

TO NO EARTHLY KING

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THE UNITED STATES FLAG-BEARING INCIDENT AT THE 1908 OLYMPIC GAMES OPENING CEREMONY

One of the most moving moments at any Olympic Games occurs during the Opening Ceremony, when the athletes of all the competing nations march into the stadium, led by a flag bearer carrying aloft the flag of their nation.

Traditionally, the Opening Ceremony is officially opened by the Head of State of the host nation and when the flag bearers pass the Dignitaries' Box, it is traditional for them to dip their nation's flag in honor of the host Head of State. But for one nation, the United States, this is not done, and the reasons given are considered traditional and usually relate to an episode which occurred at the Opening Ceremony of the 1908 Olympic Games in London.

But the facts relating to this incident, and the legend, are difficult to ascertain with the certainty often ascribed to it by today's Olympic media, who never fail to discuss this American tradition. This discussion is usually replete with errors. Perhaps more apocrypha has been written about this incident than any single Olympic controversy, so we will deal with this in some detail, including discussion of the 1908 reports, later reports, pointing out the various errors in these reports, and attempting to reach conclusions as to what actually happened.

The 1908 Olympics are now best known for the many controversies surrounding them, with the Americans in particular protesting many of the decisions made by the British officials. It is often stated that the controversies began with the Opening Ceremony and the problems which arose with the flags, both those surrounding the Stadium and the American failure to dip the flag. In particular, Coates has noted, "Anglo-American friction had begun with the opening day ceremonies, when the American, Swedish, and Finnish flags were not displayed. In protest, some Swedes left the games. Finland, under Russian domination, could not afford to do much in protest.

When Ralph Rose, a shot-putter and flag bearer, refused, as a customary courtesy, to dip the American flag when passing before King Edward [VII], the remaining activities were held with open animosity."²

Johnson has also stated, "The Games of 1908 featured a very nasty feud between Americans and Englishmen that apparently began when the U.S. team arrived at the stadium in London, gazed around and suddenly realized that, within the full fluttering forest of flags on display, Old Glory was nowhere to be seen. As it turned out, the Swedes had no flag there either, and they quit the Games, and the Finns had none either, but they simply marched (albeit grimly) anyway."³

But there are several problems with these analyses. First of all, it is a gross oversimplification to state that no Finnish flag was present and the Finns were upset by this "oversight." In fact, in 1908 Finland was considered a part of Russia. Finland was conquered by Alexander I of Russia in 1809 and remained under the control of that country until the Finnish Diet (legislature) proclaimed Finnish independence on 20 July 1917, at the time of the Bolshevik revolution. This became complete independence by 6 December 1917.

In 1908, Russia refused to allow Finland to compete as an independent nation and carry the Finnish flag, demanding instead that the Finns compete under the Russian flag. It was noted, "Finland has her own delegation which attracts much attention. The Finns were anxious to parade with the Finnish flag, but as their request to be allowed to carry it was vetoed by the Russians officials, the Finnish contingent was the only one that appeared yesterday in the procession without a flag, as they would not display the Russian colors."⁴

During the 1908 Opening Ceremony, the flags of most competing nations flew around the White City Stadium. In addition, and oddly, the Chinese and Japanese flags were also present, even though neither country was competing at the 1908 Olympic Games. But two nations' flags were missing - those of Sweden

and the United States, and the officials of both countries were upset by this oversight, for which the British Olympic Council ⁵ did later apologize.

It was stated in the British newspapers, "Commissioner [James] Sullivan has received a reply to the letter he sent to Lord Desborough, Chairman of the Council of the British Olympic Association, protesting against certain of the rules governing the contests and referring to other matters in connection with the games.

