1996

A history of the rise of aerobic dance in the United States through 1980

Beth S. Swanson
San Jose State University

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A HISTORY OF THE RISE OF AEROBIC DANCE
IN THE UNITED STATES THROUGH 1980

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Human Performance
San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by

Beth S. Swanson

December 1996

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ABSTRACT

A HISTORY OF THE RISE OF AEROBIC DANCE IN THE UNITED STATES THROUGH 1980

by Beth S. Swanson

The objectives of this study were to identify those key individuals and historical factors which set the stage for the advent of aerobic dance, and to trace its appearance and spread across the U.S. during the 1970s.

It was discovered that modern "aerobics" is based on exercise concepts adapted from European gymnastic exercise systems over two centuries. The most important ingredients in the birth of aerobic dance were: the use of the media (especially television) by fitness pioneers, the creation of many localized dance exercise programs by dancers and physical educators, the promotion of adult fitness by the academic community, the aerobic exercise movement of the late 1960s, and the women's movement. Jacki Sorensen's Aerobic Dancing and Judi Sheppard Missett's Jazzercise spread because of their promotion in the YMCAs and among physical educators, their implementation of nationwide training systems, and the progression of participants from students to instructors and entrepreneurs.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my incredibly supportive thesis committee who encouraged me to pursue a difficult and unusual project, and who helped stoke my creative fires; my family who provided loving care and acceptance during the long and arduous process; and all of the wonderful aerobic dance pioneers who bared their souls to me, and gave so generously of their time.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

One of the most popular fitness activities to arise during the past 25 years has been aerobic dance. Performed to upbeat, rhythmic music, aerobic dance combines simple dance steps with locomotor movement patterns (for example, walking or jogging) to provide a cardiovascular workout. The continuous nature of the movement, along with its simplicity and repetitiveness, distinguishes aerobic dance from traditional dance classes which emphasize dance technique rather than cardiovascular fitness. Currently, most aerobic dance classes also include exercises for strength and flexibility. Aerobic dance is now often referred to simply as "aerobics," a term which encompasses the many variations on the original dance exercise formula.

It has been estimated that about 20 million women and 2.5 million men attended aerobics classes at health clubs and other locations in 1993, that another 5 to 10 million Americans (primarily women) exercised at home to aerobics video tapes and television programs, and that more women participated in aerobics than any other sport or fitness activity except walking.¹ Thus the impact of aerobic dance has been enormous: this was an organized activity which did

¹American Sports Data, "1993 Health Club Trend Report," (Hartsdale, N. Y., 1994). This trade information is supplied privately to health clubs.

not exist before the early 1970s, and which was embraced by millions of women, many of whom had never exercised regularly before. It also provided women the opportunity to participate in a group physical activity outside of the narrow realm of high school and collegiate sports.

How was aerobic dance born? The two largest professional organizations serving aerobic dance instructors, IDEA (International Association of Fitness Professionals²) and AFAA (Aerobics and Fitness Association of America) both credit the birth of aerobic dance to two women, operating independently at about the same time. In 1969, Jacki Sorensen, a University of California at Berkeley graduate who had been teaching dance classes to dependents on various Air Force bases, developed and produced a dance exercise television program for Air Force wives at a base in Puerto Rico where her husband was stationed. Utilizing her broad background in dance, "she invented the concept of combining dance with aerobic exercise for the program. She choreographed a set of vigorous dances to lively music and 'Aerobic Dancing' was born."³ After moving to South Orange, New Jersey in 1970, Sorensen offered her Aerobic Dancing classes at several local YMCAs. In 1972 she began training

²This association began in 1982 as the International Dance Exercise Association, but changed its name in 1993 to broaden its scope; the IDEA initials, however, were not changed.

³Jacki's Inc., "Jacki Sorensen," (Deland, Fla., 1994), company brochure.

other instructors; she also spread the word about her innovative new program by holding workshops and producing record albums for physical educators, becoming a Clinician for the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, and appearing frequently in the local and national media.⁴

Also in 1969, Judi Sheppard Missett, a performing arts graduate of Northwestern University, "created a new concept--a blending of jazz-dance choreography, aerobic muscle-toning and stretching exercises," which she taught at a small dance studio in Illinois between performances as a professional dancer.⁵ In 1972 she moved to Carlsbad, California, and began offering her "Jazzercise" classes at various community facilities. In 1977, she started training and franchising other instructors, and today she directs a worldwide organization that has 5,000 instructors teaching 16,000 classes per week.⁶

Two important "revolutions" occurred in the 1960s and early 1970s which set the stage for the aerobic dance phenomenon. First, the medical community stepped up its efforts to investigate and publicize the health benefits of aerobic exercise, especially with respect to the cardiovascular system. In 1968, physician and author

⁴Neil Sorensen (Jacki Sorensen's husband and business partner), letter to author, 8 December, 1994.

⁵"Jazzerjam: Jazzercise Turns 20," *American Fitness* 8 (November/December 1990): p. 10.

⁶Jazzercise, Inc., "Background & Bios: A History of Jazzercise," (Carlsbad, Calif., 1994), company brochure.

Kenneth Cooper translated the contemporary medical research into a readable and persuasive bestseller, *Aerobics*, and millions of Americans began to jog, cycle, and swim using his easy-to-follow "Aerobics Point System."⁷ Cooper defined aerobics as a "variety of exercises that stimulate heart and lung activity for a time period sufficiently long to produce beneficial changes in the body." These changes include increased oxygen uptake, greater cardiac output and stroke volume, increased blood supply to muscles, decreased resting heart rate and blood pressure, and faster recovery rate after exercise.⁸

The second critical event that set the stage for women's participation in aerobic dance in the 1970s was the women's liberation movement, which grew out of the civil rights movement of the 1960s and was catalyzed by feminist writers such as Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem. Feminists challenged traditional feminine roles and sought greater psychosocial freedom for all women. They battled for educational and economic parity, and were instrumental in the passage of many federal and state laws prohibiting gender discrimination.⁹ It is possible that the early

⁷Cooper Aerobics Center, "Kenneth H. Cooper, M.D.," (Dallas, Tex., 1994), biographical information sheet.

⁸Kenneth H. Cooper, *Aerobics* (New York: M. Evans & Co., 1968), p. 15 (quote).

⁹Miriam Schneir, ed., introduction to *Feminism in Our Time: The Essential Writings, World War II to the Present* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994)), pp. ix-xvi.

impetus for the aerobic dance movement grew out of women's search for greater physical competence, and the desire for more control in the pursuit of leisure-time activities; alternatively, aerobic dance may have represented a backlash to the women's liberation movement, since these classes often emphasized weight control and reinforced a very traditional feminine image.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this thesis was to investigate how aerobic dance began, and how it spread into a nationwide presence during the 1970s. The original intent was to explore the motivations and influences perceived by Jacki Sorensen and Judi Sheppard Missett as underlying their initial efforts, and to document in detail the events and chronology of each woman's journey from local entrepreneur to head of a nationwide organization. During this exploration, it became evident that Sorensen's Aerobic Dancing was involved in a widespread, national expansion throughout the decade, and spawned numerous other aerobic dance programs. Missett's Jazzercise, on the other hand, was primarily confined to a small geographical area (San Diego County in Southern California) for most of the decade. Therefore, the decision was made to place a greater effort on tracing the expansion of Sorensen's Aerobic Dancing.

In the course of interviewing aerobic dance entrepreneurs from the 1970s, this researcher discovered

that many modern programs had been influenced by exercise pioneers operating well before the advent of aerobic dance and Ken Cooper's "Aerobics." A substantial number of the entrepreneurs interviewed mentioned the inspiration of Jack LaLanne, Bonnie Prudden, and exercise programs found in the YMCA; therefore, it was decided to include a section on the early exercise pioneers. While investigating the three early pioneers selected (LaLanne, Prudden, and Thomas K. Cureton, Jr.), this researcher was surprised to learn that all three individuals had been trained in their youth in the European-influenced gymnastic exercise systems. This led to the inclusion of an additional section on those gymnastic systems. The objectives that finally guided this investigation were as follows:

1. To identify those gymnastic exercise systems popularized in the United States during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries which contained many of the key elements found in today's aerobics.

2. To identify and profile several key individuals whose exercise programs gained national attention in the 1950s and 1960s and influenced the next generation of aerobic dancers.

3. To identify the historical and cultural factors that set the stage in the 1960s for the popularity of aerobic dance in the 1970s, including examining some of the groundbreaking exercise programs of the 1960s.

4. To trace the appearance and spread of aerobic dance classes across the United States over the period 1969 to 1980, and to investigate why aerobic dance was embraced by so many women.

This study was primarily an analytical one, but it also involved a considerable amount of chronological narrative. As the project evolved, the ultimate goal of the study became to research a chain of events, to establish a "connection among occurrences" in order to illuminate a change that took place over a period of time.¹⁰

Working Hypotheses

While the historian should never embark upon an investigation with firm hypotheses in mind, it is useful to devise tentative or "working hypotheses" which can be altered or abandoned as dictated by the evidence that is accrued.¹¹ The working hypotheses that initially guided the search for evidence in this study were:

1. Aerobic dance was independently conceived of and popularized by two different women at about the same time: Jacki Sorensen and Judi Sheppard Missett. Primarily as a result of their charismatic personalities and self-promotional efforts, news of their classes spread and a variety of imitation classes were spawned.

¹⁰Roberta J. Park, "Research and Scholarship in the History of Physical Education: The Current State of Affairs," *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport* 54 (1983): p. 96.

¹¹Park, "Research and Scholarship," p. 97.

2. Aerobic dance gestated in the cauldron of the aerobic fitness and women's liberation movements of the late 1960s.

Limitations and Delimitations

This project was undertaken with recognition of the following limitations: (a) the study was limited to those individuals who were available and willing to talk about the events under examination; (b) the study was limited by the memories and perceptions of those being interviewed, especially considering that twenty years or more had passed since the original events; and (c) there may have been an important aerobic dance pioneer or an early exercise pioneer who was inadvertently overlooked as the evidence was gathered, and who was subsequently omitted from this study.

The delimitations placed on the project were:

1. The investigation of Jacki Sorensen and Judi Sheppard Missett concentrated on their first ten years of activity, since this was the period during which they personally created, promoted, and refined their dance exercise programs and established their national organizations.

2. It was originally intended that the trace of the spread of aerobic dance be confined to two geographical areas, California and the Northeast, and to the years 1969-1980. However, because so much important information was unearthed from other geographical areas and from the years

prior to 1969, these delimitations were abandoned--except for the retention of 1980 as the latter year limit, and the restriction of the project to the history of aerobic dance in the United States. The year 1980 was selected because the preliminary data indicated that aerobic dance classes were a well-established, widely-available exercise alternative by that date, and the thrust of this study was how aerobic dance was born.

Definitions of Terms

The following terms were used in this study:

Aerobic dance is defined as a form of aerobic exercise that combines simple dance steps with locomotor movement patterns performed to music for a continuous period of time. This activity may take place in a group setting (aerobic dance classes) or individually at home, and may or may not include strength and/or flexibility exercises.

Jacki Sorensen's program is referred to by its capitalized, registered trademark name, Aerobic Dancing. Judi Sheppard Missett's program is referred to by its trademark name, Jazzercise.

Dance exercise is used to denote any exercise program that is dance-based, and includes aerobic dance.

Aerobics is used to describe the modern fitness activity that encompasses both aerobic dance and a wide variety of other group-exercise classes which have evolved

from the original dance exercise format.¹² Step aerobics involves stepping up and down on a small platform of adjustable height; the stepping routine may or may not incorporate dance and locomotor movements. Aqua aerobics is comprised of exercises performed in water in a pool. There are a variety of classes based on disciplines other than dance: karate, tai chi, sports conditioning, boxing, and skating (or slide) aerobics are a few examples.

Aerobics as envisioned by Ken Cooper (for example, walking, jogging, bicycling, swimming) is referred to as Ken Cooper's "Aerobics."

