IRON GAME HISTORY

VOLUME 4 NUMBER 3 April 1996

Relocation Blues

Last fall, shortly after we mailed the last issue of ***IGH,*** we began a process which is still far from complete—the physical moving of our collection of books, magazines, photos, courses, artifacts, films, audiotapes, posters, videotapes, clippings, and other related materials to another location on the campus of the University of Texas at Austin. Before, we were in Gregory Gym; now, we and the collection are housed in Anna Hiss Gym. [please note our new mailing address on the back page. The phone and fax remain the same.] Gregory Gym was built in 1929, with substantial additions from the 1960s, but it was in bad need of the renovation which prompted our relocation.

Our new quarters are less spacious than they were in Gregory, and we are very cramped. On the positive side, our materials are primarily located in one room now, and so the place has more of the feel of a library about it. In any case, we are grateful to have such a large room (over 3000 square feet) in which to store and use the collection and we am beginning to be able to find things again. Those who have never visited the collection no doubt have a hard time imagining how extensive it is and how much space it requires. To provide some context, imagine a 3200 square foot room (40' x 80') with eleven foot ceilings. Next, imagine approximately 70 large, brimful bookshelves arranged in tightly spaced rows or "stacks." Finally, imagine boxes of unpacked material piled on top of almost ever) shelf up to the ceiling. (We are also fortunate to have another storage space of approximately 1000 square feet down the hall and it is packed floor to ceiling with less frequently used items.)

Before all this material could be moved to Anna Hiss Gym, of course, the bookcases on which it has rested for the past 15 years or so had to be emptied and moved to their new location. Because we have done our best through the years to accumulate bookcases and display cases which are both large and old (and thus more in keep ing with the collection), many of them had to be completely taken apart and reassembled here in Anna Hiss. In addition, each of the many tens of thousands of books and magazines had to be individually packed, moved to Anna Hiss, unpacked, and reshelved.

This sad tale isn't intended to make anyone feel scary for us, because we love the collection and we would have moved it to its new home even if we had had to do it a box at a time. The aim here is merely to provide some context for our apology about the lateness of this issue. Normally, our intention is to publish a new issue every two or three months, depending on the quality of the material we have on hand, but this time the task of moving the collection—along with our usual responsibiities as faculty members here at the university—has made us very late. Because of the delay, we have lengthened the issue by four pages. The addtional four pages allowed us to include, in full, two of the longest, most interesting (although completely different) articles we have ever published. We hope you accept our apology, enjoy this issue, and continue to support ***IGH.***

On another matter, we have been asked by quite a few readers to provide news of the young man we have been coaching—6'3", 415 pound Mark Henry. It would probably be safe to say that over the past nine or ten months, Mark has received more attention from the media—both print and electronic—than any competitive lifter since Paul Anderson back in the 1950s. The pressure from the media over the last months has been unprecedented for any iron gamer other than such bodybuilding legends as Steve Reeves and Arnold.

It began last spring with a long, flattering piece on the front page of the ***New York Times*** following Mark's gold medal in the Pan American Games in Argentina. Since that time he either has appeared or will appear on such television shows as ***Late Night With Conan O'Brien, The George Michael Sports Machine, The CBS Summer Sports Show,*** Prime Sports' coverage of the 1996 National Weightlifting Championships, ***The Tonight Show with Jay Leno, ESPN's Profiles, Primetime Live,*** and ***The Today Show.*** In the medium of print, he was profiled in a long story recently in ***USA Today,*** featured on the cover of ***Vanity Fair*** in a photo by the celebrity photographer Annie Liebowitz photographed by ***Life*** for their photo essay on bodies in the Olympics, given a two page spread in ***U.S. News and World Report,*** featured twice in **Outside** magazine, covered at length in Newsweek, written about again in ***Sports Illustrated,*** and profiled at length in most of the top bodybuilding magazines.

Last week, he laughed and said he'd been interviewed so many times that he was beginning to feel like he was running for something. Indeed, media pressure of this sort is enervating, but Mark feels he owes it to the game to make himself available. In almost every article and television show, he manages to get across his message that drugs are not necessary for world class strength, and he told an interviewer the other day that he felt much more kinship with the men who did their top lifting before 1960. He said that he considered his top competitors in weightlifting today to be cheaters, pure and simple, and that he knew he was in a fight that wasn't fair. He went on to say that even if he doesn't win the gold (or any other) medal in Atlanta, he still believes that his way—the old way—is the best way.

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FROM PHILADELPHIA TO YORK:
GEORGE JOWETT, MARK BERRY, BOB HOFFMAN, AND THE REBIRTH OF AMERICAN WEIGHTLIFTING, 1927-1936*

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Editor's Note: This article is the final installment of a trilogy on the origins of American weightlifting written by Dr. John Fair, chairman of the history department at AUM. The first two installments appeared in *IGH* vol. 2 no. 6 (May 1993) and *IGH* vol. 3 no. 5 (December 1994). If you missed those issues and would like copies, back order information is available on page 28.

We have always had a soft spot in our heart for Philly, because once it was the Mecca of barbell bugs. We came here timidly and shook hands reverently with the Great Man, and later, when Calvert passed out of the picture, we hobnobbed with his successors, George Jowett and Mark Berry. We met our long-time pal Sig Klein in this very town, in the old, dusty Milo building on narrow Palethorp street.

Came the 1930s and like the Capital of the United States was once moved to York during Revolutionary Days, young and vigorous Bob Hoffman picked up the torch that others had laid down, and the Capital of the Weight-Lifting World moved 90 miles westward to Muscletown. Then the real development of American Lifting began.[1]

–Harry Paschall

In the early decades of the twentieth century, weightlifting became an organized sport in the United States under the guidance of Alan Calvert, Ottley Coulter, George Jowett, and David Willoughby. But it was Jowett who did most to foster its growth during the 1920s through his development of the American Continental Weight Lifting Association (ACWLA) and his editing of ***Strength*** magazine from 1924 to 1927. Not only did the latter constitute a major source of inspiration for fledgling lifters, but its effect was enhanced by its association with Milo Barbell Company, the principal supplier of lifting apparatus since 1902. With the presence of Herrmann's Gym and Jowett's conduct of exhibition meets at Milo on a regular basis, Philadelphia became the center of iron game activity.[2] That Jowett was unable to sustain his lofty standing may be attributed to his inability to control the commercial and political infrastructure of weightlifting. Hence the capricious owner of Milo, Daniel Redmond, was easily able to replace him as editor of ***Strength*** in 1927 with the more pliable Mark Berry.[3] American weightlifting languished for several years as Berry's Association of Bar Bell Men (ABBM) proved to be merely an imitation of the ACWLA and the parent company struggled to survive the onset of the Depression. But Berry, through the offices of Dietrich Wortmann, did forge an important alliance with the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU), a step that was as important to the future of American lifting as the promotional acumen of Jowett. What brought these disparate strands together in the early 1930s was Bob Hoffman whose financial resources and dynamic personality brought about a supplanting of Redmond's malevolent influence and a rebirth of American weightlifting.

The story of these unique developments has never been recounted in full. The first historical glimpse of events in this critical era was provided by Hoffman in his "Story of the World Famous York Barbell Club" in successive issues of ***Strength & Health*** just after World War II. Unfortunately the account terminates in 1932, York's take-off year, and, not surprisingly, focuses unduly on the achievements of Bob and his gang, relegating other worthies of the sport to bystander roles. Jowett, for instance, invited by Hoffman to a contest in the mid-1920s to choose York's strongest man, "just sat there aiding us perhaps by his presence, but doing nothing to run the meet."[4] Likewise David Willoughby's serialized "History of American Weight-Lifting," which appeared in ***Your Physique*** a few years later, strongly reflects the author's personal views and the activities of the Los Angeles Athletic Club. With regard to the circumstances behind the submission of the ACWLA and ABBM to the AAU, he is only able to admit "I do not know."[5] David Webster's ***Iron Game,*** though providing a much broader and more balanced perspec-

tive, comes to no closer quarters on substantive issues of reorganization. As for Hoffman, he points out that "Bob has never been noted for his modesty and likes to tell of his most interesting life. So much has been written about him that further comment here would be superfluous."[6] Yet Hoffman's triumphs in the early 1930s cannot be so easily dismissed, and lest his role be overstated by relying too much on York publications, it is possible to gain a more accurate picture of how the center of gravity in weightlifting shifted from Philadelphia to York by consulting hitherto untapped sources in ***Strength*** and the Todd-McLean Collection at the University of Texas.

Upon being dismissed from Milo in 1927, Jowett's first inclination was to strike back. "Redmond pulled off a dirty trick on me," he told Coulter, "but I am not through with him yet. If it is possible I will make him regret it." To this end, Jowett intended to file a $17,000 suit for damages, reinstate his claim to profits from the sale of his books by Milo, and reassert his right to advertise in ***Strength.*** He was also scheming to "buy Redmonds mailing list through another firm," he explained to Coulter. "He will go mad if he knows it is for me. By the way he is laughing he has got me out of the business and that I cannot get a job in the game."[7] Jowett felt nothing but contempt for Redmond who had "better be careful for I am not in the mood to be trifled with by a physical inferiority as he" and for Berry who "looks like a starved shit."[8] Despite his bravado, Jowett needed a steady income to support his ailing wife Bessie and daughter Phyllis in Canada, and for awhile he even considered joining his pal Coulter on the police force in Uniontown, Pennsylvania. His severance from Milo not only cost him advertising and mail privileges but denied him an effective medium for self-promotion and propagation of his gospel of "scientific lifting." Eventually he worked his way back into the iron game by founding the Jowett Institute of Physical Culture and pursuing various other mail order schemes with International Correspondence Schools in Scranton. But survival was by no means easy. Jowett was forced to sell his home in Philadelphia and to sleep in his car during the summer months.[9] Then he avoided room rent by "sleeping in the shop of a friend," he related to Coulter in December, "but it is getting too cold for that, so I figured if I could get a good office room cheap it would do for both purposes. I hit a good one this week with heat & light for 20 oo a month less than I paid for a room. I brought all my stuff in today...Bit by bit I will get some necessary things, but we can't do biz with no place to operate or store things." With the Jowett Institute only beginning and the ICS having experienced its "worst year," with "terrible losses," the outlook was bleak. "It will be a lonely Xmas for me," he predicted. "That rat Berry I'll get & when I get him I get him good."[10]

Meanwhile Redmond and Berry were making every effort to erase all traces of Jowett's association with ***Strength*** and to supplant the ACWLA with the ABBM. How curious it must have seemed for readers to encounter Jowett's plea for $2.00 to join the ACWLA in the June 1927 issue followed by Berry's pitch for $2.75 for ABBM membership the next month! Surely the credibility of organized lifting must have suffered from the presence of two obviously rival associations with equally grandiose designs. The extent to which Jowett was cast aside was most evident in the publication of American weightlifting records in successive months. Whereas Jowett appears prominently in those listed for June, his name is noticeably absent from the July listing.[11] To ensure Jowett's complete exclusion from the organizational hierarchy of weightlifting, however, it was necessary to supplant his connections with the increasingly powerful AAU. At its Baltimore convention in 1926 Jowett had assumed chairmanship of an AAU weightlifting committee which included Roy Smith of New York City, Donald Mitchell of Easthampton, Massachusetts, Albert Manger of Baltimore, and Marion Betty of Los Angeles. Exactly how it would relate to the ACWLA was unclear, but it was incumbent on Jowett to coordinate the committee's activities with AAU chief Charles Dieges.[12] In the months following his takeover of ***Strength,*** Berry made every effort to inspire a new organizational framework. After informing readers of the August 1927 issue that "the response to our call for members has been nothing short of wonderful," Berry announced that the new ABBM would have a board of control consisting of Warren Lincoln Travis and Siegmund Klein of New York, Charles McMahon and himself of Philadelphia, and Arnold Schiemann of Baltimore.[13] He also set up a photographic posing competition, reported a major strength show that he refereed in New York City, listed the current British and European records, and announced plans for future shows in Philadelphia. Included in the latter was a national weightlifting competition to be conducted at various locations nationwide with the results being mailed to ***Strength.*** Robert Hoffman, still a relative unknown, won the heavyweight class in Philadelphia (by default) and thereby became national champion, With this flurry of activity under the ABBM rubric, affiliation with the AAU might not have seemed necessary to Berry, but to ensure that Jowett did not seize this organizational initiative he secured a statement from its secretary, published in the December 1927 issue of ***Strength,*** that the AAU was not allied with the ACWLA.[14]

Jowett was, in fact, planning an approach to the AAU, but concern over its links with the International Olympic Committee (IOC), involving changes in bodyweight classifications and number of competitive lifts, made him reluctant. Whereas both the ACWLA and ABBM were modeled on the rules of the British Amateur Weightlifting Association (BAWLA), it was French rules that had largely governed international competition since the Antwerp Olympics in 1920.[15] Whatever prestige might be accrued from such an affiliation, reasoned Coulter, it could also discourage membership in the ACWLA. "The more lifts, the more lifters will be interested as lifters are mainly interested in what the organization will do for them." With only the Olympic lifts being contested, he could see little benefit aside from improving "the status of a few, very few, bonafide amateurs that would compete in an A.A.U." This arrangement would "put a lot of capable lifters out of any worth while recognition. Perhaps this A.A.U. recognition is worth the sacrifice to get a chance to get back at Milo." Indeed Coulter felt a sense of proprietary interest in organized lifting in the United States, having originated (with Jowett) the first association, and if there was any money to be made through the AAU "we have did [sic] as much to earn the same as anyone ."[16] Notwithstanding these reservations, Jowett seemed determined to secure AAU affiliation which he was able to do for $10.00 in the Middle Atlantic Association in early 1928. He also intended to change the name of his organization from ACWLA to the American Amateur Weight Lifting Association (AAWLA), "thereby seizing the national title for the asso. & crimp any reactions from others for American always signifies top dog." By such means he hoped to "make the big plunge towards success."[17]

In succeeding months Jowett drafted new bylaws for the association, and Coulter became convinced that affiliation would be "the best means of combating Milo." This strategy would enable them to "control the amateur lifting and issue the only titles that will be recognized by the A.A.U." What concerned Coulter was the possibility that Milo might try to affiliate directly with the Federation Internationale Halterophile (FIH). But he doubted that "the European organization would recognize any organization from this country unless there was some prestige mixed in it like the sanction of the A.A.U." The best way of securing strong standing within the AAU, he thought, was to publish a physical culture magazine with an ancillary focus on track and field news.[18] Despite the absence of any activities since Jowett's dismissal from ***Strength*** and the lack of an alternative publicity medium, Coulter wanted to believe that the ACWLA could at least maintain parity with its rival. "I suppose that the A.C.W.L.A. has already attained as much official recognition as the barbell assoc. will ever attain but it is hard to tell as publicity is the big thing and they have the medium at present." He was pleased at least to learn that Redmond and Berry could not directly affiliate with the FIH. "I hope that we will be able to do so later and put a big thorn in their side."[19] Upon acceptance of the ACWLA by the AAU in early July, Jowett felt confident that they could disallow joint registration to ABBM members. Again Coulter demurred.

> *All you state about ruling them out of the Milo Assoc. is ail right if it does not limit our own membership too much. If it works it will be a terrible blow to them but we will have to be careful about this as most of the amateurs in this country do not care much for their chances in the Olympic Games as they realize that they do not rank high enough on those lifts. They are after all the publicity they can get and know that they have a better chance on lifts in which they are more proficient. They no doubt will think that Milo is in the best position to give them publicity because of Strength Mag. If they get the publicity they will not care much whether they get the sanction of the AA.U. or not but as time goes on and they realize that they are getting no real official wordwide recognition with the Milo Assoc. they will gradually see the value of joining with us. We need a medium for giving them equal pub licity with Strength.*

As Coulter recognized, the critical factor to their success would be the launching of a magazine. To this end they sampled reader opinion from old ACWLA mailing lists and newer ones obtained from Earle Liederman. They decided that "The Body Builder" would be the best name and that it should include articles under such headings as "Stalwarts of Strength," "With the Boys," "Rules and Records," "A.A.W.L.A.," "Hands and Wrists," "How Strong are You," and "Around Vulcan's Forge."[20] Their major problem was insufficient capital. In addition to start up costs, yearly estimates for production of a 34 page magazine were in the $25,000 range. Neither Jowett nor Coulter had access to this amount of cash. Attempts were made to market chest expanders, spring sets, an abdominal board, and even leotards, but to no avail. Jowett's proposition for a $10,000 loan from a bank president fell through, and his publication (through the Jowett Institute) of a series of instructional ***Man Power*** booklets failed to catch on. Despite AAU acceptance and innumerable strike-it-rich schemes, Jowett had to face the fact that it would be impossible to regain his former stature in the iron game without adequate financial resources.

