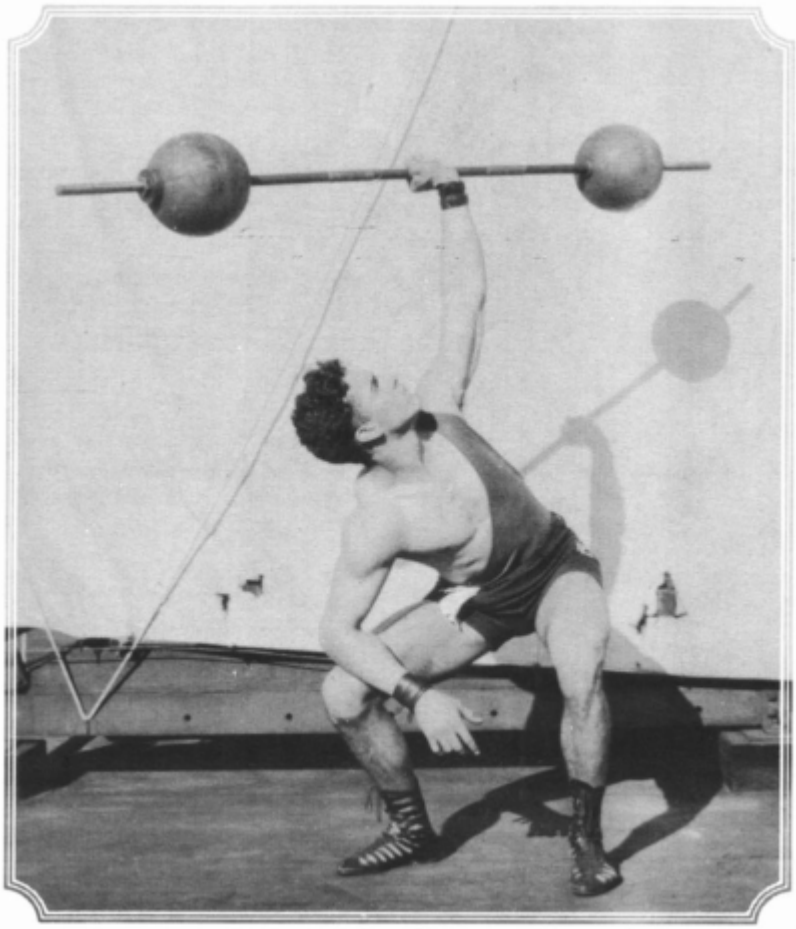
Willoughby also wanted an "up to date list of foreign lifting records" for comparative purposes[60] Not since Coulter's list appeared in the 1920 issue of ***Strength*** had any such records been published. Willoughby was certainly justified in chiding Coulter for negligence. With no meets and no records to its credit, there seemed to be little reason for an association that existed only on paper.

On April 19, 1924, Willoughby infused further life into organized weightlifting by hosting the first National Weight Lifting Championships in Los Angeles. It was also an Olympic tryout in as much as the winners were expected to represent the United States at the Paris games in July. Seven lifters, virtually all from Willoughby's club, competed in three weight classes, another innovation for American lifting. Interestingly, the performances turned in at the Southern California Championships the following month, where the "Olympic lifts" were defined as the left hand snatch, the right hand clean & jerk, and the two hand military press, were higher than those attained at the national meet. A picture in the September 1924 issue of ***Health and Life*** featured an impressive array of husky lifters of the Los Angeles Athletic Club, anchored by Willoughby, which vividly underscored their domination of the American weightlifting scene.[61]

Meanwhile Jowett, always the opportunist, was again seeking to enter the mainstream of the sport by renewing his contacts with ***Strength.*** He boasted to Coulter that Calvert had offered him as much as $75 per week but that his employer in Pittsburgh had matched it and pleaded with him to stay. "Calvert is considering about joining the A.C.W.L.A., but said they wanted me there to take care of there [sic] new showrooms where they will give exhibitions as well as sell barbells."[62] After several months of negotiations, Jowett finally agreed to join the Milo staff in Philadelphia in September 1924. His employment there, along with physical culturist Charles MacMahon,

coincided with the departure of Carl Easton Williams and changes in editorial policy. A year earlier, as editor, Williams had expanded the size of ***Strength*** and instituted a more general physical culture format, but it did not bring financial success. Now, under Calvert's influence, there was a greater emphasis on lifting-related content which Jowett's presence was intended to reinforce. Upon departing Pittsburgh, Jowett expressed final regrets over the failure of the Apollo System. "You do not know how I hate to leave Pittsburgh Ott. It is the closing out of all my ideals that you & I struggled for. I may never have showed it Ott, but closing down on that job hurt me & cut me like a knife."[63] It seemed a stroke of good luck that Jowett could extricate himself from a losing proposition and assume a post at the center of the iron game where fullest advantage could be taken of the business opportunities in sport.

So far as the association was concerned, Jowett's move had the effect of raising expectations all round. In the first issue of ***Strength*** after his coming, Calvert authored an article entitled "Enthusiasm Breeds Enthusiasm" which highlighted the accomplishments of Jowett, Coulter, and Willoughby in fostering a national lifting organization. But its underlying theme was Jowett's newfound connection with ***Strength*** as part of the magazine's increased commitment to lifting. It noted how Jowett, "the most scientific lifter in this country," had "spent all his spare hours in spreading the gospel of lifting" over the previous five years. "His influence has certainly been wide-spread, and his work has been so meritorious and so utterly unselfish, that it took no effort on his part to persuade the publishers of this magazine to lend him their assistance." ***Strength,*** Calvert reminded readers, "has peculiar advantages in this connection because in its infancy it was entirely devoted to the cause of lifting and still retains among its readers thousands of lifting enthusiasts."[64] In the same issue there appeared a full page 'rally call" for all lifters to join the American Continental Weight Lifter's Association, now supported by "the strong arm of ***Strength."*** For a yearly payment of $7.50, initiates would receive a lapel button, a membership card a year's subscription to ***Strength,*** and "all the big benefits of this organization." With groups already in place in Pittsburgh and Los Angeles, and others forming in New York and Philadelphia, under Siegmund Klein and Jowett, organizers foresaw fraternal groups springing up in urban centers throughout the country ultimately with as many as 250,000 members![65]



David P. Willoughby demonstrates the one hand snatch in this photo taken in California in 1924. Willoughby is wearing the team uniform adopted by his lifters in Los Angeles.

Photo:Todd-McLean Collection

It remained to be seen whether Jowett's presence at Milo would be a magnet for the other early organizers of American weightlifting. He had held out this possibility to Coulter who, though less driven by purely commercial considerations, was encouraged by the new arrangements. Coulter was "glad that the Milo will take an active part in the A.C.W.L.A. and I think that with their help that it can attain the position that it should." He was also impressed, in light of their failure with the Apollo System, by Jowett's report that Milo was making $10,000 monthly and as high as $30,000 in the winter months. "This shows what years of advertising and an established reputation will do. Too bad that we did not get started first in this weight lifting game."[66] Coulter was well aware of the employment opportunities as an iron game professional at Milo and was no doubt attracted by the possibility of joining his old partner, but he had little of the craving for power and self-aggrandizement that motivated Jowett. Especially with a young family, he had little desire to relinquish

his steady job as a plain-clothesman in Uniontown to test the less charted waters of the barbell business in Philadelphia.

