

Peary and Mabel Rader Collection 1931-1989

Abstract

The Peary and Mabel Rader Collection contains materials on their professional and personal lives in Alliance, Nebraska. Together, Peary and Mabel Rader published *Iron Man Magazine* from the 1930s through the 1980s, a magazine regularly lauded by its readers for producing quality weightlifting content. In addition to *Iron Man Magazine*, Peary and Mabel Rader were involved in multiple business ventures, including providing printing services and developing and selling weightlifting equipment, dietary supplements, and weightlifting courses. They were involved in planning and judging weightlifting, powerlifting, and bodybuilding competitions, and were personally interested in health, wellness, and physical fitness.



SUMMARY INFORMATION

Size of Collection: 9 boxes, 13.5 linear feet

Creator: Rader, Mabel

Rader, Peary

Acquisition Info: Gift of Jan and Terry Todd, 1991-1992.

Accruals: Accruals are expected.

Language(s): English.

Processed By: Madeline Fillip, Gillian Morton, and Kaitlyn Tuck 2019.

Conservation Notes: This collection is in good condition.

RIGHTS AND ACCESS

Access Restrictions

The collection is open for research. Though the Stark Center retains the right to limit the use of the Peary and Mabel Rader Collection under certain conditions. For any questions about the collection, you can contact the Stark Center by email at info@starkcenter.org or call (512) 471-4890.

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INFORMATION FOR RESEARCHERS

Preferred Citation

Peary and Mabel Rader Collection, The H.J. Lutcher Stark Center for Physical Culture & Sports, The University of Texas at Austin.

Separated Material

Approximately fifty-four *Iron Man Magazine* serials were separated from the collection and cataloged separately. You can learn more about the serials by contacting the Stark Center by email at info@starkcenter.org or call (512) 471-4890.



BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Peary Rader, 1909-1991, was born in Peru, Nebraska on October 17, 1909 and was the oldest of four children. His family moved to the Alliance, Nebraska area when he was four and this is where Peary would live for the rest of his life. Peary Rader became interested in weightlifting at the age of twelve when his father bought him a Farmer Burns wrestling course. Weightlifting would remain a lifelong passion. In adulthood, he lifted weights competitively and was a heavyweight champion. In 1936, Peary married Mabel Kirchner, who was born in June of 1917 and was the youngest of 9 children. Peary and Mabel Rader had two sons together, Gene, born in 1938, and Jack, born in 1939.

In 1936, when Peary was employed as a maintenance man at the Emerson Street School, he brought a broken ditto copier home from work and fixed it. He printed 50 copies of *Physical Culture*, which would become *Iron Man Magazine* in the second issue, a periodical about weightlifting and physical culture. He mailed copies of the magazine to his friends and readership increased by word of mouth. Initial subscribers paid \$.15 an issue. Peary and Mabel Rader continued printing *Iron Man Magazine* through World War II (while Peary worked for the railroad), gaining a steadily growing readership and reputation for dependable insight on the iron game. *Iron Man Magazine* contained editorials about weightlifting, powerlifting, and bodybuilding techniques, as well as information about nutrition, health, and the life-extending and character-building benefits of these exercises. The magazine was notable among its many supporters for being a less commercial publication, dense with quality information and writing. *Iron Man Magazine* also regularly featured editorial content about exercise and health for women. At its height, the magazine had over 40,000 subscribers from around the world.

After World War II, Mabel and Peary decided to devote their lives to publishing the magazine full time. They bought an old barracks house and built a cinder block basement beneath it to serve as a gym, printing shop, and the *Iron Man Magazine* offices. Their house, located at 512 Black Hills Avenue in Alliance, Nebraska, would be the home of *Iron Man Magazine* until its sale to the competitive bodybuilder, Muscle Beach alum, and longtime fan of the magazine, John Balik in 1986. Peary Rader was the Editor, Owner, and Publisher of the magazine and Mabel Rader served in the capacity of Associate Editor and contributed to the magazine, including on topics about women's health and exercise. Peary and Mabel Rader had additional business ventures which included selling their own brand of exercise equipment, books, and training courses, providing printing services, and serving as stateside ambassadors for the sale of Società Nebiolo printing equipment. Peary Rader developed and sold protein-based supplements, contributing to its mainstream acceptance and commercialization starting in the 1950s. Peary and



Mabel eventually built a 12,000-foot building in the lot behind their home in order to house all of their expanding business pursuits.