Milo, on the other hand, though having the wherewithal to stake sole claim to AAU and international recognition, seemed to lack the motivation. In an early 1928 poll of its readers, ***Strength*** received near unanimous approval to change from British to continental regulations, but recent contacts with BAWLA made Berry disinclined to change the present structure.[21] His stance was reinforced by a decision not to send a contingent of American lifters to the Olympics in Amsterdam where the standard three lifts—-press, snatch, and clean &jerk—were first performed. Berry noted that "the Amateur Authorities of this country have to be convinced concerning the quality of the lifting material who would represent the Stars and Stripes against the best from all other comers of the Earth." A quick analysis of the highest totals of America's leading lifters led him to believe that light heavyweight Al Manger was "the only man among our amateurs who would have a look-in." It would be hard to justify the effort and expense of sending a team "with chances of placing but one man out of the fifteen or so who would compose the team." To compensate for this admission of weakness, the A.B.B.M. was offering an ersatz gold medal to any amateur lifter who equaled the *third* place winner in his class at the Olympics.[22] It is hardly surprising that there were no takers. In a more practical vein, ***Strength*** regularly promoted and reported on meets that were held in Philadelphia and elsewhere, thereby imparting a greater sense of camaraderie. Berry hoped that "by the time of the next Games our boys will be capable of giving battle to the world's best." But Berry never expected that his countrymen would be capable of beating the Europeans. The results of the 1924 Olympics in Paris had led some "students of strength" to believe that "the approximate limit in lifting had been reached," only to see it surpassed by the Austrians, French, and Germans in 1928. Berry portrayed European lifters as invincible, and even after an ABBM rules committee recommended affiliation "with the International Federation as soon as possible," he seemed reluctant to act.[23]

More resolute leadership was soon forthcoming from an unexpected quarter. Dietrich Wortmann, a wrestler at the 1904 Olympics and leader of the German-American Athletic Club (GAAC) in New York City, had already gained an appreciation for a national amateur sports regulatory body. In 1927 Wortmann anticipated both Jowett and Berry by presenting to the AAU a set of rules conforming to international practice. Along with a sanctioning of the GAAC and its rules by the AAU, Wortmann was named chairman of the Metropolitan Weightlifting Committee and subsequently national chairman.[24] Berry grudgingly acknowledged the presence of this new power, noting in the February 1929 issue of ***Strength*** that "there are quite a number of good lifters in this club." Sig Klein, one of its newest members, suggested a team match in New York between the GAAC and ABBM amateurs. Berry regarded this challenge as a splendid idea, but "it is our belief that the G.A.A.C. men would

have to step some to take the measure of the A.B.B.M. boys," who would include the likes of Al Manger of Baltimore, Arnie Sundberg from Portland, Oregon, Artie Levan from Reading, Pennsylvania, and Robert Knodle and Dick Bachtell from Hagerstown, Maryland.[25] Such an encounter never materialized, but next month's issue included full publication of Wortmann's rules and an announcement that an AAU national championship in weightlifting would soon take place at the German-American club.[26] In succeeding months Berry tried to disparage Wortmann's efforts by contrasting the exorbitant ($2.00) entry fee with the nominal costs for ABBM membership, certificates, diplomas, etc. Furthermore it was his intention to seek ABBM affiliation with the AAU and the FIH. What helped convince him to do so was a special AAU meet staged by the German-Americans in March where he met the AAU president, Col. Charles Dieges. "It is a pleasure to meet this gentleman," observed Berry. "The Colonel, a powerfully built man of sixty-three years, has a manner of shaking hands by which he reaches forward and pulls the other man towards him. You should have seen the weight lifters fly off their balance as they gripped with him."[27] Although it seemed somewhat contradictory to his own aspirations for control over a national regulatory body, Berry urged ABBM members to join the AAU also. Especially with Jowett and Wortmann having already made a commitment, he could not afford to ignore the possibility of tapping the AAU's growing prestige with the IOC and FIH.[28]

The first AAU national championship in weightlifting, held on May 3 and 4, 1929, was a spectacular success. ***Strength*** called it "the greatest carnival of weight lifting in the history of the game, in America." It was "a great boost for lifting in America, and we must take off our hats to Mr. Wortmann for all the trouble he has gone to in getting things properly started in the A.A.U." The most notable feature of this gathering, unlike previous national championships, is that it was staged at a single time and place, thereby imparting a greater sense of uniformity and excitement to the proceedings. Much was made of how welterweight Arnie Sundberg had traveled all the way from Oregon to take part. But the most distinctive characteristic of the meet itself was its domination by the big German-American clubs of the New York City area Although no official team scores were recorded if three, two, and one points are allotted to first, second, and third places respectively, the following would result:

Cooper AC, Brooklyn, New York	15
German-American A.C., New York, New York	11
Arcade A.C., Hagerstown, Maryland	6
Deutsche Eiche, Hoboken, New Jersey	4
Independent Entry, Baltimore, Maryland	3
Multonomah A.C., Portland, Oregon	2

Of the 23 competitors, 19 had German-sounding names—Rasch, Kettner, Meisenbach, Froelich, Rohrer, Gruebel, Faas, and Knaup being among the more obvious. Some of the lifters had only recently arrived from Germany.[29] A Teutonic cultural flavor was palpable to lifter and spectator alike. Robert Knodle, seven-time national champion from Maryland who won the 112 pound class, recalled that many of the competitors "could hardly speak English. All they would do was eat and drink. The bartender would be lifting the next day." Knodle "didn't know how they could lift, they ate and drank so much."[30] This occurrence serves as a reminder of the extent to which competitive weightlifting on both sides of the Atlantic is rooted in German culture.

Wortmann's rivals, however, were not prepared to concede sole control over lifting to the New York Germans. Jowett, who had attended one of their earlier meets, was not impressed. It was "rotten," he sardonically told Coulter, and he did "not wait to see the finish. Berry was there and when he saw me he beat it." Later Sig Klein allegedly asked Jowett if he would talk with Berry. "I told him if Berry wanted to keep his face and body whole to stay away from me or I would smash him right there. He did too." Jowett vowed too that Redmond "will get his yet."[31] Unable to secure a special place for himself in the AAU, Jowett seemed determined to play the role of a spoiler, but he possessed neither the personal following of Wortmann, the publicity medium of Berry, nor the financial resources of Redmond to "call the shots" in the iron game.

Berry, with less reason to be bitter, also displayed piques of jealousy over Wortmann's AAU connections. Though he recognized in the September 1929 issue of ***Strength*** the need to conform to FIH standards, he believed that in America "the game of weight lifting would be due for a terrible flop if any serious attempt was made to entirely rule out all lifts other than the five recognized by the International body." Therefore he sought to develop a closer relationship with BAWLA and "continue to promote interest in all recognized lifts." After printing a lengthy letter from BAWLA Secretary W. J. Lowry touting the virtues of the British tradition, Berry pointed out the impracticality of Wortmann's "continental" reforms. "That such rules are incomplete has since been adequately proven at recent lifting contests."[32] But Berry remained unsure of his ground. In announcing the upcoming ABBM championships, designed to challenge Wortmann's AAU meet as the premier national event, he decided to adhere to the new international standards for weight classes and number of contested lifts, while otherwise allowing recognition of both AAU and ABBM rules. He admitted that "some length of time will be required to properly iron out this question of rules. If. . . we find very few interested in the old style of lifting, we will adopt International rules completely."[33] Berry was unable to determine which path held the greatest prospect for future success in the iron game—the British trail blazed by Jowett for the ACWLA and ABBM *or* the new international order being created by Wortmann for the AAU.

A further unsettling factor for Berry was the uncertainty of his position in the Milo organization. Redmond, its proprietor and publisher, was a businessman who had no sentimental links to weightlifting. For him it existed chiefly as a means to the greater end of making money. But the ABBM, like the ACWLA, was never a profitable enterprise, and whether the specialized activities of strongmen ever stimulated sales of merchandise amongst the general public interested in physical culture is questionable. Redmond tolerated Berry's association *but* was unwilling to invest in it. Not only was there no lifting team in the Quaker City, but in 1928 the monthly strength shows that had been held for years at the Milo building on Palethorp Street were discontinued. In October 1929 they were resumed on Chestnut Street at the new studio of Lynwood "Bill" Lilly, a strength star who (having performed a world record shoulder

AT A MEET IN HAGERSTOWN, MARYLAND, IN 1932, BOB HOFFMAN (CENTER) AND THE MEMBERS OF THE YORK OIL BURNER ATHLETIC CLUB POSE WITH OTHER OFFICIALS AND COMPETITORS. STANDING NEXT TO BOB IN THE SUIT IS ROBERT SNYDER. AL MANGER IS STANDING AT THE FAR RIGHT. ALSO INCLUDED ARE BILL AND WALTER GOOD, ART LEVAN, BOB KNODLE, DICK BACHTELL, AND JOE MILLER. HOW MANY OTHERS CAN YOU IDENTIFY? –*TODD-MCLEAN COLLECTION*

bridge of 458 pounds) was now trying to become an entrepreneur of sport. Other new businesses that sponsored clubs and served as staging areas for lifting and bodybuilding shows were established by Charles Durner in Allentown and Arthur Gay in Rochester.[34] No such link between business and sport seemed possible at Milo, though it was ideally situated to patronize weightlifting. Despite Berry's enthusiasm, and the presence of Charles MacMahon and Robert Jones, Redmond begrudged every penny spent on the sport per se. ***Strength*** was an important source of information on lifting activities and an inspiration to physical culturists, but it was becoming less of amoral force in American weightlifting. That Philadelphia was no longer able to chart a course independent of the AAU was evident in the cancellation of the 1929 ABBM national championships. "We did not become properly affiliated with the A.A.U. until rather late," Berry admitted. Credibility was undermined by there being too few entrants registered and too few locations sanctioned by the AAU. "In some quarters, totals were made under A.A.U. sanction in other quarters fellows lifted who were not registered, some of the latter type are still to be heard from while the majority of A.A.U. members hold back to be certain of their steps."[35] This abject failure actually signified progress in the sport by ending the practice of holding national championships by mail. Most importantly, Berry was forced to abandon the pretensions of the ABBM and to respect the new regulatory authority of the AAU, thereby imparting a new course to American weightlifting.

To align himself with the Gotham Germans, Berry quickly came to terms with the AAU. In the spring 1930 issues of ***Strength*** he devoted considerable effort to publicizing the forthcoming National AAU Championships in New York City, assuring readers that it would be a "competition, the like of which has never been seen on the west shores of the broad Atlantic." Furthermore all ABBM shows and athletes must now be registered in the AAU. For good measure, he even published from Spalding's handbook, the rules defining amateurism. It was obvious from various endearing references to the activities of the German-American clubs that an understanding had been reached between Berry and Wortmann. The former and the ABBM would remain the focus of attention for iron game enthusiasts while the latter and his AAU associates would control the course of competition.[36] Berry estimated that "the greatest lifting ever witnessed in America was seen at the National A.A.U. Championships." With 25 new AAU marks being established, American lifters were "improving by leaps and bounds" and "have lately been approaching the European standard."[37] The extent to which the ABBM was now subsumed under the AAU was evident from the fact that all enquiries concerning AAU activities, including national championships, were directed to Berry. Still the combined talent and financial resources of the two leading organizations in American weightlifting were deemed insufficient to send a team that would be competitive to the 1930 world championships in Munich.[38]

Underlying at least some of this weakness was a general economic malaise associated with the onset of the Great Depression. "Business is terrible," Jowett reported to Coulter in May of 1930. "The whole bottom fell out of the advertising with March." Some issues of physical culture magazines featuring his ads "have never given a single order. I cancelled all my June and July ads." Even his correspondence courses with ICS were "taking an awful licking. Things were going fine but all report the same. It just seemed as though something stopped everything."[39] But Jowett seemed to be faring better than most mail order musclemen. In September he told Coulter that he had recently been to New York where he had

> *personal contact with all in our field. Titus is out completely. The Federal Trade Commission suspended him. The agency took it over to get their money out. They lost so heavy with Titus and Jimmy De Forest who is more than broke that they ruined their credit. Crusader is in bad water from magazine and wholesale depression . . . Brietbart is out I think for good. Atlas is out personally for good. Titus is trying to do something with Michael McFadden which he owns. Earle [Liederman] tried to do something with the apparatus end since his course flopped. He lost very heavy on both and has stopped his apparatus campaign. I was with him and he told me personally he was hard hit. You would be amazed to see the empty desks. From 96 employees he now only has ten.*

What interested Jowett most, however, was the condition of Milo, especially ***Strength,*** which had taken over ***Correct Eating Magazine*** earlier in the year. ***Strength*** was reputed to be in "the worst" state of all the physical culture magazines. "What in Gods name has happened to it I cannot fathom" exclaimed Jowett. "I do know they do not have the reading following they did. Earle said it looked to him that all the circulation they had was 500 . . . I think Redmond made a mistake when he took over Correct Eating. It was a failure with only 20,000 readers." An advertising agent had supposedly told Jowett that Redmond "felt the need of me and asked me if I would consider going back. I said not at any price." Indeed Redmond remained the "one guy I hope does get hit and hit out for keeps."[40]

Meanwhile Berry continued to sponsor monthly strength shows at various locations, including Hermann's Gym and the Grand Fraternity Building on Arch Street. That the Quaker City remained an important hub of iron game activity was indicated by a successful show in March 1931 which produced the biggest gate ever and the 1931 AAU national championships in May at the Penn Athletic Club which, in Berry's estimation, evinced the "finest lifting ever seen in America."[41] Again the German-Americans dominated the competition. Lifting as a heavyweight was Robert Hoffman, representing the York Oil Burner Athletic Club (YOBAC). His third place total for five lifts of 731.5 was less than the winning totals of the five preceding classes and elicited no comment in the official report of the lifting.[42] Yet it was Hoffman's activities as a promoter that excited constant attention in ***Strength*** over the next two years. The October 1931 issue reported a dual meet at York between lifters headed by Hoffman and a rival team assembled by Dick Bachtell from Hagerstown. Outstanding lifting by Art Levan and Joe Miller, recruited from nearby Reading and Salunga, provided the winning edge of 45 pounds for the York squad in a competition that lasted until 3 AM. Indicative of his growing enthusiasm for the sport was Hoffman's hope to participate in the 1932 Olympics in Los Angeles; and if poor pressing ability kept him off the team, he was willing to serve in the menial capacity of loader. In the meantime, he would be organixing meets between teams on opposing sides of the Mason-Dixon Line. Berry, who credited Hoffman with "doing everything possible to promote lifting" in southern Pennsylvania, noted that there were "just two things he talks about chiefly—one, the success of his business of manufacturing oil burners, the other weight lifting." On August 31 his men defeated Hagerstown by an even greater margin 3,165 to 3,110 pounds, despite the presence of two national champions on the latter team.[43] An encounter on September 27 yielded similar results, but what most impressed Berry was the luxurious facilities where the lifting took place in York.

> *If you as a real dyed-in-the-wool weight ljfting enthusiast have entertained day-dreams of an ideal club for iron-men, you have only to see the York O.B.A.C. club-house to realize that your dreams have come true. In truth, it is a veritable palace situated on the outskirts of a thriving city of some sixty odd thousand citizens.*
>
> *A private lifting gym wherein a few hundred spectators can be seated, spacious lounging, game, and dressing rooms, with buffet and dining accommodations. We might even go so far as to say it is beyond the dreams of avarice. If you ever get within a few hundred miles of York, by all means go around to see this— the worlds finest weight lifting club.*[44]

As Hoffman's aggregation continued to reel off victories, it claimed to have the best weightlifting team in the United States. But to deserve this honor the York Oil Burner AC. would need to beat the formidable German-American team from New York.

What enabled Hoffman to establish such a bold profile in the iron game so quickly was his success as a businessman. Originally from Pittsburgh, he came to York in 1920 at the urging of his older brother Chuck who had been stationed at nearby Fort Meade and had married a local girl. After pursuing various marketing schemes, Bob entered a partnership with Ed Kraber, the son of a local plumber. Kraber had inherited some money and had designed one of the country's first automatic oil burners, but he was "no salesman" recalls an early business associate.[45] The partners sold oil burners from the middle Atlantic coast to the hinterlands of Ohio, and their profits steadily increased during the 1920s. Hoffman estimates that he sold 227 oil burners in 1927 and continued that pace for the next four years. Soon there were branches of York Oil Burner in Philadelphia and Toronto also reporting spectacular gains.[46] By the early 1930s Hoffman according to his brother Jack, was making money at an unbelievable rate," perhaps as much as $60,000 a year.[47] In 1928 Bob and his wife Rosetta purchased a one bedroom bungalow on a Susquehanna River inlet. It was here that he claimed to have recruited his earliest lifters, devised the barbell training system he later peddled, and performed his first serious weight *training—after* winning the national championship! In 1929 Hoffman and his partner acquired a permanent building at 51 N. Broad Street in York to manufacture oil burners *and* barbells. Hoffman also purchased some land on Lightner's Hill in north York where he built the YOBAC club house and started constructing in 1931, the multi-story "house on the hill," designed to be his dream home.[48] With his new found affluence he could take business interests more for granted and devote more energy to weightlifting. "Finally in 1931," he later admitted,

"I was so situated that I could go on with the game I had come to love more than any other."[49] The key to his eventual success in appropriating the iron game to himself was the attachment of his sporting interests to his business enterprise.