Whether Willoughby, who had done so much to launch the sport in a practical way, would be drawn to this emerging Mecca was another matter and was probably the reason for his exploratory visit to the East in the late summer of 1924. At the "editorial sanctum of HEALTH and LIFE" in Chicago, he left a firm impression that he was "a real Iron Man."[67] In Philadelphia he met with company officials, helped Jowett formulate an ACWLA "set of definitions and rules" based on those of BAWLA, and discussed employmmt possibilities.[68] But his idealism and lack of business-mindedness left a bad impression on the leaders of the sport. "He is a good fellow," Jowett told Coulter

> but too much of the idealist, he cannot see the material side or business aspect of us & others at all, & he says it is all a shock He thinks all should fall on his neck with joy to see him & I told him when he told me that it would be a big advantage to the Milo to use him, & that we could not ignore him, that our concern or any other did not have to give a damn for him, as there was too many in the field & we could get along without any one man, we could kill him if we wanted. Believe me, I shocked him to earth. Tho his heart is in the right place & a willing worker, & good man, & he will outgrow his troubles, but he is like so many others, he wants all for nothing, & likes to impress you of how much he knows, & more than others"[69]

As usual, Coulter concurred with Jowett, but it was equally evident to him how valuable persons unsullied by commercial designs were to the sport. "It is well that we have some idealists like him or the association would not have lasted in the early stages."[70] Although Jowett and Coulter pioneered the idea of a weightlifting organization, they never forgot the contribution of Willoughby whose deeds were crucial to the realization of their concept.[71]

The association of Jowett with ***Strength*** brought about a firmer financial and publicity base for the ACWLA and was accompanied by a reorganization of its governing board. Virtually all interests were represented, with Jowett as president, Coulter and Willoughby as vice presidents, and an advisory body consisting of Bernard, Calvert, MacMahon, Liederman, Macfadden, Atlas, and Henry Titus. ***Health and Life*** welcomed these innovations, calling them "a decided step forward. Previously it has been a one-sided affair, Calvert and E. Liederman (who have done so much) being left out, entirely."[72] ***Strength*** was no less sanguine, declaring that its principal aim was to bring all barbell enthusiasts together into "one big family body."[73] For one of the few times in its century of existence the iron game fraternity appeared to be united, and optimism abounded on all sides that organized weightlifting was at last off the ground.

Energy, idealism, and enthusiasm were all critical factors to the inception of weightlifting in the United States, but it was equally evident that a solid financial footing was necessary to sustain the movement. Jowett and Coulter found themselves caught on a cleft stick, often being forced to sacrifice their early ideas of honesty and integrity to the realities of money, prestige, and power. If not cupidity, commercial considerations at least permeated their organizational approach. Unable to carry forth their ideas for an association independently, they sought support through ***Health and Life,*** then through the ill-fated Apollo System, and ultimately by resorting to Milo, the company whose life depended on weightlifting. Jowett, Coulter, and Willoughby too, had to reconcile themselves with the irony that the most necessary ingredient to the lasting life of weightlifting as a sport—commercialization—was also the quality that most detracted from its nobility of spirit. It was hardly just a sporting proposition. This marriage of amateur enthusiasm with commercial vision would serve as a model for promotional methods later perfected by others at York and Woodland Hills.

Notes:

I am grateful to Jan and Terry Todd for allowing me to use the Todd-McLean Collection and for their assistance with this article. I would also like to thank David Webster. Unless otherwise noted, all correspondence references cited in this paper are from the Coulter Papers of the Todd-McLean Collection, The University of Texas.

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[2]William J. Baker, ***Sports in the Western World*** (Totowa, New Jersey: 1982), 215.
[3]David Webster. ***The Iron Game, An Illustrated History of Weight-Lifting*** (Irvine, Scotland: 1976), 114-5.
[4]David Webster, ***Barbells & Beefcake, An Illustrated History of Bodybuilding*** (Irvine, Scotland: 1979), 54.
[5]Alan Calvert, ***The Truth About Weight Lifting*** (Philadelphia: 1911), 15 & 109.
[6]Coulter is referring here to handbalancing.
[7]Ottley Russell Coulter, "Honesty in Weight Lifting and the Necessity of Making Lifters Prove Their Claims," ***Strength*** 3(January 1917): 14-15, and Alan Calvert, "An Offer To Max Unger," **Strength** 3(January 1917): 16.
[8]Alan Cavert, "In Regards to Lifting Records." ***Strength,*** 5(November 1920): 50.
[9]Daily Diary, October 1, 1920. Coulter Papers.
[10]O. R. Coulter, "Concerning Lifting Records," ***Strength*** 5(November 1920): 23-26.
[11]Jowett to Coulter, 9 November 1920.

