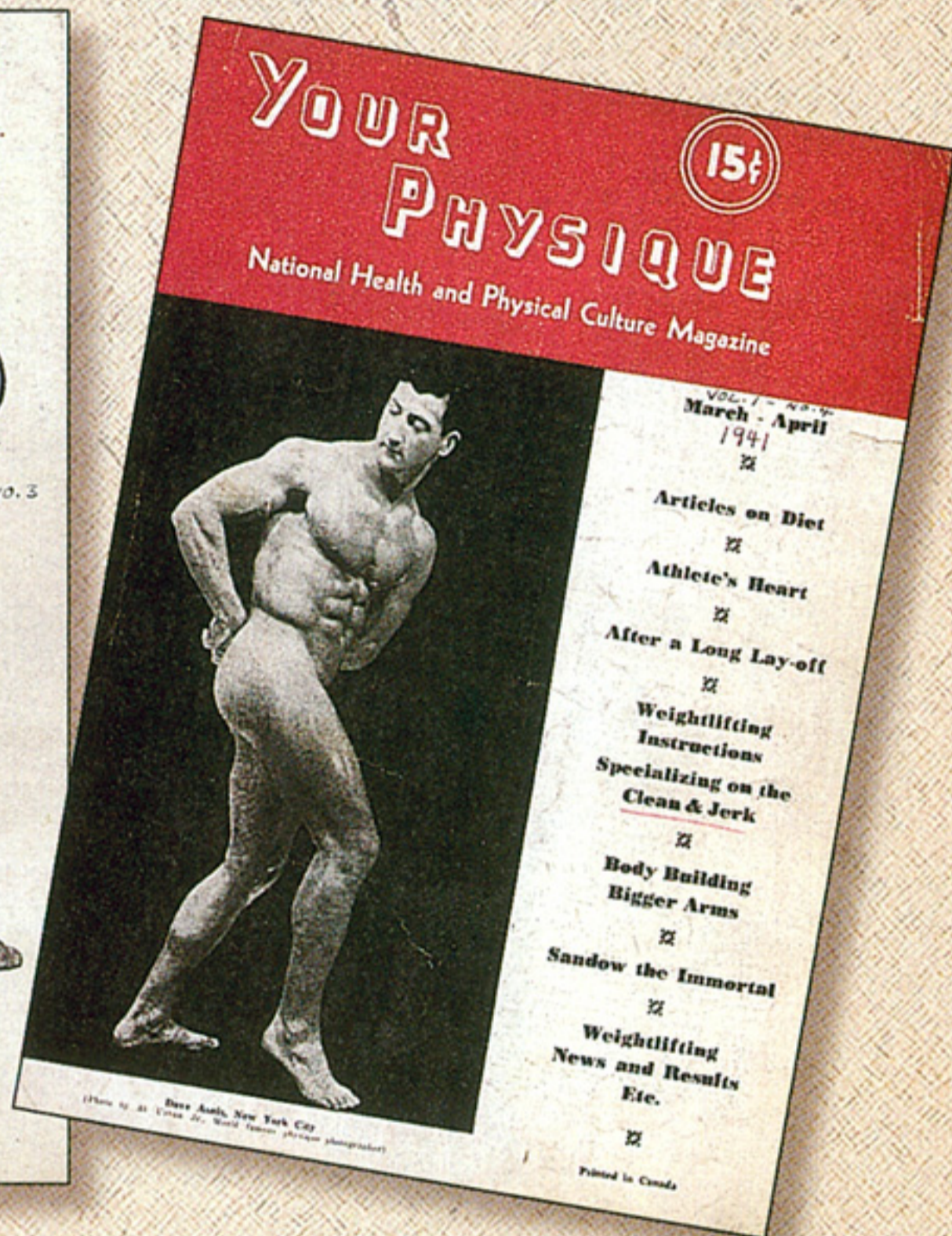