It seems remarkable that Hoffman's glory years began in the depths of the Depression, at just the point when all other physical culturists were suffering monumental losses. In April 1931 Jowett estimated that "this game is ruined beyond measure." Earle Liederman, the most successful muscles-by-mail vendor of the 1920s "had a worse blow than anyone," Jowett told Coulter.

> *His agency is broke for over $100,000 in bad advertising for 1930. Earle would not help with his money and whether his wife began to think he would and lose all he had is hard to say but she ran away with another fellow taking Earles imported Italian car and unfortunately robbing Earle of every penny he possessed. Unfortunately Earle had all his securities in her name as a protection if such a thing happened to the advertising game as did, then they could not come on him, but she stripped him clean. Earle has been in a sanitorium under treatment. He is broke in heart as well as financially. . . Everybody in the magazine and athletic and physical* culture *business have taken a terrible lacing.*[50]

Jowett was by no means immune to these untoward circumstances. By July the lack of sales "completely wiped me out," he told Coulter. He had had to relinquish his interest in his latest venture, the American Athletic Appliance Co. "My creditors took it away and operate it from New York. . . I owe the advertising company over $4,000.00 and the printer nearly $2,000.00. The bank wiped all my investments out and I owe them $5300.00 . . . I am broke worse than ever in my life."[51]

Jowett, now an advertising manager for a wholesale firm in Connecticut, was consoled only by the fact that his old Milo adversaries were doing no better. He had heard that ***Strength*** was "dead entirely. Few people use it. It has too many padded readers." Jowett explained to Coulter that Redmond stayed in business by buying address lists of defunct magazines.

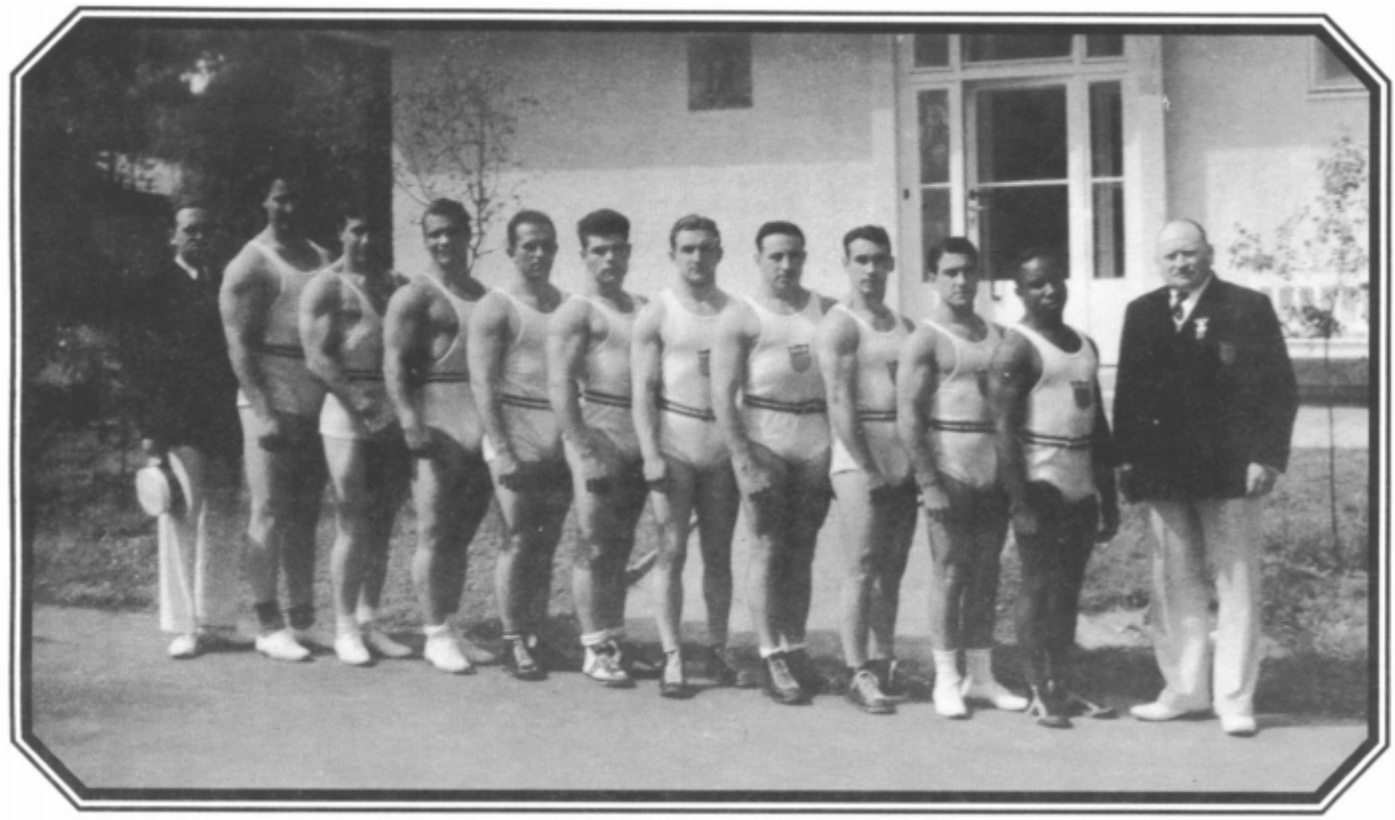
> *I should say he buys out the old magazines so he has the subscriptions to fill in order to prove to the Advert. As so that he has so many subscribers and readers. He bought out a dead diet magazine and a matrimonial magazine and a confidence mag, so you can form your opinion what he is doing. He has not paid a foundry bill for over three years and owes over $16,000, I have this from the foundry. He gets away with it because his father is a partner but the president is sick of it and asked me to take over that type of business and he would help me.*[52]

The standing of the ABBM, as a non-profit adjunct to ***Strength,*** appears to have been even more precarious. Though it boasted in 1931 Of having three times as many members as the earlier ACWLA, it suffered acute financial losses. ***Strength*** had absorbed this burden in the interest of sport, but henceforth it vowed that the ABBM would be administered on "a firm business basis, paying for every operation incidental to its maintenance." Accordingly membership fees were increased drastically to $1.00.[53] Unfortunately the response to this appeal for more member support was "disgustingly apathetic." It was, of course, the heart of the Depression and many of the estimated half million barbell users in the country were unemployed Nevertheless ***Strength*** scolded its readers, insisting that "greater cooperation on your part is essential—absolutely essential." Despite its advertisements and gimmicks, ABBM membership was only 2,000, and the same individuals were always having to organize and promote weightlifting events.

> *Now contrary to what a lot of you may think, no one is either getting rich or* making *a penny out of the A.B.B.M. Instead, the lifting organization has always been a money losing proposition, and if we may be permitted the freedom of saying so, weight lifters are quite apathetic when it comes to properly supporting the very things in which they should be vitally interested.*
>
> *Oh, yes, we are fully aware of the existing belief that the A.B.B.M. is hooked up with the sale of bar bells. Well, let us assure you it isn't, and certain parties who should know are convinced that the game of weight-lifting is essential neither to* ***Strength*** *Magazine or the promotion of bar bells . . We wonder if you fully realize what would become of the lifting game if those who are behind the A.B.B.M. should become disgusted and decide lifting was too unprofitable. We venture the guess that within several months American lifting would be dead as the proverbial door-nail.*[54]

Obviously Milo Barbell viewed ***Strength*** and the ABBM as financial liabilities, regardless of their potential advertising value. Money was tight everywhere it seemed—except in York!

Despite such a dismal outlook, Berry drew inspiration from the preparations that were underway for the forthcoming Olympics in Los Angeles. More attention nationwide was being focused on performing the Olympic lifts and Berry, once an exponent of the 60 lift British tradition, now believed that "everyone should concentrate upon these lifts for district, sectional, and local championships." American lifters were "all the time trying too many different stunts. . . . The truth on this question is that if you want to be a good javelin thrower, you practice with a javelin."[55] Also featured in ***Strength*** was a full explanation of the program and Olympic regulations and pictures of the well-appointed Olympic village. This first Olympiad on American soil since 1904 was definitely helping to standardize, internationalize, and popularize weightlifting in the United States, and there would be no excuse for not engaging the formidable Europeans and Egyptians. Raising $6,000 to send a team to Los Angeles



FLANKED BY MARK BERRY (LEFT) AND DIETRICH WORTMANN (RIGHT), THE MEMBERS OF THE 1936 OLYMPIC TEAM POSE IN THE OLYMPIC VILLAGE AT BERLIN.

–TODD-MCLEAN COLLECTION

might have seemed an impossible goal, especially given the meager finances of the ABBM. But Berry seemed undaunted. "Come cdl—let's see what sort of sports you fellows are," was his appeal.[56]

Meanwhile Hoffman's standing was enhanced by his inclusion among the American weightlifting officials for the Olympics. With Wortmann as manager, Berry as coach, and Emmett Faris of Cincinnati as trainer, Hoffman was named assistant trainer. Perhaps even more indicative of his status was York's selection as the venue in 1932 for both the Middle Atlantic championships and the AAU national championships. The latter was especially significant inasmuch as it was originally scheduled for Philadelphia. The most important test of Hoffman's growing strength, however, was his encounter with the redoubtable German-American team in December 1931 at the York club house. The New Yorkers, spirited by Tony Terlazzo's 600 pound total as a featherweight, easily outclassed Hoffman's team and a visiting Hagerstown squad by 3,890 to 3,725 to 3,375 pounds. At their next meeting in February in New York, the German-Americans bested the YOBAC by 4,114 to 4,031 pounds. ***Strength*** reported that "the most remarkable score of the day was, beyond any question, that of Tony Terlazzo; just note that his total was but 5 1/2 pounds behind the score of the Egyptian world's champion, and but 16 pounds under the best ever scored by a featherweight in official competition."[57] Losing at anything was intolerable to Hoffman, and it was becoming obvious that drastic measures would be necessary to establish his paramountcy in weightlifting. He was already paying to transport his lifters to distant meets and offering special medals and trophies for their performance, but what he most needed was a sure-fire method of recruiting better lifters. Hoffman was by no means above the most flagrant violation of the amateur code, including outright payments to athletes, but he found a far more effective and *legal* method of attracting lifting talent to York—a job in the oil burner business. It would be difficult to imagine a more effective lure for America's best lifters in this bleak decade than the prospect of secure employment and access to the finest training facilities anywhere. "At first we didn't mind getting beat," Hoffman told team member Walter Good in early 1932, "but now we want to have a first team that can beat the best team that can be gotten together."[58] He would use the remarkable economic power he had accumulated at York to appropriate the cream of weightlifting talent in the eastern United States.

Hoffman's clever compromise of the amateur spirit was made even more egregious by his practice of making barbells from the same facilities used in the manufacture of home heaters. Although he produced his first barbell (from a German design) in 1929, he notes that 1932 marked the real beginning of the operation. "A sale of 22 bar bells during the week of [the] fourth of July, 1933, stood as the record in the sale of York Bar Bells for a time."[59] His team became so integrated with the company that it trained not at the luxurious club house on Lightner's Hill but on a ramshackle platform on the second floor of the Broad Street factory. Long before the Olympic ideal was tarnished by the nationalization of sport by countries eager to make a political statement, Hoffman was using his corporate resources to

make his personal mark in weightlifting.

Opposition, however, soon emerged from those interests that had most to lose from Hoffman's strategy. "Some strange matters have arisen in official lifting ranks," remarked Berry after Hoffman enlisted Dick Bachtell from Maryland and Wally Zagurski from Indiana to lift for him. At issue was an AAU rule requiring athletes from another district first to compete unattached for a year.

> *These two transfers . . . took place late in March, so neither of the men is eligible to lift on the Y.O.B.A.C. team either in the Middle-Atlantic title events on April 30th or the Nationals on June 4th; nor may they compete for M.A. titles. That is . . . true on strict A.A.U. definition as applying to athletes in general. But, there is a queer angle in connection with lifting . . . The A.B.B.M. is a member of the Middle-Atlantic Association and not directly affiliated with the National Body. In which case it* ***might*** *be decided that every AB.B.M. member, regardless of where his residence may be, belongs in the M.A. a district and has the right to compete in such district without transfer.*

Berry further noted that the "parties concerned. . . aren't very jovially inclined over the turn of events." Permitting Bachtell and Zagurski to cross district lines might set a precedent for other elite lifters, such as Tony Terlazzo, Art Levan, or Bill Good, to travel around the country to win titles. There was an ambiguity surrounding lifters who held multiple memberships in the AAU, the ABBM, and affiliated clubs.[60] Given its unprofitability and conflicting jurisdiction with the AAU, serious questions emerged over whether the ABBM should continue to exist. Underlying this whole process, however, was a subtle shift of power that was taking place in two stages. Berry's ABBM had already been eclipsed by Wortmann who effectively applied the AAU's international leverage to his advantage. Now the latter's authority was being undermined by the financial wizardry of Hoffman.

There is no question that Wortmann was using his influence in the AAU to harass Hoffman, but his team's loss in April l932 in New York to the YOBAC, 5,725 to 5,835 pounds, was a devastating blow. Critical to Hoffman's victory was the appearance of his two "ringers," Bachtell and Zagurski. The latter, according to ***Strength,*** was "the sensation of the meet."[61] Hoffman confided to Walter Goal that Wortmann and Berry "didn't do any protesting until after we won at New York, but they surely have tried to make it difficult since that time." Not only was there an attempt to exclude Bachtell and Zagurski, but Hoffman's opponents protested his use of the York Oil Burner A.C. name as commercialism, that too many major meets were being held in York, and that some YOBAC members had violated amateur guidelines. Hoffman took decisive steps to check his adversaries. "I have been appointed A.A.U. Commissioner in this territory and have been on very intimate terms with the A.A.U. Commissioner in Pittsburgh for the last twenty years," he told Good. "And thanks to Mr. Clarke in Philadelphia, the President of the A.A.U. there, being in favor of the work we are doing here, everything has been satisfactorily arranged."[62] Thus Hoffman wisely decided not to declare war on troublesome AAU regulations but to use its organization and status to advance his own cause.

In the 1932 national championships at York in June, Hoffman's team won its first of many nationals. Because of the personal power and prestige at stake in triumphing over Wortmann, it made a deep impression on Hoffman. For the rest of his life, winning the team title at the AAU nationals became his foremost aim as a means to showcase his influence in the sport. York compiled 22 points as against 15 for the German-Americans and five each for teams from Detroit, Portland, Pittsburgh, and Baltimore. ***Strength*** reported:

> *The biggest factor in deciding the team honors was the transfer of Anthony Terlazzo from German-American A.C. to unattached in the Middle Atlantic district. The young fellow was out of work and learning of the possibility of landing a job in York he went there. However, he was informed that holding the position depended upon his not representing the G.-A. Club, hence the transfer. The loss of Terlazzo, who was regarded as a certain winner, by the G.-A. Boys, resulted in a dampening of their spirit. Indeed, we are surprised they came so close to the York combination.*
>
> *The York O.B. outfit should have a powerful team a little later on as Bachtell and Walter Zagurski are now residing there waiting for the A.A.U. time limit to expire so they may represent the team. Beyond any doubt other fellows would like to locate there as the environment is most ideal.*

Although York lifters won three weight divisions (to none for the German-Americans), Hoffman protested that two more of his men were denied victories by the tie-breaking lightest man rule. Even when Berry pointed out that this rule complied with AAU rules and international practice, Hoffman further defied the powers-that-be (on his home turf) by suddenly deciding to lift during the course of the meet, despite having initially signified his intention not to compete and having never weighed in. Berry regretted Hoffman's arrogance. "Until most recently, American weight lifting was entirely free of bickering and questioning of official decisions." He noted that "the complaining emanates from but one source. Steps can, should and may be taken to end this unjust criticism of honest and impartial officiating."[63] Looming ahead lay the question of whether the intrusion of Hoffman's expansive ego was too great a price to pay for the financial revival of American weightlifting.

Bob, however, was still a relative newcomer and had little influence over the ruling councils of the sport. At the Olympics, bronze medal wins by Tony Terlazzo and light heavyweight Henry Duey of Detroit helped the United States team attain a third place finish in its first international outing. Team results were: France 36, Germany 22, United States 20, Czechoslovakia 15, Italy 14, Austria 9, Denmark 5, and Argentina 1. "So close was the team scoring," according to Berry, "that had Tony won and Suvigny been disqualified as

he should have on his presses and snatches, the U.S. would either have tied or beaten out France."[64] Largely because he was excluded from a dominant role in this quite respectable showing, however, Hoffman characterized it as a loss and criticized American officials for mishandling the American team. Berry, in a lengthy report on the FIH Congress meeting in Los Angeles identified two autocratic forces that endangered the welfare of weightlifting. First, "the present manner of French domination of the sport must discontinue," especially the influence of FIH President Jules Rosset. But his more immediate concern lay with the future of American lifting.