[12]George F. Jowett, "Arithmetic in Weight-Lifting," ***Strength*** 5(April 1921): 18.
[13]Bernard Bernard, "Strong Men of America, Unite!" ***Health and Life*** l(July 1922): 70.
[14]Jowett to Coulter, 13 & 22 June 1922.
[15]Coulter to Jowett, 19 June 1922.
[16]"ACWLA Notes," ***Health and Life*** 1(September 1922): 100.
[17]Coulter to Jowett, 12 July 1922.
[18]Jowett to Coulter, 24 July 1922.
[19]Coulter to Jowett, n.d. [September 1922].
[20]Jowett to Coutler, 14 October 1922.
[21]JOwett to Coulter 24 July 1922.
[22]George F. Jowett, "The Romance of Strength." ***Strength*** 6(August 1922): 53-54.
[23]Coutler to Jowett, n.d. [September 1922].
[24]Jowett to Coulter, 14 October 1922.
[25]See 'With the Men of Iron," ***Health and Life*** 2(July, October, December 1923): 231, 338-39, and 410-11. It was also on this occasion that Angelo Siciliano, known as Charles Atlas, won the physique title of "World's Most Perfect Man" for the .second time. Both Coulter and Jowett scofffed at Atlas' lifting and body measurement claims. He appeared more of a "conjurer" than an "athlete" to the latter. "His measurements. What a fake they are. If his forearm is 14 3/4 then mine is 17, & as for his lifting ability, that is more punk. Watch him Ottley, he will fall down. That stuff is no good." Jowett to Coulter, 19 December 1922.
[26]Jowett to Coulter, 5 and 2 November 1922.
[27]Jowett to Coulter 23 November 1922.
[28]Calvert to Jowett, 6 December 1922.
[29]Coulter to Jowett, 15 December 1922.
[30]Jowett to Coulter, 19 December 1922.
[31]Coulter to Jowett, 11 January 1923.
[32]Jowett to Coulter, 14 & 15 January 1923.
[34]Ibid.
[35]Coulter to Jowett, 21 January 1924.
[36]Jowett to Coulter, 14 January 1923.
[37]Jowett to Coulter, 23 January 1923. The other state representatives included F. J. Goldthwaite of Louisiana; Robert Snyder of Maryland Arthur Gay of New York William Holt of New Hampshire, and Ottley Coulter of Pennsylvania.
[38]See David P. Willoughby, "Strong Men of the Far West" ***Health and Life*** 1(December 1922): 188-89, and 2(Januaary 1923): 17 & 30; and "With the Men of Iron." ***Health and Life*** 2(May 1923): 159.
[39]Jowett to Coulter, 5 February 1923.
[40]Willoughby to Coulter, 19 March 1923.
[41]Coulter to Gay, 11 April 1923.
[42]Jowett to Coulter, 15 January 1923.
[43]Coulter to Jowett, 19 January 1923.
[44]Jowett to Coulter, 6 & 15 February 1923.
[45]Coulter to Jowett, 2 February 1923.
[46]Coulter to Bernard 19 May 1923, and "With the Men of Iron," ***Health and Life*** 2(June, 1923): 195.
[47]"A New Era Dawns," ***Health and Life*** 2(October 1923): 319.
[48]Richard Bonner, 'The March of a Great Athlete," ***Health and Life*** 2(September 1923): 302 & 322; and "The Development of Muscular Power and Beauty," ***Health and Life*** 2(December, 1923): 425.
[49]"With the Men of Iron,"***Health and Life*** 2(November, 1923): 374.
[50]Charles A. Smith to the author, 26 July 1989. Author's Collection.
.[Editor's note: Smith's words are curious in light of what he wrote in the April, 1955 issue of ***Muscle Builder,*** "One [incident] will remain ever green in my memory, and that's my first meeting with the immortal George F. Jowett." Smith continues, "In his younger and active days, Jowett was a Man among men. A one arm military press of 140 pounds, a bent press of 286 pounds, a two hands jerk of 345." Among those who actually saw Jowett lift, Ottley Coulter was never prone to exaggerate poundages. His recollections in a 1968 letter to Vic Boff are helpful, "neither [of us had] done any training during that time. However, George did demonstrate at times to our pupils...On different occasions I saw George do a perfect one arm military press with a solid 100 lb. dumbell and with apparent ease . . . Also, he demonstrated. . . how to do the perfect two arms military press . . . in accordance with the ACWLA rules. I saw him do this in perfect style with a 212 lb. barbell and with great ease. He could have done more, if there had been any reason to do so. . . He could also bend over backwards and pick up a handkerchief in his teeth." Bob Hoffman in an October, 1934 issue of ***Strength & Health,*** also marveled at Jowett's gymnastic abilities, especially since Jowett was well into his forties when he did the stunts Hoffman describes, "he could run much easier and lighter than I. He could turn back flips and cartwheels. . . and land with his weight of 238 as light as a feather." As for Jowett's lifting, Hoffman wrote, "I saw him make his two arm [record military] press of 250 pounds. With all his hard work irregular training and injuries of the past I saw him press 210 six times [and] make six presses one hand military style with 100 pounds . . . I have never seen such a terrific physical specimen. Tremendous arms, upper and forearm, nineteen inch shirts, a chest over fifty inches, legs like tree trunks, huge pectorals, trapezius and latissimus." As for "official" lifting, Jowett, in front of a sellout crowd and judges, created a new "world record" on May 24, 1918 in the continental and jerk with 310 pounds in Canada, at a bodyweight of 154 pounds and a height of approximately 5'4". So, although Jowett was not the "strongest man in the world" in the 1920's, he was an exceptionally strong and nimble man. Perhaps Jowett's tendency to boast had the effect of blinding some to his remarkable physical abilities.]
[51]Jowett to Coulter, n.d. [1924]. Jowett later noted that Barzen claimed that he and Coulter owed him $700, but that the concern "only was in debt about $200.00." Jowett to Coulter, 9 June 1924.
[52]See successive issues of ***Health and Life*** 3(June-September 1924): 229 & 248, 269 & 284, 305 & 318, and 341.
[53]"With the Men of Iron," ***Health and Life*** 2(May 1923): 159 & 178.
[54]Coulter to Jowett, 14 February 1923.
[55]Jowett to Coulter, 6 February 1923.
[56]"With the Men of Iron," ***Health and Life*** 2(May 1923): 159.
[57]Coulter to Willoughby, 1 June 1923.
[58]Draft letter by Coulter on verso of Willoughby to Coulter, 26 August 1923.
[59]David P. Willoughby, "With the Strong Men of the Far West:" ***Health and Life*** 2(December 1923): 14.
[60]Willoughby to Coulter, 30 November 1923.
[61]David Willoughby, Report of the National Weight-Lifting Championships," ***Health and Life*** 3(June 1924): 236; David Willoughby, "Southern California Wieghtlifting Championship is Held at San Diego," ***Health and Life*** 3(August 1924): 305; and "Muscular Iron Men of the Far West," ***Health and Life*** 3(September 1924): 341.
[62]Jowett to Coulter, n.d. [July 1924].
[63]Ibid. [September 1924].
[64]Alan, Calvert, "Enthusiasm Breeds Enthusiasm," ***Strength*** 9(November 1924): 30-31, & 88-89.
[65]"Special Limited Time Offer," ***Strength*** 9(November 1924): 8.
[66]Coulter to Jowett, 8 September 1924.
[67]"With the Men of Iron." ***Health and Life*** 3(October 1924): 381.
[68]David P. Willoughby, "A History of American Weight-Lifting," ***Your Physique*** 12(November 1949): 9.
[69]Jowett to Coulter, n.d. [September 1924].
[70]Coulter to Jowett, 14 September 1924.
[71]See Coulter to John Grimek, 20 December 1956.
[72]"With the Men of Iron," ***Health and Life*** 3(December, 1924): 429.
[73]"Now is Your Chance to Join The American Continental Weight-Lifters Association," ***Strength*** 9(December 1924): 10.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

BILL CURRY AND THE GOSPEL OF PHYSICAL FITNESS

AL THOMAS, PH. D. KUTZTOWN UNIVERSITY

"One of our sport's grand old men," announced another of the same sport's "grand old men" when I told him that I was writing this "Where Are They Now?" column about W. A. "Bill" Curry. The phrase itself—the quickness with which it came to his lips—jolted me a bit: not the compliment implied in "grand," of course, but that word "old." Bill Curry, "old"? Momentarily he had been, at least to the "jolted" kid in me, the super-lifter and athlete who, between 1937 and 1951, held all the South's weightlifting records in the light-heavyweight class: all of them for 14 years. "Old"? But as I came back to the realization that I myself had, long since, passed over into my own seventh decade, I had to admit that a man at 75 (halfway through his eighth decade) did, indeed, qualify for the attribution of that dismal adjective, even though I also had to admit that nobody carries off 75 with more athletic jauntiness and élan than this remarkable athlete of strength who dominated weightlifting in the South—as perhaps no other man had—from the Depression until a half-dozen years after World War II. From 1937 to 1951, he was the light-heavyweight champion of the Georgia State, Southeastern, Mid-South, and Southern A.A.U.'s, as well as the A.A.U. Junior National Champion in 1939, a fourth place finisher in the 1940 A.A.U. Senior Nationals, and runner-up as a heavyweight in the 1944 A.A.U. Senior Nationals. A signal athletic record.

