Why History of Physical Activity?

The history of physical activity teaches us about *changes* as well as *stability* in the past, which help us understand the past as well as the present and *make reasonable decisions for the future*. 
What Does a Historian of Physical Activity Do?

• College or university faculty members
  – Teaching
  – Research
  – Professional service

• Others
  – Librarians
  – Publishing company consultants
  – Library archivists
  – Museum curators
Goals of Historians of Physical Activity

• Identify and describe patterns of change and stability in physical activity in particular societies or cultures during specific periods.

• Analyze patterns of change and stability in physical activity in particular societies or cultures during specific periods.
History of the Subdiscipline

• Early beginnings: Late 19th century to 1960s
• Identifying the subdiscipline: 1960s to 1970s
• Expanding the subdiscipline: 1970s to present
  – New analytical frameworks: modernization and human agency
  – Greater focus on gender
  – New focus on exercise and health
Research Methods in History of Physical Activity

• Finding sources of evidence
  – Primary sources
  – Secondary sources

• Critiquing sources
  – Authenticity
  – Credibility
    • Rule of context
    • Rule of perspective
    • Rule of omission or free editing

• Examining, analyzing, and synthesizing the evidence
History of Physical Activity in North America

• Critical time periods
  – 1840-1900: Industrialization and westward expansion
  – 1900-1950: Consumerism, immigration, and democratization
  – 1950-2007: Electronic communication and globalization

• Focus will be on
  – participation in physical activity,
  – physical activity professions, and
  – scholarly knowledge about physical activity.
Physical Activity in the United States 1840–1900

Physical activity participation

- Integration of body, mind, and soul
- Recommendations for vigorous exercise for boys and men
- Recommendations for moderate exercise for girls and women
- European gymnastics systems—German and Swedish
- YMCA and YWCA
- Immigrants and sports—clubs focused on their traditions, including sports
- School and college physical activity—Hitchcock, Sargent, Hannah
- Intercollegiate sport—student control to university control
- Women’s sports
- Professional and amateur sports

(continued)
Physical Activity in the United States 1840–1900 (continued)

Physical activity professions

• Early practitioners before the 1880s
  Physicians, successful athletes, journalists, educators, ministers, health reform advocates, business entrepreneurs, and a handful of European gymnastics specialists who immigrated to the United States

• Beginnings of the physical education teaching profession, late 19th century
  – In 1885 the American Association for the Advancement of Physical Education formed; today known as the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance
  – Teacher training programs
The earliest identifiable American physical activity profession—teaching physical education—was established in the late 19th century during a period of high interest in physical activity among the general public.
Scholarly Knowledge About Physical Activity 1840–1900

- **Science-based investigations and curriculums**
  
  19th-century scientific discoveries in anatomy and physiology, oxygen transport, energy transformation, and the nervous system

- **Professional programs were very common.**
  
  Focused on teaching physical activities and instilling positive social values in students through participation in play and sport
Physical Activity in the United States 1900–1950

Physical activity participation
– Competitive sports for males
– Competitive sports for females
– Sports at the center of school and college physical education curriculums
– Military and World War I
– Golden Age of Sport
– The Great Depression
– Military and World War II; All-American Girls’ Baseball League
– Racial and ethnic relations

(continued)
Participation in Physical Activity 1900–1950 (continued)

Physical activity professions

• Degree programs in physical education expand
  – Undergraduate
  – Graduate
  – 1920s: First doctoral degree programs

• Coaches

• Athletic trainers
  – 1950 National Athletic Trainers Association
  – Cramer Company

• Physical therapists
  – WWI reconstruction aides
  – 1920s American Women’s Physical Therapeutic Association
    (presently American Physical Therapy Association)
Teaching physical education continued to be the main profession for which students were prepared in college physical education programs during the first half of the 20th century.
Scholarly Knowledge About Physical Activity 1900–1950

• Growth of research in the late 1920s and 1930s
• Harvard Fatigue Laboratory
• Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport
Physical Activity in the United States 1950–2007

• Rapid expansion in electronic media
  Television, computers, satellites, Internet

• Participation
  – Increase in health-related exercise through 2000, followed by a decline in Americans meeting recommended activity levels
  – Increase in sport participants and spectators
  – Girls and women in sports; Title IX (1972)
  – African Americans in sports
  – Growth of televised coverage of sports
  – Increase in outdoor recreation
Physical Activity Professions 1950–2000

- Discipline of kinesiology leads to an expansion in the number and variety of professions
- Growth in the variety of professionally oriented college and university curriculums
- Growth of professional associations and certifications
Scholarly Knowledge About Physical Activity 1950–2000

• Influences on the growth of scholarly subdisciplines beginning in the 1960s—specialization
• Research journals
• “Physical Education: An Academic Discipline”—Franklin Henry, *JOPERD*, 1964, 35(7), 32-33, 69
Beginning in the 1960s, the discipline of kinesiology grew rapidly, and numerous scholarly subdisciplines developed. By the end of the century, students had an array of physical activity careers to choose from.
Reasons to Study the History of Physical Activity

- Learn about the discipline’s past
- Learn about societal influences on physical activity
- Learn about YOUR past
- Consider what might happen in the future
History Extends Your “Memory”

Knowledge of the past gives you an important, broad understanding of the present that you can use to make better-informed personal and professional decisions for the future.