III. United States Physical Education


Using the “open systems” approach, universities and departments as organizations must acquire resources for survival from the task environment consisting of administrators, faculty, students, alumni, and the general public. By expanding athletic programs between 1890-1930, universities profited monetarily, gained visibility, and increased enrollments while providing sports entertainment. When faculty opposed athletics as inappropriate to the educational goals of the university, it became essential to defend its program as educational. By linking athletics with departments of physical education, they gained a veneer of justification. The financial stability gained by physical education carried with it the responsibility to provide proper organizational guidance. Based on secondary works; 7 notes and a bibliography.

—Angela Lumpkin


Edward Hitchcock, M.D., first President of the American Association for the Advancement of Physical Education and Professor of Hygiene and Physi-
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cal Education at Amherst College, was an innovator and leader of physical education programming during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Often referred to as the “founder” of physical education in American colleges and universities, his program of light gymnastics included calisthenic type exercises performed in unison to music while using dumbbells weighing one or two pounds each. Marching, running or “double-quick” movements were also a part of “Doc” Hitchcock’s exercise program. His interest in comparative anatomy and anthropometry led to the establishment of a large pool of anthropometric measurements that were useful to future generations of physical educators. Based upon primary sources and secondary works; 11 notes.

—Robert W. Case


Gulick’s professional career including his schooling, the years spent within the YMCA program, the formation of the Public Schools Athletic League, and community recreation programs are discussed. In addition, Gulick’s leadership within physical education and his general philosophy of life and exercise are examined. Based upon primary sources and secondary works: 22 notes.

—Miriam Sheldon


Luther Halsey Gulick’s realization in 1885 that “organized physical education was every bit as useful in the modern world as organized religion” turned his life around. Prior to that moment, he experienced great self-doubts about himself due to his inability to follow his father into the ministry. With renewed vigor and direction, he led “his play organizers in a crusade for ‘muscular Christianity’ that affected almost every dimension of American society.” Applying the ideas and theories of G. Stanley Hall and John Dewey, Gulick brought American physical education into the Progressive Era and recreation to the fore of American society during the twentieth century. Based upon primary sources and secondary works; 15 notes.

—Miriam Sheldon


Jesse Feiring Williams (1886-1966) was one of the most influential leaders and prolific writers in the history of American physical education. Between 1916 and 1964, he delivered many speeches, wrote several articles and authored or co-authored 41 books. Influenced by such famous educational theorists as John Dewey and William Heard Kilpatrick, Professor Williams sup-
ported the notion of education through the physical. He believed that it is the function of education and the role of physical education within it, to prepare the child for life in a democratic society. He also advocated the “whole man” or physical, mental, and social objectives of physical education. According to Williams, beneficial social values can be learned through participation in sports and physical education activities. Based upon primary sources and secondary works; 5 notes.

—Robert W. Case


Elmer Dayton Mitchell, “the father of intramural athletics,” was an early leader in the establishment of intramural sport programs in colleges and universities. While serving as Intramural Director at the University of Michigan, Mitchell was an active member of the American Physical Education Association (now the AAHPERD). He was also editor for both the *Journal of Health and Physical Education* as well as the *Research Quarterly*. His extensive writings contributed significantly to the fields of physical education, intramurals, and recreation. Before his death in 1983, Mitchell received several professional honors including the Gulick and Hetherington Awards from the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance. No notes.

—Robert W. Case


The career of Eleanor Metheny, a prominent physical educator, is traced through her early schooling, entry into physical education, and graduate education. The ideas and theories which influenced her at the University of Chicago and later her association with C. H. McCloy are discussed. Many references are made to writings and speeches. She put forth a great effort in seeking women’s equality in all aspects of life, and her theories on human movement are most valuable to physical educators today. Based upon primary sources and secondary works.

—Miriam Sheldon


Delbert Oberteuffer, a leader in the professions of health and physical education for almost four decades, died on March 26, 1981 at the age of 79. As chairman of the Men’s Physical Education Department at Ohio State University for twenty-five years, Professor Oberteuffer helped to lead the univer-
ity’s health and physical education programs to national prominence. His many articles, speeches, and two basic textbooks have contributed significantly to the health and physical education professions. Over the years he received several professional awards and he still remains the only person to have received the Luther H. Gulick Award from AAHPERD and the William A. Howe Award from the American School Health Association. No notes.

—Robert W. Case