A common distinction in discussions of aerobic dance styles is the differentiation between choreographed aerobic dance, where the steps are tailored (in advance) for a particular song, and freestyle aerobics. Freestyle aerobics involves the use of a sequence of steps or movements, with each movement performed for a certain number of beats (usually eight or some multiple of eight)--without reference to the specific song that is playing at the time.

Within the aerobic dance format, many specialty classes have evolved based on different types of dance movements, such as funk, country line dancing, and ballroom dancing.

¹²Aerobics may also refer to an exercise activity performed at home alone, usually with the guidance of an aerobics videotape or television broadcast. This activity retains the essence of a group-exercise session, however, in that the participant is verbally and visually cued by the instructor as to the upcoming movements.

In addition, aerobic dance classes are also classified by impact intensity: high impact, low impact, or a combination of the two. Low impact classes are defined as those utilizing movements in which one foot remains on the floor at all times, and where all locomotor movements are based on walking rather than jogging.

Need for the Study

Sport is both a mirror of society at large, and is itself an agent of change; thus its history is an essential component in the tapestry that makes up the social history of a particular culture.¹³ The history of sport and recreation has received attention only relatively recently from historians and physical educators, while scholarly studies that describe and analyze the advent of modern fitness activities are practically non-existent. A bibliographic search turned up few references on the history of aerobic dance, scholarly or otherwise. Since so little documentation exists on this subject, it is critical that the information be gathered and preserved while the key figures are still alive and the events are still relatively fresh in their minds. Beyond simply tracing the rise of aerobic dance and the logistics of its spread, it is also important to attempt to trace its historical and cultural

¹³Nancy L. Struna, "In 'Glorious Disarray': The Literature of American Sport History," *Research Quarterly For Exercise and Sport* 56 (1985): p. 154.

roots--in order to shed light on the society which spawned
and nurtured this popular form of physical activity.

Chapter 2

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The historical method of research was used in this study to gather, analyze, and present evidence pertinent to the problem under investigation. Using the general procedures outlined by Shafer in *A Guide to Historical Method*,¹⁴ the following steps were undertaken:

1. Existing historical information about the topic was surveyed, and the initial objectives of the study were formulated.

2. General historical literature of the main period under study (1960-1980) was examined, in order to become more familiar with the "social, cultural, and intellectual environments in which the events central to the investigation have occurred."¹⁵ This examination included a history of the women's liberation movement, and some of the key feminist writings of the period--with special attention paid to what was written about women's participation in physical fitness activities. Since feminist writers in general had little to say during this period about physical fitness activities, the search was broadened to include any feminist commentary up to the present (1995) that addressed the aerobic dance/group exercise phenomenon. Also reviewed

¹⁴R. J. Shafer, *A Guide to Historical Method*, rev. ed. (Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey Press, 1974).

¹⁵Park, "Research and Scholarship," p. 95.

were books and articles that were written for the general public about exercise, fitness, and health during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. Exercise books by Prudden, LaLanne, Cureton, the Royal Canadian Air Force, and Cooper were examined--as were articles written about these key figures or programs.

3. An extensive bibliographic search was completed for secondary sources about the aerobic dance movement, including books, magazine articles, journal articles, government publications, pamphlets, theses, and dissertations. The *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature* and several computerized indexes were searched from 1960 to the present for any material written about dance exercise, aerobic dance, or aerobics in general. Once the scope of the project was expanded backwards in time, the library was searched for secondary sources about the gymnastic exercise systems popular in the United States during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These sources were used to make a selection of the exercise systems that appeared to be the predecessors of aerobics. All materials that were located were photocopied, and the photocopied documents were sorted by category and catalogued. The secondary sources were used to provide clues in the search for primary sources, and to supply corroborative data for evaluating the accuracy of primary sources (especially data provided in personal interviews).

4. The primary evidence was gathered. First, by networking with IDEA and AFAA personnel, a number of early aerobic dance entrepreneurs and instructors were located. This was facilitated by a letter that was published in the "Speak Out" column of the May 1995 issue of IDEA's magazine for fitness professionals, *IDEA Today*. The letter described the project and listed an "800" (toll-free) telephone number set up by the researcher for those interested in responding (see fig. 2.1). In addition, an advertisement was run in the classified section of the magazine for three months (also displayed in fig. 2.1). The researcher received approximately 200 phone calls and letters from across the nation, and quickly developed a set of screening questions to determine which of the respondents would be called back for a formal interview.

A total of 121 aerobic dance entrepreneurs, instructors, and participants were interviewed over the telephone. These interviews were undertaken only after formal consent was obtained from the interview subjects; in most cases, the consent form was read to the subject at the outset of the telephone interview, and then subsequently mailed to the subject for a signature. The questions for these interviews were planned in advance, but were adapted for the particular subject as the interview progressed. The interviewer always began with questions that were straightforward and noncontroversial, the *who*, *what*, *when*,

WANTED: PIONEER AEROBICS INSTRUCTORS

I am hoping that readers of *IDEA Today* can help me with a project I am currently undertaking as a graduate student in the Human Performance Department at San Jose State University. I have become interested in documenting the rise and spread of aerobic dance. Very little has been written about the early history of this enormously popular form of exercise. We need to capture some of that history before memories fade and it is irretrievably lost!

I am looking for aerobic dance instructors who were teaching from 1971 to 1978. I am especially interested in instructors trained by Jacki Sorensen or Judi Sheppard Missett, but I would also like to hear from those who taught for other programs or who originated their own programs. In addition, I would like to contact early (1970 to 1976 or so) aerobic-dance class participants to get their impressions of those classes.

Any help will be greatly appreciated.

Beth Swanson
PO Box 26914
San Jose, CA 95159
(800) 375-4808 ■

**WANTED: EARLY AEROBIC DANCE
INSTRUCTORS/PARTICIPANTS (1970-
1978)** to be interviewed for research project on the history of aerobic dance. Contact Beth Swanson, PO Box 26914, San Jose, CA 95159.

Fig. 2.1. Letter from the author published in the "Speak Out" section of the May 1995 issue of *IDEA Today* (p. 8), and the advertisement that ran in the "Classifieds" section of that same issue (p. 87).

and *where* questions, and after rapport had been established, proceeded to the difficult questions that required more emotional and nonverifiable responses--the *how* and *why* questions.¹⁶ Several books on interviewing techniques were reviewed by the researcher, which presented guidelines and valuable tips distilled from the experiences of seasoned authors and journalists.

Many of the callers who responded to the *IDEA Today* letter provided data about early programs (including programs prior to 1969), and about key figures in the aerobic dance industry. Through this information, other important interview subjects were located--a networking process that consumed over a year. After digesting some of the preliminary evidence, the researcher generated a list of important pioneers, and began the process of tracking them down and obtaining their permission to be interviewed. For these interviews, a description of the areas to be covered (along with the consent form) was mailed in advance to the subject. After the telephone interview was completed, some of the subjects were mailed a list of follow-up questions for them to respond to in writing. These questions usually involved the verification of information that the subjects had provided, allowing them time to rethink answers or to research archived materials.

¹⁶Shafer, *Historical Method*, p. 82.

Sorensen and Missett had already been contacted at the outset of the project, and had agreed to provide in-depth information about their careers. Missett was interviewed in a lengthy telephone interview in the summer of 1995, and a number of her earliest Jazzercise instructors were also identified and interviewed. Sorensen declined to be interviewed in person or over the telephone; thus, a series of six letters was exchanged over eighteen months in which she responded to lists of questions submitted by the researcher. The letters were actually written by her husband, Neil Sorensen, who had been intimately involved in the administrative aspects of her company (Aerobic Dancing, Inc.) since its inception. After obtaining data from the Sorensens and from several of the early Aerobic Dancing instructors, an organization chart was developed which identified the key individuals who had initiated the Aerobic Dancing program in each of the major regions of the country. Efforts were then made to locate and interview these individuals.

Two of the three early pioneers selected, Jack LaLanne and Bonnie Prudden, were interviewed over the telephone, and their original books were examined--as were the writings of the third pioneer, Thomas Cureton, Jr. (now deceased). Finally, after a number of the early gymnastic exercise systems had been selected based on their similarities to modern aerobics, a search was made for the original books or

manuals written by the creators of those systems, with special attention paid to finding illustrations or photographs of the exercises involved.

A number of the subjects interviewed subsequently sent through the mail original materials (or in some cases, copies of the original materials) that they had authored or collected over the years. These included books, record albums, audiocassette tapes, videocassette tapes, photographs, newspaper and magazine clippings, brochures and newsletters, company organization charts, and advertising materials. The Aerobic Dancing, Inc. area manager for Northern California had maintained a scrapbook since the mid-1970s, and the researcher personally retrieved the scrapbook and made copies of its entire contents.

5. The evidence was examined, and subjected to external and internal criticism. External criticism is the process of establishing the authenticity of the author and date of a document. In this study, most of the evidence was provided by oral interviews obtained directly by the researcher, which provided verification of the source. When information was obtained from published media sources, the researcher verified whenever possible that the material or quotations attributed to a certain individual did indeed come from that individual.

Internal criticism, the process of establishing the credibility of the evidence, was performed on the statements

obtained from each witness, and on the data reported in newspaper and magazine articles. Important statements were subjected to tests of probability and plausibility, and were compared as much as possible to the statements from other sources for contradiction or corroboration.¹⁷ Evidence was examined for possible biases, errors of "commission and of omission, partial truths, twistings, favorable interpretations," and other distortions, whether willful or inadvertent (p. 148). Since most of the participants in this study were recalling events from a distance of fifteen to twenty-five years (or more), it was critical to scrutinize their statements for accuracy, and to provide as much corroboration as possible. A number of cases occurred where two or more subjects gave conflicting information (especially regarding dates), and the researcher was required to select the most accurate version based on all of the data available.¹⁸ Another problematic area was crediting the true source of an important idea or program, when more than one person claimed to be the originator. Again, the researcher made decisions based on probability, plausibility, and corroborating evidence.

It was also important to identify and control for the

¹⁷Shafer, *Historical Method*, p. 41.

¹⁸One of the first Aerobic Dancing instructors in the San Diego area, who had saved all of her daily appointment calendars since 1970, proved to be an invaluable source of dates. Many of the dates provided by other instructors in this region, and by Sorensen herself, were incorrect!

biases of the researcher. Usually the historian is looking back at a time that is beyond the scope of his or her experience; in the case of this study, however, the researcher had experienced firsthand the events of the 1960s and 1970s, and was herself an early aerobic dance participant and instructor. She tried to be vigilant against soliciting evidence from other observers with preconceived ideas in mind, and against drawing conclusions from her research based on her personal opinions of the events under scrutiny.

6. The evidence was analyzed and interpreted, and the results arranged into a meaningful synthesis. The goal was to look for "logically possible outcomes,"¹⁹ and for the "causal relations that permit explanations of human events."²⁰ In this process "it is proper to demand that an historian be thorough, fair, and impartial in seeking and using all the evidence, not just evidence which accords with his [sic] preconceptions or supports his thesis" (p. 170). "Almost any historical thesis can be proved, if only supporting evidence is selected" (p. 175).

After all of the interviews had been transcribed and entered into the computer, they were printed out. Individuals from the same program (for example, those from Aerobic Dancing or Jazzercise) were grouped together. Next,

¹⁹Park, "Research and Scholarship," p. 96.

²⁰Shafer, *Historical Method*, p. 182.

the interviews were briefly reviewed, and a set of general categories was constructed, such as "YMCA programs prior to 1970," "YMCA programs that replaced Aerobic Dancing," "Health club/spa programs," "Media figures," "Programs descended From Bonnie Prudden," "Programs descended from Slimnastics," "Programs that began in the public schools," "Spinoffs from Aerobic Dancing" and so on. Each category was placed in a manila folder, with the contents listed on the cover. These content listings included notations next to each person's name describing the person's program, influences, and key contributions. Finally, a large chart was generated from the information on all of the individual folders, with arrows drawn showing the connections between various people and programs. The magazine and journal articles were also reviewed and categorized.