"In his reply Lord Desborough opens with an apology to the Americans for the failure to use a single American flag in the decoration of the Stadium on the opening day, the omission to do which, he says, has been remedied." ⁶

However, it is not true that Sweden left the Olympics. The Swedes competed throughout the Olympics, represented by 168 athletes who won 25 medals, and eight gold medals. Sweden later lodged a protest over a wrestling decision and it has been stated that, upset by the flag incident at the Opening Ceremony, and angered by the decision in wrestling, they then withdrew from that sport and the tug-of-war. ⁷ That is also not true. That decision took place on 21 July, and Swedish athletes competed throughout the remainder of the Olympics. The tug-of-war was by then long concluded, having been contested on 17-18 July.

The problem concerning flags at the Opening Ceremony, which has become legendary, concerns the American team and the failure of their flag bearer to dip the American flag in the presence of King Edward VII. There should have been little doubt as to what was expected of the flag bearers at the 1908 Olympic Opening Ceremony, as the protocol for the Opening Ceremony was published in multiple British newspapers for several days before the Olympic Games. The protocol was given specifically as follows:

1. That all teams should assemble at 2 o'clock in their respective dressing rooms at the Stadium on Monday, the 13th inst.
2. On the parade it is expected that every athlete taking part will be in the athletic costume of his country, or of the sport in which he intends to compete. In the event of it being a wet day, it is left entirely to the discretion of the manager of each team as to what precaution should be taken for the protection of the various members.
3. All teams will parade in the rear of the Stadium facing Wood-lane at 2.45 promptly and behind their respective representatives, who will bear the flag and entablature of their country.
4. Each nationality will be formed up in sections of four, and will be headed eight paces in front by the bearer of the entablature or name of the country, and four paces between the entablature and the front column by the bearer of the flag of the country.
5. On the sounding of the bugle the columns will march off in alphabetical order.
6. Each team on entering the Stadium will wheel either to right or left on to the centre of the cinder track and march to its special flag, which will be placed off the side of the track, then wheeling on the flag march straight forward into its proper position in front of the Royal Box, which will be indicated by another flag.
7. On arriving in position facing the Royal Box the entablature bearer will fall back to the right side of the leading section of his team. The flag bearer to stand six paces in front of column.
8. The International Committee and Representatives will next parade before his Majesty, who will then declare the Stadium open. The National Anthem will then be performed by the band, **all flags being lowered to the salute** and three cheers will be called from the whole of the teams for His Majesty.
9. On the signal being given by Mr. H. Elliott, the Chief Marshal, the columns will wheel to the right, and march off in alphabetical order with the exception that America will immediately precede the British Colonial Contingents, which will precede Great Britain, who will bring up the rear.
10. On the march the entablature bearer will march four paces in front of the flag bearer, who will also be four paces in front of the leading section of his column.
11. An interval of at least four paces should be kept between the entablature bearer and the rear rank of the preceding column.
12. **Each column on passing the Royal Party will salute**, afterwards marching right round the track and make its exit.

13. A full meeting of managers and (as far as possible) the team, will be held at the Stadium, on Saturday, 11th, at 11.30; also, on Monday, 13th, at 12 o'clock, for rehearsal.”⁸

Therefore, according to the official protocol, the flag bearers were expected to lower their flags to the Ring not once, but twice, although the second reference is a bit more vague and may have consisted of some other form of salute by the team members.

We have identified four main controversies surrounding the American flag bearing incident in 1908:

- 1) who was the American flag bearer?
- 2) did the American flag bearer refuse to dip the flag?
- 3) if it did occur, were the British actually upset by this affront? and finally,
- 4) did Martin Sheridan ever actually state that the American flag dipped to no earthly king?

Identity of the American Flag Bearer

Three different American athletes are often mentioned as the American flag bearer in 1908 - Ralph Rose, Martin Sheridan, and Johnny Garrells. But it was Ralph Rose, without a doubt, who carried the American flag. It was also Ralph Rose' who "apparently" did not dip the flag. However, it is not so certain that the British were decidedly upset by this action. And we know of no 1908 source attributing to Sheridan his famous comment re the American flag dipping to no earthly king.