Writing about Bill's victory at the 1939 Junior Nationals, Bob Hoffman wrote with admiration of his "courage in coming from behind in the press" to beat Chicago's formidable Frank Kay: 760 to 755: "Bill was forced to break his lifetime record in the two hands snatch with a fine 235, and then in the clean and jerk with 305, to win." In the following year's Senior Nationals, at Madison Square Garden, Bill's performance, again, impressed Hoffman: "His normal weight had continued to increase, and reducing to the light-heavyweight class had handicapped him considerably. Nevertheless he finished fourth in a class which included some unusual men-John Davis, the world's champ, Steve Gob, who made a higher lifting total than any other man in the world of his weight class except Davis, and Frank Kay, who has since made a total of 835."[1]

Bill remembers this meet: "In 1940, they had called off the Olympics [because of the war in Europe]. At that point, I hadn't missed a workout in four years and had wanted to be on the Olympic team. My best practice lifts were higher than any other light-heavyweight's in the United States, except for John Davis, and they planned to take two lifters in each class. At the Nationals, that year, I took fourth. With the news about the canceled Olympics, I had quit training and had only one week to get ready, but I over-trained badly and didn't get close to my best."[2]

Nineteen-forty was the year of the famous York Barbell Club's tour of the South, including Hoffman, Johnny Terpak, John Grimek, and Steve Stanko. With his heroes in the audience at Atlanta, Bill led his Southeastern team to a victory over the South Central team, lifting 250, 250, 320 for a new lifetime record total of 820. Remembering their own (cramped) grand tour, Hoffman writes sympathetically about the effect of such a "tour" on an athlete who has to be at his best: "Four days later, having driven to distant New Orleans in a crowded car with the remainder of his team, having had little sleep and only irregular living in the intervening days, Bill did even better. He is the nervous type of lifter, a man who can lift far beyond his apparent strength. I said frankly that I didn't believe he could do as well again but I hoped that he could, and he showed me. Elwood Farmer was his competition on the South Central team. Elwood is big and strong, phlegmatic to a considerable degree, stronger than Bill I believe, but Elwood missed on his 330 jerk. Bill extended himself to break his lifetime record—by 10 pounds, to clean and jerk 330—and with this one lift he won again the title, 'The South's Best Weight Lifter,' and won the match for his team. October 23rd in Atlanta, he had been selected over a great group of well-built men, the survivors of competitions in all principal southern cities, and was crowned, "The South's Best-Built Man."' In Hoffman's view, Bill's life story made it clear that "he was not born with a silver spoon in his mouth. He was not a physical prodigy from early childhood; he had a long, hard road to follow, and he got there."[3] And in each step along the way of his "getting there," Bill had vindicated the warm praise accorded to him by the "Father of American Weightlifting" and by everybody else who has shared in the enthusiasm, manliness, intelligence, and dignity that he has brought to our sport, not all of whose champions perform as admirably off the platform as on it.

"Inauspicious" is a term that would not be misapplied in describing the introduction to the iron game of (now) retired U.S. Army Reserve Major Willie A. Curry. Genetically gifted—young Willie was not. Born December 3, 1917, in Athens, Georgia, he was a healthy boy until stricken at four with an eye disease which left him blind for two months. In time, he recovered but with much loss of strength and weight. From then on, until age 17, every physical examination disclosed Willie to be "greatly underweight." A bookworm, during his grammar school years, he was unable, until he was 16, to climb the ten-foot rope that provided the entry to the tree houses that resulted from his ingenuity—and from his immersion in Tarzan books.

Offered a membership in the Y.M.C.A. at ten, the youngster was too tired and bashful to accept—and didn't accept until he was 15. Soon after he joined the "Y", a new physical director was hired, L. H. Cunningham, who as the 1925 Mr. America, had the cachet to convince the powers about the value of weight training. Young Willie blossomed under Cunningham's tutelage, though at the start the boy's interests were exclusively centered upon swimming, handball, and

calisthenics: "I thought that these sports would build for me a body similar to Tom Tyler and George O'Brien, who were at that time my ideals . . . I believed that weights would make me muscle-bound, slow, and seriously injure my heart. It was three months before I began to realize that barbell training was working wonders with some of my friends. At the time I was fairly muscular but was too fine-drawn and weak. All I had was quite a bit of en-durance, so I started training in January, 1934. My weight at that time was 140 pounds." (In a letter dated 20 January 1993, Bill wrote me that this 140 pounds was at a height of about six feet.) "I worked hard on a standard body-building course for a month and could press the tremendous amount of 80 pounds." Soon afterwards, however, his interest lagged and he quit training.[4]

During his years as a physical education instructor at Georgia Military Academy, Bill and his students produced a number of strength extravaganza to raise money for charity. Here, Bill supports three students and a piano. *Photo: Todd-McLean Collection*

When Bill entered the University of Georgia in September, 1935, he weighed 152; by the end of the year, having made the University's freshman boxing team, he was down to 149. In January of 1936, however, his interest in training revived when he began to read ***Strength*** & ***Health***: "My interest picked up and I began to look around for some method whereby I could increase in size and strength. A friend of mine and several of the football players . . . worked out a system of dual resistance exercises which we worked on for about three months. During this time I gained considerably in strength but very little in size.[5] In January, 1937, Bill became L. H. Cunningham's "amateur assistant" for the bodybuilding club, and after a few months his weight had shot up to 160 from 150. It was at this time that a "great event took place" in Bill's life: Peter Fox (a "member of the world-famous 300 Pound Club") came to Athens and taught Bill the three lifts. In the boy's first meet, the Athens Municipal Championships, he pressed 145, snatched 135, and clean and jerked 195. Later on, he placed second in the Mid-South Champion- ships in Atlanta (177, 147, 222), and in June, he won the Southeastern Championships (AAU) with a total of 595 (190, 175, 230). (In the four years between 1936 and October of 1940, his press climbed from 145 to 250; his snatch from 135 to 245; his jerk from 195 to 330; and his total from 475 to 825. In a letter to Hoffman, Bill said that he trained like the York champions, "doing heavy single attempts on the lifts three days a week and occasionally doing series of three to five repetitions. During the summer months I usually go in for bodybuilding entirely, for there are no meets in the South.")[6] This, then, was the start-all the more instructive for its inauspiciousness—for one of the Southland's premier lifters and strength athletes; the rest is history. As a light-heavyweight, Bill pressed 250, snatched 235, and clean and jerked 315. As a heavyweight, he pressed 285, snatched 250, and clean and jerked 330; he also jerked 360 from a free-standing squat rack.[7]

A 1939 graduate of the University of Georgia, with a degree in business–majoring in marketing–Bill participated in the University's ROTC program, and because of this background, entered the Army in 1941 as a second lieutenant, after a stint as a "physical development and recreational foreman" for the National Youth Administration ("a governmental agency that set up trade schools for disadvantaged youths throughout the country")—and, also, after a tenure as head physical education instructor at Georgia Military Academy (to which he would return after W. W. II).[8]

It would be impossible, I believe, to think of any exercise theoretician (from our own ranks or any other ranks) who responded with more imagination and just plain know-how than weightlifting's Lt. Bill Curry to the Army's special needs relative to training masses of men. In Dr. Terry Todd's words, "Curry's contributions preceded those of Army doctor Thomas DeLorme, the author of the book ***Progressive Resistance Exercise*** in 1945. Curry's knowledge, ingenuity, and enormous personal energy combined to make him a true pioneer of progressive resistance exercise in the military. The programs he instituted increased the muscle size and strength, the confidence and combat readiness of many thousands of soldiers as they trained during World War II."[9]

The brilliance of Bill's adaptations of what he had learned about weight training to that which the army needed in order to develop strong, enduring soldiers is captured most succinctly by Dr. Todd in his ***Muscle & Fitness*** tribute, in the June 1991 number.