> *So strongly have we tried to make it appear to be a sport embracing saints and angels that perhaps the thing has been overdrawn . . It may be as well that the game has in the past in this country not assumed sufficiently large proportions to get mixed up in the things which bring troubles. We do know that conditions have recent-/y changed in this country; that is, since the formation of a certain club the members of which have become too ambitious. This was remarked upon by a certain famous lifter who regularly journies East to take part in the National title events. He stated not so long ago that the game was changing very much in this country and that whereas the spirit formerly was friendly to all hands the exact reverse was getting to be true, there being too much ill feeling and an over-desire to win over the other fellow in certain quarters. Up until the last National Championships we had not experienced trickery and underhand tactics in the attempt to win, but that last title event brought in any number of things which we never thought could have taken place in our beloved game.*[65]

Hoffman reacted to these criticisms first by an unprecedented request that he be appointed to the national committee. When he was unanimously rebuffed by the ruling clique, he made what was arguably the most momentous decision in the history of the iron game—the creation of ***Strength & Health*** magazine.[66] Already in possession of the necessary financial resources and the finest lifting club in the country, what Hoffman now needed was a propaganda organ to consolidate his claim to weightlifting hegemony.

The ostensible reason for his demarche, however, was more altruistic. He was supposedly dismayed by America's lackluster performance in the Olympics. The foreign competitors "looked upon the United States team as something of a joke," Hoffman wrote. He resolved to make America the world's foremost lifting power. An important step in this design, and to enhance his own standing, was to ally his fortunes with those of the other outcast figure in weightlifting. Forthwith George Jowett eagerly accepted Hoffman's offer to become publisher of ***Strength & Health.*** "This promotion comes out of the great wrong Berry has done Hoffman" Jowett explained to Coulter. "Hoffman I have known many years and he controls the Oil Burner business in U.S.A. He needed me and it was just what I wanted so we allied our interests and here we are."[67] Though the magazine later served chiefly to promote Hoffman's ideas and products, it initially reflected many of Jowett's British derivations. The name itself was an obverse of ***Health & Strength,*** founded in London by Hopten Hadley in 1902. Jowett also revived the ACWLA, proclaiming that it had left an "indelible stamp" on weightlifting.

> *The work accomplished by the A.C.W.L.A. has never been equalled . . . There is not a champion or star lifter today who did not get his start in the A.C.W.L.A., excepting those who were too young to enlist at that time. Numerous athletes and certain officials of today who lay claim to a degree of leadership, owe all they are, even their livelihood, to the A.C.W.L.A., which if this had never existed would have left them in total obscurity. None who attended can forget the great strength demonstrations and shows it fostered . . Once more the A.C.W.L.A. is answering the crusading call.*[68]

A final anglicism was the American Strength and Health League, a curious amalgam of the Boy Scouts and a pen pal club. Its object was "to promote right living, proper physical training," and "the health of the youth of our nation." It encouraged young people to be "temperate in all things" and to employ "the golden rule." Certificates and badges were distributed, and medals were awarded for physical excellence. Jowett and Hoffman stressed "physical training for the masses" and the need to "keep our country physically equal to or superior to all other countries."[69] Such fine phrases and elaborate organization could easily be dismissed as gimmicks employed by two clever promoters to bilk an unsuspecting public. Financial gain ego gratification, and a desire to improve their standing in the iron game were undoubtedly foremost, but there was also an element of high-mindedness in their appeal.

These initiatives threatened to upset the balance of power in the strength world. "We are having nice response from our efforts on the magn,[sic]" Jowett reported to Coulter in January 1933, "but the going is slow and times are still bad" With regard to the ACWLA, he was delighted that "all the old and new boys have come over en masse to us and the old association. They are tickled to death it is being revived." Only Manger was holding back as "Berry's last stand by."[70] Despite public pronouncements that they were above the blatant commercialism of earlier promoters, controversy soon set in for Hoffman and Jowett. "We anticipated the fight of jealousy and envious competition, and the filthy breath of slander from those who see the finger of doom pointing at them from the sword of our teachings. We burnt all our bridges behind in our eagerness for the duel."[71] In subsequent months every effort was made to revive the ACWLA for its impending duel with the "parasital forces" of Wortmann and Berry. Its first meet in March 1933 appears to have been a success, but Jowett interpreted it as a personal triumph. "It was like old times," he told Coulter. "Went over with a bang and when I came forward the crowd rose and cheered. Berry felt terrible. I made him get up to be introduced and no one clapped. That should have been enough

to show to him who is who in this game." Jowett was so puffed up from being back in the limelight that he suffered from delusions of grandeur. Indeed he had just returned from a physical culture convention where he had been the "honor guest" of fitness mogul Bernarr Macfadden. "Them was a big attendance and many eminent people. My lectures went over big so much so they asked me to be one of the speakers in response to the toast at the banquet with Wainwright Evans the novelist. B.M. congratulated me and asked me to stick to the game. He is much impressed with what I have gone through and done. They generally concede today I am the biggest shot in the business." However true it might be that Jowett was making an important contribution to York's success, he began to view himself as indispensable. He took full credit for the early issues of the magazine. "I do all the planning, lay out, spacing, selection of MSS, Editorial proof ready & selection of type etc." He also appeared to be on the verge of striking it rich by being able to market his own brand of Saxon Barbells along with two brands of York Barbells in ***Strength & Health.***[72] What he failed to realize, however, was that Hoffman no more than Redmond, would not tolerate anyone who attempted to usurp his authority. Jowett's failure to mount an ACWLA national championship in the summer was a premonition that his boasts were possibly premature.

The certainty of success for Hoffman however, was beyond question. At the Middle-Atlantic Championships in April at Bridgeport, Pennsylvania, his club monopolized the competition. Only four of the 35 lifters were non-York, yet as Berry pointed out, virtually none were actually from York. It appeared that Hoffman was "anxious to see that no one else won any places. It is this sort of thing that breaks up competition and one can hardly imagine any club in the country meeting this outfit with hopes of winning much less to look for competition in the M.-A. District." Likewise at the Junior Nationals in May the York gang far outdistanced all the rest, garnering 22 points to only 6 for the German-Americans and 3 or 2 each for the remaining eight clubs.[73] Competition at a meet held at Cobb's Creek Park in Philadelphia on July 4th was a little less onesided, but Hoffman used the occasion to attack Wortmann's leadership in the AAU. With 35,000 people attending, he thought it important that those "in charge of amateur athletics should first of all look the part." Wortmann had gained a lot of weight since his wrestling days and was no longer fit. But Hoffman was most critical of his authoritarian manner, referring to "Kaiser Wortmann" who ruled with an "Iron hand" over America's lifters as if they were "Christian slaves" or conscripts in the German Army. 'This man Wortmann is riding for a fall. It is only a question of time until the A.A.U. will find that the man they made the mistake to place at the head of the A.A.U. is the wrong man for the job, that he is doing the sport more harm than good."[74] Berry retaliated in two ways. First, he instigated a special meeting of the national weightlifting committee, including Wortmann, Arthur Gay, Emmett Faris, John Britt, Helmut Frank, and himself, which declared the ACWLA an "outlaw" organization. He reported that

> *plenty of discussion preceded this motion and it can be said that all were not only familiar with all the events leading up to the resolution but in full accord with the spirit of the move. Anyone who has had experience in the game knows full well that lifting has prospered under A.A.U. affiliation and control; how differently from the days when the A.C.W.L.A. had something to do with it? Weights were seldom weighed and likewise with the lifters. Records were claimed for all and sundry with no basis for the same. Lately we have a repetition of the same thing . . . The quarrel that Mr. Berry has had with the crowd in question all along has been in reference to laxity of rule enforcement. Certain parties are too ambitious to achieve their ends at the expense of all other lifters and so they take any means of getting into official recognition: when they are not allowed to tramp unbridled, an attempt is made to gain control of the amateur game through influencing the boys to believe that those who are behind the game have axes to grind and have been playing unfair to the lifters. Never has the game been more fair and on the up-and-up in this country since Mr. Wortmann assumed the chairmanship of the National Committee and urged lifters everywhere to support him. Those who have been most active on the National Committee have been jealous of the conduct of the game and have done everything possible to keep the game clean and above those who would commercialize it to their own ends.*

This attempt to ban the ACWLA was followed by a stalwart defense of Wortmann in the next issue of ***Strength,*** rebutting point-by-point the charges made against him in ***Strength & Health.***[75] Every effort was being made by Wortmann and Berry to elude the embrace of Hoffman's ego and money. At stake was whether amateurs–not without pride and ambition–would continue to exercise control; or whether weightlifting would succumb to the forces of professionalism and commercialization.

The ease with which Berry thought he could rid weightlifting of Hoffman's pernicious influence is evident in a ***Strength*** caricature of "Personalities" who attended the 1933 senior nationals at the Chicago World's Fair. Nowhere is Hoffman's face or name identified among the 72 figures displayed. But it was impossible to ignore him and his club which amassed more points than all the other teams combined. Furthermore Hoffman pointed out that his outlawed association "was very much in evidence," to the extent that it "won every one of the senior titles." Indeed "the A.A.U. and A.C.W.L.A. worked closer together at this championship than ever before."[76] Eventually the two warring factions reached an accord in late 1933 at the annual meeting of the AAU national committee in Pittsburgh. "We felt that two bodies could not operate one sport without considerable friction and did not wish to break up American weight lifting," wrote Jowett. Though the ACWLA had a longer association with lifting, he conceded that the AAU should have power to sanction all meets and conduct all championships. The ACWLA would "be a fraternal organization like the American Legion" to promote the sport. In a face-saving gesture, Hoffman accepted this inferior

status only if Wortmann agreed to recommend ACWLA leaders to AAU committees.[77] The ACWLA, no more than Berry's ABBM, was not capable of resisting the power which the AAU exercised over national and international sport.

For the next three years an uneasy tolerance prevailed between the ***Strength*** and York factions. During this period three events occurred that would resolve these questions over authority and forever transform the course of American lifting. First, there was a parting of the ways between Hoffman and Jowett after little more than a year of collaboration. In the February 1934 issue of ***Strength & Health,*** Jowett's name no longer appears on the masthead, and in the October issue it is announced that he was stepping down as president of the ACWLA, supposedly owing to the "pressure" of his "many business interests."[78] The exact circumstances surrounding his departure are unclear, but Jowett told Coulter that

> *I quit Hoffman because the man is crazy. He started because he was sore at Milo. I did a lot for him. Let him use my contracts and contacts but he abused them. He has the mag on the jewstands [sic] where I put it, but it does no business. Of course he does not have to rely on it for a living. It is a hobby with him . . .Hoffman has got a big head. He thinks he is the Czar. I told him he was a punk. . . He copies and cheats and steals other peoples ideas which one of these days will land him in serious trouble.*[79]

Soon the ACWLA and the Strength and Health League disappeared and Hoffman concentrated all his efforts toward bolstering his influence in the AAU. He had learned much from Jowett, including the art of exaggeration in which he far surpassed his mentor. "He always assumes more than what actually is," Jowett later wrote of Hoffman, "and can distort a meaning of a fact so great one wonders at times whether he is all there in the head."[80] One organization simply could not tolerate two such egocentric personalities. Jowett was again relegated to oblivion and a lasting bitterness toward anyone who attained patriarchal status in the iron game. In the following decade his talents would be exploited by the Weider brothers to establish themselves as Hoffman's chief nemesis, but never again would the man who did most to establish regulated weightlifting in the United States be a major force.

The second major development that altered the course of weightlifting history was the bankruptcy of Milo Barbell Company and the termination of ***Strength*** in 1935.[81] Hoffman acquired their assets and copyright entitlements for $4,000, though Milo had left $2,000,000 in liabilities, including 900 unfilled orders. To drive out any remaining competition, according to Jowett, Hoffman was offering to fill the order of anyone who bought a barbell from Milo and did not receive it for half its original cost. " He sells a 200 lbs set this way for $6.00. Materials cost him $8.35 without office overhead and advertising."[82] Jowett seemed perplexed by Hoffman's ability to survive against all financial odds. Not only did he supposedly owe York Oil Burner $16,000, but

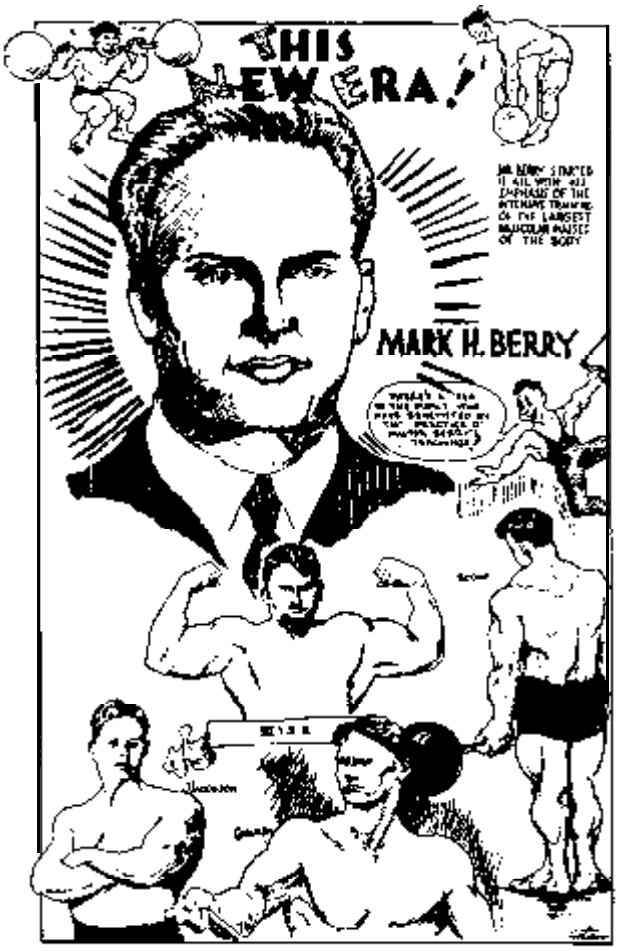
> *the Oil Burner business is greatly in debt. I know he has to pay his p.c. business bills out of Oil Burner funds. He uses their checks. On some he uses S & H Co checks but few. Which all proves he is not making money, but he does things no intelligent man would do. He hates everyone, and is insanely jealous of me. Every kid who pats his back makes his chest swell a mile. He is consumed with ego.*[83]

Now at last Hoffman was virtually the only barbell manufacturer in the country, and with Bob Jutes, a skilled handbalancer from Arkansas, at the helm of the client Milo operation in Philadelphia he could lay claim to a tradition going back to 1902. For all practical purposes, the transition from Philadelphia to York was complete.

Yet Mark Berry refused to recognize Hoffman's supremacy. Indeed a flattering caricature of Berry in one of the final issues of ***Strength*** pronounced him to be a true father of the iron game for inaugurating "This New Era!"[84] The irony of this caption can be appreciated only in retrospect, especially in view of his dwindling financial resources. Jim Messer, who drove Berry to meets, recalls that when ***Strength*** folded Hoffman tried to get Berry to work for him.[85] But the latter remained aloof, preferring instead to start his own magazine, ***Physical Training Notes,*** and his own brand of Berry Barbells from his home at Llanerck, just outside Philadelphia, probably with Redmond's assistance.[86] Unlike others, the stubborn Berry could not be bought or coopted.