Based on the objectives of the study and the accumulated data, the manuscript was divided into four periods: Prior to World War II, World War II to the 1960s, the 1960s, and the 1970s. Because so much of the accumulated data pertained to Sorensen's Aerobic Dancing, the section on the 1970s was divided into two chapters: "Jacki Sorensen's Aerobic Dancing," and "Other Aerobic Dance Pioneers of the 1970s." The most difficult task was making the final selection of who and what would be included in the chapter on the 1960s ("Setting the Stage") and in the chapter on "Other Aerobic Dance Pioneers." An enormous

amount of data had been collected, and it was an agonizing process to decide just who would be left out. Some of the criteria used by the researcher were: the size of program, the media visibility of the program, the number of future aerobic instructors influenced or trained, whether the program was part of a "chain of influences" extending from an earlier pioneer, and whether the program was a good illustration of a widespread trend or phenomenon.

Individual instructors in larger programs such as Aerobic Dancing or Jazzercise were referenced only if they played an important part in the early expansion of these programs; however, all of the interviews were reviewed to summarize information about the motivations and experiences of early aerobic dance instructors and participants. After the five chapters were written, their contents were summarized, some conclusions were drawn, and the original hypotheses were evaluated.

Instrumentation and Apparatus

The primary instrument that was utilized in this study was the carefully planned list of questions constructed for the interviews; in some cases the questions were devised specifically for a particular person. These interviews took place over the telephone (with the interviewer taking notes), and certain key interviews were recorded onto audiocassette tape (with prior permission). Another instrument used was the toll-free "800" telephone number,

which was set up to encourage potential interview subjects to call the researcher at no expense to the subject. Finally, there was the consent form (see Appendix A), which was signed in advance by each person to be interviewed, or was read over the telephone prior to beginning an interview and then mailed to the subject for a signature, along with a stamped return envelope and a copy of the form for the subject's files. In some cases a list of preliminary questions was mailed in advance to the subject along with the consent form, so that the subject could prepare in advance for the interview. Several of the interviews were carried out by an exchange of letters, and many of the subjects interviewed by telephone also sent written and audiovisual materials to the researcher. A number of subjects were mailed a list of follow-up questions after their telephone interviews, for them to respond to in writing.

The data from all of the verbal interviews, whether captured on audiocassette tape or in handwritten notes, were entered into several computer files using a word processor. These files were stored on hard disk and on floppy disk, and a paper copy was printed out for each interview. All materials received in the mail, along with the interview tapes, floppy disks, and computer print-outs, were stored in a locked filing cabinet.

The apparatus that was used for the telephone tape

recording was a Radio Shack Telephone Recording Control Unit, model 43-228A, plugged into a Sony tape recorder, model CFD-55, using standard 60-minute cassette tapes.

The total cost of maintaining and using the "800" number for the duration of the project was about \$500. An additional \$175 was spent on postage, making photocopies, the *IDEA Today* advertisement, and the Radio Shack Telephone Recording Control Unit. These costs were quite reasonable, considering that no travel expenses were incurred. Most of the subjects interviewed felt that the telephone format was desirable because it allowed for a free exchange of information with some degree of anonymity. The researcher had no difficulty in obtaining lengthy and informative interviews over the telephone, although in some cases multiple sessions were required to accommodate the subject's schedule.

Chapter 3

THE ROOTS OF AEROBICS: EXERCISE SYSTEMS IN THE UNITED STATES PRIOR TO WORLD WAR II

Aerobics has often been characterized by its originators and practitioners as a completely new and unique form of exercise.¹ But is this truly the case? Were there not earlier forms of exercise which foreshadowed the development of modern aerobics? It is the goal of this chapter to identify those exercise "systems" popularized in the United States during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that contained many of the key elements found in aerobics today: freestanding, continuous movements vigorous enough to raise the heart rate, performed indoors to music, practiced by both sexes but particularly adopted by women, and not requiring the use of bulky apparatus (except perhaps for lightweight, handheld equipment). Indeed it will be seen that aerobics is not new at all, but the continuation of exercise concepts that were proposed, practiced, refined, modified and adapted over the past two centuries.

The practice of structured exercises for health and fitness came into prominence at the beginning of the nineteenth century in Europe with the development of Friedrich Jahn's German gymnastics, Per Ling's Swedish

¹Jacki Sorensen with Bill Bruns, *Aerobic Dancing* (New York: Rawson, Wade Publishers, 1979); and Jazzercise, Inc., "Background & Bios: A History of Jazzercise," (Carlsbad, Calif., 1994), company brochure.

gymnastics, and Franz Nachteggall's Danish gymnastics--all three based on the work of Germany's Johann GutsMuths, who published *Gymnastics for the Young* in 1793.² It is beyond the scope of this chapter to present a complete history of these European gymnastics systems, but it is important to note their role in inspiring the exercise programs that were subsequently devised by various physical educators in the United States.

There were very few formalized programs of exercise in the U.S. during the first half of the nineteenth century. The emigration to this country of Europeans trained in German and Swedish gymnastics brought American educators into contact with these systems. By the 1850s, "gymnastics" in the U.S. had come to mean formalized exercises usually performed indoors, rather than games and sports; "calisthenics" (meaning "beautiful strength") commonly referred to gymnastics that had been adapted for women. The first exercise program created by a native-born American was the calisthenics course of Catharine Esther Beecher.³

Catharine Beecher's Course of Calisthenics

Catharine Beecher (1800-1878), who came from a family of prominent ministers, reformers, and authors, opened a private school for girls in Hartford, Connecticut in 1821.

²Taken from a chart compiled by Shirley Reekie, sport history professor at San Jose State University.

³Harvey Green, *Fit for America: Health, Fitness, Sport and American Society* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), p. 87.

She instituted a series of daily exercises, performed in loose clothing, which she created after familiarizing herself with both the German gymnastics and Ling's scientifically-based Swedish Movement Cure.⁴ In the urbanization that had accompanied rapid industrialization, Beecher felt that Americans in general, and women in particular, had lost the "superior health and activity" of previous generations, and had become "feeble, sickly, and ugly."⁵ In 1831, a treatise was published in Hartford titled *Course of Calisthenics for Young Ladies*; although the author was identified only by the letter "M", this work is widely attributed to Beecher.⁶

In 1832 Beecher moved to Cincinnati with her family, where she opened the Western Female Institute. She continued to refine the calisthenic exercises she had developed in her Hartford school. These exercises emphasized graceful movements performed in time to rhythmic music (usually played on a piano), and were designed to "secure all of the advantages supposed to be gained in

⁴Green, *Fit for America*, p. 94.

⁵Catharine E. Beecher, *Physiology and Calisthenics for Schools and Families* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1856), p. 10.

⁶Green, *Fit for America*, p. 91; Deobold B. Van Dalen and Bruce L. Bennett, *A World History of Physical Education: Cultural, Philosophical, Comparative*, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1971), p. 379; and Emmett A. Rice, John L. Hutchinson, and Mabel Lee, *A Brief History of Physical Education* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1969), p. 171.

dancing schools'." ⁷

After years of lecturing throughout the East and Midwest in promotion of physical education, Beecher published in 1856 her widely circulated and influential textbooks, *Physiology and Calisthenics for Schools and Families* and *Calisthenic Exercises for Schools, Families, and Health Establishments*, bound together in a single volume. The first twenty-six chapters presented basic anatomy and physiology, common abuses of the bodily organs, and modes of remedy. Beecher then described and illustrated sixty-two calisthenic exercises, divided into "Exercises for the Chest and Lungs," "Exercises to Perfect the Muscles of the Arms and Hands," "Exercises for the Muscles of the Trunk," "Exercises for the Feet and Legs," and "Exercises for the Calisthenic Hall: Walking, Skipping, Exercise with Weights." The exercises could be done in schools, health establishments, and at home, "*without apparatus, and without a room set apart for the purpose....* This is a system that contains all that either sex needs for the perfect development of the body." ⁸

Beecher listed the following benefits of performing her calisthenics on a regular basis: (a) the prevention of

⁷Willystine Goodsell, ed., *Pioneers of Women's Education in the United States: Emma Willard, Catharine Beecher, Mary Lyon*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1931), p. 127. Goodsell is quoting Beecher, but the source is unspecified.

⁸Beecher, *Physiology and Calisthenics*, p. iv.

disease; (b) an increase in the "fullness and strength of muscles" and in the "force, flexibility, and dexterity of movement"; (c) an increase in "the size and action of the lungs" and in blood circulation; (d) the "removal of obesity, or an excess of fat"; (e) the promotion of "feelings of friendship" when practiced in a group; (f) the production of cheerfulness, and diversion from mental labor and stress.⁹ These outcomes are remarkably parallel to the benefits that are ascribed to aerobics. Beecher stated that the aim of calisthenics should be to provide exercise which is "exhilarating and amusing. For exercise that is sought as a pleasure is more than doubled in value."¹⁰ In the 1970s, Jacki Sorensen described Aerobic Dancing as "a whisper of exercise, a SHOUT of fun!"¹¹

Fig. 3.1 illustrates the resemblance between Beecher's exercises and the moves performed in aerobics. Each exercise was initiated by a "Word of Command" (equivalent to the cueing used in aerobics), and proceeded by alternating the legs--and arms in some cases--for 12 counts. At first the exercises were to be performed slowly and repeated only a few times; each succeeding day the quickness, force, and

⁹Catharine E. Beecher, *Calisthenic Exercises for Schools, Families, and Health Establishments* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1856), pp. iv-vi.

¹⁰Beecher, *Physiology and Calisthenics*, p. 178.

¹¹Sorensen, *Aerobic Dancing*, p. 9.

EXERCISE 44.

Word of Command—"Up Stairs Movement!"

Fig. 55.

Hands on the hips. Raise the right and then the left knee alternately, as in Fig. 55.

Count one, and so on to twelve.

EXERCISE 45.

Word of Command—"Knee Bend!"

Fig. 56.

Hands on the hips. Raise the right and then the left foot alternately, till the heel presses the thigh, as at Fig. 56.

Count one, and so on to twelve.

Fig. 54.

EXERCISE 43.

Word of Command—"Side Reach!"

Throw the body and stretch the right arm and right leg as far as possible to the right. Reverse the movement, and stretch them to the left, as at Fig. 54.

Count one at the first movement, and so on to twelve.

EXERCISE 42.

Word of Command—"Forward Reach!"

Fig. 53.

Place the hands on the hips, and throw the body as far forward as possible, as at Fig. 53, first on the right and then on the left foot.

Count one at the first movement, and so on to twelve.

Fig. 3.1. Examples of Catharine Beecher's calisthenics

Reprinted from Beecher, *Calisthenics for the School, Family, and Health Establishments* (1856), pp. 34-35.

EXERCISE 55.
Word of Command—"Weights Up!"
Let the weights be carried as at Fig.
69, still marching to music.

EXERCISE 56.
Word of Command—"Weights
Balancing!"

Let the pupils keep time by
changing the weights up and
down as the teacher says "left
up! right up!" This should
keep time with the music.

EXERCISE 54.
Word of Command—
"Weights Out!"
Let the pupils carry
the weights as at Fig.
68, marching to music.

Fig. 3.2. Examples of Catharine Beecher's calisthenics with hand weights

Reprinted from Beecher, *Calisthenics for the School, Family, and Health Establishments* (1856), pp. 45-46.

number of repetitions were increased, up to some maximum.¹² This is comparable to the progression method used in modern aerobics classes.

Beecher's system made use of hand weights, which were constructed by filling two oblong cotton bags with corn (see fig. 3.2). Handheld weights, typically two to five pounds each, are also a feature of most aerobics classes.

Beecher's calisthenics gained popularity throughout the U.S., and were adopted by many schools as a substitute for dance.¹³ Opposition to dance arose during the first half of the century because of a revival of religious attitudes about immoral social behavior, and because "the American ideals of material accomplishment and usefulness made suspect any activity such as dance, which was manifestly connected with pleasure and pastime"; Beecher's musical calisthenics, which resembled dance, were widely adopted in order to circumvent that opposition.¹⁴

The New Gymnastics of Dio Lewis

During the 1850s, Dioclesian Lewis (1823-1886) developed a system he called the "New Gymnastics": freestanding exercises arranged to music, "found to possess

¹²Beecher, *Calisthenic Exercises*, p. 9.