Peary and Mabel Rader traveled extensively to bodybuilding, weightlifting, and powerlifting meets and competitions and were both voted into the hall of fame for all three sports for their achievements. Often, Peary would write articles about the competitions they attended and Mabel would photograph the events. Both Peary and Mabel Rader judged and refereed events, though Mabel was never a weightlifter herself. Mabel Rader obtained her Amateur Athletic Union referee's certificate and served as a judge for many physique (bodybuilding) competitions. In fact, she was the first woman to receive a National Referees card and she advocated for more women to be involved in competitions both as competitors and as referees. Peary Rader also advocated for the inclusion of more women in the sport.

During the 1960s, Peary served as the Mid-Western Region Amateur Athletic Union (A.A.U.) Weightlifting Chair. Mabel succeeded him in the role when his term limit expired in 1969, serving in this capacity until 1976. She also served on the board of the A.A.U. Powerlifting Committee's Women's Committee and was the first chairwoman of the U.S. Weightlifting Federation's Women's Committee in 1980. In this role, she petitioned the U.S. Weightlifting Federation Board to hold a women's national competition. Thanks in large part to her advocacy and promotion of the idea, the first women's national weightlifting event was held in 1981. In 1989, Peary was honored by the Association of Oldetime Barbell & Strongmen for his outstanding contributions to physical culture.

- Beckwith, Kim. "Mabel Lovera Rader: Never a Competitor, But Always a Champion." Paper presented at the North American Society for Sport History Annual Conference, Miami, FL, May 22-25, 2015.
- Daniel T. Hall and John D. Fair. "The Pioneers of Protein." *Iron Game History: The Journal of Physical Culture* 8, no. 3 (2004): 23-24.
- Todd, Jan. Interview with Kaitlyn Tuck, Gillian Morton, and Madeline Fillip. Rader/Iron Man Collection Informational Interview. Austin, September, 2019.
- Todd, Terry. "Our Best Man Gone." *Iron Game History: The Journal of Physical Culture* 2, no. 1 (1992): 1-4.



SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Peary and Mabel Rader Collection spans the years 1938-1989 with the bulk of the material dating from the 1950s, 1970s, and 1980s. The materials in the collection represent Peary and Mabel Rader's professional business and personal lives and are presented accordingly in six series.

The Iron Man Magazine Business Records series documents the work that went into publishing the Iron Man Magazine. The Finances subseries contains documents, including correspondence, regarding a \$20,000 business loan application in 1956-1957 to the Small Business Administration with the intent to purchase printing presses and expand the Iron Man business facility. A business ledger for Iron Man Magazine contains the financial accounts of the magazine for 1975, including a record of income via new subscriptions and subscription renewals. The Subscriptions subseries contains survey forms sent out by the magazine to collect reader feedback in the 1950s, in addition to handwritten reader feedback letters, and notecards documenting subscribers' addresses. The Advertising subscries contains a "Before and After" advertisement for the Marcy Barbell Company which was featured on the back cover of *Iron* Man Magazine beginning in the 1950s. The folder contains the "before" model photograph, a hand-drawn sketch of the advertisement, and the final printed advertisement. The Distribution and Mailing subseries contains lists of distribution addresses across the United States, including lists specifically for Los Angeles and the Bay Area, correspondence from major distributors, including Empire News Company and the Pacific News Company, and mailing forms and receipts from the U.S. Postal Service. The final subseries, Iron Man Magazine--Publication Information, contains copies of Iron Man Magazine, spanning 1953-1986, enclosed in manila envelopes with notes and statistics associated with each publication. These notes include the percentage of written content and advertisements in each issue.