Predictably therefore, tensions between the two leaders mounted, especially with the 1936 Olympics on the horizon. Hoffman eyeing berths for members of his team and himself as American coach, developed grandiose notions of his organization as a world weightlifting power. Having won the senior nationals for a fourth time in 1935, Bob represented his lifters as the world's strongest club, comparable to the talent of entire nations. Germany supposedly had the strongest team in the world, but the combined totals of its five best lifters exceeded that of York's best five by only 84 pounds.[87] Further to ensure a prominant role for himself at Berlin, Hoffman tactfully promoted Wortmann as a "hard worker for amateur athletics." He could afford to be generous since the German-American club was no longer a weightlifting power. It was trounced at the 1935 nationals by York, 31 to 7. At the junior national championships in Cleveland in April 1936, Hoffman recognized that "no man has done more for weight lifting" than Wortmann. But his flattery was to no avail inasmuch as Wortmann secured Berry's appointment as Olympic coach—an immense blow to Hoffman. He at least made a show of "good sportsmanship," it being noted in ***Strength & Health*** that Bob "gave no sign of disappointment."[88] Notwithstanding selection of the wrong person as coach, Hoffman in succeeding months attempted to appropriate America's lifters as his own. Even though they were trained by others, he claimed that they had used York equipment and methods. Hoffman envisioned that the York-trained team would be "a happy family and a hard working one, who will be training, thinking, breathing weight lifting in an endeavor to win the team title for America in Berlin."[89]

Unfortunately the largely York-based team did not perform as well as expected at Hitler's games. Tony Terlazzo, as a featherweight, became America's first Olympic gold medalist in weightlift-



"MR. BERRY STARTED IT ALL WITH HIS EMPHASIS OF THE INTENSIVE TRAINING OF THE LARGEST MUSCULAR MASSES OF THE BODY." READS THE CAPTION ON THIS ILLUSTRATION FROM THE APRIL 1934 ***STRENGTH.***

ing, but no one else placed higher than fifth, and the United States team again placed third behind Germany and Egypt. Chagrined, as he had been four years earlier at being excluded from a team that he had largely raised, and unwilling to remain on the sidelines while others received the credit, Hoffman resorted to desperate measures. While waiting to return on ship at Le Havre, France, Hoffman took advantage of his size to carry out an unprovoked attack on Berry. Team member John Terpak, who witnessed the incident from a half block away, recalls that Bob descended upon Berry along some store fronts in the French port and beat up his diminutive rival for about 20 or 30 seconds.[90] Jowett rightly refers to it as a "cowardly assault" prompted by "pure hate and jealousy on B.H's part," but the immediate cause was an embarrassing exposure of Hoffman's business practices pub lished in Berry's magazine during their trip.[91] Hoffman explained:

> *It would be interesting to know what happened in La Havre, France. The Olympic boat was in port there for a day and most of the team went ashore. When Berry came back aboard he was the worst messed up specimen of humanity we have seen. Blood and mud everywhere. The story went the rounds that he was kicked by a mule, hit by a truck, thrown out somewhere, etc . . . No doubt retribution caught up with him, for his story appeared in the team's absence. Mails brought it to Berlin. There are men who owe him much and perhaps one of these men caught up with him and paid his debt in part.*
>
> *We couldn't imagine what it was. No other member of the team had any marks on his face to match Berry's closed eye, split and badly swollen lip, his greatly enlarged and flattened nose and enough bruises in general to have been the result of going through a concrete mixer. Bob Hoffman had the skin torn on both hands and swollen knuckles but he had slipped on wet pavement on the way back to the ship, so we were informed . . . People that throw stones should be prepared to meet the consequences when it comes. Berry spent the next seven days in the confines of his own room, most of it in bed. Perhaps he did a little thinking and may have learned a lesson. If he hasn't, the same mule might catch him again.*[92]

What actually happened was that when Hoffman bought out the Milo assets, he assumed that they included rights to Berry's book ***Your Physique and Its Culture.*** He thus procured, advertised, and sold hundreds of copies without giving its author a cent. Berry, however, took legal action and in May 1936 received a favorable decree on all five points of his suit. Hoffman appealed, but Berry won again hence the notice that appeared in his magazine. What must have galled Hoffman was Berry's headline—"I Win the Law-Suit with Bob Hoffman."[93] Bob hated losing, and this must have been the final straw in his attempt to cope with Berry who had been an irritant for years. Failing in any other way to relegate Berry to a subordinate role in the iron game, Hoffman resorted to a final physical solution. Though Hoffman was forced by the state of Pennsylvania to pay him $544 from the sales of his book, Berry never recovered his former stature and transferred his interests to swimming.[94]

Thus by 1936 Hoffman an had emerged victorious over all his rivals from the previous decade and was billing himself as the WORLDS LEADING PHYSICAL DIRECTOR. "The irony of it," remarked Coulter to Jowett. "A few years ago he was an unknown and had done nothing in the pioneering of the business . . . I really believe that you would have been better off, if you had united with Berry or Redmond instead of Hoffman. Apparently there is no way of stopping him from being the Big Mug of Muscledom."[95] *Plus-ça change, plus c'est la même chose!* Hoffman's success in moving mecca from Philadelphia to York may be attributed to several interrelated factors. First and foremost was the firm financial stake he established in the oil burner business in the 1920s which evolved into the York Barbell Company. Hoffman used these resources to assemble the best lifting team in the country and thereby build a social and political base in the weightlifting community. While his initial bid for power in the AAU and the international Olympic structure was stymied the creation of ***Strength & Health*** as a promotional organ

in 1932 broadened his appeal and made his claim to absolute control irresistible. His resort to fisticuffs at Le Havre destroyed the last vestige of resistance to his authority and enabled him to bring about a rebirth of American weightlifting. Subsequently Hoffman's consolidation of power became so complete that it was possible for him to alter wholesale perceptions of the past. By acts of historical legerdamain, Hoffman would not only demolish the claims of Jowett and Berry to immortal status in the iron game but deny earlier patriarchs—Windship, Curtis, Attila, Sandow, Macfadden, and Calvert—their rightful claims to the title of Father of American Weightlifting.

NOTES

*I am grateful to Jan and Terry Todd for allowing me to use the Todd-McLean Collection and for their assistance in the preparation of this article. My research was also made possible in part by a grant-in-aid from Auburn University at Montgomery.

[1]Harry Paschall, "Behind the Scenes," ***Strength & Health*** 24(August 1956): 26.

[2]See Robert L. Jones, "Wm. J. Herrmann, Health Builder," ***Strength & Health*** 15(April 1947): 16-17, & 31-33; and (May 1947): 28, & 30-33.

[3]It is ironic that heretofore Berry was subservient to Jowett. "In Mark," according to Sig Klein, "Jowett had possibly the greatest admirer any cult leader has ever had before or since. He hung on George's every word, and often told us, 'Jowett is the most intelligent man I have ever known."' "Weightlifting Pioneer . . . Mark Berry," ***Strength & Health*** 25(July 1951): 43.

[4]See Bob Hoffman, "The Story of the World Famous 'York Barbell Club,"' ***Strength & Health*** 13(November 1945): 39 and most issues through November 1946.

[5]David P. Willoughby, "A History of American Weightlifting," ***Your Physique*** 12(November 1949): 38, and all issues from March 1949 through March 1950.

[6]David Webster, ***The Iron Game, An Illustrated History of Weight-Lifting*** (Irvine, Scotland, 1976), 116.

[7]Jowett to Coulter, 22 March 1927, and n.d. [Monday], Coulter Papers, Todd-McLean Collection, UT-Austin. Unless indicated, all correspondence is from the Todd-McLean Collection.

[8]Jowett to Coulter, 4 May 1927, and n.d. [1927].

[9]Coulter to Jowett, 27 July 1927.

[10]Jowett to Coulter, n.d. [December 1927].

[11] John Bradford, "American Continental Weight Lifters' Association Notes," ***Strength*** 11(June 1927): 75 & 77, and Mike Drummond, "Association Notes," ***Strength*** 11(July 1927): 78-79.

[12]John Bradford, "American Continental Weight Lifters' Association Notes," ***Strength*** 11(March 1927): 49.

[13]Mike Drummond, "Association Notes," ***Strength*** 11(August 1927): 53-54, and Mike Drummond "Association Notes," ***Strength*** 11(September 1927): 48.

[14]Mike Drummond, "Association Notes," ***Strength*** 12(January 1928): 49-50, and Mike Drummond, "Association Notes," ***Strength*** 11(December 1927): 50.

[15]See David Willoughby, "A History of American Weightlifting," ***Your Physique*** 12(December 1949): 16, and Gottfried Schodl, ***The Lost Past*** (Budapest: 1992), 74-76.

[16]Coulter to Jowett, 16 February 1928.

[17]Jowett to Coulter, n.d. [March 1928].

[18]Coulter to Jowett, 8 & 21 June 1928.

[19]Coulter to Jowett, 27 June 1928.

[20]Coulter to Jowett, 11 July 1928.

[21]Mike Drummond, "Association Notes," ***Strength*** 12(March 1928): 65.

[22] ***Strength*** 12(April 1928): 71, and ***Strength*** 12(May 1928): 77.

[23] ***Strength*** 12(October 1928): 73; ***Strength*** 12(November 1928): 57; and ***Strength*** 12(August 1928): 55.

[24]Dietrich Wortmann, "History of modern American Weightlifting & Body Building," ***1948 U.S. Olympic Team Weightlifting Trials, Official Program of the United States Olympic Committee,*** 11.

[25]Mike Drummond, "Association Notes," ***Strength*** 13(February 1929). 56.

[26]Mike Drummond, "Association Notes," ***Strength*** 13(March 1929): 56 & 72.

[27]"Membership in the A.B.B.M.," ***Strength*** 13(April 1929): 59; Mike Drummond, "Association Notes," ***Strength*** 13(May 1929): 56; and ***Strength*** 13(June 1929): 51 & 66.

[28] ***Strength*** 13(July 1929): 55.

[29] ***Strength*** 13(August, 1929): 67. Interestingly an announcement of the results of a Silver Cup Posing Contest, conducted by ***Strength*** in previous months by mail, accompanied reportage of the AAU meet. The winner was Walter Podolak of Syracuse, followed by Dick Bachtell of Hagerstown, Roy Hurcombe of Adelaide, South Australia, Arnie Sundberg of Portland, and Cheah Chin Poh of Penang, Straits Settlements. Its juxtaposition made this contest a precursor and rough equivalent to the Mr. America shows that would accompany Senior National AAU championships in subsequent decades.

[30]Interview with Robert Knodle, 3 January 1988, Hagerstown, Maryland

[31]Jowett to Coulter, n.d. [April 1929].

[32]Mike Drummond, "Association Notes," ***Strength*** 13(September 1929): 54 & 80. The FM still recognized the one arm lifts in the snatch and clean & jerk along with the three Olympic lifts.

[33] ***Strength*** 13(November 1929): 53-54.

[34] ***Strength*** 13(December 1929): 52-53.

[35] ***Strength*** 14(March 1930): 54.

[36] ***Strength*** 14(April 1930): 54; and ***Strength*** 14(June 1930): 56-58 & 74.

[37] ***Strength*** 14(September 1930): 52-53.

[38] ***Strength*** 15(March 1931): 50; and ***Strength*** 14(November 1930): 56.

[39]Jowett to Coulter. 10 May 1930.

[40] ***Strength*** 14(23 September 1930); See also "Correct Eating," ***Correct Eating Combined with Strength,*** 14(May 1930): 21; and Jowett to Coulter, 10 May 1930.

[41]Mike Drummond, "Association Notes," ***Correct Eating & Strength*** 15(Apri1 1931): 48; ***and Correct Eating & Strength*** 15(July 1931): 50.

[42]Hoffman's one hand snatch and one hand clean & jerk were the lowest of any competitor in the meet. Ibid., 67.

[43] ***Correct Eating & Strength*** 15(October 1931): 19; and (November 1931): 20-21.

[44]Ibid. 15(December 1931): 34.

[45]Hoffman, "York Barbell Club," 36; and interview with Lavern Brenneman, 28 December 1994, York, Pennsylvania.

[46]Bob Hoffman, "Never Stop Exercising," ***Strength & Health*** 29 (November, l961): 4; and the Philadelphia Record, 22 August 1932.

[47]Interview with John L. Hoffman, 1 January 1988, Parker, Pennsylvania.

[48]Bob Hoffman, "The Story of the York Barbell **Club,"** ***Strength & Health*** 13(March 1946): 34-35; and "The World's Finest Bar Bell Club," ***The Strong Man*** 1(November 1931).

[49]Bob Hoffman, "The Advantage of Qualified Personal Instruction," ***Strength & Health*** 1(November 1933): 10; and Alan Carse, "The York Barbell Company," ***Strength & Health*** 8(September 1941), 27.

[50]Jowett to Coulter, 17 April 1931.

[51]Jowett to Coulter, 2 July 1931.

[52]Jowett to Coulter, 16 July 1931.

[53]Mike Drummond, "Association Notes," ***Correct Eating & Strength*** 14(August 1931): 67-68 & 10.

[54] ***Correct Eating & Strength*** 15(June 1932): 27-28.

[55] ***Correct Eating & Strength*** 14(December 1931): 32.

[56] ***Correct Eating & Strength*** 15(February 1932): 32.

[57]Ibid., 33-34, and ***Correct Eating & Strength,*** (April 1932): 52-53.

[58]Hoffman to Good, n.d. [1932] Good Papers, West Reading, Pennsylvania.

[59]Alan Carse, "The York Barbell Company," ***Strength & Health*** 8(September 1941): 27.

[60]Mike Drummond, "Association Notes," ***The Arena—Strength*** 15(June 1932): 26-27.

[61]Mike Drummond, "Association Notes," ***The Arena—Strength*** (August 1932), 27.

[62]Hoffman to Good, 23 April 1932, Good Papers.

[63]Mike Drummond, "Association Notes," ***The Arena—Strength*** 15(September 1932): 28-29 & 47.

[64]Mike Drummond, "Association Notes," ***The Arena—Strength*** (October 1932): 28. Only sixteen pounds separated the top three totals in the featherweight class: Raymond Suvigny (France)-632, Hans Wolpert (Germany)-621, and Anthony Terlazzo (USA)-616.

[65]Mike Drummond, "Association Notes," ***The Arena—Strength*** (November 1932): 29.

[66]Berry noted that "we have never heretofore heard of any **such** application: when the services of some individual are felt to be for the good of the game he is requested to serve or appointed by the committee of the district in which he resides; but to approach the National Committee in such fashion is almost, if indeed not altogether, unprecedented." Mike Drummond, "Association Notes," ***The Arena—Strength*** 16(February 1933): 26.

[67]Jowett to Coulter, 14 December 1932.

[68]Wally Zagurski, "A.C.W.L.A. Shows and Events," ***Strength & Health*** 1(February, 1933). 10.

[69]"American Strength and Health League," ***Strength & Health*** 1(Januarv 1933): 20; and "American Strength and Health League," ***Strength & Health*** 1(February 1933): 20-21; and "Editorial," ***Strength & Health*** 1(December 1932): 1.

[70]Jowett to Coulter, 13 & 30 January 1933.

[71]Bob Hoffman, "Editorial -- What Can We Believe?" ***Strength & Health*** 1(March 1933): 2.

[72]Jowett to Coulter, 7 July 1933, and n.d. [mid-1933].

[73]Mike Drummond, "Association Notes," ***The Arena—Strength*** 17(July 1933): 32-34.

74Bob Hoffman, "A.C.W.L.A. Shows and Events," ***Strength & Health*** 1(August 1933): 17, 27-28.

[75]Mike Drummond. "Association Notes," ***Arena—Strength*** 17(October, 1933): 51-52, and Mike Drummond, "Association ***Notes," Arena—Strength*** 17(November 1933), 36-37.

[76]Ibid. and Bob Hoffman, "A.C.W.L.A. Shows and Events," ***Strength*** &Health 1(October 1933): 12-14.

[77]George F. Jowett, "A.C.W.L.A. Shows and Events," ***Strength & Health*** 2(January 1934): 19; and Mike Drummond, "Association ***Notes," Arena—Strength*** 18(January 1934): 35.

[78]Bob Hoffman, "Weightlifting News," ***Strength & Health*** 2(October 1934): 23-24.

[79]Jowett to Coulter, 20 March 1935.

[80]Jowett to Coulter, 21 November 1935.

[81]For a requiem on ***Strength*** see Sig Klein, ***"Strength*** Magazine As I Knew It," ***Strength & Health*** 3 (July 1935): 65-69. On Milo see Hoffman, "Sincerity Necessary for Success," ***Strength & Health*** 3 (August 1935): 62-63 & 84-85.

[82]Jowett to Coulter, 5 October 1935.

[83]Jowett to Coulter, 16 October 1935.

[84]Jim Wright, "This New Era," ***The Arena—Strength*** 18(Apri1 1934): 33.

[85]Interview with Jim Messer, 9 July 1990, Norristown, Pennsylvania.

[86]Jowett to Coulter. 8 April 1936.

[87]Harry Good, "The World's Strongest Weight Lifting Team," ***Strength & Health*** 4(February 1936): 16-17.

[88]"Reports of Lifting Shows and Events," ***Strength & Health*** 4(April 1936): 29-30; and "Reports of Lifting Shows and Events," ***Strength & Health*** 4(June 1936): 30.

89Alan Carse, "America's Chances in the Olympics," ***Strength & Health*** 4(June 1936): 44.

[90]Interviews with John Terpak, 3 July 1990; and John Grimek, 11 July 1990, York Pennsylvania.

[91]Jowett to Coulter, 5 October 1936.

[92]"Something Happened in La Havre, France," ***Strength & Health*** 4(October 1936) 5. Jowett also notes that Hoffman kicked Berry when he was down, and smashed all his false teeth. Jowett to Coulter, 5 October 1936.

[93] ***Physical Training Notes*** 2(August 1936): 2 & 20-21.

[94]Mark H. Berry vs. Robert C. Hoffman, 11 May 1938, Court of Common Pleas, No. 1, of Philadelphia County, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Hoffman Papers. For a defense of the York position see Robert L. Jones to Coulter, 26 July 1939.