Concerning the identity of the flag bearer, we will examine the most commonly quoted sources. Among recent works we have Schaap, who noted, "When the Olympians marched before King Edward [VII], each nation dipped its flag in tribute - but, to the outrage of the crowd, not the Americans. "This flag dips to no earthly king," snapped Martin Sheridan, the weight thrower. The tradition has persisted; the United States still does not dip its flag in Olympic parades.”⁹

Weyand also has described the event as follows, "The honor of bearing the Stars and Stripes went to Johnny Garrells, the famous University of Michigan football player. . . . The British were somewhat perturbed at the opening ceremonies, too. Most nations do not attach a great deal of importance to their national

flags. All of the flags were dipped to King Edward [VII] except ours [USA]. Regulations prescribe that the United States flag should never be dipped.¹⁰ Some of the athletes thought that this might indicate a stiff-necked attitude, and there was some talk of following the example of other nations. Martin Sheridan has been quoted as silencing the argument with the laconic assertion, "This flag dips to no earthly king.”¹¹

Finally, among more recent works, both Johnson and the Associated Press have claimed the flag bearer was Martin Sheridan. Johnson wrote, "When the opening ceremonial parade commenced, the American shot putter Martin Sheridan was leading the United States forces, carrying a particularly large and brilliant flag. Flag-bearers from all other nations obeyed the gentle protocol of the day by dipping their flags in tribute to the head of state, King Edward [VII], as they passed his seat of honor. Not the Americans. The burly, hot-tempered Sheridan muttered, 'This flag dips to no earthly king.' The crowd gasped, but Sheridan held his flag erect when he stomped past the king.”¹²

In Pursuit of Excellence: The Olympic Story, we find, "It was expected that each of the 22 participating nations' flag bearers would dip his flag as the delegation marched past King Edward VII. The Americans, however, refused to dip theirs. Discus thrower Martin Sheridan, an Irish-American who needed no encouragement when it came to balking the English, asserted 'this flag dips to no earthly king.' He started a U.S. tradition that continues even today.”¹³

So from studying recent books, it appears that Martin Sheridan was the 1908 U.S. flag bearer, or perhaps Johnny Garrells. But most of the 1908 evidence supports Rose, although a few contemporary sources do state that it was Garrells, notably The New York Times and New York Herald (American Edition), one of which was most likely Weyand's source. Looking at the 1908 papers we find the following:

New York Herald (American Edition), 14 July 1908 - "The procession was formed in alphabetical order, Austria leading with the exception that the English speaking athletes came last. The latter section was led by the American team with Garrells, of the Chicago Athletic Association, at its head carrying the Stars and Stripes."

The New York Times, 14 July 1908 - "The procession was formed in alphabetical order, Austria leading, with the exception that the English-speaking races came last. This latter section was led by the American team, with Garrells of the Chicago Athletic Association at its head, carrying the Stars and Stripes."

New York Herald (Paris Edition), 14 July 1908 - "Then came the Americans, Garrell carrying the sign, and big Ralph Rose the flag, and the manager, 'Mar' Halpin, in top hat and frock coat, heading about seventy of the team."

New York Sun, 14 July 1908 - "Ralph Rose, the giant shot putter of the Olympic Athletic Club of San Francisco was at the head of the little body of Americans, carrying the Stars and Stripes."

The Sportman, 14 July 1908 - "Several of the nations dipped their flag as they arrived opposite the Royal party, while others contented themselves with a military salute. Next came the United States, whose flag was borne by Ralph Rose, the giant shot putter, and it was a thousand pities that the large squad of competitors should not have been in their athletic costumes."

The Sporting Life, 14 July 1908 - "the next body of athletes being the Americans, led by the gigantic Rose, as standard-bearer."

Amos Alonzo Stagg writing in the *Chicago Tribune*, 14 July 1908 - "Ralph Rose, carrying the American flag and leading the American contingent, failed to dip the flag in passing the royal box."

