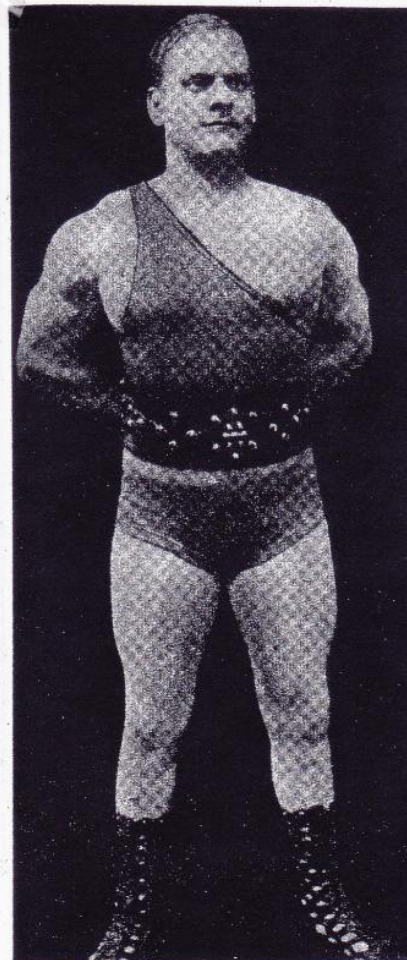




One of the most fabulous wrestling careers in history, was that of George Steadman. He was a wrestling champion for 30 years, retiring at the age of 54, while still holding the crown.



Warren Lincoln Travis was the center of one of the most controversial strength disputes on record. Read the interesting details here.

IN THE WORLD OF

MUSCLE
POWER
FEB '54

Strength

BY LEO GAUDREAU

Wrestlers are often prominently identified with the world of strength and while I don't really know whether or not George Steadman, old time British wrestling champion, had any experience with the weights, he appears to have been quite a physical robusto.

George Steadman, born February 20, 1846, at Asby, Westmoreland (England), was a typical British sportsman; an honest and honorable man with a long and illustrious career as a wrestler. He started wrestling very young and, even as a beginner, his strength and ability attracted attention. While still in his 'teens he was given excellent training and coaching and in 1866 he was good enough to meet one of the best men of that time. Soon afterwards, at Ullswater Sports, at a bodyweight of about 195 pounds, he won the all-weights competition. At Manchester (England), in 1868, he won his first important heavyweight victory and created a sensation in wrestling circles by defeating one of the very best men of his day.

These men wrestled in the Cumberland and Westmoreland style. The natural surroundings of this unique method of grappling is the picturesque North Country of England. It is a style of wrestling that had popular appeal only to the people of the North Country—the Cumberland and Westmoreland district. One

American traveller abroad, many years ago, described it as follows:

"The rivals shake hands, and then bending over with their heads on each other's shoulders and their bodies and legs bent at right angles, they clasp each other round the body and begin solemnly to waltz slowly around in a circle, waiting for the psychological moment to draw each other close in a fierce grip and with every muscle taut try to trip and throw the other."

There is more to the Cumberland and Westmoreland style of wrestling than that simple explanation; it is a style of wrestling that requires much agility and strength. George Steadman possessed these in an abundance. He was a big, powerful man: at the age of forty-six, when he weighed 259 pounds, his measurements were—height 5'11", thigh 25½" and calf 17¾". In his last ten years of wrestling activities his weight never changed, remaining constant within a couple of pounds. In spite of his great weight, as he threw one man after another, his actions have been described as "kittenish."

His last appearance was in August, 1900. At 54 years of age he was still able to defeat all of his opponents but found the going getting tougher and tougher. "These young beggars will be killing me in a bit"—was his observation as he sat (Continued on page 15)

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in his dressing tent—"Ave finished; a'll give 'em a chance." He stuck to his word and decision and after holding the Cumberland and Westmoreland championship for over thirty years, and probably winning more money in his career than any other wrestler (and saving the greater part of it), he settled down in Brough. Here he lived a fairly busy life as a farmer and in assisting his son Matt in the management of Castle Hotel. Matt Steadman was also a wrestler of considerable reputation.

Geordie, as he was affectionately called, although essentially a Cumberland and Westmoreland style of wrestler, was able to give a good account of himself in other methods of wrestling. Continental wrestlers came to England and defeated some of the best Cumberland and Westmoreland wrestlers with their style of wrestling—Graeco-Roman. When they wrestled Steadman though, it was a different story; he was able to add these to the list of foreign aspirants for which it had been his honor to defend the old country. In Paris, in 1897, he won a competition and the first prize (5,000 Francs). There were 32 competitors from England, America, Italy, Greece, Sweden, France and Australia. Great wrestlers like Tom Cannon and Antonio Pierri were defeated by Steadman at their own style of wrestling. Matt Hall, the Lancashire giant 6'7" tall and (Continued on page 58)