In February 1942, Lt.. Willie "Bill" Curry reported to Fort McClellan, Alabama for active duty in the US Army infantry. Because of his background in physical education, he was assigned to direct physical training for his company. He conducted calisthenics, running and the other basic Army training methods for several weeks. Then one day his former military science professor from the University of Georgia, Col. John Hutchinson, who also happened to be the regimental commander, asked him if it would be possible to improve the condition of the troops more quickly. Curry said yes, if he could get some weight training equipment.

Given an immediate go-ahead, Curry began overseeing the building of 50 barbells, constructed of 6-foot sections of pipe, l-inch thick, on the ends of which were No. 10 cans filled with concrete. This setup permitted Curry to run one platoon of 50 men through a barbell routine while the other three platoons were engaged in running, calisthenics and other activities. Each platoon would work with the barbells for about 15-20 minutes and then rotate to other activities for the remaining period of physical training.

Curry would stand on an instructor's platform and lead the troops through sets of such basic barbell exercises as the squat, military press, bent-over row, upright row, heel raise, curl and power clean.

After several months the program had been so successful that Curry was assigned to conduct the training of 800 limited-service trainees, who were at the lowest end of the fitness spectrum. For that, Curry ordered built another 100 barbells, barbell racks, a row of 24 adjustable slant boards for abdominal work, 12 Roman chairs, 12 dipping stations, 12 chinning stations, and an elaborate arrangement of pulley weights made of concrete, cans, ropes and pulleys that allowed the men to do one- and two-hand movements. Also provided were vaulting horses of logs and wrist rollers in a rack that was long enough for a squad of 12 men. Curry's system could handle a 200-man company every hour, and he took four companies through every day. His program was a huge success, and his battalion of "limited-service" trainees ended up winning the overall post softball championship.

Curry was then promoted to captain and placed in charge of all physical training for all eight regiments on the installation. Although barbell training remained the heart of Curry's workouts, he also put a lot emphasis on lifting logs. Six men were assigned to each log; the men would shoulder the logs and then perform various exercises such as squats, presses, side straddle hops and bent-over rows. They also ran relays with the logs on their shoulders. The program was published in a manual and distributed to the entire Army.

Curry was later assigned to Fort Benning, Georgia. Even though he claims to have been unable to convince the West Pointers there of the value of his barbell routines, he was allowed to implement his log training program, with excellent results. Curry managed to get in enough barbell workouts himself that he was able to win second place at the National Weightlifting Championships in 1944.

Upon his release from the Army in January, 1946, Bill returned to Atlanta and to five years of coaching physical education at Georgia Military Academy. In 1951, he accepted a position as sports consultant and merchandise buyer for the Rich's Department Store chain in Atlanta; and after 23 years with Rich's, Bill embarked upon his "third career," working as national merchandise manager for Diversified Products, one of the world's biggest and most respected manufactures of exercise equipment. In the words of Cal James, retired president and former C.E.O., "Bill Curry was a great inspiration and motivator at DP for 13 years. His efforts helped us become a major manufacturer of fitness equipment. He is a great friend and was an inspiration to my son, who he personally trained in physical fitness."[10]

Today, at 75, Bill is still the tireless physical educator and motivator, coaching 24 youths, aged 12-17, in his gym His wife, whom he met on a blind date in 1940, Mary Eleanor Barnes Curry, is 70 but, like Bill, still works out in their gym "She always told me to go in the direction I wanted," says Bill, "and she would go with me."[11]

Son, Bill, Jr., has had a legendary career in football. In high school, he lettered in football, baseball, and basketball, and was All-State in football. An All-American and All-S.E.C. center and linebacker at Georgia Tech, Bill played pro football for ten years, was All-Pro twice, and played in three Super Bowls (one with the Packers and two with the Baltimore Colts); he played with the Packers, the Colts, the Oilers, and the Rams. After his pro career, he was head football coach at Georgia Tech and, then, at the University of Alabama; he is now head football coach at the University of Kentucky. Needless to say, he works out with the weights three times a week and also gets-in his aerobics—the regimen still followed by his father. Daughter, Linda, 46, leads a group of men and women in weight training, aerobics, cross training, and distance running. She is a 10K racer and half-marathoner, and is involved in both weight training and bodybuilding. Daughter, Deborah, 38, trains three or four times a week, doing weight training and aerobics; she also runs 10K races. Among Eleanor and Bill's grandchildren—Kristin, 25 lifts, cycles,

and runs. Billy, 22, is a senior football player at the University of Virginia, where he also lifts and runs. A "walk-on" at UVA, Billy won a scholarship, earned three letters, and played in two bowl games. Nikki, 21, runs. Adam, 19, runs cross country and 10K races, plays basketball, does skateboarding, and some weight training. Emma, 8, is involved, already, in swimming, ballet, cycling, and skating.[12]

In 1983, Bill was among seven national recipients of the Honorary Presidential Sports Fitness Award at the country's first President's Council on Physical Fitness Sports Festival. He was selected for this honor "because he exemplifies what the President's Council stands for," according to the program's Executive Director, Michael Goldberg. He was deservedly honored, in short, for his "lifetime contributions to sports and fitness." He has preached, for years, the "Gospel of physical fitness and encouraged others to get involved with exercise and sports activities. His influence and dedication to the philosophy of health and wellness have earned him tremendous respect and admiration within the fitness community," Goldberg continues, "[and] we felt he deserved recognition for his efforts."

Bill's training regimen includes 20 minutes, or more, or aerobic exercise three times a week, along with a weight training program that exercises all the muscle groups three times a week. He avoids red meat, but "eats plenty of chicken, fish, turkey, grains, skim milk, fruits, cereals, and raw veggies." He takes vitamins and drinks a high-protein shake five times a week.[13]

When asked if he still follows the current weightlifting scene, he admitted to being very disappointed in American weightlifting, attributing its decline (among other reasons) to the "promotion of bodybuilding, at the expense of any mention of Olympic lifting," as well as to the fact that so few people are interested in becoming lifters and that there are so few meets. "It's terrible that the U.S.A. has *no* world class lifters."[14]

One of the respected elder statesmen of our Game, Bill feels that, "considering [his] poor genetics and background, [he has] done pretty well." He attributes his "self-confidence, discipline, and self-esteem" to his participation in the Game: "I believe that I would never have 'come out of my shell and been able to take my place in the work-a-day-world if it had not been for weightlifting."15

His wish is to be remembered as a "caring, dedicated Christian father, husband, and friend." To this "grand old man" of our grand old sport, the granting of this wish seems inevitable, a shoo-in, but no more so than the great respect and sense of fondness that he has generated in the hearts of all those who, like him, have labored long and hard to make this Game of ours all that it can, and should, be; an endeavor in which nobody has worked more mightily, in all the senses of that word, than Bill Curry.

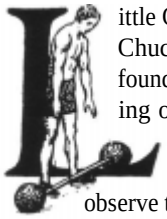
At his home in Opeilka, Alabama, Bill has outfitted a complete weightroom where he, his wife Eleanor, and dozens of local teenagers train regularly. At 75 he still manages to get in three sessions with the iron every week. *Photo: Todd-McLean Collection*

Notes:

[1]Bob Hoffman and Bill Curry, "Bill Curry. The Man on the Cover," ***Strength & Health*** (March 1941): 45, 52.
[2]Bill Curry to Al Thomas, 20 January 1993. Author's Collection.
[3]Hoffman and Curry, "Man on the Cover," 52.
[4]Ibid., 52, 64.
[5]Ibid., 64.
[6]Ibid.
[7]Ibid. and Curry to Thomas, 20 January 1993.
[8]Charles Evans and Edna Skipworth, "A Lifetime of Fitness," ***McClellan News,*** April 17, 1992, 6-7.
[9]Terry Todd "Bill Curry, Pioneer Army Ironman," ***Muscle & Fitness*** (June 1991): 125.
[10]Evans and Skipworth, "Lifetime of Fitness," 7.
[11]Ibid.
[12]Curry to Thomas, 20 January 1993.
[13]Ibid.
[14]Ibid.
[15]Ibid.