Martin Sheridan writing in the *Chicago Record-Herald*, 14 July 1908 - "Ralph Rose, carrying an American flag in the parade in the Stadium, failed to lower it when passing the king's stand, as those of all other nations did. Rose did not give any reason for not lowering his flag."

Obviously the flag bearer was not Sheridan, who wrote a column about the incident, and described the bearer as Rose and did not mention himself. Garrells is described as the flag bearer only in *The New York Times* and the *New York Herald*. Garrells was described elsewhere as the "standard bearer," i.e., carrying the name placard for the United States. We think the reference to him as flag bearer is a mistake confusing the standard bearer and flag bearer.

Photographic evidence exists to support this thesis. Pictures of the American flag bearer can be found in *Outing Magazine*, the British newspaper *The Daily Mirror*, and the *Chicago Daily News*. In all three photos, one thing is obvious the American flag bearer is the tallest and largest American in the contingent. This guarantees it to be Rose, who stood 2 metres in height (6-6¾) and weighed upwards of 275 lbs. (125 kg.). Garrells was not small, standing 6-2 (1.88), but he weighed only about 185 pounds (84 kg.) and he was dwarfed by Rose, who was gargantuan for the era.

Rose was a somewhat unusual choice and Sheridan, multiple Olympic champion in 1904 and 1906, and hugely popular among American athletes, would have been a better one. Amos Alonzo Stagg, a member of the American Olympic Council, wrote that Rose "was not 'relished' as a fellow student by the better class of his colleagues at the University of Michigan." And Dyreson noted the following:

The Bookman criticized the choice of Rose as flag-bearer. "Now Ralph Rose is unquestionably an athlete of considerable ability, but beyond that one cannot truthfully go," opined the editor, recalling Rose's indiscreet challenge to fight world heavyweight boxing champion James J. Jeffries after the 1904 Olympics, and the rowdy behavior that ended his scholastic career at the University of Michigan. "All this was perfectly well known to those in charge of the American team," observed *The Bookman*. "Yet this young man was selected to carry the American flag in the march of competing athletes past the Royal Box," the editor marvelled. "He deliberately chose to insult the English people by his failure to salute King Edward [VII]."

The Bookman castigated those who had supported Rose's defiant gesture. "'Boyish patriotism!' 'The Spirit of 1776!' Nonsense. Sheer, caddish, boorish manners," lectured the editor. "It was an incident of which Americans should be heartily ashamed."¹⁴

Was the American Flag Lowered?

Did Rose refuse to dip the flag as has been reported continuously since 1908? We think he did refuse, but the evidence for this is not as definite. Ralph Rose

apparently claimed that no-one had told him what to do during the ceremony and while this might well be true it is strange that he chose to do nothing rather than be guided by the actions of all the other standard bearers around him.

Rose's remark that he was not told what to do has been noted by Lucas "The giant Californian said he had never been given instructions on what to do that day."¹⁵ But recall that there were two rehearsals of the ceremony one on Saturday, 11 July 1908, and one shortly before the actual ceremony, on Monday, 13 July 1908. And given the above description of the Opening Ceremony, published in every British paper we have seen, it is hard to see how Rose could not know he was supposed to dip the American flag. In addition, the above protocol describes two salutes to be made to the Royal Box, although the second salute does not specifically mention lowering the flag. And seeing the other flag bearers lower their staffs, possibly twice, what could Rose have been thinking?

Note the following from 1908 reports:

New York Sun "14 July 1908 - "As each contingent passed the royal box the standard bearer dipped the flag of his country . . ."

New York Herald (Paris Edition), 14 July 1908" the other countries lined up on either side and 'the standard bearer of each nation' lowered his flag in salute."