[95]Coulter to Jowett 19 October 1937.

The Strange Saga of Galen Gough

Greg Travis

Excerpted from: ***Galen Gough: The World's Miracle Strong Man*** (Benton, KY: Greg Travis Pub., 1996)

Editor's Note: Greg Travis, editor-in-chief of the Benton, Kentucky *Tribune Courier* has producd a fascinating biography of professional strongman Galen Gough and we are grate ful to Mr. Travis for allowing us to excerpt the following passages There is, however, much more to the story of this strongman, movie star, preacher, and artist than can be told here. Gough, like most professional strongmen, exaggerated many of his claims, but his life was anything but boring. To order a copy of Travis' 312 page, heavily illustrated work, write him at 112 West Oaks Drive, Benton, Kentucky, 42025-8869. The price is $19.95.

Galen Gough was born May 30, 1899, at his grandparents' small log home in Howard's Grove, Kentucky, and was described as a big, robust boy who was "smart as a tack" with an unquenchable "love for life."[1] Standing several inches taller and weighing a few pounds more than most of the other boys his age, the sandy-haired lad with the smooth complexion was by-and-large a cheerful youngster.

Marshall County residents simply assumed that Gough got his strength from his father who was considered quite powerful in his own right. Those who remembered his father spoke of the elder Gough's unique ability to handle with ease the large farm animals he would tend to as a veterinarian. A local writer claimed that Gough's father "when doctoring a balky mule could grasp the fore and back legs and flip the animal over his back" single-handedly.[2] In his early life, Dr. Gough, who was also an ordained minister, had been a farmer and a blacksmith.

The oldest of seven children young Galen carried with him that indelible Gough trait of strength which had been seen repeatedly in both his grandfather and father. Apparently, strength was of interest to Gough at an early age, for in 1935 he told the ***Los Angeles Times—*** in a full-page feature in the Sunday Magazine section—that as a child he did possess many of "the usual adolescent ambitions."

> *I wanted, for instance, to become the world's strongest man. Jack Johnson, with his glistening black body of such tremendous power, was the worlds heavyweight champion and like many other a youth at that time I wanted to become the "white hope" who could and would wrest the imaginary crown from his head. My body was much as those of my school mates except that at the age of 16 I was nearly 6 feet tall and weighed around 180 pounds.*[3]

Gough's youth was short-lived. While only in the eighth grade his caustic restlessness peaked and, according to various accounts, he simply got up from his seat one day, walked out of the small one-room school and proceeded to travel to Louisville to enlist in the United States Marine Corps. Soon, he was caught up in what came later to be known as World War One.

Gough may have tasted the tragedies of war in places like the soggy, death-stenched trenches of Belleau Woods, but it was at Vierzy, near Soissons, in the Battle of the Marne, that he experienced the harsh pain and agony associated with deadly combat Previously wounded on several occasions, those injuries, though serious, would pale in comparison to the suffering he was about to endure.

In the midst of the organized disorder there came that all-too-familiar sound. The explosive projectile was falling hard and fast and it was headed straight toward Gough. With no tune for retreat the bomb had found its mark. Instantly a piece of hot, burning lead split Gough's head open, piercing his brain. He collapsed lifelessly across the greenish-gray machine gun he was trying so desperately to man. The shrapnel from the German explosive had ripped apart Gough's mastoid section. As a result of the enormous blow to his skull, he was left with a paralysis on the right side of his body that ran from his head and face, to his shoulder and arm and all the way down his right leg to his foot.[4]

Time continued to pass. Everyone thought Gough was dead. By all rights he probably should have been dead. But dying on a distant field of war was not meant to be for Galen Gough, and after months of intensive medical treatment overseas he was returned to New York's Brooklyn Naval Hospital aboard the S.S. Kroonland.[5] Days of hospital confinement turned to months for the helpless Gough Skilled medical experts at numerous U.S. and overseas hospitals tried repeatedly to offer words of encouragement, but each physician's attempts were met with little success. Over and over the phrase "hopeless invalid" came from the lips of the physicians, and it was expected that Gough would be bed-ridden, or at least strapped in a wheelchair the rest of his life.

Tom facial muscles ripped apart by the explosion, coupled with make-shift remedies, drastically changed his looks. Gone forever was the innocent countenance of his childhood. The wounds to his face and head were abominable, but his will to live endured. Gough's unyielding perseverance carried him through the agonizing months of hospitalization. Nearly one year after that frightful injury, he was finally going home. He was discharged as permanently and hopelessly disabled, but he was alive and headed back to western Kentucky as a Purple Heart veteran.

His once youthful body was ravaged and buckled. Behind his grafted left ear was an inch-and-a-quarter silver plate. His face

and mouth were twisted and he was unable to speak in an understandable voice. His eyesight and hearing were seriously impaired. And from time to time the pressure sure of the plate in his skull caused him to have spells—often described as blackouts. Life at home in Kentucky was hard for the war-ravaged veteran. Friends he knew before joining the service now crossed to the other side of the street before stopping to gawk and stare. Family members he loved and played with as a child were apprehensive of him, and children would run in fear anytime he came near them.

Searching for something meaningful to do with his life he reluctantly heeded the resurrected advice of his mother and submitted himself to the ministry. Despite what may have been honest and sincere attempts at preaching Christ's Gospel to the lost, Gough's pastorate didn't last. Pain from his war wounds continued to plague him, and he found himself laboring under the pressure of extreme nervous strain. Soon he began yielding to the temptations of life. Fighting and drinking became popular pastimes during his idle hours. It didn't take long for the business owners or patrons of the various McCraken County establishments he frequented to dub him 'The Terror of Paducah."[6] Published accounts of his stopover at the local watering hole described the evening this way: "He had time for but a single drink when one of the Kentuckians wanted to know what he meant by that sneer. . . After that, things began happening. Four men attacked the fighting parson at one time. He bounced them off the floor. More threw themselves upon him. He tossed them aside. Chairs, bottles and crockery began to fly."[7]

GALEN GOUGH, DRESSED AS A GANGSTER FOR ONE OF HIS MOVIE ROLES. NOTE THE FACIAL IRREGULARITIES.

– COURTESY GREG TRAVIS

"Ex-Marine Runs Amuck, Whips Eighteen Men" read the headline in the local newspaper the next morning.[8] Newsmen had become all too familiar with Gough. They knew his new-found reputation. City editors were quick to send cub reporters out to follow up on stories involving the lighting parson. For instance, there's the story of the time when he stood atop a flight of steps leading from the street up to the Paducah Police Station and "hurled cop after cop down the steps."[9] Another well-remembered story involves the time he got into a bit of a "disagreement" with six Paducah police officers outside a popular night spot on Second Street near the river. By the time the skirmish had ended he had lifted each of the six officers several feet off the ground, hooked their belts to the rusty iron steps on the sides of some nearby telephone poles and walked away. In a 1938 magazine article, Paducah policemen who were on the force during Gough's exploits of the 1920s were interviewed about the local folk hero. They were quick to acknowledge his strength and to recall how his name was legendary in the "River City."

His exploits caused him to lose his ministry, and soon his problems worsened. In March of 1920, Gough was examined by Doctors H.B. Sights and R.B. Kirkpatrick in Paducah, and they determined that because of his war injury he was suffering from "Traumatic Psycho Neurosis" and thus unaccountable for his actions. The doctors went on to suggest that Gough required supervision and control for his own welfare and that he could best be provided for by commitment to a "mental institution."[10] Accordingly, Gough was sent to a government hospital in the northeast, where the medical staff concurred with the Paducah doctors. Ironically, it was in the hospital that Gough began to heal himself. Years later, he recalled "I finally became interested in physical culture. It promised so much and seemed to be based upon sound principles. I took the study of it seriously. It represented my last hope... I started first with a reform in my diet, eating good natural food that facilitated digestion and put vitality into my sluggish body.[11]

Soon, his condition began to steadily improve. The prolonged days spent in the hospital were providing him the opportunity to begin rebuilding, restructuring and regaining not only his body, but his feeble spirit as well. Gone were the impetuous actions that had brought him such repelling notoriety at home. Physical culture was turning Gough into a new man. **[Ed. Note: Gough's accounts of his weakness and partial paralysis are at odds with the tales of his success as a barroom brawler. Perhaps he thought that a weak, paralyzed man who gained great strength through physical culture made a better story.]**

Gough describes his earliest training efforts thusly: "Using crude equipment as rocks lashed to sticks for barbells and ash cans full of gravel for weight lifting." Doctors kidded him about his so-called recovery, but he said nothing.

> *When I still limped with my right foot, I used to put it in a pulley and work the pulley up and down with my good arm, just to exercise the paralyzed side. I had no strength in my hands. I used to hold a rubber sponge in my right hand and try to grip it to gain strength.*
>
> *I had so little strength in my fingers that I could not go on with the art work I had taken in the vocational school in New York . . . I used to chew on a rubber sponge to develop strength in my jaws.*[12]

In no time his limited exercises had built his neck to 18 inches, up from 14 l/2 inches before he began his training. His biceps had reached 17 inches, which showed an increase in development of 3 inches. And his 5-foot, 10-inch body had grown in weight from 164 pounds to 223. Convinced he was well enough to take his life back into his own hands, one June day in 1920 Gough walked away from the United States Veterans Hospital in Philadelphia. Where he went after leaving the hospital is not clear.

Regardless of where he spent the next six months, Gough finally recognized he had a major problem on his hands. Authorities would be searching high and low for him—not as a suspect for a crime this time, but rather because he walked away from a mental institution. So, on December 10, 1920 the Marine veteran and former hospital patient traveled to Hampton Road, Virginia and re-enlisted in the United States Marine Corps. Gough described his reasoning for re-enlisting this way: "By doing this I established my sanity as far as the government was concerned. They wouldn't want to admit they had a man with a screw loose serving as a recruiting sergeant Then I bought myself out of the rest of my enlistment period on grounds of medical disability, just reversing the sales-talk I had used to get in."[13]

Ready to take another step on his journey through life, Gough returned to New York. While there he continued his study of physical culture—picking up bits and pieces and storing them in the back of his mind. The next reports were of him heading south again aboard a speeding freight train—this time bound for Florida. There he hid in the swamps for months, finally making his way to his uncle's house near Lake George. Resting in the company of family, Gough could now gather his thoughts and put them back in order. The refuge provided a greatly needed escape. "I realized (at that point) that my mind alone could make me whole again. Then and there I determined to use all my mental power to co-ordinate my physical powers and improve my pitiful condition" he said.[14]

Using homemade devices similar to those he had created while in the hospital, Gough commenced with his workouts—picking up where he had left off. From morning to evening, his thoughts were upon his exercises. Day-in and day-out he continued. With each week that passed he came up with new ways of lifting heavier weights. Intent upon conquering new goals he walked longer distances each day and lifted heavier weights for extended periods. Soon Gough found he was lifting 1200-pound weights with little or no strain.[15] Gough was amazed that in addition to his new-found strength, his handicapped speech amazingly disappeared. The lisp was still there as a result of his war wounds, but the major speech impediment was gone. At last Gough could communicate again in an understandable voice.

Unable to hide from the public any longer, one sunny day he ventured from his uncle's home to St. Augustine. The Brown & Dryers Carnival was playing a show date on the outskirts of the town and Gough eager to mix with people again, decided to visit the gala festivities. An ever-popular attraction of the early carnivals and sideshows was the oversized wrestler who would challenge any-and-all comers to try to stay in the ring with him for a specified Period of time. Seldom, if ever, did a challenger overcome the house wrestler, but this day was to be different. The champion wrestler was soon to meet his conqueror. Knowing his own strength, as well as his recently-tested will power to overcome adversities, Gough answered the giant wrestler's call for someone from the crowd, and in only two minutes Gough had pinned the carnival wrestler to the mat, shattering the showman's huge, hairy arm in the process.

Bisch Turner, a friendly man who was putting on the sideshow, witnessed the encounter and immediately offered Gough the carnival's strongman position—now vacant due to the broken arm. Gough accepted the job on the spot and Turner agreed to pay him $1 a day and furnish his meals. In addition to his work at the sideshow as a wrestler and strongman, Gough did odd jobs around the carnival grounds before and after the shows.[16]

Wearing a thick, coarse beard to help conceal his twisted and scarred face, Gough, tipping the scales now at 250 pounds, traveled across the south with the Brown & Dyers Carnival. In the sports arena he would wrestle all comers. But, after the matches, he would make a quick exit off the rear of the platform and return donned in a gold-and-black, leopard-skin suit as the strongman for an adjoining sideshow. Gough said of his early carnival days:

> *We didn't have much money for new equipment so we kept straightening out the bar after every act. It had been bent and straightened out so much it was ready to shred. [One day] I had the center of the bar in my teeth with three men hanging on each side, their feet off the floor, when it split. Steel splinters were rammed into the roof of my mouth. I couldn't holler, and the fellows kept right on tugging. It was awful. I had to have a couple of teeth pulled out with pliers. It left me sick* for *days and after that I gave up the sideshow idea.*[17]

Out of a job, Gough decided to enter the thrilling world of daredevil antics. One of his main stunts was to hang by his teeth on a rope suspended from a plane. Gough explained: "I had to demonstrate to the pilot that I could lift a 500-pound weight with my teeth before he would ever take me up."[18] Once, high above an enthusiastic crowd of spectators staring motionless toward the heavens, Gough even walked from the wobbling wing of an airplane to the wing of another airplane while in mid-flight.[19]

Trouble continued to haunt him, however, and while in Toledo, Ohio, trying to join up with a traveling vaudeville troupe, he was interrogated by local police and ultimately arrested on "suspicion." The account of the arrest passed down through the years is that a leery storekeeper, assuming that Gough was a thug because of his unusual looks, immediately summoned the police. Refusing to go peacefully, Gough protested, and the longer he objected to the arrest the more violent he became. Reports say Gough nearly tore the Toledo jail down before he was released.[20] The Toledo spectacle didn't sit well with many people and apparently Gough landed in an observation ward.

Upon his release, and faced with the sudden cut in his finan-

cial status, Gough decided he would take up prize-fighting. Sad to say, however, the fighting never really progressed past a few fights in barrooms. His fighting led him to Toronto, Canada, where he landed a job with the local Elks Club doing an act called a "resisto" performance, in which he would "resist" the efforts of a half-dozen men. Struggling frantically, the opponents would try to remove Gough from the stage, but never succeeded.

Moving to other adventures, Gough then found himself wrestling a bear in a traveling carnival for a living. Gough said at the time that with himself, the bear, an ossified man a mummy and his partner all sleeping in the rear compartment of a small truck, it got too stuffy for him—adding that the hot Florida weather didn't help the situation.[21]

Sometime in those early years of travel he began to be billed as "The World's Miracle Strong Man." It was a title that the promoters loved. But as the account of his extraordinary life continued to spread far and wide, even more vivid and exciting honors came his way. Within months of his association with the Brown & Dyers Carnival the young Calvert City native was hailed as "The Strongest Man on Earth," "The World's Most Sensational Strong Man," and "The Daringest Daredevil in the World."[22] Billings that would later come along included, 'The Roughest, Toughest, Fightingest Daredevil in the Business; "The World's Iron Man;" and "The Hercules of modern Days."

Setting a course that would allow him to conquer more fields and display his new-found strength, Gough began weightlifting in earnest. Within two years he had broken numerous standing records by true heavyweights of the profession. By 1925 he was openly accepting challenges from any and all opponents, but, as the faded, yellow newspapers clippings report none could triumph over him.

To further substantiate Gough's claim as the "World's Strongest Man," Dr. John Hewins Kern, the friend he had made several years earlier in New York, agreed to witness Gough's latest feats of strength. Afterwards, in a book on physical culture, Kern wrote that Gough was, "one of the strongest men the writer has ever met."[23] **[Ed. note: Travis is referring to Kern's book, *Vigorous Manhood,* published by the Charles Renard Corporatioo in 1925. Kern relates having seen Gough tear four decks of cards at one time, bend heavy steel bars, and, most amazing, bite a standard Yale key in half.]**

During the years between 1922 and 1927 Gough toured every state in the union performing his spectacular feats of strength, and the press splashed his story across the front pages of newspapers from New York to Los Angeles and from Detroit to Dallas.