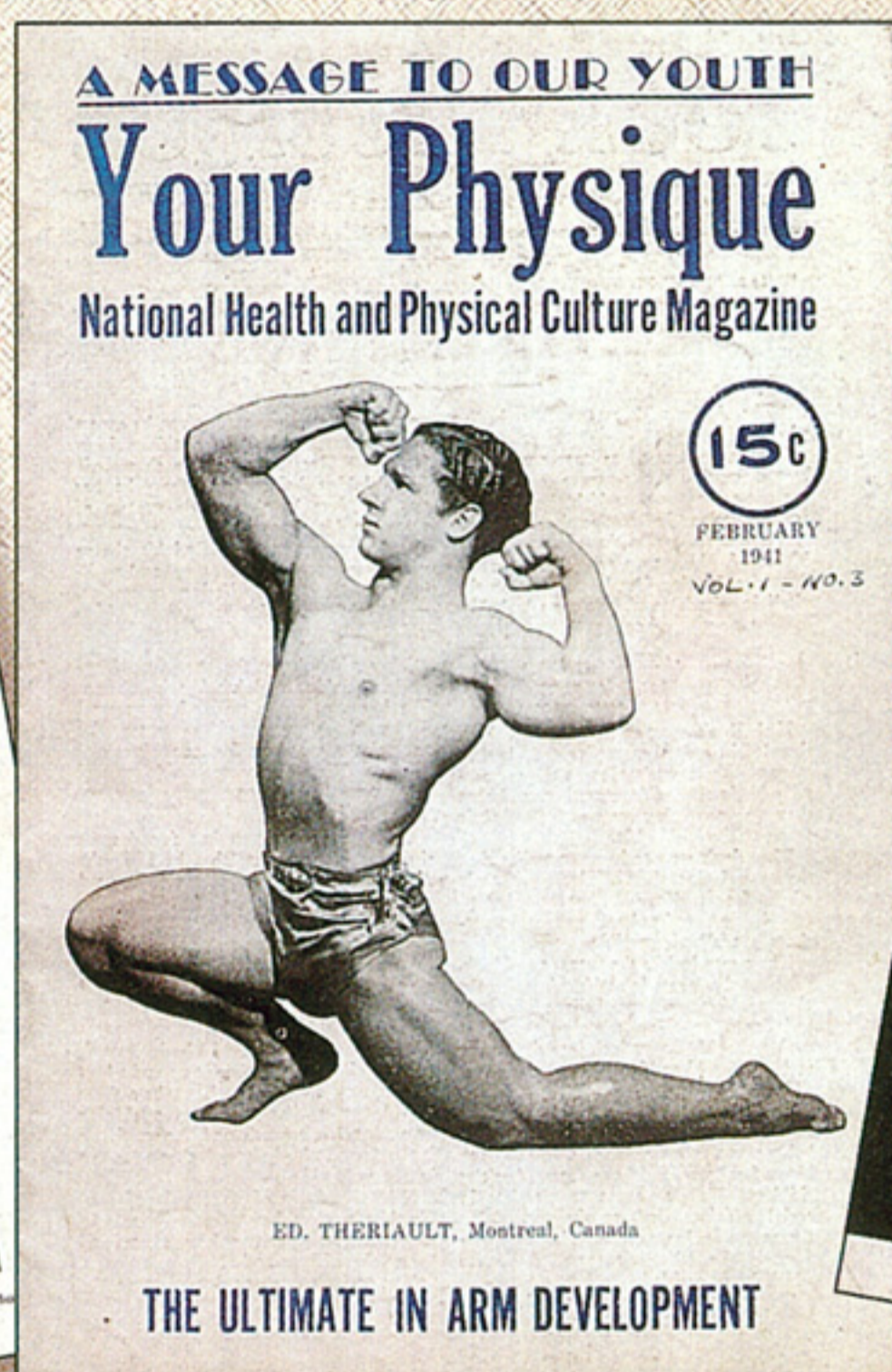