BOA/DW File (source uncertain) - "All heads were turned towards the Royal pavilion, and each nation saluted the King according to its custom. Then in unison, all brought their hands to the salute, military fashion. **All the flags were dipped in passing.**"

The Sporting Life noted in three different sections, "All previous contingents had passed the Royal box at attention, with eyes right and colours lowered; . . .", ". . . as each contingent passed the Royal box the flags were dipped, caps removed and hands brought to the salute.", and "The standard bearers, carrying the national flags, stepped a few paces to the front, taking up their dressing along the edge of the swimming tank. In the meantime the members of the International Olympic Committee, the British Olympic Council, and members of the Comité d'Honneur, headed by Lord Desborough, had passed in front of the Royal box. Flags were lowered to the

salute, and Lord Desborough, stepping forward, requested His Majesty to declare the Fourth International Olympiad open."

The Sportsman, 14 July 1908 - "The cheering had scarcely subsided when the band of the Grenadier Guards played the National Anthem, and **the standard-bearers of all the nations dipped their flags in salute.**"

From these reports it would appear that Rose did lower the flag in unison with all the other flag bearers. But other sources, notably Stagg and Sheridan, as noted earlier, disagree. Given their reports, especially Sheridan's, who was presumably marching with the U.S. team, we think it is difficult to assume any other conclusion than the oft stated fact that Rose did not dip the American flag, although this brings us to the 3rd question.

The British [lack of] Response to the American [in]action

If Rose did not dip the American flag, why was there so little British furor over this seeming affront to their King? No British newspaper that we have seen describes anything about the American flag not being lowered at the Opening Ceremony. Certainly no furor existed among the British concerning Rose's breach of etiquette. It is not described, even after the fact, in *A Reply to Certain Criticisms*,¹⁶ and there is little that the British held back in that report. And notably, *The New York Herald* noted that no opprobrium accompanied the American actions during the Opening Ceremony, "As the procession came into the Stadium each country received applause, that for America and the Colonies being particularly enthusiastic."¹⁷

But Stagg, writing from England, commented, "There is one incident of the games **which has received little comment in this country**, but which may explain in part the markedly noticeable unpopularity of the Yankees with the spectators aside from the fact that they were winning a majority of the events. That incident took place in the parade of the athletes of all nations on opening day. Ralph Rose, carrying the American flag and leading the American contingent, failed to dip the flag in passing the royal box."¹⁸

Tait¹⁹ described the results of Rose's inaction, stating that it was an affront to the British, "To the English

officials this alone was a terrible slight, but as they scurried across the grass to demand an explanation, they found that, not only was Rose instructed to take the action he took ²⁰, but that his teammates considered him to be a hero for having the pluck to follow the instructions through.” ²¹

Thus in North America, Rose’s defiant act was well known, seemingly even applauded, while the British appear not to have been overly concerned by it. The American attitude seems to have been one of “We’ll show them!” while the British seemed to have had too much restraint and gallantry to trouble themselves with it, and respond to it in the media.

Even after weighing all the foregoing evidence certain aspects remain unresolved. While the British press might not have noticed, or chosen to ignore the fact, that Rose had failed to dip their flag during the march past, it is difficult to fathom that the press would have shown the same insouciance if the action was repeated when the teams lined up in front of the Royal Box. If the Stars and Stripes remained aloft while all the other flag bearers in the line lowered their Standards, the effect would have been so striking that comment would surely have been passed. But no such comment can be found in the British press.

One other possibility exists, which will likely never be resolved, but would explain both aspects of the problem. Perhaps Rose failed to dip the flag during the march past, to which Sheridan and Stagg referred, but which was of little consequence to the British media, but then he did dip it while in line with the other flag bearers, so that no comment was made by the British media.

The Legendary Sheridan Remark

Now we come to the famous remark so oft attributed to Martin Sheridan, “This flag dips to no earthly king!” which is now almost an American Olympic motto. Did Sheridan ever actually say this? If he did, we cannot find it in any 1908 source, including several newspaper stories which were written by Sheridan, mentioned above. In fact, there is no real reference to this American “tradition” in American newspapers until after World War II.