¹³Rice, Hutchinson, and Lee, *A Brief History*, p. 149.

¹⁴Richard Kraus, *History of the Dance in Art and Education*, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969), p. 125.

a charm superior to that of dancing."¹⁵ Lewis had attended the Harvard Medical School for a short period, and then worked as a physician's assistant; in 1851 he was awarded an honorary medical degree from Cleveland Medical College, and began a career as a health and temperance lecturer.¹⁶ While on a tour of Europe in 1856, he studied both German and Swedish gymnastics. Opposed to the use of heavy weights and cumbersome apparatus, he drew on elements of both gymnastic systems--along with Beecher's calisthenics--to create a system of graceful exercises that could be done by men, women, older adults, and young children.¹⁷

Lewis presented his system of gymnastics at the 1860 meeting of the American Institute of Instruction in Boston. He was a magnetic speaker, and created a sensation among the assembled educators. They recommended "the general introduction of Lewis' gymnastics into all the schools and for general use."¹⁸ In 1861 Lewis opened the Boston Normal Institute for Physical Education; during its seven years of existence, the school trained between 250 and 421 New Gymnastics teachers, depending on which source is to be

¹⁵Dio Lewis, *The New Gymnastics for Men, Women, and Children* (Boston: Ticknor & Fields, 1862), p. 5.

¹⁶Rice, Hutchinson, and Lee, *A Brief History*, p. 174.

¹⁷Green, *Fit for America*, p. 184; and Van Dalen and Bennett, *A World History*, p. 386.

¹⁸Van Dalen and Bennett, *A World History*, p. 379.

believed.¹⁹ Lewis also opened a school for girls in 1864 in Lexington, Massachusetts, and hired Catharine Beecher to teach on his staff. They soon clashed over their respective exercise systems, and Beecher departed to resume her educational promotion work.²⁰

In 1862 Lewis published *The New Gymnastics for Men, Women, and Children*, which was phenomenally successful: it went through twenty-five editions and "became the standard text for calisthenic exercises in schools, gymnasiums, and homes for twenty-five years." The appeal of Lewis' gymnastics to women and his willingness to train women teachers at his normal school (the majority of graduates were female) were important factors underlying this popularity, since women have from the beginning been instrumental in the promotion of physical education in the United States.²¹

Lewis's New Gymnastics could be performed by "the strongest man, the feeblest woman, and the frailest child" in any sort of hall or room.²² The exercises were always to be done in a group, accompanied by music played on a piano, violin, or best of all, a hand organ; a small drum was also

¹⁹Robert K. Barney, "Adele Parot: Pathfinder for the Dioclesian Lewis School of Gymnastic Expression in the American West," *Her Story in Sport: A Historical Anthology of Women in Sports*, ed. Reet Howell (West Point, N.Y.: Leisure Press, 1982), p. 385.

²⁰Rice, Hutchinson, and Lee, *A Brief History*, p. 174.

²¹Green, *Fit for America*, pp. 184 (quote), 186.

²²Lewis, *The New Gymnastics*, p. 9.

to be used for emphasizing the beats, as an aid in keeping time to the music (p. 14). The participants "accomplish wonders under the inspiration of music. I believe five times as much muscle can be coaxed out, under this delightful stimulus, as without it" (p. 14).

Always a campaigner against female corsets, Lewis prescribed a gymnastics costume that allowed for "perfect liberty about the waist and shoulders" (p. 16). He also recommended a low-cut shoe with a strong buckle and a layer of rubber covering the sole (p. 18).

Lewis urged the importance of exercises which stressed the cardiopulmonary system. "Those exercises in which the lungs and heart are made to go at a vigorous pace, are to be ranked among the most useful" (p. 66). Unlike many of his contemporaries who believed that exertion depleted one's lifetime stock of vital energy, Lewis felt that one's vitality was enhanced by vigorous activity (pp. 66-69). He also advised the participants to warm up before beginning the more strenuous exercises and to cool down at the end: "Avoid sudden transitions from rest to great exertion, and the reverse. It is best to commence with light exercises, and arrange to have the most difficult ones come in the middle of the lesson" (p. 126).

Each of the above features of Lewis's New Gymnastics has an analogue in modern aerobics: the adaptability to any fitness level and to any venue; the importance of musical

stimulation and of exercising in a group; the use of music with a clearly discernable beat; the need for comfortable, non-restrictive clothing and specialized shoes that grip the floor and provide some shock-absorption; the emphasis on providing a cardiopulmonary workout; and the design of the exercise session to follow a bell-shaped intensity curve.

Lewis' exercises involved a wide variety of movements of the arms, trunk, and legs. Illustrated in fig. 3.3 are raising the knee (a), twisting the body (b), swinging the leg sideways (c), bending and stretching the leg to the rear (d), legs out and back sidewise (e), a knee kick (f), and trotting (g). These are comparable to movements in most aerobics classes.

The New Gymnastics also utilized a variety of handheld equipment, such as bean bags, wooden rings, a smooth stick called the Wand (fig. 3.4a), a rope with handles called the Arm Pull (3.4b), the Shoulder Pusher (3.4c), Indian clubs, which had been adopted by British soldiers stationed in India (3.4d), and light dumbbells made of wood (3.4e through g). Lewis condemned heavy weights because they did not allow vigorous movements and a large range of motion. He recommended wooden dumbbells weighing three pounds each, shaped very much like those used in modern aerobics.²³

²³Lewis, *The New Gymnastics*, p. 63. Lewis' dumbbell exercises were based on Maurice Kloss, *The Dumb Bell Instructor for Parlor Gymnasts*, 2nd ed., trans. Dio Lewis (Boston: Ticknor & Fields, 1862). [Original work published in Germany in 1860.]

Fig. 3.3. Examples of Dio Lewis' New Gymnastics

Reprinted from Lewis, *The New Gymnastics for Men, Women, and Children* (1862), pp. 105-115.

Fig. 3.4. Handheld equipment in Dio Lewis' *New Gymnastics*

Reprinted from Lewis, *The New Gymnastics for Men, Women, and Children* (1862), pp. 43-100.

In addition to handheld dumbbells, modern aerobics makes use of plastic balls, stretchable latex "rubber bands", rubber tubing with handles (fig. 3.5a), and the Body Bar (3.5b), which is similar to the Wand.

Fig. 3.5. Equipment used in modern aerobics: rubber tubing, and the Body Bar

Reprinted, by permission, from *Fitness Wholesale 1995 Product Catalog* (Stow, Ohio): pp. 37 & 21.

Lewis continued to lecture, operate several gymnasiums, and hold summer school training sessions until his death in 1886. His gymnastic system influenced many other exercise and physical education pioneers well into the twentieth century. It is interesting to note that one of Lewis' pupils, Adele Parot, brought his system in 1862 to the California State Normal School (located at the time in San Francisco²⁴), and through her impact on State Superintendent

²⁴The California State Normal School was moved to San Jose in 1870, and later became San Jose State University.

John Swett and other administrators and educators, is credited with contributing to California's passage of the nation's first mandatory physical education law in 1866.²⁵

The Gymnastics of the German Turners

By the 1880s, both the German and Swedish gymnastic systems had gained a foothold (for both men and women) in American schools and gymnasiums. In the Swedish system there was no musical accompaniment, and except for some brisk marching and jumping, the exercises were done slowly, with the emphasis on the correct holding of positions. The German Turner system included a wide variety of activities and apparatus, but due to a general lack of funds and equipment, the free exercises received the most attention. They were usually performed to music, were very rhythmic, and by the late 1800s, made use of light dumbbells, wands, Indian clubs, and garlands.²⁶

Rice et al. described the contents of the May, 1894 issue of the American Turner publication *Mind and Body*, in which there was a detailed chart of exercises for general strength, localized strength, skill, alertness, quickness, and endurance. In these last two categories were found the antecedents of modern aerobics: "Rhythmically repeated movements distributed over a great number of muscles with

²⁵Barney, "Adele Parot," pp. 385-389; and State of California, *Historical Sketch of the State Normal School at San Jose, California* (Sacramento: State Printing Office, 1889), p. 16.

²⁶Rice, Hutchinson, and Lee, *A Brief History*, pp. 178-180.

the intention of...straining the activities of the heart and lungs to the utmost and causing temporary exhaustion of these organs."²⁷

A direct examination of a 1915 issue of *Mind and Body*²⁸ revealed a large number of articles listing specific instructions for group exercises (for girls, for boys, or for mixed groups)--including the music to be used, the number of counts for each exercise, and the number of repetitions. Most of the exercises involved marching (with various arm movements), lunges, knee bends, jumping in place, trunk bending, and step hops. Some of the sequences incorporated German folk dance steps, such as the Polka and the Schottische. Fig. 3.6 shows an example of a Turner gymnastic exercise utilizing dumbbells; fig. 3.7 illustrates the modern-day equivalent in aerobics.

The Turners particularly liked to incorporate climbing into their gymnastics, and when exercising outdoors would make use of hilly terrain and natural objects (such as rocks and logs) to provide a vertical component to their workout. This was echoed in the 1980s by the development of step aerobics, where the participants step up and down, utilizing a small platform of variable height.

In the early part of the twentieth century, gymnastics

²⁷Rice, Hutchinson, and Lee, *A Brief History*, p. 179.

²⁸*Mind and Body* 22 (March 1915 to February 1916): pp. 511-995. Published in Milwaukee, Wisc.

Fig. 13.

Fig. 14.

EXERCISE III.

- 1- 4 Lunge left backward, and bend arms for strike over shoulders—Fig. 13.
 5- 8 Kneel left and swing arms through the forward position, and backward—Fig. 14.

Fig. 3.6. German gymnastic exercises with dumbbells

Reprinted from "Dumbbell Exercises (Turnfest, San Francisco, 1915)," *Mind and Body* 22 (March 1915 to February 1916): p. 918.

Fig. 3.7. Modern aerobics exercise with three-pound dumbbells

Reprinted, by permission, from an advertisement for DuPont Supplex in *IDEA Today* 13 (July-August 1995): p. 13.

(in one form or another) were the centerpiece of most school physical education programs, and much of the adult population had also become aware of the health benefits of systematic exercise. German gymnastics were particularly prevalent, both in and out of schools, in areas such as the Midwest where there was a large German population; Swedish

gymnastics were widely popular in public schools and in women's colleges.²⁹ As games and sports began to supplant gymnastics in most programs for boys and men, two new European exercise systems arrived in the U.S., and found their way into many programs for girls and women.

The Fundamental Gymnastics of Neils Bukh

Danish gymnastics, as devised by Franz Nachtegall around 1800, began as a close copy of the German gymnastics of Johann GutsMuths, and were subsequently influenced by Friedrich Jahn's German *Turnen* system; by the twentieth century, however, many features of Per Ling's Swedish gymnastics had also become deeply enmeshed in the Danish system.³⁰ Neils Bukh (1880-1950), a renowned teacher and leader of the Danish Olympic gymnastic team, began in 1915 the development of a more rhythmic form of Danish gymnastics which he called "Primary Gymnastics," but which became widely known as "Fundamental Gymnastics."³¹ Bukh's system was designed to promote "flexibility, strength, and agility," and was characterized by continuous, rhythmic movements, rather than sustained positions, with smooth transitions from one exercise to the next.³²

²⁹Rice, Hutchinson, and Lee, *A Brief History*, pp. 249, 251.

³⁰Van Dalen and Bennett, *A World History*, p. 264.

³¹Niels Bukh, *Primary Gymnastics*, 7th ed., trans. Frank Punchard and Johan Johansson (London: Methuen & Co., 1948), p. ix.

³²Niels Bukh, *Fundamental Gymnastics: The Basis of Rational Physical Development*, 2nd ed., trans. Emily Russell Andrews and Karen Vesterdal (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1928), p. 11.