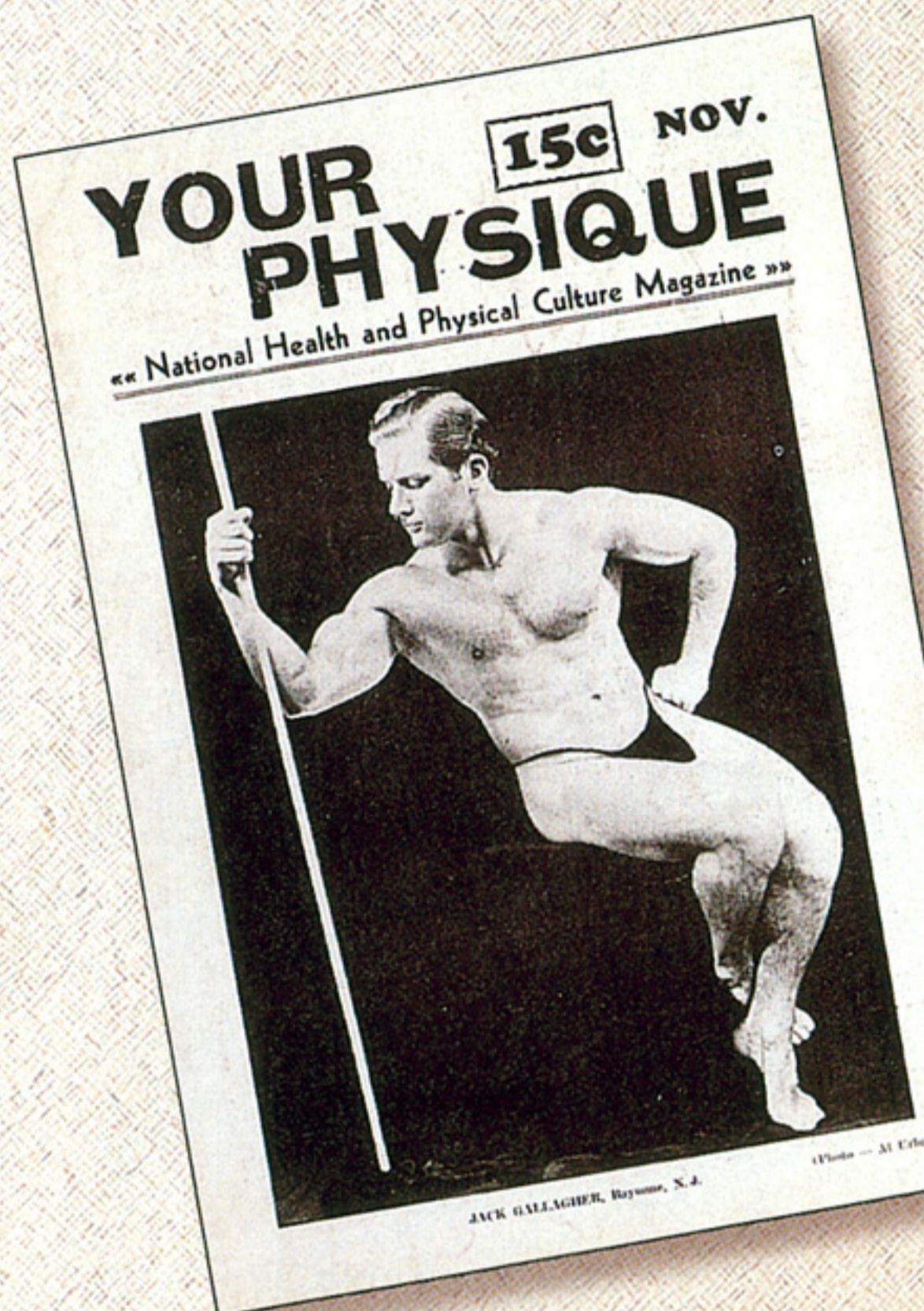