A word here re sources. We would like to be able to discuss the legendary episode with either Rose or Sheridan, but failing that, a relative who knew them would be helpful. But this is not possible in this case. Both Rose and Sheridan passed away from pneumonia while quite young - Rose in 1913 at 28 years old, and Sheridan in 1918 at 37. Neither man ever married and they both died without issue. Thus, close relatives of the athletes are not available to us. ²²

Sheridan was one of the most famous athletes of his time, and one of the most beloved. His obituaries, in multiple newspapers, described his career at length. ²³

Despite detailed newspaper articles concerning Sheridan for several days, and some mention of him found in newspapers three months after his death, not once is the famous remark, “This flag dips to no earthly king,” attributed to him. And remember Sheridan’s story written in 1908, “Ralph Rose, carrying an American flag in the parade in the Stadium, failed to lower it when passing the king’s stand, as those of all other nations did. Rose did not give any reason for not lowering his flag.” ²⁴

Concerning modern American media coverage of the Opening Ceremonies, the United States’ flagbearer is almost always mentioned in American newspapers. But it took almost 50 years for the media to begin quoting Sheridan’s “famous remark.” The 1912 reports in U.S. newspapers mention the flagbearer, George Bonhag, but no mention is made of whether or not the flag was dipped. In 1920, *The New York Times* did state of flagbearer Pat MacDonald, “The Americans executed ‘eyes right’ and did not dip their flag.” This may support the legend - MacDonald was another weight thrower of Irish origin.

But note the descriptions of the 1924 Opening Ceremony. After describing the U.S. flagbearer and standard bearer, respectively, Pat MacDonald and Matt McGrath, both weight throwers of Irish birth, *The New York Times* noted, “As each delegation passed the Presidential box its flag was lowered in salute and with eyes right, the athletes marched past in fours. Behind his country’s flag walked the veteran leader of the United States team, Colonel Robert M. Thompson . . .” ²⁵ There is no mention that the United States’ flag was not lowered, and it appears that is probably was.

In addition to 1924, there is good evidence that the United States flag was lowered two other times at the Opening Ceremony. In 1906, the American flag bearer, Matthew Halpin, lowered the Stars and Stripes. It is known for certain that Halpin dipped the flag. He described it in an article written in the *New York Evening Mail* as follows: "Before the King and Queen of Greece, all the other available royalty and more than 60,000 people, the Olympic Games at Athens were opened yesterday with ceremonies officially impressive for the coronation of some great monarch. We paraded - 900 athletes from all over the world and a grand march it was. I headed our bunch, carrying the American flag, and we got a louder hand all around the track than any other group. When I dipped the Stars and Stripes passing the royal box, the King staked me to a smile that made me feel like I belonged."²⁶ This was, of course, before the 1908 Opening Ceremony.

The only other time that the American flag has definitely been dipped at the opening ceremonies was in 1932 at the Olympic Winter Games when the flag bearer, Billy Fiske, lowered it in salute to then-governor Franklin D. Roosevelt of New York. This is described in *The New York Times* the day after the event.²⁷

But after World War II, it became not only a tradition that the American flag not be lowered, it was a Federal Law. In 1942, shortly after Billy Fiske's death while flying with the British Royal Air Force in World War II, the United States' Congress made a repetition of Fiske's actions illegal by passing Public Law 829, which states, "That no disrespect should be given to the flag of the United States of America, the flag should not be dipped to any person or thing."

