In The World Of Strength

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weighing 322 pounds, was defeated by Steadman so badly that he never again was able to participate in wrestling matches. George Steadman always gave convincing proof of his outstanding prowess.

Steadman died March 5, 1904, and people came from all over the countryside to pay their last respects. The pall-bearers were some of his old wrestling opponents, men of great prowess themselves—George Lowden, Hexham Clarke, J. Simpson, T. Elwood, R. Langley and T. Birbeck. So passed George Steadman, a dalesman with the love of clean wrestling in his blood, and the courage and the strength of his Viking forefathers who probably brought wrestling with them to the Cumberland coast between the years 870 and 920.

Greybeards like to look back on the past and yearn for "the good old days." This, despite the fact that the world has made progress in almost everything and anything. Personally, I like to delve into the past in order to better appreciate the present. I was looking through old PHYSICAL CULTURE magazines, vintage of 1920, and ran into the great controversy for a proposed Strong Man Contest. (Incidentally, PHYSICAL CULTURE magazine at that time ran to as many as 144 pages.)

It seems that everybody concerned had ideas for a Strong Man Contest, to decide who was the American Champion Strong Man. Alan Calvert, the "expert" of his day, had a peculiar scheme for a man that was supposed to have so much knowledge of strength. "Barbell lifting," wrote Calvert, "is a splendid medium of testing the strength—for those who are skilled in the use of barbells, but some lifts are unfair to those who are unfamiliar with barbells." He also eliminated back and harness lifting as being unfair. His idea was to invite "every man who thinks he is strong, and give him a chance." He wanted to give farmers, lumbermen, piano movers and such a chance to compete on equal terms on lifts that required no special training. A group of judges, according to Calvert's plan, would pick out eight or ten feats "which are simple; none of which requires anything but pure strength." He suggested that any apparatus "whose use had to be learned," be ruled out. Apparently, he believed that there was one lift with a barbell that any man could do at sight—and this could be included. The list of tests was to be kept secret "until the minute the contest is to start." Then it could be sprung, everybody would start even, nobody's pet lifts included and nobody would have had a chance for specialized practice.

Sounds kind of silly in 1953, doesn't it? Well, that's the good old days for you. So, let's pursue the subject a little farther.

Don't think it was all to the bad though; Edward W. Goodman of California had something to say about the proposed Strong Man Contest in the September, 1920, issue of PHYSICAL CULTURE magazine. Goodman was a well known lifter at that time, had made records in lifting and, later, pictures of him graced Calvert's book *Super-Strength*. Goodman believed that the sport "should be divided into classes for men of different weights," with no restrictions on the winner or one or more classes on entering the class above. But then, they knew more about weightlifting (as we understand it today as a competitive sport) in California than was known elsewhere in the country. Probably due to the influence of Dave Willoughby, and fellows like himself, who kept themselves informed about weightlifting activities in Europe.

Edward Goodman was ahead of his time though, in thinking, because even the amateur contests then—and they were under sanction of the Amateur Athletic Union—had no weight-class divisions. The lifts used in their competitions consisted of: one arm snatch, one arm jerk, two arm continental press, two arm continental jerk and pressing a fifty pound dumbbell in each hand the greatest number of times. There was an additional feat which I don't quite understand—"a special lift in which an allowance of one hundred pounds was made for perfect performance, weight considered."

Apparently the A.A.U. had recognized weightlifting on the West Coast in those far away days. I certainly have no remembrance that it was recognized nationally until many years later. Goodman wrote that the six lifts mentioned "are those sanctioned by the A.A.U. through their recognition by one of the foremost experts on physical culture and training with weights in the United States—Mr. 'Al' Treloar, Physical Instructor of the Los Angeles Athletic Club."

One of the aspirants, at that time, for the title of American Champion Strong Man, was Warren Lincoln Travis. Goodman wanted to meet Travis in a "real contest of strength and agility." His opinion was that if Travis could have been lured away from his "special trick lifts, back lifts, grip lifts and finger lifts" to the recognized form of lifting, that there were (at that time) any number of amateurs in the United States, weighing a great deal less than Travis "who will beat him—and some of them will beat him at his own game of trick lifting and supporting feats."