inside YOUR PHYSIQUE

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE MAGAZINE THAT STARTED IT ALL 60 YEARS AGO **By Terry Todd, PhD**



Imagine the task of starting an international publication today: the investment in advanced technology, recruiting professionally trained journalists and photographers, procuring distribution channels, driving a media-savvy ad-sales team. Though that's a far cry from how magazines were produced six decades ago, you'd still have to consider the odds a long shot at best when, at the tail end of the Great Depression, a young man short on both money and magazine know-how set out to publish a bimonthly for bodybuilders and weightlifters. Today, more than 7 million people each month read MUSCLE & FITNESS, the world's largest and most influential bodybuilding publication.

Actually, that first issue was more like a newsletter. Aiming at the local Canadian market, Joe Weider compiled YOUR PHYSIQUE with what was then cutting-edge information about bodybuilding and weightlifting. It was printed — rather mimeographed — on rough, inexpensive paper, and a year's subscription to the publication sold for just 75 cents. Bodybuilder Barton Horvath, who in later years would become an editor for Joe, graced that first cover. The issue contained 24 pages but only six photos, one of which was of Joe himself striking a now-familiar

'In the first issue of YOUR PHYSIQUE, Joe wrote in his editorial: "The first few issues will be printed every two months, as we have no desire to rush things to start with. Later on we shall grow bigger!"'





broad-shouldered pose. Joe also wrote the editorial, which is very revealing in light of the vastness of his current publishing empire. He wrote: "The first few issues will be printed every two months, as we have no desire to rush things to start with. Later on we shall grow bigger." How prophetic.

Sharing His Physique Philosophy

The table of contents made clear Joe's uncanny instinct for what iron gamers wanted, and for what would sell. One major feature was titled

What Was Happening in 1939?

- Golden Gate Exposition opened in San Francisco.
- Marion Anderson sang on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial.
- Germany and the U.S.S.R. invaded Poland; World War II began in Europe.
- John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* was published.
- "The Wizard of Oz" and "Gone With the Wind" were released.
- The U.S. economy picks up as unemployment falls to 14.2%, down from a Depression high of 24.9%. — D.C.

"How to Build a Better Body," which answered the question in the forefront of most young men's minds. In another, "Vitamins for the Bodybuilder," Joe explained the importance of eating a mixed, healthy diet and supplementing it with vitamins. "One can liken the body to a furnace — we feed it with fuel (food), we speed up the flame by opening the damper (exercise), and we subdue the flame by closing the damper (rest)," he wrote.

Another clue to the direction in which Joe intended to take the magazine is seen in his editorial. "We must preach body-building, so as to get our apathetic youth to build up their bodies, and who knows, produce championship material, of which we can never have too much."

But young people weren't his only targets. One article in the first issue was called "I Am Young At 62." In it the

1939: The Year in Bodybuilding

By David Chapman

The final year of the 1930s was filled with drama. For many, advances in art, science and technology created an optimistic outlook. Nothing exemplified this more than the New York World's Fair, which showcased the world of tomorrow as a utopia. But just as the world seemed poised on the brink of a happier new life, it also teetered on the edge of the abyss. By the end of the year, Hitler's Germany would invade its neighbors and the world would be engulfed in a horrific war.

Due to this political turmoil, sport and leisure activities weren't always at the forefront, but many superb athletes nonetheless espoused the virtues of health and strength. The principal American health magazine of the time was Bob Hoffman's *Strength and Health*. This publication had made its debut in 1932, but by the late '30s and early '40s, a minor revolution occurred in the ranks. Hoffman was passionately interested in weightlifting, and he neither liked nor understood the rising sport of bodybuilding.

In spite of this, a few truly remarkable physique athletes came to the fore. New York gym owner Sig Klein had been training men for years, and his own physique proved that he knew how to pack on muscle. Ed Theriault, a Canadian muscleman, began to develop the sinews that, despite his short stature, would make him the envy of many aspiring athletes. Dave Asnis, another leader in this muscular parade, was a New Jersey gym owner and bodybuilder who had worked out for years — and it showed. Barton Horvath, also from New Jersey, was just beginning his march toward greater bulk. In France, Marcel Rouet's broad shoulders and deeply incised abdomen became the finest example of Continental physique art.