The Roark Report

Chuck Sipes



Little Chuck was watching Big Chuck. About 1948, when Chuck Coker, who would later, in 1961, be in on the founding of Universal Equipment company, was working out hard and regularly in his Modesto, California garage gym, he often noticed a young man who would pause at the end of Coker's driveway to observe the exercises. So, at the age of 16, Chuck Sipes was invited into the gym to learn the iron.

William Sipes, Chuck's father, recalls that Chuck was underweight in high school and wanted to add some size so he could play football. Later, of course, Chuck would run over other bodybuilders on world class competition playing fields.

Charles Harry Sipes was born August 22, 1932 to William and Evelyn Sipes in Sterling, Illinois. Bill and Evelyn were married July 2, 1927, and their first son, Bill, Jr., had come along two years before Chuck arrived.

Little Chuck became big Chuck in more ways than the obvious bodybuilding way. His marriage to Mary on September 1, 1952, would yield three daughters: Daphne, born July 19, 1954, Kathy, December 22, 1955, and Patricia "Trish" in 1962.

Daphne recalls an incident when as children she and Kathy were storming through the house playing and they crashed into the shelf holding their father's bodybuilding trophies. The storm calmed instantly as they pondered the response Dad would have when he arrived home. They cleaned up the broken and scratched trophies as well as young girls could, and waited. Chuck arrived, was told of the mishap, and called his daughters to him. Hugging them he said, "No problem, they're just trophies. We can get them repaired." A temperament such as this, and years of the same loving attitude, now causes Daphne to feel, "He gave me, his daughters, unconditional love. He loved us no matter what. He was very tolerant."

But when the boys came courting later, and got a glimpse of the man-monster, as Daphne called Dad, the boys didn't like to hang around the house too long-perhaps thinking that Chuck's muscularity was coupled with acute mental awareness of their intentions. Nonetheless, once the boys got to know Chuck, they relaxed, though perhaps not fully, wondering how to treat the daughter of a man who easily ripped phone books into halves and bent iron rods. Perhaps the young men thought that this father's actions were indeed speaking louder than words...

Norm Komich is among those who called Chuck Sipes a very close friend. Norm remembers first meeting Chuck, whose 19 inch arms were relaxed, as he sincerely asked Norm to be specific in detailing how he had build his own arms (to about 15 inches). This other-person-oriented interest would be with Chuck throughout his life.

After Norm returned from Vietnam, he drove to visit Chuck that same night and knocked on his door at 3 A.M. Chuck, who was not expecting Norm, welcomed him as though it were 11 AM. and he was expected.

Chuck cared enough about other people's problems to spend 20 years with the California Youth Authority (C.Y.A.), retiring in 1988. His main function was to take troubled inner-city youths into the mountains of California for about four weeks at a time. Bill Sipes remembers his son's technique. Chuck would walk the youngsters around in circles for about a week to get them feeling lost and to lessen thoughts of escape. By the beginning of the second week, the young men would start to let their feelings out-stories detailing sad conditions which had contributed to the boys' current situations. This therapy was successful. The superintendent of Folsom Prison once noted that 96% of the young men whom Chuck treated in the wilderness never returned to jail. Ninety-six percent.

Other mountain hikes were for fun and exercise. Norm recalls trips into the mountains and workouts involving cables, which would be tied around trees and then stretched in various exercises. Their conversations around campfires on such outings were the underpinnings of a lifelong friendship, and now, when Norm speaks of Chuck, it is with warmth, love, respect, and bewilderment as to what changed Chuck's outlook later in life.

After a month in the woods, Chuck's bodyweight often decreased by 15 to 20 pounds, and Norm remembers the amazing transformation Chuck could undergo in regaining the lost weight and muscle. He simply ate more and lifted. No drugs, according to Norm,

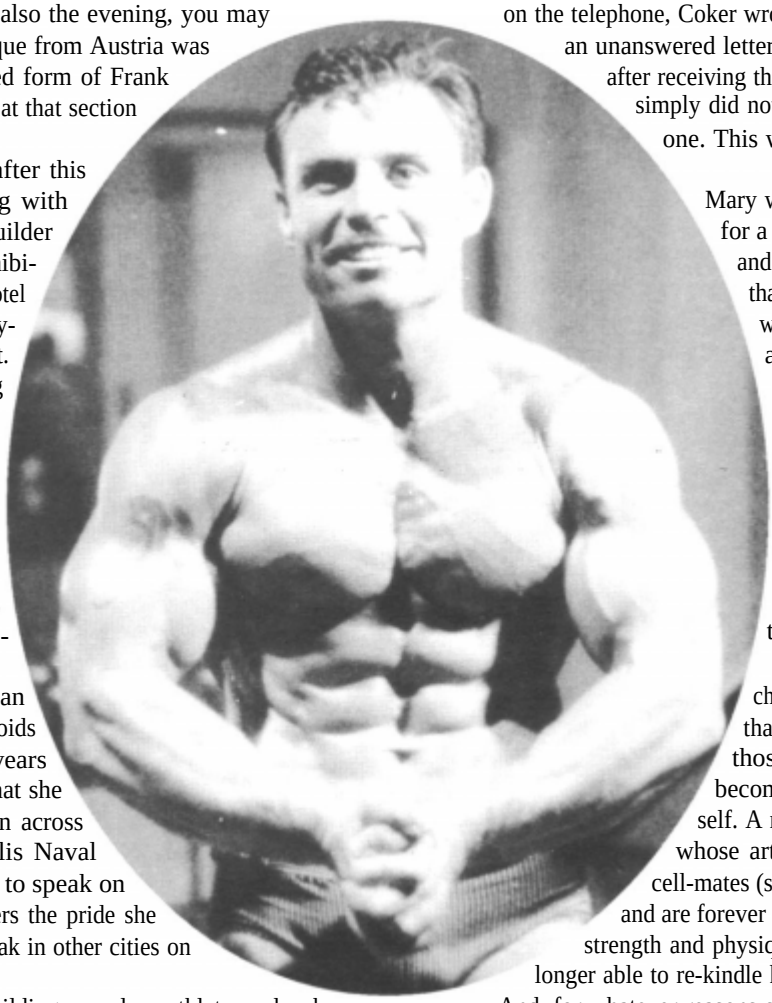
Chuck began his competitive bodybuilding career unwillingly. Chuck Coker recalls that when Sipes was a lifting competitor in his junior college days in Modesto, there was one occasion when a physique contest was held in connection with the lifting. Chuck's buddies on the team filled out an entry form to the physique contest, then informed Chuck that he had to get up on stage and pose. He said no at first, but then did sort of a stroll across the stage and hit a few poses. Soon, he gave up competitive lifting to specialize on his physique. In his prime, his forearms may have been the best in the world.