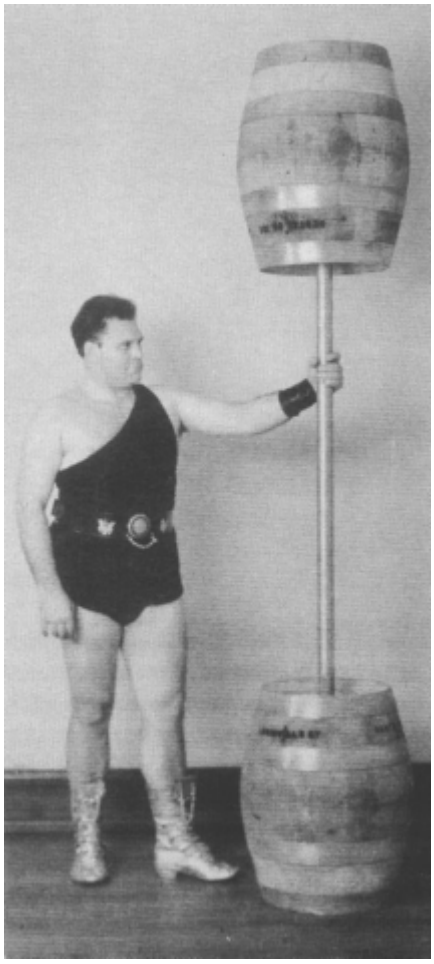
During his travels in the mid-1920s he also picked up what would become his "signature" stunt—allowing a vehicle, from an automobile to a semi-truck, to run over him. Among Gough's other feats of strength were the following:

✪A tug of war with 40 men pulling on ropes tied to each arm;
✪A tug of war with a team of horses tied to one arm and a five-ton truck pulling on the other arm (history records that once when he performed this stunt "the rear wheels of the truck spun and the horses strained motionless in their tracks.")[24]
✪ Dangling from a rope tied to an airplane while holding on to the rope with noting but his teeth while carrying 50-pound weights in each hand;
✪Wrapping iron bars around his arm;
✪Taking a steel wagon wheel and making a bracelet out of it;
✪Popping steel bands wrapped around his biceps;
✪Shattering a 4" by 4" board over the crown of his head by grasping both ends with his hands and pulling down;
✪Performing numerous "resisto-strength" stunts; (this included making himself so heavy and stationary that large groups of men were unable to budge him from his position);
✪Allowing 14 men to hang from an iron bar he held in his mouth:
✪A tug-of-war against four men with just the strength of four of his fingers:
✪Tossing around a huge, lo-foot barbell made from two full beer barrels, one on each end of a heavy iron pipe;
✪Biting keys in half;
✪Biting five-eighths inch spikes in half;
✪Bending a 14" piece of one-half inch thick iron rod over the back of his neck;
✪Driving 20-penny spikes into a board with his bare hands;
✪Lifting 600 pounds by just his teeth,
✪Performing lifts of 4,001-pounds (a test of strength that broke Warren Lincoln Travis' previous record. Gough's endeavor took place at Spanish Fort, an early amusement park in New Orleans. It was witnessed by Captain Payne and Lieut. Samuel Levy, both of the United States Service.);25
✪Lifting the front half of a Model A Ford with just one hand;
✪Lifting entire automobiles;
✪Having a car placed on a lift: standing under the car; having the lift slowly lowered and then holding up the automobile in the air:
✪Placing a mouthpiece in his teeth that had been made fast to a tree and then letting 20 men try to pull him loose;
✪Permitting any man of any size to whip his body repeatedly with a large iron bar;
✪Wrapping a semi-steel slab, 2 1/2 inches wide and 1/2 inch thick, around his arm in 10 seconds, a feat that was reportedly never duplicated: and
✪Juggling a 300-pound anvil, pitching it in the air, catching it on the drop, then tossing it back in the air and catching it again.[26]

Similar stunts were performed by other strongmen of the day, but the fact that Gough had previously been a hopeless invalid made his accomplishments doubly impressive. Between his vaudeville engagements, Cough fulfilled booking contracts at such annual attractions as the Florida State Fair, the Indiana State Fair, and the Wisconsin State Fair. In Massachusetts he garnered tremendous press coverage when he played the Boston Gardens.

While the nation's leading newspapers were splashing his story and picture on page one, magazines and supplements were also hurriedly featuring full page articles about him, Numerous books told of his successful recovery: radio was touting his name: and movie newsreels kept the rest of the world up to date on his antics. Unfortunately vaudeville, which had been such a significant part of the American culture during the first decades of the 1900s, was slowly dying out. So with a head full of new ideas, Gough returned home to Kentucky.

In a front-page article in February 1927, ***The Tribune-Democrat*** welcomed him home from Chicago. The story went on to tell how Gough had been playing the vaudeville theaters and that he was now in Benton for three months of intensive physical training in preparation for a wrestling match with John Pesek, one of the world's champion grapplers.[27] According to the article, the forthcoming wrestling match was the result of a claim made in St, Louis by Gough that strength was superior to wrestling science. Gough boasted "he was able to break any hold that any wrestler might try to take upon him." The news story further reported that Gough's challenge had been accepted and that Pesek, who at the time had only recently won the right to meet Stetcher of Iowa for the Diamond Belt, had demanded a demonstration in a St. Louis gymnasium. The try-out contest was held, and Pesek, the press reported, was unable to hold his challenger by any methods—Gough's predictions were correct However, Pesek stated that he believed he could defeat Gough in a formal match.[28]



GOUGH PREPARES TO LIFT TWO BARRELS OF OERTEL'S BEER AS A PUBLICITY STUNT.

The ***Paducah Evening Sun*** also gave Gough front-page coverage on his return, plus it included the following signed state ment from John Pesek concerning Gough's wrestling abilities:

> *To whom it may concern:*
> *I, John Pesek, will personally* verify that I do *not believe any wrestler in the world (excluding myself or Stetcher) will ever hold Galen Gough, professional strong man, to the mat on taking hold, but that Gough will break the hold.*
>
> *In a private test Gough proved to me that he is what he claims to be and is the strongest man I ever met . . .He breaks holds applied by me that I have held on the best of champions . . . However, I believe in a contest that I will defeat him, but not without my best efforts.*[29]

Massive headlines welcomed Gough's return to western Kentucky in the spring of 1927. After years of rejection, the people of Marshall and surrounding counties were cautiously beginning to embrace the World War I veteran. "Galen Gough Home to Train for Big Wrestling Match" "Ex-Marine, Disabled in World War, Now One of the Strongest Men in the World Is at Home in Benton;" and "Galen Gough of Benton, War Veteran, Will Wrestle Pesek" were but a few of the headlines proclaiming his recovery from hopeless paralysis and his return home as "The World's strongest Man."

Gough's fame continued to grow in the cities throughout his native western Kentucky. He also began writing weekly articles for the Paducah newspaper explaining the secrets of physical culture and how the average person could improve his/her health and increase bodily strength at the same time. He called his column "'Steps to Supremacy of Strength, Exercise and Diet in Physical Culture"' by Galen Gough, World Renowned Strong Man Director of Physical Culture." The weekly articles included tips on health, strength, dieting, fasting, and exercise.

The year 1927 was one of ups and downs for Gough. Not only had he performed triumphantly before throngs of cheering and supportive friends and fans, it was also the year he received his first really "big break." Bernarr Macfadden publisher of both nationally-recognized physical culture magazines and books on health and fitness printed a series on Gough in his periodicals. The articles described him as 'The Modern Hercules Who Defies the World in Feats of Strength."

Bernarr Macfadden, the "father of physical culture"-wild hair and all—had become a household name. His publications were successful among health-conscious people across America. The most famous in his long list of magazines was ***Physical Culture.*** In September of 1928 Gough was featured in that periodical in an article detailing his life story and his many accomplishments.[30] Macfadden knew Gough would be a tremendous asset to his company, so the details were soon ironed out and near the end of that year Gough joined Macfadden Publications. As Physical Culture and Strength Development Editor of the numerous publications, Gough immediately began writing a weekly column for MacFadden's ***New York Evening Graphic.*** Its staff was made up of a combination of highly competent old pros as well as young cubs who were to become household names in later years—among them, Walter Winchell, Ed Sullivan (with whom Gough became good friends), John W. Vandercook, Fulton Oursler, and Grace Perkins.[31]

Gough found himself right at home working for the ***Graphic*** and in January 1929, the newspaper's magazine section carried a full-page feature about his remarkable recovery. Banner headlines described him as "A New Sandow Whose Strength Grew Gut of a

Body Crippled in War!" The article, written by Joseph Applegate, featured a huge picture of Gough tearing Manhattan telephone books in half and a second picture of him being run over by a seven-ton, ***New York Graphic*** delivery truck.[32]

Soon, Gough began using 30-day liquid fasts to purify his body—a formula he once said he got "from bears, alligators, snakes and other creatures who hibernate with no harm to their physical well-being." Eating no food and drinking only water, he would continue to perform his feats of strength throughout the month. By these actions he sought to prove the value of fasting and that he could retain his strength despite going without nourishing meals of any kind.

In the spring of 1930, Gough started writing for another New York publishing firm, and he was immediately given his own department and named director of the Health Service Bureau of the magazine, ***Psychology.*** Gough's monthly articles for the magazine were lengthy, yet informative. In them he would elaborate on his own experiences and tell how readers could overcome similar obstacles in their lives. The editor of the magazine touted Gough's strength printing such banner headlines as "Let the World's Strongest Man Teach You How to be Strong."

But problems with drinking and fighting were again surfacing—so Gough returned to the Brooklyn Naval Hospital. There he hoped to find solace. Hospital administrators, now eager to accommodate and cooperate with the renowned ex-Marine, allowed him to rest and recuperate. During his stay he also received some medical attention for his scars. But, as he remembered, the facial work was somewhat lacking.

No matter how hard Gough tried, his roller coaster ride through life didn't seem to want to stop while he was on top. For years problems hid around every comer. Sadly, 1931 would also have its share. By then he was out of the hospital, and most of that year Gough could be found tossing wrestlers at Revere Beach, Massachusetts, and working with a vaudeville show in Boston. During the long summer months, he was introduced to a local, prominent socialite by the name of Virginia Dodge Taylor. Although the relationship between Gough and Taylor may have started on a friendly basis, it didn't end that way.

On August 3, 1931 Gough filed a $25,000 lawsuit in Suffolk County Superior Court charging that "Mrs. Taylor expressed love for him and admiration for his physical prowess and his robust physique for the purpose of inciting him to tight Charles Merriman, a local man. And, that as a result of the slashing he received from a razor wielded by Merriman, he was incapacitated."[33]

Once again the newspapers had a "field-day" at Gough's expense. ***The Boston Post's*** headline screamed, "Strong Man Sues Heiress: charges Mrs. Taylor Invited Him To Fight Man Who Injured Him —Asks for $25,000"[34] The embarrassing case lasted for months with no settlement. As might be expected, the "Bean Town" incident, and the substantial coverage it received in the New York papers, didn't sit well with his publishers and ultimately cost him his job as a writer and an editor.[35] So Gough left Boston for California. With the carnival, circus, and vaudeville days behind him, he saw only one thing to do—pack his bags and head for Hollywood.

His tough looks, the source of so many of his problems, landed him assorted small parts in numerous releases, but two of the first films he appeared in were classic Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer pictures. In 1930 he was an extra in the prison epic ***The Big House*** with Wallace Berry and Chester Morris. Within two years time Gough had associated himself with one of the premiere studios in Hollywood and had appeared in two of the biggest movies in the history of film. He had offers coming in regularly for work as an extra.

While in California Gough also found time to author a weekly column in Hollywood's ***Filmograph—*** publication devoted to recording the various studios' weekly activities. He called his new column "Reconditioning Movie Stars" and it was modeled after his former ***New York Evening Graphic*** feature. Along the way he acquired two honorary degrees which he no doubt believed would add more credence to his articles. One of the degrees was a "Doctor of Psychology" and the second was a Doctor of Metaphysics."

Just prior to his numerous California activities he had managed to write his first book— ***Health Psychology: Mental and Physical Coordination.*** *The* book, dedicated to his friend and business manager W. J. Schoonmaker, was published by Psychology Publishing of New York.[36] It was a book of principles about "dynamic power, strength and mental vigor through controlled resistance and directed thought." It also carried personal testimonies about Gough's strength by such professionals as Bernarr Macfadden; Carl Easton Williams, editor of ***Physical Culture*** magazine: Dr. Henry Knight Miller, editor of ***Psychology*** magazine; and John Pesek, the professional wrestler.[37]

Although ***Health Psychology*** was only somewhat successful when first published, it was instrumental in creating yet another set-back in his life. ***True*** magazine reported the events this way:

> *A young girl read both the weekly articles and his book and promptly declared herself in love with him. He took her under his wing, taught her how to tear up small directories and built up her reputation in films and newspapers as Hollywood's strongest woman. [Her former boyfriend] cashed several checks using Gough's name and was jailed, and when Gough returned for the hearing he found the girl had moved into his apartment. Gough recalled that 'she cried and kept getting more and more hysterical until I told her she could stay . . .When I suggested we have a couple of drinks she was all set to celebrate. When she had three or four drinks in her she began to talk about what she really wanted and that was $1,000. Her boyfriend, the forger, needed it for his defense and she was trying to get it out of me. I tried to toss her out of the apartment, but when she began struggling and kicking me I left her and walked out. The next day I was arrested for assault with intent to kill. What the papers didn't do with that story: "Strong Man Versus Strong Woman," "Doctor Attacks Girl," "Girl Throws Strong Man Out," were some of the headlines. She had me charged with everything on the docket from kidnapping and moral charges to attempt to kill. She even got through an indictment on the latter charge,*

but I was finally tried on simple assault. I pled guilty to trying to toss her out of my apartment and took a few weeks in jail to repent.'[38]

This time Gough's troubles almost got the best of him. He roamed the country wildly—all the while questioning both his future and his past. In 1933 he ended up in Havana, Cuba. After several characteristic fights with the natives, Gough was labeled as an undesirable. The repeated run-ins with the Cuban authorities nearly sent him before a firing squad. Fortunately for him he managed to escape—but he was still suffering from severe manic depression. Even the fact that he barely got away with his life didn't cheer him up.[39]

Back in the states, Gough knew he had to come up with something bizarre that would both capture and hold the attention of the press and the public. So, while in Louisville, Kentucky, he announced that he would live in a large, steel cage and exist solely on Oertel's Beer for 30 days—all the while performing his repertoire of incredible strength stunts. Just as with his water fast, Gough was to eat no food. But this time he would drink no other liquids either. To add more credibility to this latest endeavor, a group of Legionnaires from the Jefferson Post of the American Legion were hired to guard him around the clock. Standing watch in shifts, the duty of the sentries was to keep a 24-hour surveillance. At the end of the 30 days they would testify to the fact that he had lived solely on the Louisville beverage.

Commenting on the uniqueness of the feat, John F. Oertel, Jr., president of the Oertel's Company, said: "We don't want anybody to get the idea that we are advocating beer as an exclusive diet. We want to establish accurate scientific evidence that good beer will supply nourishment, sustain strength, keep the body in perfect condition and at the same time, not be in the least fattening."[40] Gough responded with these comments: "I am going to prove that Oertel's Beer will give you more energy, more pep, more vitality. I am going to prove that Oretel's Beer will keep your body in perfect condition."[41] Gough dropped more than 20 pounds during the 30-day trial. But, as promised at the outset of the stunt, when the month passed he allowed an 8,000 pound truck to drive over his body.

In 1934 Gough made his way back to California for another shot at the movies. Again he landed small parts in several pictures. Later, joking about his movie appearances, Gough said: "as long as I was a gangster, a pug, a wrestler or a strongman I was all right, but as soon as my role required acting, I was terrible."

In any case, he continued to attract tremendous press coverage for his miscellaneous antics, most especially his beer fasting. In Hollywood, Gough was registered in the plush Biltmore Hotel and, just as in Louisville, he was assigned 24-hour bodyguards to be sure he didn't eat. As before, he continued to perform his feats of strength on a daily basis while touting the qualities of the new beverage—Eastside Beer. When the stunt was over Gough had consumed 1,080 steins of the beverage. Universal Newsreels picked up on the stunt and included it in its movie newsreel packages. Newspapers and news magazines were also quick to feature the story.

While living in California, Gough decided he couldn't tolerate looking in the mirror and seeing his twisted face any longer. It was time for more plastic surgery. Of the successful operation he said "The mental effect of being able to smile like a regular human being is amazing. I feel like a different man: I no longer hesitate about meeting people, and my whole outlook on life has changed."[42]

Bucked up by his new appearance, Gough returned to Benton, Kentucky, in late 1936 and began writing a weekly feature for ***The Tribune-Democrat*** entitled "Health and Happiness." The articles highlighted many of the strongman's previous teachings on physical culture. In another regard, however, he went from one extreme to the other, and this big career change came immediately following the famous Los Angeles beer fast. What happened is that within a few weeks of his return to Kentucky he founded the Fidelity Temperance League and adamantly shunned all requests from previous "beer fast" sponsors.

As founder of the League, Gough wrote the following creed and had it published in the local newspaper: 'To promote Temperance as a moral issue . . . as the direct means of encouraging strength of courage and character. . . to disregard all influences which breed immorality. . . to give aid to the morally weak. . . to particularly persuade young people against patronizing the liquor interests . . . "[43]

It's unclear exactly what caused Gough's change of heart. It could have been that he got several stern lectures from his father, the Baptist minister, about the evils of drinking. Regardless, Gough did change his ways and spoke out the rest of his life against the destructive powers of intoxicating liquors, touting his temperance campaign to everyone who would listen.