In the March, 1920, issue of PHYSICAL CULTURE magazine, Travis had been presented as the World's Champion with an open challenge to the world. Warren Lincoln Travis wasn't that good but he knew his way around and being a professional he didn't miss a chance for publicity. Anyway, some of the aspirants for the strongman championship made a few uncomplimentary cracks against Travis and the result was that Travis popped into the editorial offices of PHYSICAL CULTURE magazine and backed his challenge with a $10,000 Liberty Bond, which he deposited with the editor, to be held until January 3, 1921. The Bond was to stand as a side bet to meet any man in the world, or "as a special offer to four specified strong men."

In the case of the four specified strong men, Lionel Strongfort of Newark, N. J., Demetrius Tofalos of Greece, Antone Matysek of Baltimore and Wilfred G. Cabana of Canada, the Coney Island strong man proved himself most magnanimous: he offered the $10,000 Liberty Bond as a present to any of the four who could defeat him on ten lifts—the lifts were to be picked by Warren Lincoln Travis though. In Matysek's case, the Baltimore strong man being a lighter man, Travis offered to start off with a 500 pounds handicap, and if Matysek lifted 500 pounds as much as Travis on the ten lifts, he would have received, in addition to the Liberty Bond, Travis' diamond and gold belt emblematic of the championship of the world.

Travis could afford to talk big because he was well trained in back and harness lifting and such lifts where hundreds of pounds are moved only an inch or two. This was his daily work as a strength performer. He had no legitimate claim to being the world's champion outside of the fact that away back in 1903 he had won the Police Gazette Diamond Championship Belt for weightlifting; in 1906 he won the Police Gazette Diamond Championship Belt "which he was compelled to defend in open competition against all comers for a period of ten years before it became his property." Travis claimed that it was the "only genuine gold, silver and diamond strong man championship belt in the world."

PHYSICAL CULTURE magazine seemed to be sympathetic to Travis' claims, but, to their credit they allowed everybody to get into the act by printing, without comment, everybody's viewpoint, comments, criticisms, suggestions, etc. Editorial comments about Travis were most favorable to him; they discovered that his worst vice was probably his fondness for candy and pastry. Among his many virtues was the fact that he didn't wear underwear. A letter from Professor Anthony Barker of New York City, another of the well known mail-order physical culture teachers, backed Travis to the limit. Professor Barker claimed that "the strongest man in the world is the man who can lift the heaviest weight, which is one way of testing real strength." He also favored another test, which was "for a man to lift the heaviest weight the most number of times without a rest. This proves just what his endurance is."

Anthony Matysek, of Baltimore, Maryland, who, about that time, had full-page ads in PHYSICAL CULTURE magazine, in connection with his muscle control and strength courses, had a two-column letter in the December, 1920, issue of PHYSICAL CULTURE. His opinion and comments, similar to Edward Goodman's, made more sense than most of the others. "Calvert," wrote Matysek, advocated "a contest not only far from a progressive point of view, but entirely unmodern, because he wants the strong men of today to enter on an out-of-date, even a dangerous, principle." Matysek had seen Joseph Nordquest lifting at the New York City Police Headquarters, in 1916, and in his opinion Nordquest was "miles ahead of almost any lifter I know of in this country and I know a good many of them."

Matysek was opposed to favoring the slow, bulky type of lifting (harness lifting, back lifting, etc.) and claimed that young men should train and compete on lifts that combined action with strength. "Over in England," wrote Anthony, "and the rest of Europe where people understand weight lifting they arrange contests of quick and slow movements. Such mixed strength tests produce fine looking graceful, physical specimens." Matysek was certainly progressive in his thinking and the years have not dulled him either because, at the present time, his youth far behind him, he still continues to think in a far-sighted, progressive manner.

When Travis appeared at the editorial offices of PHYSICAL CULTURE magazine to deposit his $10,000 Liberty Bond, lo and behold, who was in the office at the same time but one of his rivals, Wilfred G. Cabana, the Canadian Champion. Cabana proclaimed his willingness to put up a side-bet of one thousand dollars for a contest with Travis, Matysek or any of the others in the running for championship honors. Cabana was more generous than Travis with terms; he was willing to allow the other fellow to choose five lifts (and he would choose another five), the total number of pounds lifted to decide the contest.

Wilfred Cabana, out of Montreal, was about 24 years of age at that time. He was full-fledged heavyweight, thick-chested and a rather good-looking chap. He was supposed to have done 281 pounds best press, although he claimed to be able to do closer to 300 pounds. A picture shows him holding two men at arm's length: the men are seated in