Physiques in Search of a Contest

Bodies were being built, but athletes still had no place to compare themselves to one another. In 1939 regular, organized competitions were but a dream. European muscle pioneer Eugen Sandow had held an early contest in 1900, and Bernarr Macfadden continued that tradition in America, but these early competitions

were sporadic and (in terms of format) would be virtually unrecognizable to modern athletes. Slowly, however, certain people began to see the drawing power of physique competitions, and in 1939 an early version of the Mr. America contest was held in New York state. Bodybuilders, however, would have to wait another year for the real Mr. America event.

The winner of that first Mr. America was John Grimek, who redefined both bodybuilding and male muscularity in general. He showed the rest of the world the extent to which human muscles could be built and was destined to become the model for generations of future physique athletes because of his great bulk and symmetry.

Some would say that he was the finest muscle man who ever lived. Without Grimek, there could never have been a Schwarzenegger.

What was it about these athletes of the late '30s that set them apart from their predecessors? Why did bodybuilding flourish at this particular time? The answers are complex and tied to the history of the sport.

First, the world was ready to accept bulky, muscular men as ideals of masculinity. The pioneers showed that great muscularity, even that of early marvels like Sandow, wasn't the anomaly it had previously been considered. Now, the path to muscle development was open to all.

Second, magazines and books provided the exposure needed to turn a hobby into a popular sport. By 1939, these magazines were for the most part ineffective in telling audiences how the trick was accomplished, but at least they showed the world that these early bodybuilders weren't muscle-bound freaks — they were dedicated athletes who developed their newly sprouted sinews in a symmetrical and balanced way.

Finally, athletes began to discover the techniques for muscle building that produced the types of physiques that were becoming popular. People knew that heavy physical labor produced muscles and that lifting weights seemed to be the best method for this transformation, but the specific exercises and routines either weren't yet devised or were known to only a few.



Sig Klein (left) and Joe Salazar



YOUR PHYSIQUE

VOLUME 1 No. 2 The Weightlifter
NOVEMBER, 1939 Body + Matter
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EDITORIAL

Approximately two months ago, when the first issue of the magazine was published and sold, we were told by former editors, publishers and others connected with the "iron game" and bodybuilding that a magazine of this type would not be appreciated or supported. They said that we were publishing a "w" which would cause our shares to rise in a hundred, that we could come out on top.

But, being a bodybuilder and weightlifter myself, I know the need for a magazine of this type for our Canadian followers, and I had my feet in them. "And we were wrong!"

When this magazine was started for the weightlifter and bodybuilder which we intended would be a magazine of this type, we were told that we were publishing a "w" which would cause our shares to rise in a hundred, that we could come out on top.

Then, we are bringing out this magazine printed on fine, glossy paper with 16 pages.

Even though this issue is reduced in size and a little less than in more magazines, it is more attractive than ever. This is due to smaller type in more attractive.

The next issue will contain 16 pages and continue to give you more and more. Now, in order to keep up



I take you in hand. I train you personally. I make you a Finished Product.

Why should you take my course of Physical Culture?
REASONS—

1. I will start by personally taking you in hand and train you from the very beginning.
2. I will show you how to fully build up your physique.
3. I will put inches of solid muscle on your chest, arms, legs, etc.
4. If you are fat or thin I will help you to become Normal.
5. I will show you how to eradicate constipation, indigestion and flatulence.
6. I will show you how to strengthen your heart and lungs, and give you your physical vigor!

Why are you certain of getting results?
REASONS—

1. I have the most up to date gym in Canada.
2. My system of Physical Training has been worked out through years of experience, and is the best in position.
3. I have all the necessary equipment for successful results.
4. I have fifteen years of practical experience behind me.
5. My successfully trained pupils can give the knowledge. Where I have succeeded on others I can succeed on you.

LET'S GET ACQUAINTED. Readers of this magazine are entitled to a FREE, regular workout by showing this ad at 1110 Clarke St.