The General Correspondence series contains incoming and outgoing correspondence of Mabel and Peary Rader. The Mabel Rader Correspondence subseries contains outgoing letters from Mabel Rader addressing subscription problems, such as changes in address, magazines that failed to arrive, and payments that were not received, as well as responding to printing requests, purchase inquiries, photograph payments, subscription renewals, and book prices. The Peary Rader Correspondence subseries contains incoming mail for Peary Rader and alphabetized folders of outgoing mail Peary sent regarding subscriptions, thank-you notes, payments for articles and photos, supply requests, exercise advice, and responses to ad requests.

The Peary and Mabel Rader Business Ventures series documents their other professional endeavors beyond publishing *Iron Man Magazine*, which includes their printing services, weightlifting equipment manufacturing activities, and their finances associated with these



business ventures and, to a lesser degree, their personal finances. The Finances subseries consists of Peary and Mabel Rader's financial ledger for 1975, which includes sections related to their businesses, such as books and courses, barbells, home gym plans, and the production of Muscle Bulk; sections related to costs of operations, such as repairs, wages, phone, lights, and interest insurance; and sections related to their personal finances, such as travel and medical expenses. The Printing Services subseries contains correspondence with Società Nebiolo and equipment manuals associated with Peary and Mabel Rader's contracted printing services business. The correspondence is from the 1950s, during which time Peary Rader frequently corresponded with Società Nebiolo, an Italian printing press manufacturer, coordinating the purchase of printing presses, discussing what he liked about their machines and what could be adjusted for the sale of their presses stateside, and enquiring if he could become a representative for Società Nebiolo in the United States. The subseries also includes returned manuscript correspondence for books that Peary Rader was unable to print, as well as equipment manuals associated with printing technologies. The final subseries, Weightlifting Equipment Manufacture, contains correspondence related to the manufacture and selling of weightlifting equipment, as well as weightlifting equipment manuals and diagrams. The correspondence is from the 1970s and 1980s, during which time Peary Rader corresponded with Tom Lincir, the international sales manager of the Ivanko Barbell Company, to place bulk orders for weightlifting equipment and accessories to sell; additionally, it contains dealer logs for weightlifting equipment, invoices, and handwritten orders and shipping notes.

The Nutrition, Vitamins, and Supplements series provides documentation of Peary Rader's growing interest in using protein and vitamins in supplements to aid bodybuilding. Peary and Mabel Rader advertised protein-based supplement products in *Iron Man Magazine*, wrote about the importance of the nutritional component to bodybuilding efforts in editorials, and worked to develop supplements for manufacture and sale. The series spans from approximately 1954-1981 and contains a wide array of materials including correspondence related to supplement development, sample order requests from pharmaceutical manufacturers, formulas, testing reports from chemists at nutritional laboratories, informational pamphlets about hormones, vitamins, and minerals, labels for products, and handwritten notes. The series also contains correspondence with Washington, D.C.-based lawyers Charles Pratt and Dwight James, who represented the collective interests of members of the National Vitamin Distributors Association (NVDA), of which Peary Rader was a member. This material includes documentation of a lawsuit by the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) regarding the restriction of formula ingredients and labeling claims of dietary food supplements from the years 1963-1964. Also included are newsletters from the NVDA and Peary Rader's statement from an FDA hearing held in Kansas City on May 14th, 1963. In a letter to Charles Pratt on January 4th, 1964, Peary Rader says he is no longer going to pursue the development, approval, and sale of three products:



Wheat Germ Oil, Super Protein, and Complete (a vitamin product). This appears to have been the result of the tightening of restrictions by the FDA, effectively marking the end of Peary's involvement with this pursuit.

