

The Theoretical and Professional
Development of American Physical
Education

KIN 375 – Dr. D. Frankl

General Events

Nineteenth Century Concept of Health:

- Why is the 19th century health status of importance to Physical Education?
- Health Promotion and Wellness was a major component in 19th century Physical Education Programs - Health and Fitness is a fashionable and high profile component in the Phys. Ed. programs of the 1990's.

Health: A Major Concern

- Growth in popularity - books, lectures, articles, etc.
- Endless variety of health enhancement techniques and benefits (current diets...)
- Why was health of such concern to Americans?

Prevalence of infectious diseases (e.g., influenza outbreak in 1917, cholera, typhus, typhoid, scarlet fever, influenza, diphtheria, smallpox, measles, whooping cough, and T.B.)

"Influenza 1918"

The worst epidemic the United States has ever known. Before it was over, the flu would kill more than 600,000 Americans--more than all the combat deaths of this century combined.



Military physicians were baffled by the mysterious illness that was striking young, healthy soldiers.

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/influenza/>

Anna Milani remembers...

"Diagonally across from us a fifteen-year-old girl was just buried. Toward evening, we heard a lot of screaming going on. In that same house, a little eighteen-month-old baby passed away."

That month, 12,000 Americans died of influenza. People could be healthy in the morning and dead by nightfall. Others died more slowly, suffocating from the buildup of liquid in their lungs.



A nationwide casket shortage was evidence of a mounting death toll.

**State of Medical Knowledge
During 19th Century**

**Lack of systematic research and data,
poor dissemination of new
discoveries and advances**

**A dualistic view of health strived for a
balance between body and
temperament (mind and spirit)**

Louis Pasteur (1822-1895)

Humoral medicine as a treatment to cure disease/restore health

Health was also a matter of moral character-characteristics of diligence, integrity, honesty, hard work etc. were demonstrable traits that mind and spirit operated in harmony.

Foundation of health--"*mens sana en corpore sano*" - Healthy mind in a healthy body.



Status of Physicians in 19th century

Physicians not trusted as healers due to:

- absence of educational standards
- new scientific ideas - germ theory, growing anti-elitist feeling served to undermine the occupational professions – anyone who claimed special status by
 - (1) licensure,
 - (2) right of education
 - (3) protective legislation.

President Andrew Jackson (elected in 1828)

the "common man" platform

- Demonstrated the expansion of democratic enfranchisement
- Essential distrust of intellectual and economic elite who traditionally provided both the nation's social and political leadership.
- M.D.s were not accorded special status as far as Jackson was concerned. Doctors and lawyers were especially mistrusted by the common people.
- Why?...



(1767-1845)

<http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/>

Health Reform

Popular interest in health and periodic scientific discoveries facilitated the rise of alternative (irregular) medical theories and treatments.

As a result, numerous health and hygiene reforms took place:

- Vegetarianism; Homeopathy; Chemopathy; Electropathy; Hydropathy; Thomasonianism - every person could be their own M.D.
- Medical School education? Standards? Admission Requirements?

Seventh Day Adventists: Ellen G. White (1827-1915)

A vegetarian health reformer and one of the founders of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church. Vegetarianism and other health teachings of the Adventists are due to White's efforts. She believed that the human body represented God's temple and therefore it should not be abused. She also denounced tobacco and alcohol.



Homeopathy



Samuel Hahnemann (1755-1843), Founder of Homeopathy

- Introduced to the United States (beginning in 1825) by European doctors who influenced American trained doctors practice homeopathic medicine. By the mid-1800's, several medical colleges existed that taught homeopathy--the science of healing, derived largely from herbal medicine.

Hydropathy: Vinzenz Priessnitz (1799-1851)

Therapeutic system that professes to cure all disease with water, either by bathing in it or by drinking it.

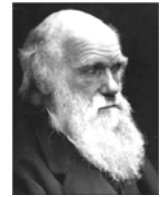


Hydrotherapy 1818 – 1819

<http://www.afx.cz/priessnitz/EN/>

Preeminence of Biological Science

- Biology has evolved in this era and was a premier science of the period.
- Three general concepts; form, function and transformation
- Work of Charles Darwin--scientific method & scientific discoveries reinforced "modern culture"
- The organic development of each individual was grounded in science which helped determine the role and scope of Physical Education - we develop individuals



19th Century: A period of Radical Change

- All aspects of American society were in flux
- Social change led to emergence of a middle class, bureaucratic society based on (1) specialization and (2) expertise
- Physical Education experienced this change and reflected the general, social and institutional ideas/beliefs of this era.