In December, 1932, ***Strength & Health*** magazine began, but Chuck would never appear on its cover. In 1940, when Chuck was eight, Joe Weider began his publishing career, and later Chuck would appear on several Weider covers.

By 1958, Chuck was into his early competitions, placing third at the western sectional of the Junior Mr. America contest in Portland, Oregon. Ray Routledge won and Earl Clark was second. The placings for the most muscular award were in the same order. The following year Chuck won the IFBB Mr. America title. By 1961, he was the IFBB Mr. Universe, and he competed in the second and

third Mr. Olympia contests in 1966 and 1967. He was, by then, writing for Joe Weider, and had started his AMERICAN BODYBUILDER'S CLUB, which cost a dollar to join.

I was in the audience on September 25, 1968, in Miami Beach, Florida, when Chuck won the 1968 Mr. World contest. As odd as it sounds now, the audience was welcomed onto the stage following the contest. This was also the evening, you may recall, that a rough-cut physique from Austria was competing against the finished form of Frank Zane. Chuck who was a judge at that section of the show, voted for Zane.



A couple of years after this contest, Chuck was rooming with another world famous bodybuilder overseas during a posing exhibition. Chuck walked into their hotel room and found the other bodybuilder with a needle in his butt. Chuck asked what was going on and was told, "Oh, you have to do this to compete these days." No, Chuck did not have to, and the following year he wrote an article in ***Muscle Training Illustrated*** entitled, "HELP! DRUGS ARE DESTROYING MUSCLEMEN."

He retired rather than take the large amounts of steroids that were being used. Two years later, 1972, Daphne recalls that she accompanied her father on an across the country trip to Annapolis Naval Academy where Chuck was to speak on physical fitness. She remembers the pride she felt upon seeing her father speak in other cities on the way to the academy.

Chuck began bodybuilding as a clean athlete, and as he became aware that steroids were becoming really widespread, he lost some interest toward it. His job with the C.Y.A., in the final years, was negatively influenced by some bureaucratic snafus which thwarted some of the rewarding trips he had previously made into the mountains. One suspects his interests in this part of his life lessened also.

As the years passed, those close to Chuck began to notice changes in him which were not positive. Even his painting, which he had been doing for years and in which he captured the beauty of his beloved mountains, was not enough to sustain him. Chuck was growing despondent against the best efforts of his true friends and his family. Chuck Coker, who is still involved in the physical fitness field, tried to reach Chuck by phone to offer him a job talking to young people at high schools about physical culture. Unable to get through on the telephone, Coker wrote what would turn out to be an unanswered letter offering the job. But Sipes, after receiving the letter, told his father that he simply did not want to be a burden to anyone. This was 1992.

Also that year, Chuck and Mary would travel to Massachusetts for a six month visit with Daphne and her husband. Also living in that state is Norm Komich, with whom Chuck attended the tenth annual meeting of the Oldetime Barbell and Strongmen Association in New York City.

In November, Chuck and Mary returned home to Weed, California. It was about this time that Chuck saw his parents for the final time.

What causes a man, who cheers up everyone, to change so that he cannot be cheered up by those he loves? Big Chuck was becoming little Chuck inside himself. A man whose family loved him, whose artwork was respected, whose cell-mates (so to speak) became sell-mates and are forever in his debt, whose stupendous strength and physique accomplishments were no longer able to re-kindle his former bright attitudes.

And, for whatever reasons such an evolution takes place, it took place, and Chuck decided to say farewell on February 24 of this year. And no one was watching.

Chuck is buried in his beloved buckskins in Sunset View Cemetery in Jackson, California, about 50 miles from the gym he used to run in Modesto. Norm spoke the eulogy, the mountains were near, and Chuck became part of the 96% who would not return to whatever demons imprisoned them. **—Joe Roark**

Dear *IGH*,

On March 17, 1993 I left bleak ice-and snow-paralyzed New York City which was reeling from the most punishing blizzard in decades. I flew Virgin Atlantic, destination: Heathrow in England. Objective: to attend the second Oscar Heidenstam Memorial Trust dinner reunion on March 20, 1993. The airline and the flight were superlative. We arrived slightly ahead of schedule. I could scarcely contain a cry of joy upon our landing in England to find beautiful sunshine, pretty spring flowers, greenery everywhere and mild temperatures. In comparison to what I had left, it seemed like a paradise. I headed for the new Marriott Hotel in Slough at Heathrow to get much needed slumber time. March 18 found me much refreshed. At dinner I was elated to find Angela and John Grimek as well as Reg Park, his wife Marrianne, his mother and his son Jon Jon. Great company and great food. This was the day after St. Patrick's Day and the hotel happened to have a group of guests from Northern Ireland. Although after dinner I had planned to once again enter into the land of nod I just couldn't resist the beautiful grand piano in the hotel lobby. What with my playing and a chorus of Irish and English patrons turned singers for a night, the music lasted until four in the morning and a most merry time was had by ah. For sheer delight this was hard to beat. Spectacular night. Music is powerful. Of course, the countdown was on until the arrival of the eagerly awaited March 20th. A little over 24 hours to go.

And finally Saturday morning arrived. I went to the Maximum Gym in the Langley-Slough area and had a great two hour full body workout. Reg Park went there the day before. Upon my return from the gym I found Grimek, Dave Webster, Dave Gentle and Al Murray, among others; gathered in the lobby perusing photographs of the great and the not-so-great who were part of a by-gone, pre-steroid era.

Finally, the big night arrived and the excitement was palpable in the largest meeting room of the Marriott Hotel. At 7:00 pm we were all there happily greeting each other, conversing and imbibing the wide assortment of adult beverages being served by very personable hotel staff people. There was a much larger gathering of friends and soon to be friends than the marvelous reunion of the year before. Dave Webster was absolutely outstanding in his kilts and Dr. Tom Temperly looked terrific. So did Norman Hibbert. Reg Ireland was looking great. Photographers were taking pictures of everybody and I had one taken of me with Darth Vader himself, David Prowse. In addition to all the oldtimers there were several young timers present such as the current NABBA Mr. Universe, Peter Reid. He told me that he was proud to be there in the presence of immortals like John Grimek and Reg Park. I was seated next to Dave and Rosemary Gentle. Dave is a prolific iron game writer and Rosemary's personality is delightful. Dave Gentle and I found that we have a common interest in ju-jitsu when I mentioned to him that I am a student of Gracie from Brazil.

After a fine dinner the awards ceremony began with Vice Chairman Cohn Norris, who had said our pre-dinner prayer, introducing Secretary and Treasurer Malcolm Whyatt, who explained that the Oscar Heidenstam Trust endeavors to help deserving people who have overcome personal obstacles to succeed and to inspire others. Two such honorees were present: wheelchair-bound Philip Mason, who had been an outstanding gymnast prior to a tragic accident; and Audrey Henderson Marshall, who had been an excellent ballet dancer prior to her own physical misfortunes. These two special people continue to lead productive lives and to help other human beings.

The next honoree was Bill Norris, who has lead a very full life in the world of physical culture for over 60 years. As an example, in 1984, as a light heavyweight in the 60 to 70 year old class, he accomplished a world record squat with 347 pounds! The wry English humor has to be heard to be fully appreciated as Colin Norris explained to the audience that the lift was disallowed because Bill Norris refused to submit to a steroid test. Everybody laughed loudly at that one.