Bukh's program became extremely popular in Great Britain, where his book *Primary Gymnastics* went through seven editions (1925 through 1948), and helped to inspire the Keep Fit Movement³³--one of the direct predecessors of British aerobics (see Chapter 5). In 1923 Bukh visited North America with a group of students; over the next few years, his chief proponent in the United States, Helen McKinstry, arranged for fifty-four women physical educators to attend Bukh's six-week summer sessions in Ollerup, Denmark.³⁴ Two of those educators wrote books for the American audience: Emily Andrews, an instructor at the Central School of Hygiene and Physical Education (which trained YWCA leaders and was headed by McKinstry), translated and adapted Bukh's *Fundamental Gymnastics* in 1928; and Dorothy Sumption of The Ohio State University wrote the textbook *Fundamental Danish Gymnastics for Women* in 1927 ("revised and enlarged" in 1932).³⁵ Bukh's gymnastics became a fixture in physical education and exercise programs for women until World War II, and was a component of the Women's Army Corps fitness program during the war.³⁶

Fundamental Gymnastics were performed for a period

³³Bukh, *Primary Gymnastics* (1948), p. ix.

³⁴Bukh, *Fundamental Gymnastics* (1928), pp. xix-xxi.

³⁵Dorothy Sumption, *Fundamental Danish Gymnastics for Women*, 2nd ed. (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1932).

³⁶Rice, Hutchinson, and Lee, *A Brief History*, p. 252.

ranging from thirty minutes to one hour (similar to the length of today's aerobics session), and consisted of a warmup, stretching, vigorous exercises of the trunk, arms, and legs ("swingings," "bendings," and "twistings"), and rhythmic whole-body exercises such as jumping jacks, marching, hopping, and kick-walking (see fig. 3.8).³⁷ "By continually shifting action from one part of the body to another--without entire cessation of activity--tired muscles are given a rest period and work can be prolonged" (p. 12). Because of the emphasis on continuity of movement--the only time the movement stopped was when an unfamiliar exercise was being demonstrated--Bukh's system was "effective in stimulating the circulatory, respiratory, digestive and excretory organs" (p. 11). As in modern aerobics, cueing was critical: "While the class is doing one exercise the next one is named; then, when the final signal is given, the new exercise is started immediately, with no break."³⁸

Bukh, who incorporated many folk dance steps into his gymnastics, played music only during certain portions of the session. When his system was imported to the U.S., music was almost always used to provide rhythm and enhance motivation. Phonograph records had by now come into popular use, reducing the need to employ a live accompanist. In

³⁷Bukh, *Fundamental Gymnastics* (1928), p. 26-30.

³⁸Sumption, *Fundamental Danish Gymnastics*, p. 7.

Fig. 3.8. Examples of Neils Bukh Fundamental Gymnastics. Note the brief and non-restrictive exercise costume, and the use of clapping (a common rhythmic component of aerobics).

Reprinted from Sumption, *Fundamental Danish Gymnastics for Women* (1932), pp. 59 & 75.

Sumption's 1932 book, she even goes so far as to suggest specific songs for some of the gymnastic routines, such as "Yankee Doodle," "Where, Oh Where Has My Little Dog Gone," and "Comin' Through the Rye."

Many of the features found in Bukh's *Fundamental Gymnastics* are echoed in today's aerobics. He emphasized the intensity curve, and the importance of progression. He introduced the use of combinations and series, putting familiar exercises together in new and interesting ways. He stressed that the exercises should be "fun to do," a "stream of activity without rigidity, tension or inhibition...with an accompanying exhilaration and sense of satisfaction, increased endurance, and achievement."³⁹ Bukh also devoted a section to the adaptation of his gymnastics to non-school settings, such as the YWCA and YMCA: these classes should involve less discipline and formality, the exercise combinations should be kept simple, and the instructor should impart enthusiasm while carefully monitoring the fitness levels of participants. "The work must be given with the recreative element paramount. These groups are entirely voluntary, attendance dependent upon desire for vigorous activity, either for fun or for health reasons" (p. 39). This is the same philosophy that drew millions of women who were no longer in school to aerobic dance in the

³⁹Bukh, *Fundamental Gymnastics*, p. 15.

1970s (see fig. 3.9).

Danish Gymnastics, especially as it was practiced in Europe, often made use of mass demonstrations in which large groups of participants performed precisely-timed, rhythmic exercises in unison (see fig. 3.10). Aerobic Dancing, Jazzercise, and other early aerobic dance programs used similar performances to promote their programs, impart enthusiasm, and create a sense of community. It is likely that both Bukh's Danish Gymnastics and Dio Lewis' New Gymnastics, are precursors to the modern sport of "Rhythmic Gymnastics" (see Chapter 5).

**Aerobic Dancing —
FITNESS made FUN!**

*"No matter how good it
is for me both physically and
emotionally, I wouldn't do
Aerobic Dancing if it weren't
fun!"*

Fig. 3.9. Aerobic Dancing - Fitness made fun!

Reprinted, by permission, from Aerobic Dancing, Inc.,
"Aerobic Dancing Newsletter 1" (Northridge, Calif.: December
1979).

Fig. 3.10. Illustration of the mass demonstrations used in Danish Fundamental Gymnastics. Bukh called this activity "Positional Gymnastics". The performance pictured took place at the Gymnastic High School in Ollerup, Denmark, during the 1940s.

Reprinted from Bukh, *Primary Gymnastics*, 7th ed. (1948), p. 273.

The Eurhythmics of Emile Jaques-Dalcroze

Although Emile Jaques-Dalcroze's Eurhythmics were never as widely adopted in the U.S. as were Danish gymnastics, and although Dalcroze's program was initially intended more as a vehicle for artistic expression than physical exercise, it is important to include Eurhythmics in this survey because of the precedent they set in the creative application of music to exercise. Dalcroze (1865-1950), a Swiss music teacher and composer, began developing a system in 1897 whereby physical movements were used to increase perceptions of musical rhythms. In 1910, several enthusiasts built Dalcroze a college in Hellerau, Germany where he could teach his system of Eurhythmics, and many of the 3,000 students who completed the course emigrated to other countries, including America, to teach the Dalcroze method.⁴⁰ Just before World War I, Dalcroze was exiled from Germany for protesting against the government's military methods, and he returned to Geneva where he continued to develop his theories.⁴¹

Classes in Eurhythmics sprang up in the U.S. in the 1920s at a number of private schools and colleges in the East and Midwest, as a substitute for regular gymnastic classes. "Teachers of music, of physical education, of dancing and

⁴⁰Kraus, *History of the Dance*, p. 141.

⁴¹Jo Pennington, *The Importance of Being Rhythmic* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1925), p. 32

just ordinary teachers became interested; people flocked to the demonstrations--and the usual crop of imitators soon sprang up in New York and elsewhere."⁴² By 1925, Dalcroze teachers were found as far west as Berkeley and Seattle (p. 142).

Participants in Eurhythmics performed continuous movements that expressed each beat in the music's measure (see fig. 3.11), with the exercises cued by words of command called "hopps." There were also interludes of marching, running, clapping, and skipping, and periods of improvisation. The goal was to harmonize the mind with the body--utilizing the body as a musical instrument. Music functioned as the stimulus and the central control for the body's movements, a "great psychic force" which evoked powerful emotions: "If a musical phrase of any typical composition is played, the entire mental state of the period at which it was composed is revived." The students were to incorporate their individual feelings into the movements, without concern for producing exact copies of one another.⁴³

One of the key factors underlying the appeal of modern aerobics is its use of popular music. Jacki Sorensen tried to make Aerobic Dancing "a stimulating experience, *emotion in motion*," by choreographing "emotionally to match the mood and

⁴²Pennington, *The Importance of Being Rhythmic*, p. 38.

⁴³Emile Jaques-Dalcroze, *Eurhythmics: Art and Education*, trans. F. Rothwell (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1930). Quote is on p. 7.

Realisation : From 4 to 1. The step.
 „ 1 to 2. The free leg is lightly crossed over the supporting leg.
 „ 2 to 3. The free leg is stretched out sideways.
 „ 3 to 4. The free leg rejoins the supporting leg.

Fig. 3.11. A four-beat measure in Eurhythmics

Reprinted from Emile Jaques-Dalcroze, *The Jaques-Dalcroze Method of Eurhythmics*, vol. 1 (London: Novello, 1920), p. 45.

beat of a particular song."⁴⁴ She encouraged participants to be individually expressive, "without worry as to whether

⁴⁴Sorensen, *Aerobic Dancing*, p. 9.

skill and technique are correct" (p. 19). Aerobics students often remark that certain songs take them back to particular periods in their lives, providing a joyous release from stress and boredom.

Fig. 3.12. Aerobics: Joy in rhythmic movement to music

Reprinted, by permission, from *Vogue Beauty/Health Guide* (1980/1981): p. 44.

Fig. 3.13.
Examples
of movements in
Eurhythmics.
Students wore a
costume that left
the arms and legs
bare, and were
barefooted.

Reprinted from
Jaques-Dalcroze
*Eurhythmics: Art
and Education*
(1930), p. 25.

Fig. 3.14. A modern aerobics
unitard, which greatly resembles
the Eurhythmics garment pictured
in figs. 3.11. and 3.13.

Reprinted, by permission, from
IDEA Today 13 (April 1995), p.
32.

Seward Staley's Gymnastic Dancing

There is one final exercise system that bears investigation in this survey--even though it was designed primarily for male participants--because the principles embraced by this system so closely mirror the principles underlying aerobics. In 1920, physical educator Seward C. Staley co-wrote a book with D. M. Lowery titled *Manual of Gymnastic Dancing*, which was based on Staley's thesis work while a student at the YMCA College of Springfield.⁴⁵ The book was intended for use in universities and in the YMCAs, and enlarged upon a system of Gymnastic Dancing begun in the YMCAs in the late 1800s (pp. 17-18). The system rejected the balletic orientation of dance classes; it utilized simple, rhythmic, "masculine" movements drawn from folk dancing, German gymnastics, athletic exercises, and the drills of Dio Lewis.⁴⁶

Among the hygienic effects proposed for Gymnastic Dancing were longevity, the replacement of fat with muscle tissue, muscle conditioning, an increase in the efficiency of blood and lymph circulation, and a "measured demand" on the cardiorespiratory system.⁴⁷ The participants were encouraged to get a "sweat-up," and there were no

⁴⁵Seward C. Staley and D. M. Lowery, *Manual of Gymnastic Dancing* (New York: Association Press, 1920).

⁴⁶Kraus, *History of the Dance*, p. 128.

⁴⁷Staley and Lowery, *Gymnastic Dancing*, pp. 23-25.

"excessively difficult exercises from the standpoint of muscular strength" (p. 24). The authors stressed the recreative aspects of Gymnastic Dancing, such as the spirit of freedom and play, and the taking of the mind off of "immediate and material worries" (p. 30): "The dancer prosecutes the most vigorous steps with no thought for the work he is doing. He is only aware of his pleasure" (p. 24). The physical effort was inspired by music and rhythm, and the movements were "plastic and natural" rather than stiff and artificial as in a calisthenics drill (p. 36).

Staley and Lowery devoted a portion of their text to the qualities necessary to becoming a good Gymnastic Dancing teacher: energetic enthusiasm, an interest in each individual student, a patient and cheerful personality, a sense of humor, a strong voice, and knowledge of the anatomical, physiological, and psychological bases of the exercises (pp. 39-42). The teacher should always be on the lookout for new ideas, and at each session should incorporate a new step, new combination, or new way of doing an old step--without varying things so much as to cause confusion (p. 49). The teacher should stand at the front with his back to the students so that they can follow him (p. 47). A new exercise should be broken down into its individual steps, and the class allowed to go through the steps slowly and without music (p. 50). "Progression from the standpoint of interest should be carried forward as

rapidly as possible, but not so rapidly as to cause a large percentage of the class to drop out because of inability to keep up" (p. 52). Commands should be kept simple, and executed in a loud voice with distinctly separated words; counting is helpful, and the cueing commands should be given a few counts ahead of the next step (pp. 56-60).