The Weightlifting Competitions series documents Peary and Mabel Rader's involvement in weightlifting competitions from the 1960s to the 1970s. It contains four files: Age Group Clean and Jerk; International Powerlifting Federation; Ron Collins Photographs; and General Weightlifting Competition-Related Documents. The Age Group Clean and Jerk file spans from 1974 to 1975 and contains records of Peary Rader's activities in the role of National Chairman of the Mid-Western Amateur Athletic Union, specifically the organization of a competition for teenagers featuring the Clean and Jerk method of weightlifting. This file includes correspondence requesting information about the meet, meet results, competition entry forms, and flyer ads for the competition. The International Powerlifting Federation file contains documents from 1975 including rules for the International Powerlifting Federation (IPF) and two rolls of punch tape (which contain the same information) along with a letter from Clay Patterson at the IPF thanking Peary Rader for the offer to print the new rules in Iron Man Magazine. The Ron Collins Photographs file spans the years 1962 to 1965 and contains photographs of weightlifter Ron Collins performing at meets (including the World Powerlifting Championships), being awarded a Champion of Champions Trophy, and performing the following techniques: the deadlift, the bench press, the training squat, and gripwork. The General Weightlifting Competition-Related Documents file contains documents from the 1960s and 1970s about competitive weightlifting including correspondence, meet information, rules and regulations, and newspaper clippings, among other assorted documents related to weightlifting competitions.

The Publications series consists of several periodicals pertaining to practices for the health and wellness of the mind and body dating from 1938-1960 and several newsletters from General Electric and the U.S. Government Printing Office from the late 1950s and the early 1960s. Also included in this series are a member booklet from the Strength League, and the book *The Drama of Fluorine* by Dr. Leo Spira, and several *Individual Psychology* publications containing case studies done by Dr. Alfred Adler, and a pamphlet from the *International Paper Company*.



COLLECTION INVENTORY

Series 1: Iron Man Magazine Business Records, 1953-1986

This series consists of five subseries: 1.1, Finances; 1.2, Subscriptions; 1.3, Advertising; 1.4, Distribution and Mailing; and 1.5, *Iron Man Magazine* -- Publication Information

Subseries 1.1: Finances, 1956-1975

Folder Title	Box Number	Folder Number
Business Expansion Loan, 1956	1	1
Business Expansion Loan, 1957	1	2
Business Ledger, <i>Iron Man Magazine</i> , 1975	1	3

Subscriptions, 1954-1959

Folder Title	Box Number	Folder Number
Forms for Subscription Renewal and Reader Feedback Survey, circa 1950s	1	4-6
Subscription Renewal Letters and Written Reader Feedback, 1954-1959	1	7
Readers' Round-Up, written reader feedback, 1955-1956	1	8
Subscribers' Addresses, undated	1	9

Subseries 1.3: Advertising, circa 1950s

Folder Title	Box Number	Folder Number
Marcy Barbell Co. Before and After Advertisement, circa 1950s	9	1



Subseries 1.4: Distribution and Mailing, 1956-1960

Folder Title	Box Number	Folder Number
Distribution Mailing Addresses and Locations in the United States with notes, circa 1950s	9	2
Correspondence from Distribution Companies, 1948-1959	1	10-11
U.S. Postal Service Mailing forms and Receipts, 1956-1960	1	12

Subseries 1.5: Iron Man Magazine -- Publication and Information, 1953-1986

Folder Title	Box Number	Folder Number
General Publication Notes, undated	1	13
1953-1954, Volume 13, No. 4 and 6	1	14
1954, Volume 14, No. 1 and 3	1	15
1956, Volume 15, No. 2 and 3	1	16
1956, Volume 15, No. 4, 5 and 6	1	17
1956, Volume 16, No. 1 and 2	1	18
1956-1957, Volume 16, No. 3 and 4	2	1
1957, Volume 16, No. 5 and 6	2	2
1957, Volume 17, No. 1 and 2	2	3
1957, Volume 17, No. 3 and 4	2	4
1958, Volume 17, No. 5 and 6	2	5
1958, Volume 18, No. 1, 2 and 3	2	6