The English and the Irish both have wonderful senses of humor which were much in evidence.

We then heard from NABBA Chairman Ivan Dunbar from Northern Ireland who was absolutely delightful in relating his memories of Reg Park doing a seated 300 pound behind the neck press some 40 years ago before a large crown of fans in a theater in Ireland.

The mood changed from the humorous to the dramatic as the microphone was passed to Jon Jon Park I think that I was not alone in getting teary-eyed as Jon Jon, in a strong voice which trembled with emotion from time to time, delivered a tremendously moving relation of how, in spite of his being a young man, he is a fan of what he considers to be the "golden era" of bodybuilding, which he said was the "late 1940's, 1950's, and early 1960's." He said that, in his opinion, the late 1970's to date has been an era of illusion dominated by "drug monsters." He referred to John Grimek, who was seated next to him, as being his father's inspiration. The audience enthusiastically called for Grimek to stand up which, with his usual humility, the great one did to a standing ovation. Thrilling! The emotion, the affection, the sense of camaraderie, the drama was incredible. And Jon Jon Park was engendering it as he continued to relate how he had met, two weeks before, in California, another of his father's contemporary inspirations: the still imposing Steve Reeves. He described a meeting between Reg Park and Steve Reeves after their not having seen each other for 37 years. Jon Jon said that he had now met everybody that mattered who had been a part of his father's career. I was watching Reg and his emotion was quite evident as his son related how Reg had been the major influence in his life and, with his voice trembling, said "my father is my best friend." For me Jon Jon really was the person who set the feeling for the evening. He set the mood for the main event as he asked everyone to raise their glasses in a toast to four things: "(1) to the memory of Oscar Heidenstam, (2) to the friendship of the world, (3) to the true golden era and (4) to the greatest man I know, my father, Reg Park." Overwhelming, fabulous!

Suddenly the majestic Reg Park posing music filled the room. Reg was quickly on his feet and went through a few poses, in his suit, and the audience loved it.

It was Trust President Dr. Ian MacQueen's role to introduce Reg Park to the audience. In doing so he related a conversation he had with Reg at the Mr. Britain contest some forty odd years before

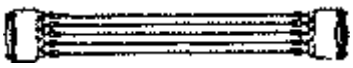
when he asked Reg if he trained with light weights and high repetitions for definition and heavy weights and low reps for bulk and mass. Reg said "no, I do high repetitions with very heavy weights".

And now it was Reg's turn to speak. Reg Park is a physically imposing and quite articulate man. He was eloquent as he greeted everyone, and before making any reference to his own honors that night he acknowledged the earlier honorees and how what they accomplished puts everything into perspective. Reg paid homage to those who inspired him when he was a youth. He gestured towards JCG and said "Grimek, you don't have to even say John. It's Grimek, that says it all." The audience voiced their approval. Reg said, "I feel very sorry for the present generation of bodybuilders because the athleticism is secondary, nutrition is secondary and chemistry is everything. Sadly, they're not only destroying themselves but they're destroying the sport that many of the people in this room helped to create. I know that when I started in my home town of Leeds I was regarded as a freak and today I seem to be in step with the rest of the world. People throughout the world now work out. And the people who made the sport what it is are in this room, many of them." Reg then paid respect to the five women in his life-his grandmother; his mother, who was present; his wife, friend and partner; his daughter; and his granddaughter, "who steals my heart every time I look at her." Reg acknowledged the things his son Jon Jon had said. "You can imagine how I felt being the recipient of what he had said. It's the greatest! Thank you, good night and God bless you all."

First class. Reg Park is my choice as having been the best movie Hercules of all. And if I could have had my way I would have cast him as my own favorite movie hero, Edgar Rice Burroughs' Lord Greystoke, Tarzan of the Apes. Tarzan was in reality an English nobleman. He was a physically imposing and impressive figure. He was intelligent and articulate. That's Reg Park.

Somebody in the hotel, who was not part of our group, when I told him that I was from New York and why I was there said to me, "isn't that a long way to travel just for a dinner?" I laughed, but the reality is that it was far more than a dinner. It was a priceless evening. I made a lot of new friends during the week that I was in Britain. I saw a lot of different places. And I realize how fortunate I am to have participated in so many activities with the greats of those activities. I was not a champion, but everyone can't be champion. I'm happy to have been there throughout the years to interact with the great champions. That too is priceless.

Dr. Kenneth Rosa
Bronx, New York



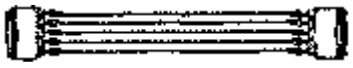
Dear *IGH,*

Jan, your article on "The Classical Ideal . . .1774-1830" was terrific. I hope you can, if you haven't already done so, bring this kind of work into the feminist literature. The piece was an excellent study of another progressive alternative that was available for dramatically changing women's lives but got nowhere in this country because of the dominant sexist American culture. Comparisons between different conceptions of women's physicality here and in Europe, as you note in your article, have in ways been substantial. For example, my wife Maria is from Italy (and a powerlifter) and has often remarked on the cultural differences in the meaning of "feminine." In Italy, especially in the town where she was born, a strong, hard working woman was not considered unwomanly. In the United States, however, despite countless historical examples that long, long ago should have led to a broadening of the range of attributes "proper" for a woman, the margins have been narrow and changes have been too slow in coming. A small footnote. It's true that many of the British writers were so enthralled by the Elgin Marbles that they disregarded how the sculpture got from Greece to England, and what the plundering meant for Greece, but not all the poets countenanced the pillage. For example, Lord Byron wrote a long poem, "The Curse of Minerva," that is a venomous damnation of Lord Elgin for essentially robbing the Parthenon. And another British writer of the time, H. W. Williams, wrote:

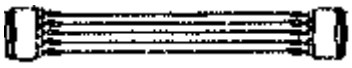
> That the Elgin marbles will contribute to the improvement of art in England, cannot be doubted. They must certainly open the eyes of the British artists, and prove that the true and only road to simplicity and beauty is the study of nature. But, had we a right to diminish the interest of Athens for selfish motives, and prevent successive generations of their nations from seeing those admirable sculptures? The Temple of Minerva was spared as a beacon to the world, to direct it to the knowledge of purity of taste. What can we say to the disappointed traveler, who is now deprived of the rich gratification which would have compensated his travel and his toil? It will be little consolation to him to say, he may find the sculpture of the Parthenon in England.

Moral: In every age, there are always people, like J. A. Beaujeu, who have their heads screwed on straight.

Dr. Gerald S. Coles
Piscataway, New Jersey



Recent calls from the West Coast bring the sad news that Jack Delinger, the 1949 Mr. America, died of a heart attack at the age of 66 in front of his home in Oakland. Friends report that Delinger had his share of problems with alcohol and that he felt as if he had not been given proper credit for his accomplishments in the game. A short, massively structured man, Delinger was ahead of his time with regard to the amount of muscle he packed onto his heavy frame.



A handsome new magazine is now being published, called ***Milo.*** The first issue had articles on Heinrich "Milo" Steinbom and Paul Anderson, along with information about training. Address all inquiries to ***Milo,*** P.O. Box 1228, Nevada City, CA 95959. And don't forget ***The Iron Master,*** published by Osmo Kiiha, (4456 West 5855 South, Kearns, Utah 84118). The last issue was a treasurehouse of information about our greatest weightlifter, John Henry Davis.