Staley and Lowery felt that music was "the very soul" of Gymnastic Dancing; without music it was a "dead, inane, senseless activity" (p. 64). The music selected should have a strong beat and consist of "the popular pieces of the day, old-time melodies," and familiar standards which "seem to strike a chord that is not touched by other forms" (p. 69).

A Gymnastic Dancing session usually lasted about 30 minutes, and could be varied as to speed and intensity. This exercise system was adaptable to almost any environment, age-range, temperament, or fitness level (p. 36). Fig. 3.15 shows a representative sampling of Gymnastic Dancing movements.

Staley's *Manual of Gymnastic Dancing* touches on almost every topic found in the manuals written over the past twenty years for aerobics instructors, and most of the recommendations are amazingly parallel. It is ironic that Gymnastic Dancing was created as a less complicated, less feminized exercise system for men--yet it very closely resembles Aerobic Dancing as it was created by Jacki Sorensen as an exercise alternative for women. In the 25

Fig. 3.15. An illustration of Gymnastic Dancing. Most participants wore shorts, athletic shirts, high stockings, and basketball shoes.

Reprinted from Staley and Lowery, *Manual of Gymnastic Dancing* (1920), pp. 99-100.

years since Aerobic Dancing came upon the scene, dance-oriented forms of aerobics have been criticized for being too complex and too feminine, and this criticism has led to the explosive growth of freestyle aerobics and step aerobics, both of which concentrate on simple "power moves" highly reminiscent of the gymnastics and calisthenics that predated Gymnastic Dancing.

Seward Staley went on to a distinguished career as Dean of the College of Physical Education at the University of Illinois, where he published numerous journal articles and books on physical education, exercise systems (including calisthenics and "conditioning gymnastics"), and physical fitness.⁴⁸ In 1941 he hired Thomas K. Cureton, Jr. as Associate Professor: "Staley believed physical fitness could be the focus of graduate education in physical education and convinced Cureton to come to Illinois to develop courses devoted to fitness and to start a laboratory for the scientific study of exercise."⁴⁹ As will be seen in Chapter 4, it was Cureton who provided a direct link from Staley to the aerobic-exercise phenomenon of the late 1960s.

Looking Ahead

During the 1930s, many gymnastic programs for women were replaced by dance classes, and after World War II, the

⁴⁸Marquis *Who's Who*, 10th ed. (Reed Elsevier Inc., 1996).

⁴⁹Jack W. Berryman, "Thomas K. Cureton, Jr.: Pioneer Researcher, Proselytizer, and Proponent for Physical Fitness," *Research Quarterly* 67 (March 1996): p. 4.

only remnants of the old gymnastic systems left in most schools in the U.S. were calisthenic exercises (without music) performed as a warm-up for sports activities in both men's and women's programs. "Gymnastics" by this time had come to refer to the modern competitive sport utilizing specialized apparatus. Calisthenics also survived in the YMCAs, YWCAs, and private gymnasiums, primarily as a modality for strengthening and toning muscles and losing weight--but gone were its cardiopulmonary, musical, and recreative components.

When the health benefits of continuous aerobic exercise (such as jogging, swimming, and bicycling) were widely popularized in the late 1960s by Kenneth Cooper in his book *Aerobics* (1968), the stage was set for innovators such as Jacki Sorensen to devise a system of vigorous, highly-simplified dance movements that stressed the element of enjoyment. This exercise system became so popular that it co-opted the name "aerobics" from other aerobically-based activities. It is clear from this historical investigation that aerobics is not a new phenomenon, but the continuation of exercise trends established at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Modern, rationalized gymnastic exercise systems first appeared in the early nineteenth century in Europe, and these systems were adapted for women in the U.S. by Beecher and Lewis, who added elements of rhythm and music. As the

twentieth century approached, more dance elements found their way into these systems for women, culminating in Bukh's Fundamental Gymnastics and Dalcroze's Eurhythmics (and in the YMCAs Gymnastic Dancing for men). These exercise systems finally gave way to dance itself (primarily modern dance, folk dance, tap dance, and social dance), but their basic essence was revived with the advent of aerobic dance. In addition, many of the exercise programs that were immediate predecessors to the aerobic dance programs of the 1970s were created by individuals who had been exposed to gymnastic exercise systems during their youth. The next two chapters will examine a number of those innovators who foreshadowed (and in some cases directly set the stage for) the aerobic dance phenomenon.

Chapter 4

EARLY PIONEERS

Between World War II and 1970, a number of physical fitness enthusiasts started a variety of exercise classes for women, but the vast majority of these entrepreneurs never expanded beyond offering their classes at a local level. However, two important individuals--Jack LaLanne and Bonnie Prudden--took their message to the media in the 1950s. As a result, their exercise programs gained national attention, paving the way for the fitness "revolution" of the 1970s and influencing many future aerobics teachers and students. In the academic arena, Thomas Kirk Cureton, Jr. developed a landmark adult fitness program at the University of Illinois (in conjunction with Seward C. Staley), and influenced a generation of exercise professionals in schools, colleges, YMCAs, YWCAs, and municipal recreation departments across the country. His efforts between 1942 and 1970 to popularize cardiovascular exercise programs laid the groundwork for the publication of Ken Cooper's book *Aerobics* in 1968 and the subsequent jogging craze of the late 1960s and the 1970s.

Jack LaLanne

Jack LaLanne was born in 1914 and grew up in the San Francisco Bay area. He was an unhappy child--physically weak and plagued by illnesses. At the age of fourteen, he attended a speech by health lecturer Paul Bragg (an early

advocate of natural foods), and made the decision to change his life by beginning an exercise program and modifying his eating habits. He took up wrestling, swimming, and football, and worked closely with a friend who belonged to a German Turnverein and who trained LaLanne in German gymnastics.¹

In 1931, after making a careful study of Gray's *Anatomy*, LaLanne decided to start a gym in his own backyard, utilizing dumbbells, barbells, and various pieces of equipment of his own devising. By the time he graduated from Berkeley High School in 1933, he was a top athlete. He took some college classes, and then went on to graduate from a chiropractic college.²

In 1936, LaLanne opened his first commercial gym in downtown Oakland, the Jack LaLanne Physical Culture Studio. In addition to traditional weights, he continued to invent new equipment, such as machines with pulleys and cables. He tried to create a pleasant environment that included carpets, mirrors, and music, and he even installed a health-food snack bar. His studio was one of the first to attract women and older clients. The workouts that he designed were not "aerobic," but LaLanne counseled his clients to keep their heart rates elevated by moving continuously from one

¹Jack LaLanne, telephone interview by author, 20 September 1995.

²LaLanne, telephone interview.

exercise to the next.³

In the 1950s LaLanne acquired several other existing commercial gyms in California and operated them under his own name; by the end of the decade, however, he decided to sell his interests in the gyms and simply franchise his name to various health-club corporations under a royalty arrangement. He remained active in the promotion of these businesses, which in the 1960s and early 1970s began to offer group exercise classes.⁴

LaLanne began a local television program in the San Francisco area in 1951 called *The Jack LaLanne Show*. He would start the show with a pep talk and a nutrition tip, and then would do a workout that progressed through each major muscle group of the body. He called his system of exercises "Trimnastics," which was probably the inspiration for the name "Slimnastics" that was adopted by numerous exercise programs during the 1960s. The LaLanne workout was nonstop, and involved some cardiovascular conditioning in addition to the strength exercises. He would always demonstrate an exercise for the viewers to do through the commercial break, a practice continued by virtually every subsequent television exercise program. LaLanne employed a piano or an organ player who played live music throughout

³LaLanne, telephone interview.

⁴LaLanne, telephone interview. See Chap. 5, "The Spa Connection."

Fig. 4.1. Jack LaLanne on his television show in 1958
Photograph courtesy of Jack LaLanne.

the show, following the tempo that LaLanne would set for each exercise.⁵

After several years, LaLanne started a second show in Los Angeles; he would film the shows for one location while his wife, Elaine, would do the shows for the other location. In 1955, the show was syndicated nationally, and ran until

⁵LaLanne, telephone interview.

1985--a total of thirty-four years. After Ken Cooper's book *Aerobics* was published in 1968, Cooper appeared on the show, and LaLanne demonstrated to him how weight training could be "aerobic" by doing the exercises quickly and continuously.⁶

LaLanne wrote a total of six books on fitness and health (the first was published in 1960), and after *The Jack LaLanne Show* went into national syndication, he was a guest on dozens of television shows and the subject of hundreds of articles and interviews. LaLanne's television show was targeted primarily at women, and he always tried to speak directly to their concerns.⁷ Almost every aerobics pioneer contacted during the course of this study remembered exercising with Jack LaLanne on television, and many remarked that his enthusiasm and missionary zeal had inspired them to search for new and interesting ways to maintain their personal fitness programs.

Bonnie Prudden

Like Jack LaLanne, Bonnie Prudden was also born in 1914. She grew up in New York City, and was enrolled in the Kosloff Russian Ballet School at the age of four. By the time she graduated from high school in 1933, she had been exposed to many years of physical education classes based primarily on German gymnastics, had attended a German

⁶LaLanne, telephone interview.

⁷LaLanne, telephone interview.

Turnverein club in Manhattan, had studied dance extensively, and had earned varsity letters in five sports. After graduation she joined the modern dance school of Doris Humphrey and Charles Weidman, and soon became a professional dancer. She married in 1936 and gave up her dance career to start a family.⁸

When her two daughters began attending elementary school in the 1940s, Prudden discovered that a new philosophy had infiltrated girls' physical education classes: games and play activities had been substituted for vigorous exercises.⁹ Watching her daughters become less and less active, she decided in 1947 to start what she called an after-school "conditioning class" for her children and their friends; in six weeks she had 75 "boys and girls running, jumping, leaping, skipping, dancing, tumbling, and delighted...for a full hour."¹⁰ She drew on her dance and gymnastic exercise background, and devised simple equipment such as wands, sticks (broom handles), and ping-pong paddles with cloth streamers attached. She rented bigger and bigger spaces to accommodate the burgeoning classes, which were soon offered to both adults and children in thirty-week

⁸Bonnie Prudden, telephone interview by author, 10 August 1995; and Eileen Kuperschmid, "Prudden Attacks Pain," *Berkshire Massachusetts Sampler*, 6 July 1960, p. 5.

⁹Prudden, telephone interview.

¹⁰Bonnie Prudden, *Bonnie Prudden's After Fifty Fitness Guide* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1986), p. 8.

sessions. In 1954, Prudden (now divorced) bought an abandoned elementary school in White Plains, New York and opened the Institute for Physical Fitness, which included six gymnasiums and an outdoor obstacle course with apparatus similar to the earlier German and Swedish systems.¹¹

In 1952, Prudden began a collaboration with Dr. Hans Kraus, a friend with whom she shared a passion for rock climbing. She was searching for a simple fitness test to use with her students, and he recommended utilizing a six-measure test devised by Kraus and Dr. Sonia Weber to assess minimum muscular fitness.¹² Prudden and Kraus began using the Kraus-Weber test on thousands of school children in both the U.S. and Europe, and in 1953 reported the early results in the *New York State Journal of Medicine*: the failure rate in the U.S. was 57.9% while in Europe the failure rate was only 8.7%.¹³ The story was eventually reported in magazines and newspapers across the country.¹⁴

In the wake of the publicity wave generated by their activities, Prudden and Kraus were invited to present their

¹¹Dorothy Stull, "Be Happy, Go Healthy With Bonnie," *Sports Illustrated* 5 (16 July 1956): p. 62.

¹²Stull, "Be Happy, Go Healthy," p. 60.

¹³Robert H. Boyle, "The Report That Shocked the President," *Sports Illustrated* 3 (15 August 1955): p. 30. 4,264 children (aged 6-16) were tested in the U.S., and 2,870 children were tested in Austria, Italy, and Switzerland.