Folder Title	Box Number	Folder Number
1959, Volume 18, No. 4 and 5	2	7
1976 - 1977, Volume 36, No. 1 and 2	2	8
1977, Volume 36, No. 3 and 4	2	9
1977, Volume 36, No. 5 and 6	2	10
1977-1978, Volume 37, No. 1 and 2	2	11
1978, Volume 37, No. 3 and 4	2	12
1978, Volume 37, No. 5 and 6	2	13
1978-1979, Volume 38, No. 1 and 2	2	14
1979, Volume 38, No. 3 and 4	2	15
1979, Volume 38, No. 5 and 6	3	1
1979-1980, Volume 39, No. 1 and 2	3	2
1980, Volume 39, No. 3 and 4	3	3
1980, Volume 39, No. 5 and 6	3	4
1980-1981, Volume 40, No. 1 and 2	3	5
1981, Volume 40, No. 3 and 4	3	6
1981, Volume 40, No. 5 and 6	3	7
1981-1982, Volume 41, No. 1 and 2	3	8
1982, Volume 41, No. 3 and 4	3	9
1982, Volume 41, No. 5 and 6	3	10
1982-1983, Volume 42, No. 1 and 2	3	11
1983, Volume 42, No. 3 and 4	3	12



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Folder Title	Box Number	Folder Number
1983, Volume 42, No. 5 and 6	3	13
1983-1984, Volume 43, No. 1 and 2	3	14
1984, Volume 43, No. 3 and 4	3	15
1984, Volume 43, No. 5 and 6	3	16
1984-1985, Volume 44, No. 1 and 2	3	17
1985, Volume 44, No. 3 and 4	3	18
1985, Volume 44, No. 5 and 6	3	19
1985-1986, Volume 45, No. 1 and 2	4	1
1986, Volume 45, No. 3 and 4	4	2
1986, Volume 45, No. 5 and 6	4	3
1986, Volume 46, No. 1	4	4

Series 2: General Correspondence, 1948-1987

This series consists of two subseries: 2.1, Mabel Rader Correspondence; and 2.2, Peary Rader Correspondence.

Subseries 2.1: Mabel Rader Correspondence, 1973-1979

Folder Title	Box Number	Folder Number
Mabel Rader Outgoing Correspondence, 1973, 1975	4	5
Mabel Rader Outgoing Correspondence, 1976	4	6
Mabel Rader Outgoing Correspondence, 1977	4	7



Folder Title	Box Number	Folder Number
Mabel Rader Outgoing Correspondence, 1978	4	8-9
Mabel Rader Outgoing Correspondence, 1979, 1981, 1984, 1987, and undated	4	10

Subseries 2.2: Peary Rader Correspondence, 1948-1987

Folder Title	Box Number	Folder Number
Peary Rader Incoming Correspondence, 1948-1981	4	11-12
Peary Rader Outgoing Correspondence, A, 1980-1986	4	13
Peary Rader Outgoing Correspondence, B, 1979-1986	4	14
Peary Rader Outgoing Correspondence, C, 1979-1986	5	1
Peary Rader Outgoing Correspondence, D, 1986	5	2
Peary Rader Outgoing Correspondence, E, 1986	5	3
Peary Rader Outgoing Correspondence, F, 1956-1986	5	4
Peary Rader Outgoing Correspondence, H, 1978-1986	5	5-6
Peary Rader Outgoing Correspondence, I, 1957-1985	5	7
Peary Rader Outgoing Correspondence, J, 1979-1987	5	8



Folder Title	Box Number	Folder Number
Peary Rader Outgoing Correspondence, K, 1983-1986	5	9-10
Peary Rader Outgoing Correspondence, L, 1979-1988	5	11-13
Peary Rader Outgoing Correspondence, M, 1984-1988	5	14-15
Peary Rader Outgoing Correspondence, N, 1979-1986	6	1
Peary Rader Outgoing Correspondence, O, 1980-1986	6	2
Peary Rader Outgoing Correspondence, Q, 1980-1985	6	3
Peary Rader Outgoing Correspondence, R, 1979-1984	6	4-5
Peary Rader Outgoing Correspondence, R, 1985-1986	6	6
Peary Rader Outgoing Correspondence, S, 1956-1985	6	7
Peary Rader Outgoing Correspondence, T, 1983-1986	6	8
Peary Rader Outgoing Correspondence, U, 1976-1987	6	9
Peary Rader Outgoing Correspondence, V, 1980-1986	6	10
Peary Rader Outgoing Correspondence, W, 1983-1986	6	11



Series 3: Peary and Mabel Rader Business Ventures, 1956-1986

This series consists of three subseries: 3.1, Finances; 3.2, Printing Services; and 3.3, Weightlifting Equipment Manufacture.