As always, large crowds turned out at every opportunity to see and hear the legendary Gough. Newspapers reported that many of the crowds throughout western Kentucky were so large that spectators had to be turned away at the doors.[44] After lecturing for a while, Gough would often interrupt his program for strength exhibits such as bending iron rods, straightening horseshoes or pitching an anvil in the air. Gough refused to make anyone pay to hear his temperance talks, but with any monies that were raised through other means, he bought pamphlets and literature for his cause. Although it failed to reach the national prominence that he had hoped it would his Fidelity Temperance League continued.

Soon his life changed in another way, when he met the woman who became his life. Martha Louise Key had taught the eighth grade for two years in the local school when she met Galen at a revival at his father's church. Galen spoke that night about the evils of strong drink, and after a brief courtship they were married. Soon thereafter they left the area to spread the temperance gospel and drum up business for his strongman shows.

The Goughs traveled through Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Wisconsin during the first half of 1937 performing his truck run-over stunts. Various other reports said that during his time with the Hell Drivers, Gough himself would climb behind the wheel of a car, gun it up to 70 miles per hour and then deliberately turn it over.[45]

In Texas, Gough combined efforts with the ***Fort Worth Star Telegram*** to stage a benefit show for ***"The Star-Telegram*** Free Milk and Ice Fund." One article about the forthcoming show carried the headline, "Come Gut and Beat Mr. Gough." It explained that someone from the audience would be invited to take a steel bar 7 1/2

feet long and lash the strong man's bare arms and shoulders with all his might. It also outlined many of Gough's other stunts such as the spike-studded board the tug-of-war and letting men swing from a bar that he would hold in his mouth.

The Goughs continued their stay in Fort Worth, Texas, and in December 1937 a son, Wallace Key Gough, was born. "Papa Gough," as he was referred to in print, was excited about Wally's birth and immediately began to instill in the baby his physical culture teachings. Regardless of what the world might have thought of him as a strongman, Gough was determined to turn his son into the worlds strongest baby. Within days, the infant could stand on his own in his father's hand at an arm's length away. Within weeks he could swing on a trapeze and even chin himself on a walking stick that his father and mother would hold high in the air.

Newspaper, magazine, radio, and newsreel reporters were beating down a path to the Gough's door. It seemed that everyone wanted the latest reports on the boy wonder. But, with Gough's nose for news being what it was, reporters didn't have to beat too long or too hard. Wally's picture and story began appearing across the country. Gough knew then that he not only had a special son, but a special attraction. They hit the road and from coast to coast advertisements began touting the two of them as being "together in one great show."

At first Wally was dubbed "The Superboy," "The Strongest Baby in the World," and "Galen Gough II". But it was the title "Little Hercules" that stuck with him. While they were in Chicago in June 1938, the ***Chicago Tribune*** carried an article explaining some of the baby's stunts. It reported that the baby could chin himself twice on a cane being held by his parents.

Meanwhile, Gough was still garnering tremendous press coverage of his own. ***True: A Man's Magazine*** had just carried a lengthy feature titled "Galen Gough Challenges the World," detailing his long and phenomenal career from near death in the war to his rise to stardom as a professional strongman.[46] The feature also showed Gough in numerous photographs over the years. Elma Holloway, an author from Pasadena, California liked what she saw and read about Gough and included him in her 1938 book, ***Unsung Heroes.*** The book was a compilation of short biographies about 24 people who had overcome enormous difficulties in their lives to reach positions of leadership and authority in their respected fields. Gough shared a spot in the book with such noted people as Alvin York, William O. Douglas, Glenn Cunningham, William S. Dutton, William Allen White and Patrick J. Hurley.[47] The book was so popular that it was reprinted in 1939.

WALLY GOUGH, DUBBED "LITTLE HERCULES" BY HIS FATHER, RESISTS THE PULL OF TWO PONIES IN THIS PUBLICITY PHOTO. –*COURTESY GREG TRAVIS*

With Martha and Wally at his side, Gough set his sights back on southern California. The fame of "Little Hercules" was growing and in Los Angeles the youngster was offered an assortment of jobs advertising products. One of his endorsements was for "VIG," a new Vitamin B-l drink that, according to its ads, had a "million-dollar taste" that children would like and be "good for them" too.[48]

During the early 1940s, Gough found a new interest in judo. And, as always, he set out to be the very best at it. He studied, worked, practiced and before long became such an expert in the field that he authored a detailed and illustrated book titled ***Simplified Self Defense Thru an Improved System of Americanized Jiu-Jitsu and Judo.*** With World War II raging, and Gough being the loyal veteran that he was, he turned his energies to the cause at hand. Being the skilled master that he was in Jiu-Jitsu and Judo, Gough waged a crusade to retrain American soldiers in the art of self defense. "The Japanese have been masters of their system for 2,000 years. For every offensive thrust, there is also a defensive maneuver. The Japanese know the defenses of their own system, but not mine."[49] After carefully hearing him out, the Army finally concurred and with the strongman's direction, rewrote and reissued its basic field manual for unarmed combat. It was reported by those close to him that "one of Gough's proudest possessions" was a letter from the Adjutant General's office "soliciting his help in the revision" of the Army publication.[50] Little came of his work in terms of income, however.

Twenty-four years had passed since Gough's near death experience in 1918. The world had seen many changes and many tragedies, but Gough pressed on. For the next several years he waked at odd jobs around the movie studios, performed his strongman routine when he could, and often accepted an assortment of small jobs in an effort to support his family. Wally and Jill [his daughter born in 1942] continued to grow and Martha stuck by her husband's side. The years during the mid-1940s may have been hard on the strongman and his family, but a love for one another and an unyielding dedication to survive would soon put Gough on top once again.

One morning, as he sat with his wife at the breakfast table discussing their future plans, he picked up a pencil and began to sketch on a small piece of writing paper. She knew that from the earliest days of his youth he had wanted to use his artistic talents in some form, so she calmly suggested, "Why don't you paint a picture?" Soon the 300-pound giant was

letting an inner part of himself come forth like never before.

As he poured out his soul, his first creation, "The Christus"—a portrait of the head of Christ—was conceived in less than a day. The piece was so good that California art collector Clarence Greenwood paid $1,500[51] for half interest in it and declared, "I feel that this painting is destined for immortality."[52] In the meantime Gough's wife had secretly carried three more paintings to Felix Landau, proprietor of a nearby art gallery. Landau was overwhelmed by what he saw in Gough's paintings and told Mrs. Gough that he would give her husband an immediate one-man show if he could cane up with 25 more paintings. Within weeks Gough met his goal.

As expected Landau was impressed with the new creations and he honored his end of the bargain. A date was set for the show, the media were notified and invitations were sent. As collectors and art lovers filled the gallery, praise of Gough's work flooded the building. In 1949 the ***Los Angeles Examiner*** said Gough "set this town agog with his sensational paintings."[53] As the Gough originals continued, so did the rave reviews. Frank Perls, head of the Associated American Artists, one of the largest and most important galleries in the West said, "His work is stirring and brilliant. He has tremendous imagination and natural spontaneity. It is to be hoped that he doesn't read a book on painting and forget how to paint."[54]

Joseph Chabot, a well-known painter and art instructor and head of Chabot Galleries, said of Gough, His work is exceptional, expressing vitality, refreshing color sense and complete honesty of approach. It is representative of the best in true primitive art."[55]

Saddened on many occasions by the circumstances that plagued his life, Gough sought throughout the years to find that lasting peace within. By the time of his death, in 1962, he had finally found a portion of that peace through his painting.

Notes

[1]Interview with Leota Williams, 7 April 1993.
[2]Joe Creason, "The World's Strongest Artist," ***The Courier Journal Magazine*** (11 January 1953): 8.
[3]Galen Gough, "Up From an Invalid's Bed," ***Los Angeles Times Sunday Magazine*** (17 February 1935): 4.
[4]Ibid.; and Galen Gough, "It's Terrible to be Ugly," ***The American Weekly*** (2 October 1949): 5.
[5]Gough, "Invalid's Bed," 4.
[6]Gough, "Terrible," 5.
[7]George Stamford "Galen Gough Challenges The World," ***True: A Man's Magazine*** (February 1938), 74.
[8]Ibid.
[9]Bill Ladd, "Galen Gough has Switched to Murals," ***The Louisville Courier-Journal*** (17 November 1948).
[10]Stamford, "Challenges," 73.
[11]Gough, "Invalid's Bed," 4.
[12]Stamford, "Challenges," 75.
[13]Ibid.
[14]Joe Creason, "The World's Strongest Artist" ***The Courier-Journal Magazine*** (11 January, 1953): 7.
[15]Ibid.
[16]Arthur H. Howland, "The Miracle of Galen Gough" ***Psychology: Health, Happiness, Success*** (September 1920): 36.
[17]Stamford, "Challenges," 75.
[18]Ibid, 113.
[19]Interview with Joe Howard, 14 April 1993.
[20]Stamford, "Challenges," 113.
[21]Ibid.
[22] Creason, "World's Strongest Artist" 7.
[23]Flora Kaiser, "This Paralyzed Ex-Marine is Now One of the Strongest of Men," ***The St. Louis Globe-Democrat Magazine*** (6 March 1927).
[24]Personal files of S. Rayburn Watkins, Louisville, Kentucky.
[25] Howland, 'Miracle," 79.
[26]A compilation of feats from selected newspaper articles and eyewitness accounts of Gough's performance.
[27]"Galen Gough Home To Train for Big Wrestling Match," ***The Tribune-Democrat*** (18 February 1927): 1.
[28]Ibid.
[29]"Galen Gough of Benton, War Veteran, Will Wrestle Pesek," ***The Paducah Evening Sun*** (21 February 1927): 1.
[30]"From Hopeless Paralysis to Herculean Strength," ***Physical Culture*** (September 1928): 57.
[31]William E. Lickfield, ***The New York Graphic: The World's Zaniest Newspaper*** (1964), inside jacket.
[32]Joseph H. Applegate, "A New 'Sandow' Whose Strength Grew Out of a Body Crippled in War!" ***The New York Graphic (5*** January 1929): 1
[33]"Strong Man Sues Heiress," ***The Boston Post*** (4 August 1931).
[34]Ibid.
[35]Gough, "Terrible," 5.
[36]Galen Gough, **Health Psychology; Mental and Physical Coordination"** (New York: Psychology Publishing, 1930).
[37]Ibid.
[38]Stamford, "Challenges," 116.
[39]Ibid.
[40]"Physical Culture Director and Lecturer Starts Test Tuesday to Prove Person Can Live Solely on Beer; Plans Feats of Strength," ***The Courier-Journal*** (12 November 1933): 1.
[41]"Legionnaires Guard Gough to Prove That He Lives Solely on Oertel's Beer," ***The Courier-Journal*** (17 November 1933): 1.
[42]"Film Strong Man Loses Old Scars," ***Los Angeles Examiner*** (16 January 1936).
[43]"Galen Gough Speaks at Sinking Springs," ***Murray Ledger & Times*** (2 July 1936).
[44]"Record Crowd Hears Gough in Benton," ***Murray Ledger & Times*** (9 July 1936).
[45]Interview with Martha Gough, August 1992.
[46]Stamford "Challenges," 117.
[47]Elma Holloway, ***Unsung Heroes,*** 1938.
[48]VIG advertisement.
[49]Personal files of S. Rayburn Watkins, Louisville, Kentucky.
[50]Ibid.
[51]Creason, 'World's Strongest Artist," 7.
[52]Ezra Goodman, "Cripple, to Strong Man, to Painter," ***The St. Louis Globe-Democrat*** (27 March 1949).
[53]Kay English, "Primitive Artists Open New Galleries Monday," ***The Los Angeles Examiner*** (11 September 1949).
[54]Goodman, "Cripple to Painter."
[55]Ibid.

We are sorry to report that California's Dr. Charles Moss recently passed away. Dr. Moss was one of the stalwarts of the Oldeime Barbell and Strongman Association as well as a Patron of *Iron Game History*. His many contributions to the game will be sorely missed as will his kindness, humor and compassion for others. Our deepest sympathy is extended to his family and close friends.

Dear *IGH*,

The thirteenth annual reunion of the Association of Oldetime Barbell and Strongmen was of particular interest to me because one of the guests of honor was one of my contemporaries, Joe Abbenda. I remember Joe well from 1958, '59, and the early '60s. I was also delightfully astonished when a handsome gentleman walked over to me and identified himself as Morty Friedman. Morty was one of our old Bronx Union gang forty-five years ago and I hadn't seen him in forty years. What great memories.

The Bronx Union YMCA was one of the unforgettable havens of Iron Game devotees back in the late 1940s and early 1950s. It produced some outstanding bodybuilders and professional wrestlers. But more about that at another time.

Dr. Terry Todd's introduction of Joe Abbenda brought back memories of many other bodybuilding luminaries of the period like Elmo Santiago, Ken Hall, Leroy Colbert and Arthur Harris. Terry recalled how Joe first announced his arrival on the bodybuilding scene by winning the 1959 Teenage Mr. America title. How well do I remember that this was the era of bodybuilders being obligated to also prove themselves to be competitive weightlifters in order to be approved by the A.A.U., which means that Joe Abbenda deserves even greater credit for having performed three credible Olympic lifts to satisfy the powers that were. Joe then went on to win the 1962 Jr. Mr. America title, and compete for the title that was the dream of every young American bodybuilder: Mr. America. During this period the most prestigious bodybuilding title was the NABBA Mr. Universe held in London. The British imposed no absurdly inappropriate weightlifting obligations upon bodybuilders whose muscular development qualified them to enter the competition. It was a banner year for Joe Abbenda. He went to London and became the amateur NABBA Mr. Universe. There was one more title to win and 1963 found him back in London where he was declared the professional Mr. Universe.

Joe Abbenda recalled how, prior to Schwarzenegger, there was no money in bodybuilding. For that reason and because he had won the titles he wanted Joe Abbenda went back to school and today he is a respected attorney. Bravo Joe.

The guests of honor are living testimonies to the fact that iron game athletes who remain active can, to some degree, postpone the departure of youth. Al Berger, former ***Strength & Health*** coverman, belies the reality that he is aproaching the 80 year mark. He personally trains his pupils in his fitness club in Haverford, Pennsylvania and is a sterling example of what he preaches.

Dr. Hy Schaffer is a chiropractic physician who is an inspiration to all who know him. He was an exceptional 132 pound weightlifter in the 1940s and had a fine physique. Dr. Hy is always on hand at the reunions and he certainly deserves the honor bestowed upon him.

Because the third honoree was Al Thomas, my good friend I was quite pleased when Dr. Jan Todd addressed the audience to remind everyone of the countless great articles written by Al through the years for Mabel and Peary Rader's ***Iron Man*** magazine. Al Thomas' articles gave exposure to strong, muscular women bodybuilders and weightlifters. Al's intertesting articles were informative and motivational and furthered women's participation in the iron game more than anything before or since. Jan Todd was a very strong, world class powerlifter who gives credit to articles by Al Thomas for much of her lifting inspiration. Unfortunately, Al Thomas was not able to attend this year's reunion and to receive his well-deserved honor.

The exhibitions which take place at the Oldetime Barbell and Strongmen reunions are unequaled anywhere else. This night was no exception. The attendees were treated to a real strength show by the Powerstars—composed that night of John Brookfield, Dennis Rogers, Greg Ernst and Frank Civattone. This is a really well organized, fast-paced, exciting professional group of strongmen. First a platform was quickly erected upon which sat eight or ten men weighing 170 to 215 pounds. Greg Ernst then performed a backlift of all those men. Shades of Paul Anderson. Frank Civattone then proceeded to blow up a hot water bottle until it exploded. Next, Dennis Rogers, the man with vise-length hand strength, bent steel bars, and then tore a pack of playing cards in front and later, behind his back. He then had his wrists and upper arms shackeled so effectively that it looked as though he was helpless. Usually a person is not able to generate much power in doing lateral raises, but to escape from the shackes, Dennis would have to utilize the same muscles normally brought into play while performing lateral raises. With a burst of ferocious muscle power, he burst the shackles that bound him and acknowledged a round of tremendous applause. The Powerstars are all world class strongmen who must be seen by all who are interested in real feats of strength.

Probably many of us have been subjected to the ordeal of shaking hands with someone who is not really interested in a simple greeting but rather in turning it into an absurd contest of strength. I was personally impressed when I shook hands with John Brookfield Here is a man who actually has the gripping strength to crush the hands of most of us. Yet his handshake was firm but very gentle. This is a man who knows what he is capable of and consequently has nothing to prove. He has my respect

Thanks again to Vic Boff for an enjoyable evening.

Ken "Leo" Rosa, D.C.
Bronx, New York