¹⁴Boyle, "The Report That Shocked," p. 30; and Bonnie Prudden, "The United States Jaycees Healthy American Fitness Leaders of 1984 Nomination Form," (Stockbridge, Mass., 1984), p. 2, photocopy.

findings to President Dwight Eisenhower in 1955, which led to the formation of the President's Council on Youth Fitness (later changed to the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports), and to the reinstatement of mandatory physical education or exercise periods at many schools across the country. *Sports Illustrated* covered the 1955 White House event, and then in 1956 ran a feature article on Prudden and her school.¹⁵ On August 5, 1957, Prudden appeared on the cover of the magazine, and began a weekly series on fitness that ran for almost three years. In that first article of the series, Prudden is pictured next to the text: "Bonnie Prudden Says: You are NOT too young, too old, too full of aches, too fat, too thin, too far gone, too lazy, too flabby, too anything...TO HAVE FUN KEEPING FIT. Turn the page to find out how."¹⁶

Although Prudden had written an exercise manual in 1951, she published her first widely-available book on physical fitness in 1956, *Is Your Child Really Fit?* (Harper & Row), followed by twenty more books on fitness and other health-related topics over the next forty years. In 1957

¹⁵Boyle, "The Report That Shocked" (1955), pp. 30-33, 72-75; and Stull, "Be Happy, Go Healthy" (1956), pp. 38, 60-63.

¹⁶Bonnie Prudden, "How to Get More Out of Life," *Sports Illustrated* 7 (5 August 1957): cover & pp. 35-43. In the table of contents for this issue, the "teaser" for Prudden's article states: "A refreshing summer phenomenon was forty-three-year-old Bonnie Prudden as a television star on the *NBC Home Show*. On TV she won thousands to her exercise program, and with this issue she begins a series on how to keep fit that will attract many more."

she began appearing frequently on television, first on the *NBC Home Show* and then as a regular on *The Today Show* (1959-1962), in addition to numerous other television and radio programs throughout the 1960s. She started a line of exercise wear called Fitness Fashions, which included her innovative unitard, a single leotard that covers the whole body without a separate garment (or "tights") for the legs (see fig 4.2). In 1965 she created her own television show for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, *The Bonnie Prudden Show*, and eventually produced 195 half-hour programs which were syndicated all over the U.S. and Canada; the show included a ten-minute exercise segment done to music. Prudden also released six exercise records during the 1960s, beginning with *Keep Fit...Be Happy* in 1960.¹⁷

In 1957 Prudden began a series of summer workshops at Springfield College in Massachusetts, aimed primarily at YMCA instructors and at those physical educators willing to accept a change in their "play-based" curriculums. In 1959 she closed her White Plains school and moved her base of operations to Stockbridge, Massachusetts. Within ten years her program was found in YMCAs nationwide, public and private schools (including universities), summer camps, prisons, hospitals, mental institutions, factories, and

¹⁷Prudden, telephone interview; Prudden, "Nomination Form"; and Bonnie Prudden Institute for Physical Fitness and Myotherapy, "Biography for Bonnie Prudden," (Tucson, Ariz., 1995), company brochure.

Figure 4.2. Bonnie Prudden in 1960, wearing one of her innovative unitards

Photograph courtesy of Bonnie Prudden.

corporations. She received private grants that helped fund both her YMCA instructor-training programs, and a Girls' Club of America program called "Fit for Life."¹⁸ "Fully equipped with a manual, a training movie, Prudden-trained teachers, and the backing of the *Reader's Digest*, thousands of hither-to deprived American girls began to exercise to music."¹⁹

From its very inception, Prudden's exercise program had a cardiovascular component. After a locomotion-based warmup and a series of floor exercises, her workouts included across-the-floor progressions (using simple dance moves), and some movements in place.²⁰ To prevent injury, she stressed that every few bars of music, the steps be changed "so that the feet land in a different way, utilizing the muscles differently and bringing other muscles to bear."²¹ The sessions always finished with stretching and relaxation. This is very similar to the format initially used by Jacki Sorensen and Judi Missett in the early 1970s, although their routines were much more choreographed and were more often performed in place. It is important to note, however, that

¹⁸Prudden, telephone interview; Prudden, "Nomination Form"; and James D. Havlick, "Challenge, Change, Rhythm: The Bonnie Prudden Story," *Journal of Physical Education* 67 (November-December 1969): pp. 36-37.

¹⁹Bonnie Prudden, "A Brief History of Myotherapy, 1914-1990," (Stockbridge, Mass., 1990): p. 5, company materials.

²⁰Prudden, *After 50 Fitness Guide*; and Bonnie Prudden, *How to Keep Your Family Fit and Healthy* (New York: Reader's Digest Press, 1975).

²¹Prudden, *How to Keep Your Family Fit*, p. 62.

Sorensen and Missett (both of whom, like Prudden, were trained dancers) utilized locomotion in their routines to a much greater degree than did the high-impact, jump-in-place, freestyle form of aerobics that evolved later.

Prudden's basic philosophy of exercise, which was imparted to a generation of women and their daughters, was that it should be demanding and should build endurance, strength, and flexibility--but that it should not hurt, should not be too repetitive, and that it should be *pleasurable*. To this end she felt music was a key component, because music plays such a powerful role in our culture. She was always searching for popular music that was exciting, fun, and motivating, a time-consuming quest that later occupied both Sorensen and Missett.²² Bonnie Prudden, along with Jack LaLanne, brought exercising-to-music into the national consciousness during the 1950s and 1960s, and laid the foundation for the aerobics phenomenon of the 1970s.

Thomas Kirk Cureton, Jr.

Thomas Kirk Cureton, Jr. (1901-1992) is considered by many observers to be the grandfather of the modern adult fitness movement.²³ After graduating from Yale University

²²Prudden, telephone interview.

²³Jack W. Berryman, "Thomas K. Cureton, Jr.: Pioneer Researcher, Proselytizer, and Proponent for Physical Fitness," *Research Quarterly* 67 (March 1996): p. 2; and Lawrence A. Golding, telephone interview by author, 29 February 1996.

in electrical engineering, he took a job in 1925 as Director of Physical Education and Athletics at Suffield Academy in Connecticut, where he devised a fitness program for the student body based on the Danish gymnastic system of continuous, rhythmic exercise. Cureton had learned this exercise system from his swim coach at Yale, and during the early 1930s he traveled to Europe to further study the Danish system²⁴--once again demonstrating the link between the European gymnastic systems and modern group exercise.

Cureton began his academic teaching career at Springfield College in Massachusetts in 1929 (where he had earned his Bachelor of Physical Education), and in 1931 took over the Biophysics, Anthropometry, and Kinesiology Lab there. After earning his doctorate in educational research from Columbia University in 1939, he spent twenty-eight years (1941-1969) as a professor in the College of Physical Education at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign, where he encountered his mentor, Seward C. Staley--the same Staley who had devised Gymnastic Dancing in 1920. In 1944 Cureton became director of the University's new Physical Fitness Research Laboratory, where for the next twenty-five years, Cureton perfected fitness testing and developed adult exercise programs. "As the laboratory progressed, it became a center for contract research and a popular visitation site

²⁴Kevin Shyne, "Thomas K. Cureton, Jr.: Sportsmedicine Pioneer," *The Physician and Sportsmedicine* 7 (November 1979): p. 124.

for athletes, coaches, scientists, and governmental officials from throughout the world."²⁵

Cureton (see fig. 4.3) authored numerous books and over 400 articles; in addition to works for scholarly journals, he wrote many pieces on physical fitness for popular magazines and newspapers during the 1950s and 1960s, and was himself featured in a number of newspaper and magazine articles and on several national television shows.²⁶ Cureton also held hundreds of clinics to train fitness professionals from throughout the world, and mentored scores of graduate students who went on to distinguished academic and clinical careers. In the 1960s, Cureton "had worked with, trained, or personally knew nearly everyone involved in physical fitness research or promotion."²⁷

One of Cureton's students was William A. Orban, who originated the Royal Canadian Air Force exercises--a popular fitness program during the early 1960s that was a direct precursor to the aerobics movement (see Chapter 5).²⁸ In 1961 Cureton started a program called "Run for Your Life" at

²⁵Berryman, "Thomas K. Cureton, Jr.," pp. 3, 4 (quote).

²⁶Berryman, "Thomas K. Cureton, Jr.," p. 7.

²⁷Berryman, "Thomas K. Cureton, Jr.," p. 9, quoting a telephone interview with William Haskell (Stanford University), 11 October 1995.

²⁸Thomas K. Cureton Jr., "I Have Learned That...", in *Exercise and Fitness - 1969: Proceedings of a Symposium Honoring Dr. Thomas Kirk Cureton, Jr., "The Grand Old Man of Fitness," Upon His Retirement from the College of Physical Education, University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana Campus, April 25-29, 1969*, ed. B. Don Franks (Chicago: The Athletic Institute, 1969), p. 19.

Fig. 4.3. Thomas K. Cureton, Jr. in 1958
Photograph courtesy of Kirk Cureton.

the University of Illinois and at a number of YMCA branches, and he was partly responsible for the national attention that jogging began to receive from both the media and the medical community several years prior to the publication of Ken Cooper's *Aerobics* in 1968.²⁹

In 1942 Cureton wrote the *Physical Fitness Workbook* (revised in 1944, 1947, and 1970). This manual was designed primarily for men (spurred by the poor condition of the recruits in World War II), and was used by YMCAs, schools and colleges all over the country.³⁰ Cureton also held "a large number of training institutes to help introduce lay and professional leaders to useful methods of conducting the work" (p. iii). The *Workbook* illustrated various formations for group exercises, and recommended five to thirty minutes of endurance exercises such as sprints, continuous high kicking or hopping, lap running, and medicine ball throwing --to be followed by a distance run or swim (p. 44). In the 1944 edition of the *Workbook*, Cureton recommended using the step test (devised in 1943 by J. R. Gallagher and Lucien Brouha) as a fitness assessment tool; by the time he published his 1965 book, *Physical Fitness and Dynamic Health*, Cureton was recommending bench stepping itself as

²⁹Cureton, "I Have Learned That...", pp. 17, 19; and Berryman, "Thomas K. Cureton, Jr.," p. 7.

³⁰Thomas K. Cureton Jr., *Physical Fitness Workbook*, 2nd ed. (Champaign, Ill.: Stipes Publishing Co., 1944), p. i. It should be noted that Seward Staley is credited throughout this publication.

one of the most practical and effective endurance-exercise modalities.³¹

In his 1965 book and in the 1970 edition of his *Workbook*³², Cureton emphasized that the exercises were recommended for both men and women, and for older adults of any fitness level:

The woman who is really concerned about her physical well-being must overcome the erroneous psychological attitude that there is something unfeminine about exercising the muscles. She must accept the fact that there is simply no adequate substitute for walking, running, swimming and gymnastic exercises--no matter what the glamour advertisements may say.³³

He made the point repeatedly that vigorous physical exercise could prevent chronic ailments. "Especially does continuous, rhythmic physical activity tend to prevent and ameliorate coronary and ischemic heart disease, if the exercise is regular and reaches an average of 300-500 Calories of heat-work per day."³⁴

In his 1965 book, Cureton outlined a "twenty-two-lesson course of progressive, rhythmical, non-stop exercises" (p. 102), where the student begins with a "low-gear" workout and advances over a course of months to a "middle-gear" and

³¹Thomas K. Cureton Jr., *Physical Fitness and Dynamic Health* (New York: Dial Press, 1965). Bench stepping is referenced throughout the text. Modern step aerobics are based on bench stepping.

³²Thomas K. Cureton Jr., *Physical Fitness Workbook for Adults (Vigorous Dynamic Health for Executives, Professional Personnel, and Indoor Workers, Including Women)* (Champaign, Ill.: Stipes Publishing Co., 1970).

³³Cureton, *Physical Fitness and Dynamic Health* (1965), p. 67.