The first description we could find in major U.S. newspapers of the American "tradition" of not dipping the flag appears in 1952. Describing the Helsinki Opening Ceremony, "As always, the United States colors were not dipped as they passed the Presidential box."²⁸ Concerning Sheridan's "remark," we first find it in the U.S. literature in 1952²⁹, and in U.S. newspapers in 1968. Arthur Daley wrote in *The New York Times*, "The backbone of the United States

team that year [1908] was supplied by the brawny weightmen from the Irish-American Athletic Club of New York, all with deep roots in the Ould Sod. They took a firm stand and issued explicit orders to the flag-bearer. 'Ye won't bow the American flag to a British king,' bellowed Martin Sheridan, the discus champion. It didn't bow then, and it has not bowed since."³⁰

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

So we draw the following conclusions. The American flag bearer was Ralph Rose, it seems likely that, at least one time, he did not dip the American flag to King Edward VII, but the British made very little public comment about this breach of protocol. As to Martin Sheridan's famous remark, if he said it, he must have done so very privately.

But we doubt that the stories will change. The old newspaperman's motto has always been, "When the truth and legend are in conflict, print the legend." And thus the legend will continue.

NOTES:

- 1 It is not true that the United States flag has never been dipped at the Opening Ceremony, as often stated. See the later descriptions in this article for the two, possibly three, times this has occurred.
- 2 Coates JR, "London 1908: The Games of the IVth Olympiad," In: *Historical Dictionary of the Modern Olympic Movement*, JE Findling, KD Pelle, eds. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996). p. 37.
- 3 Johnson WO, *All That Glitters is Not Gold: The Olympic Game*, (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1972), p. 128.
- 4 BOA/DW, source uncertain. BOA/DW herein refers to a clipping file of newspapers held at the British Olympic Association (BOA) and discovered most recently, and sent to us, by David Wallechinsky (DW). The file is several hundred pages thick and contains clippings from most major British newspapers and both New York and Chicago newspapers. In most cases, we are able to ascertain the source of the clipping, though rarely the page number, but unfortunately, in a few instances, we must list the source only as "BOA/DW, source uncertain."
- 5 The British Olympic Council was the official name of what we would now know as the 1908 Olympic Organizing Committee.
- 6 BOA/DW source uncertain.
- 7 Weyand A. "The Olympic Pageant", (New York: Macmillan, 1952), p. 84.
- 8 These instructions are given in almost every British newspaper on 13 July 1908. See in particular *The Times*, *The Sportsman*, *The Evening Mail*, and *Sporting Life*. We have added the underlines above for emphasis."
- 9 "Schaap R, *An Illustrated History of the Olympics*, (New York: Knopf, 1963), p. 106.

- 10 This was true when Weyand's book was published, in 1952, but it was not true in 1908, as discussed later. This did not become a law until 1942 when the United States Congress passed Public Law 829, which prohibits dipping the American flag.
- 11 Weyand A, *The Olympic Pageant*, (New York: Macmillan, 1952), pp. 82-83.
- 12 Johnson WO, *op. cit.*, p. 128.
- 13 Associated Press and Grolier, *Pursuit of Excellence: The Olympic Story*, (New York: Franklin Watts, 1979), p. 60.
- 14 Referenced to "Chronicle and Comment: The Olympic Muddle," *The Bookman*, 28, pp. 104-105, October 1908, in Dyreson MS, *America's Athletic Missionaries: The Olympic Games and the Creation of a National Culture, 1896-1936*, Ph.D. Thesis, University of Arizona, 1989; pp. 321-322.
- 15 Lucas JA, *The Modern Olympic Games*, (South Brunswick, NJ: A. S. Barnes, 1980), p. 59.
- 16 Cook, TA, *A Reply to Certain Criticisms*, (London: privately published, 1909). This report was made after the Olympics and was a British rebuttal to American criticisms of the many controversies surrounding the 1908 Olympic Games.
- 17 *The New York Herald*, 14 July 1908.
- 18 *Chicago Tribune*, 14 July 1908.
- 19 Tait R, *The Politicization of the Modern Olympic Games*, Ph.D. Thesis, University of Oregon, 1984; p. 40.
- 20 Tait R, p. 40, but referenced to Lucas JA, p. 59. But Lucas's text says the exact opposite - see above.
- 21 Tait R, p. 40, but referenced to Good HJ. "The Modern Olympics," *The Canadian Magazine*, 32(8), 1908.
- 22 We have contacted Philip Sheridan Giovine, great-nephew of Martin Sheridan, who has his old scrapbooks, but he cannot add anything further to what we have written based on 1908 sources.
- 23 Sheridan died in St. Vincent's Hospital in New York on 27 March 1918. Obituaries were contained in several New York newspapers on the next day. Funeral arrangements were discussed in detail over the ensuing few days, and a memorial fund for Sheridan was started by the New York Police Department, and newspaper stories of this were carried for several months.
- 24 *Chicago Record-Herald*, 14 July 1908.
- 25 *The New York Times*, 6 July 1924, p. 23.
- 26 Attributed to the *New York Evening Mail*, quoted in Schaap R, *op. cit.*, p. 96.
- 27 *The New York Times*, 5 February 1932, p. 23.
- 28 *The New York Times*, 20 July 1952, V, p. 3.
- 29 Weyand A., *op. cit.*, p. 83.
- 30 *The New York Times*, 13 October 1968, V, p. 2.