YOUNG'S STUDIO OF PHYSICAL CULTURE
1110 Clarke St.
Montreal, Que.

author argued that weight training and proper nutrition could keep a person youthful — another remarkably modern concept. Predictably, that first issue appears amateurish when judged by today's publishing standards. Crude line drawings illustrate articles and ads that tout one Professor Matysek's "Healthoflex System," which promises to control constipation and revitalize your spine. Not to be outdone, an ad for Young's Studio of Physical Culture promises, "If you are fat or thin I will help you to become Normal." Despite such oddities of medicine and capitalization, however, the balance of the first issue establishes a blueprint Joe would follow through the intervening years.

Looking Good with Issue No. 2

The second issue of YOUR PHYSIQUE was much smaller — only 12 pages in length. But as Joe wrote in his editorial, "There is more actual information and words contained therein than in the

(Continued on page 369B)

SANDOW The Immortal

By ERNEST EDWIN COFFIN

Before proceeding with the Sandow-Chester article, and more particularly with the subject of lifting, let us first consider several very important facts. First let it be remembered that Sandow was at that time, comparatively speaking, just a child. He had not even reached the full muscular development which he attained a few years later, and, likewise, his physical power was far below that which he developed by June of 1908.

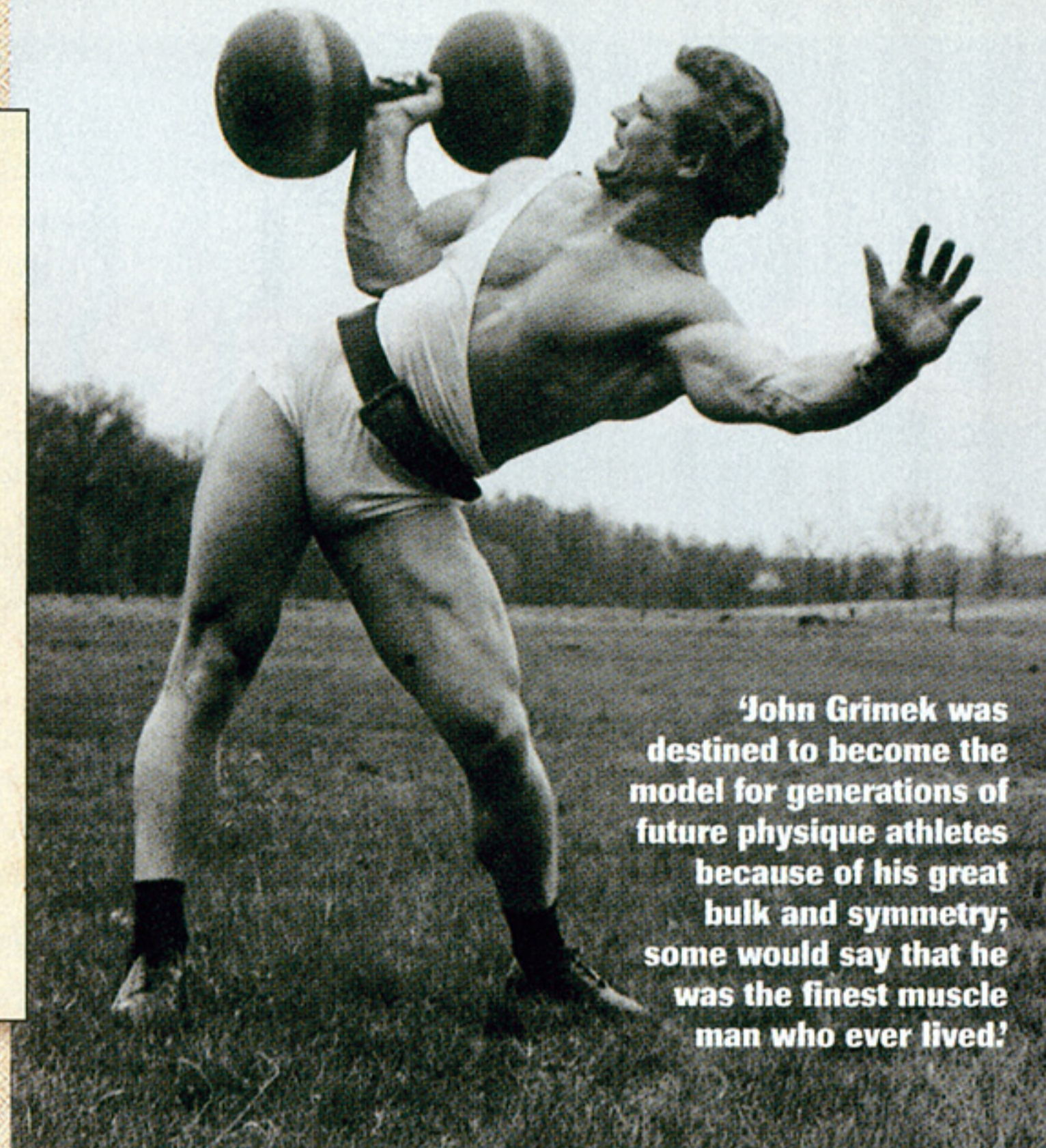


SANDOW The Supreme

Secondly I wish to again remind my readers that up to the time of this article Sandow had gained his wonderful muscular development and strength as a result of his own efforts, and not as a result of the use of any special apparatus, such as the "Sandow" or "Sandow" system, which he used for a few years later, and which he used for a few years later, and which he used for a few years later.

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"John Grimek was destined to become the model for generations of future physique athletes because of his great bulk and symmetry; some would say that he was the finest muscle man who ever lived!"

The Weightlifting Connection

Despite these advances, a great deal of popular resistance to bodybuilding still existed. Those who dared to pump iron were (at best) wasting their time and (at worst) risking physical debility or dangerous muscle binding. Gymnasiums were dark, mysterious places to most people, filled with sweaty narcissists — or worse.