Basketball at Smith College

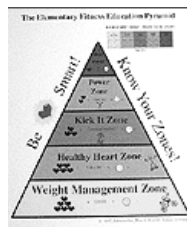
Needs and Direction of an Emerging Profession

- Professional Development--occupation specialization, demonstrated expertise phenomenon of the 19th century the traditional unchallenged authority of law, religion, and medicine was gone forever relative to explaining and administering "all that was important."



An Emerging Profession

- New disciplines were developed to house the "new and evolving bodies of knowledge."
- Colleges and universities became increasingly professional medicine began to develop subdisciplinary groups one such group was physical education.



The "Blacks" (Liberal Gymnasts)

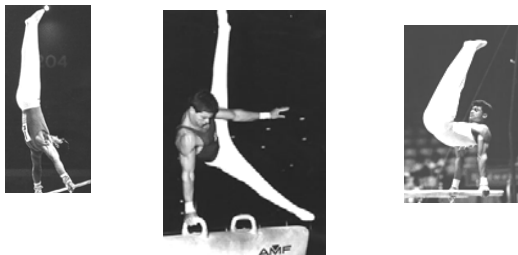
- Charles Follen (1795-1840)
 - Charles Beck (1798-1866)
 - Francis Lieber (1800-1872)
- Members of a group of German emigrants who laid the foundation for Physical Education in America.

Physical Education

Nov. 27, 1885. Forty-nine people attended a meeting at the invitation of W. G. Anderson, M.D. All 49 people had a common interest in P.E. Important issue/topic of discussion was Battle of the Systems.

Advantages/disadvantages between German (Turner) Gymnastics and Swedish Gymnastics.

Battle of the Systems: German Gymnastics



Brian Babcock (1960-1998)

<http://www.intlgyrnast.com/week/babcock/babcockpic.html>

Battle of the Systems: Swedish Gymnastics



<http://www.gymninykids.com/about.html>

Growth of Phys. Ed. by 1885

- The establishment of Teacher-training institutions
- Availability of Facilities for Gymnastics
- The growth of PE programs in non-school settings (e.g, YMCA)



James Naismith

Early PE programs

- (1) German system, (2) Swedish system or (3) a combination of both.
- Developed specific exercises that were not found in either the German or Swedish programs
 - Calisthenics developed by Catherine Beecher (1800-1878) and Dio Lewis (1823-1886). Both Beecher and Lewis devoted their efforts to promote health and exercise for women.

Beecher's system of Calisthenics

- Structured around 26 lessons in Physiology and 2 courses in calisthenics
- Used "light exercises"--"light weights"
- Wanted her students to develop beautiful and strong bodies
- Cured "physical distortions"

Theoretical Basis of American P.E.

- A new professional organization was formed in 1885 (AAAPE), and theoretical basis for the discipline started evolving.
- Cultural values, especially those of the middle class played an important part in influencing the theory base. (still does...)
- Ideological and social attitudes defined the nature of health, hygiene, character development, and improvement of society.

Theoretical Basis of Phys. Ed.

- PE influenced by the 19th Century social reform movements that connected "Physical and moral perfection"
- A strong social reformist attitude was one of the major positions of physical education in the late 19th century. Liked the philosophy of idealism. Why? Develop the "SELF" PE was used to affect the health, moral and intellectual development of the student ("through the physical").

Distinct Periods in the Development of Theory I

- 1885-1900 was characterized by 19th-century beliefs that viewed health as a balance or harmony between (1) mind, (2) body, and (3) spirit.
- Science was the provider of truth and tools of science (experimentation - observation - measurement) were symbols of learned authority. The new profession of PE reflected these beliefs and operations.

Distinct Periods in the Development of Theory II

- 1900 - 1917 - Major debates relative to what should be the appropriate methods and goals of Physical Education.



Distinct Periods in the Development of Theory III

- 1917 - 1930 - Accepted and incorporated the psychological and behavioristic principles as a major part of the Theoretical Foundation of PE.



Strong Social Reformism

- Physical Educators held the idealistic view that one can shape a child into a better person.
- U.S. Commissioner of Education, William T. Harris: "The new P.E. needed to be much broader in scope than merely training the body and providing instruction in personal hygiene."
- This debate still exists. What is the theoretical basis of P.E.? What is it that we believe and what is it we do?

“Physical Education is Good”

What is Physical Education?

- **The belief that P.E. was good for both the individual and the community was a major component of physical education's theory base. This "belief" has yet to be adequately proven. "A priori" knowledge.**
- **For a large number of physical educators, then and now, this conviction is the entire justification for P.E. !! Physical educators cite limited scientific basis for this belief.**

“Why is Physical Education Good”

Available research supports the following:

- Normal growth is dependent on proper physical activity for children
- Functional capacity later in life is related to level of activity during childhood
- Adult exercise habits are established early in life
- Learning inside the classroom may be enhanced and is supported by activity outside the classroom