EVEN THE LONDON TIMES CAN MAKE HISTORICAL MISTAKES!

The March 18, 1999-edition of the London TIMES, contained an article written by Roger Boyes in Bonn, Germany, saying

"FLATTERY, cash gifts and paid holidays were offered by the Nazis to powerful members of the Olympic movement in their successful attempts to lure the 1936 Games to Berlin.

Hider was determined to make an ideological spectacle of the Olympics - they were supposed to demonstrate the superiority of the "Aryan race" - and no price was too high to secure the support of the Olympic guardians.

As it turned out, the Nazis did not have to try too hard. According to research by Professor Hans Joachim Teichler, of Potsdam University, the International Olympic Committee was easily swayed by the Berlin bid despite a vociferous "Boycott Germany" campaign.

Baron Pierre de Coubertin, founder of the modern Olympics, was given 10,000 marks after the Germans heard that he was strapped for cash. The French and Norwegians had already given him smaller sums, but in a memorandum (seen by Professor Teichler) from an under-secretary in the Interior Ministry to Hitler's chancellery it was made plain that Germany should be more generous. "It would make an incomparably strong impression if the Führer could make an honorary donation for the founder of the Olympics," the memorandum said.

Hider responded to the suggestion immediately. Coubertin had supported the Berlin Olympics bid all along, believing that Hitler wanted to make a bridge between the classical Olympics and the modern movement.

The Germans were grateful. The baron and his family were offered an all expenses health cure in Baden-Baden

as "a signature of gratitude for his supportive part in the German bid".

This highly suggestive article was responded upon by one of the most prominent members of the ISOH, as follows:

1936 OLYMPICS

Sir,

May I take issue with your report, "Gifts, from the Nazis lured 1936 Games to Berlin". (March 18)?

The 1936 Olympic Games were awarded to Berlin at the International Olympic committee (IOC) session in Barcelona in April 1931, before the Nazis came to power. Any gifts from the Nazi Government could not, therefore, have had any effect on the bid for the Games.

Although you report "flattery, cash gifts and paid holidays" were offered to powerful members (plural) of the Olympic Movement, details are given of only one alleged IOC miscreant, Baron Pierre de Coubertin. After de Coubertin retired from the IOC presidency in 1925 he took little further part in Olympic affairs, mainly because of health and financial problems. He had spent his personal fortune (and that of his wife) in the fulfilment of his Olympic dream. You report that Nazi Germany provided financial assistance to de Coubertin to ease his financial hardship, but, as you record, so did the French and the Norwegians; in fact, in addition, the Swiss provided a rent-free apartment.

Coubertin was not present at the 1931 Barcelona session so could not vote on the site of the 1936 Games, which were awarded to Berlin after a ballot in which that city finished 27 votes ahead of its nearest rival.

Yours faithfully,

Signed:

Ian Buchanan
President, International Society of Olympic Historians.