One of the few accepted outlets was the sport of weightlifting. Somehow, it wasn't quite as bad if a young man chose to measure himself against others, so long as it wasn't a question of comparing physiques. In fact, in 1939, all physique athletes were weightlifters. Still, dedicated coaches and budding bodybuilders in North America continued their pioneering work. U.S. and Canadian theorists quickly worked through the various problems of muscular development, and men like Mark Berry and George Jowett developed some amazing physiques to show for it.

While weightlifters concentrated on the quick lifts to build strength and lifting prowess and the Europeans did sit-ups and abdominal work, American bodybuilders slowly learned that the squat (or deep-knee bend, as it was then called) was the best exercise to increase overall lower-body bulk. This was first developed by Berry and his disciple Joseph C. Hise. Their so-called breathing squat became the secret weapon of American bodybuilders. Hise insisted that doing squats with a cambered bar and with increased, forced-air intake would build the entire body. Thus, the breathing squat, in addition to the concept of sets and reps,

gave Grimek, Horvath and other North American athletes a competitive edge.

A Bodybuilding Magazine Is Born

Suddenly, in the late 1930s, an explosion of bodybuilding magazines occurred, and not just in America. *Health and Strength* and *Superman* in Britain, *La Culture Physique* in France, *Kraftsport* in Germany and America's *Physical Culture* and *Iron Man* all joined with *Strength and Health* to spread the good news of muscle building and weight training. None of these publications was devoted exclusively to bodybuilding, however; physique culture was always mixed in with other messages or diluted by other philosophies. That situation was destined to change, and the agent of that transformation was an obscure weight trainer in Montreal who believed that bodybuilding could support its own magazine as well as its own organization.

That young man was Joe Weider, and the time was right for him to put all the pieces together. The moment was at hand for bodybuilding to emerge from behind weightlifting and take its place as a separate sport. So, in 1939, the young Canadian began to formulate the ideas that he would later put into his magazines. They were destined to reach a wider public the very next year with the appearance of Volume 1, No. 1 of YOUR PHYSIQUE magazine.

David Chapman has written extensively about the history of bodybuilding. His biography of physique pioneer Eugen Sandow, *Sandow the Magnificent* (University of Illinois Press), tells the story of physical culture's earliest hero. Chapman is a teacher and lives in the Pacific Northwest.