Subseries 3.1: Finances, 1975-1981

Folder Title	Box Number	Folder Number
Peary and Mabel Rader Financial Ledger, 1975	6	12-13
General Financial, 1981 RESTRICTED	6	14

Subseries 3.2: Printing Services, 1956-1986

Folder Title	Box Number	Folder Number
Società Nebiolo Correspondence: Printing Press, 1956-1958	6	15-16
Printing Equipment Manuals and slides, 1960-1963	6	17
Printing Press Equipment Correspondence, 1964	6	18
Returned Manuscript Submissions for Printing Correspondence, 1981-1986	6	19

Subseries 3.3: Weightlifting Equipment Manufacture, 1952-1983

Folder Title	Box Number	Folder Number
Weightlifting Equipment Development Correspondence and Diagrams, 1952-1981	7	1



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Folder Title	Box Number	Folder Number
Ivanko Barbell Company, Tom Lincir, 1976-1983	7	2-3

Series 4: Nutrition, Vitamins, and Supplements, 1954-1981

Folder Title	Box Number	Folder Number
Food and Drug Administration Supplement Labeling Lawsuit, 1963	7	4
Food and Drug Administration Supplement Labeling Lawsuit, 1963- 1964	7	5-6
Food and Drug Administration Information and Label Information, 1960	7	7
Professional Foods, Orders and Invoices, 1954-1964	7	8
Nutritional Research Associates: Hormone Research and Brochures, 1954-1964	7	9
Dietary Supplement Labels, circa 1950s	7	10
Refined Milk Proteins: Research, Formulas, and Orders, 1957-1961	7	11
Supplement Development File, 1956-1962	7	12
General Supplement Development and Research File, 1951-1964	7	13
Correspondence, 1956-1981	7	14-15



Series 5: Weightlifting Competitions, 1962-1975

Folder Title	Box Number	Folder Number
Age Group Clean and Jerk, 1974-1975	8	1
International Powerlifting Federation, 1975	8	2
Ron Collins Weightlifting Photographs, 1962-1965	8	3
General Weightlifting Competition- Related Documents, 1951-1982	8	4

Series 6: Publications, 1931-1962

This series consists of two subseries: 6.1, Health and Wellness Publications; and 6.2, Newsletters.

Subseries 6.1: Health and Wellness Publications, 1931-1962

Folder Title	Box Number	Folder Number
Now You're a Health and Strength Leaguer and The Drama of Flourine, 1949-1953	8	5
Meditation Group for the New Age First Year, circa 1960	8	6
Meditation Group for the New Age Second Year, circa 1962	8	7
Individual Psychology Publications No. 1 and 19, 1931-1938	8	8
Individual Psychology Publications No. 20, 1938	8	9
Individual Psychology Publications No. 21, 1939	8	10



Subseries 6.2: Newsletters, 1955-1960

Folder Title	Box Number	Folder Number
U.S. Government Printing Office, Division of Public Documents Newsletter, circa 1950s	8	11-13
General Electric Public and Employee Relations News, 1955-1960	8	14
International Paper Company, <i>How to</i> Write Clearly, 1979	8	15



SUBJECT HEADINGS

Organizations

Amateur Athletic Union
Food and Drug Administration
Meditation Group for the New Age
Nutritional Research Associates, Inc.
Small Business Administration (United States)
Società Nebiolo Torino
United States. Government Printing Office.

People

Balik, John Fulkerson, Samuel C. MacFadden, Bernarr Rader, Mabel Rader, Peary Weider, Joe

Publications

Iron Man Magazine series

Subjects

Barbells

Bodybuilding

Dietary Supplements

Nutrition--Research--United States

Periodicals

Periodicals--Publishing

Powerlifting

Printing presses

Weight lifting