³⁴Cureton, *Physical Fitness Workbook* (1970), p. v.

finally a "high-gear" workout. He also recommended doing the exercises in a group class, "which can be taken formally in most YMCAs, schools, colleges and universities, community recreation centers and athletic clubs," or which could be organized oneself because "more and more people are looking for solutions to their exercise problems" (p. 98). The "Low Gear, Middle Gear, High Gear" exercise system was adopted by a number of military bases (as was the "Run For Your Life" program), and also received some publicity from the national media.³⁵

In the 1970 *Workbook*, Cureton described "an all around system of warm-up, flexibility and muscular endurance exercises, rhythmic and continuous"--followed by running, swimming, circuit training, resistance training, treadmill walking, or bench-stepping.³⁶ "The rhythmic, gradually progressive endurance exercise is FIRST, with extraordinary emphasis upon a cautious warm-up and forced breathing. The simple principle is to *move the blood*....Select exercises to make every part of the body reasonably fit, to protect all joints and to fight off degeneration" (p. 190). These recommendations echoed many of those made by Staley in his first text, *Manual of Gymnastic Dancing* (Association Press, 1920).

³⁵Cureton, "I Have Learned That...", p. 17.

³⁶Cureton, *Physical Fitness Workbook for Adults* (1970), p. 190.

The YMCA Connection

Cureton's lifelong association with the YMCA began at an early age (around 1910 or 1911), when he joined the YMCA chapter in Jacksonville, Florida and was introduced to dumbbells, Indian clubs, swimming, and European gymnastics.³⁷ At that time, many YMCA branches were using exercise systems based on a mixture of Dio Lewis' New Gymnastics, German gymnastics, and Swedish gymnastics; even as late as 1960, remnants of these systems were still being taught at both Springfield and George Williams Colleges--two institutions that were closely associated with training YMCA administrators.³⁸ During the period from 1942 to the mid-1960s, many individual YMCAs adopted Cureton's progressive, rhythmical exercise course.³⁹

One of Cureton's proteges, John Gillingham, was hired by the national YMCA in 1964 to implement an adult-fitness pilot program in Denver, Colorado. Gillingham devised coed classes--unheard of at the time--that combined elements of the Dio Lewis and European gymnastics systems, circuit training (based on a paper he had written in his native Australia in 1958), marching, jogging (based on Cureton's

³⁷Berryman, "Thomas K. Cureton, Jr.," p. 2.

³⁸John Gillingham, telephone interview with author, 24 May 1995. Gillingham was a graduate student at George Williams College from 1958-1960.

³⁹Berryman, "Thomas K. Cureton, Jr.," p. 7; and Cureton, "I Have Learned That....," p. 17.

"Run for Your Life"), the Royal Canadian Air Force exercises, and bench stepping. He called the classes "Cardiovascular Calisthenics," and they included thirty minutes of continuous movement done to music. At first, the music was provided by a pianist, but Gillingham soon switched to 45-RPM records. He strung a wire with hooks across the top of the gymnasium, from which he hung a huge canvas sheet to divide the room into two sections; he positioned himself at the front of the partition, while the women exercised on one side and the men on the other side. There were few female participants at the start, and Gillingham appeared frequently on a local Denver television show called *For Women Only* to promote his program. By 1966 his classes were filled with women, and the partition had long since been abandoned! He also started several specialty classes, such as "Ski Fit" (see fig. 4.4).⁴⁰

The Denver pilot program continued for ten years, and by 1974 the classes consisted of freestyle aerobics, floor exercises, and stretching segments, performed to records that were selected based on their beats-per-minute. Beginning in 1967, Gillingham held over a hundred weekend workshops (primarily in the Western and Mountain states) to train YMCA personnel to teach his fitness program.⁴¹

⁴⁰Gillingham, telephone interview. *For Women Only* appeared on Denver station KOA, and was hosted by Merrie Lynn Vanderberg--a former Miss America.

⁴¹Gillingham, telephone interview.

Fig. 4.4. John Gillingham's Ski-Fit class at the Denver YMCA in 1966. Ski-Fit was a variation on Cardiovascular Calisthenics, and contained an aerobic segment performed to music, circuit training, and bench-stepping. Note the real benches that were used.

Photographs courtesy of John Gillingham.

Thus, by 1971 there were a wide variety of exercise programs found at YMCA branches across the nation: Bonnie Prudden's program (primarily in the East); John Gillingham's Cardiovascular Calisthenics; "Run for Your Life" and other exercise programs based on Thomas Cureton's workshops and publications,; programs drawn from Springfield and George Williams Colleges; and programs drawn from the adult-fitness laboratories at several other universities. "In some Y's there were successful, thriving programs while at others, sometimes even in close proximity, there were poor programs of fitness or none at all."⁴² Recognizing the need for some sort of standardized physical fitness program, the national YMCA organization began developing *The Y's Way to Physical Fitness* in 1971, which was completed and introduced to the YMCA Physical Directors in 1973.⁴³ The subsequent development (at a national level) of an aerobic dance component in the YMCAs physical fitness programs will be detailed in Chapter 7. It is significant to note that Jacki Sorensen first introduced Aerobic Dancing in various YMCA

⁴²Lawrence A. Golding, telephone interview by author, 29 February 1996. Golding, a Ph.D. graduate of Cureton's, became involved with the YMCA organization in 1959. He was one of the primary architects and editors of the *Y's Way to Physical Fitness*, published by Rodale Press in 1973.

⁴³Golding, telephone interview. Forty-nine people were involved in writing *The Y's Way to Physical Fitness*, including Cureton and Gillingham. As part of the process of developing this book, the First National YMCA Consultation on Physical Fitness was held in Philadelphia in October of 1971; according to Golding, "the program featured the most well-known people in the sports medicine/fitness field," and was "considered the best fitness event of the decade."

branches, and that the YMCA also provided one of the important early venues for Judi Missett's Jazzercise classes.

Chapter 5

SETTING THE STAGE

During the 1960s, the awareness of physical fitness increased dramatically in the United States, both as a result of proselytizers such as Jack LaLanne and Bonnie Prudden taking their message to the increasingly pervasive medium of television, and as a consequence of growing attention to physical fitness by the medical community. By the end of the decade, there were numerous local and regional television programs that featured fitness personalities or incorporated exercise segments into their formats;¹ paperback books outlining exercise programs by LaLanne, Prudden, the Royal Canadian Air Force and others had become bestsellers; medical practitioners had begun to recognize the link between exercise and cardiovascular health; many YMCA branches had added group exercise classes of one sort or another to their schedules; Ken Cooper's book *Aerobics* had come on the scene (in 1968); and the Women's Movement was underway, setting the stage for large numbers of women to join group-exercise programs outside of their homes.

The 5BX Plan for Physical Fitness (for men) and XBX

¹Examples of regional exercise programs during this period were Canadian television's *Ed Allen Show* (with his wife Debbie Allen), and a show televised in parts of the U.S. that featured Debbie Drake, a former physical education teacher turned fitness author and television personality.

Plan (for women) were exercise programs developed for the Royal Canadian Air Force in 1959 by William A. Orban, who had completed his master's degree under Thomas Cureton at the University of Illinois.² Both programs were subsequently published as pamphlets for the civilian population by the Canadian government.³ The XBX program consisted of ten exercises (XBX meant 10BX) for flexibility, strength and endurance that were to be performed for a total of twelve minutes a day (the five exercises in the men's program were to be performed for eleven minutes a day). Each exercise was done for a precise number of minutes, with the number of repetitions increased gradually; after a certain maximum was reached, the participant moved up to the next level of exercise difficulty (there were four levels). The endurance portion of this program was only three minutes long! The pamphlet also gave some basic information on exercise physiology (including the effects of exercise on the cardiovascular system), diet, and weight control. Similar to many other exercise programs designed for women during this era, the pamphlet stated: "Do not confuse good muscle tone with bulky, unsightly muscles. The XBX is

²Cureton, "I Have Learned That...", p. 19 (see Chap. 4, note 28); and J. J. Jackson, *Mr. 5BX, Canadian Fitness Pioneer: A Biography of William A. R. Orban* (Victoria, B.C.: Sono Nis Press, 1982).

³*Royal Canadian Air Force 5BX Plan For Physical Fitness* (Ottawa, Canada: Queen's Printer, 1959), 32 pages; and *Royal Canadian Air Force XBX Plan for Physical Fitness* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1960), 46 pages. The XBX plan was co-authored by N.J. Ashton.

designed to firm your muscles--not to convert you into a muscled woman" (p. 4).

The RCAF program was extremely popular in Canada, and revised editions of both pamphlets were published in 1962. Because it was considered "a simple, clear, and compact fitness regime with many valuable features," the program was given national coverage by the media in the United States in the early 1960s, and both the *5BX* and *XBX* pamphlets became widely available in U.S. bookstores--eventually selling over four million copies.⁴ Thomas Cureton felt that the RCAF *5BX/XBX* system was an abbreviated version of the system of progressive exercises that he had pioneered, and that the incorporation of this RCAF program into a United States Air Force fitness program that also included Cureton's "Run for Your Life," laid the groundwork for Lt. Col. Ken Cooper's U.S. Air Force "Aerobics" program.⁵

During the decade of the 1960s, the medical establishment began to give credence to the role of exercise in the treatment and prevention of cardiovascular disease and obesity. Scholarly research was starting to emerge from the handful of universities that had developed research-oriented graduate programs in exercise physiology--laying

⁴Neil Solomon, "Rating the Exercise Programs," *Harper's Bazaar* 109 (November 1975): pp. 139, 186-186B. Quote is on p. 186B. An example of media coverage was "Eleven Minutes a Day: The Royal Canadian Air Force System," *Time* 81 (1 March 1963): pp. 66-67.

⁵Cureton, "I Have Learned That...", p. 19.

the foundation for a scientific body of knowledge relating to exercise and health. The American College of Sports Medicine had been officially founded in 1954, and by the late 1950s, its Physical Fitness Committee had become very active in disseminating information to the medical community⁶ (publication of the ACSM's *Journal of Sports Medicine and Physical Fitness* began in 1961). An important national conference of practitioners, researchers, and scholars--the Colloquium on Exercise and Fitness--was held at Monticello, Illinois in 1959.⁷ "At the first International Conference on Preventive Cardiology at the University of Vermont in 1964, many experts from all over the world gave convincing testimony for the role of physical activity in maintaining the health and efficiency of the heart and cardiovascular system in adult life."⁸ Significantly, it was out of the medical profession that Ken Cooper, the originator of "Aerobics," emerged.

Ken Cooper's Aerobics

Kenneth H. Cooper was born in Oklahoma City in 1931. He obtained his medical degree from the University of Oklahoma in 1956, and was a flight surgeon in the U.S. Air Force from 1957 to 1970. While in the Air Force, he

⁶Jack W. Berryman, "Thomas K. Cureton, Jr.," *Research Quarterly* 67 (March 1996), p. 8.

⁷Deobold B. Van Dalen and Bruce L. Bennett, *A World History of Physical Education: Cultural, Philosophical, Comparative*, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1971), p. 526.

⁸Van Dalen and Bennett, p. 549.

completed an M.P.H. at Harvard University (1962), and also became involved at Harvard in graduate work in exercise physiology.⁹ After specializing in research relating to the exercise needs of astronauts, Cooper became interested in disease prevention through aerobic activities that strengthened the cardiovascular system by increasing the body's capacity for processing oxygen. After doing extensive research on military personnel, he developed a fitness program for the Air Force based on a point system. "I took most of the exercises that we know demand oxygen--aerobically, not anaerobically--and measured them for the amount of oxygen they require."¹⁰ Cooper then translated these amounts into points for each mode of exercise, and established point tables for various time durations and distances covered. The participant first completed a twelve-minute run/walk test, and the distance covered determined his or her fitness category (1 to 6: Very Poor to Excellent); the participant then selected a menu of aerobic activities from the charts, and exercised a minimum of four days a week. The total points accumulated each week were to be increased slowly over the course of sixteen weeks.¹¹

In his 1968 book, *Aerobics*, Cooper presented the system

⁹Cooper Aerobics Center, "Kenneth H. Cooper, M.D.," (Dallas, Tex., 1994), biographical information sheet.

¹⁰Kenneth H. Cooper, *Aerobics* (New York: M. Evans & Co., 1968), p. 40.

¹¹Cooper, *Aerobics*, pp. 44-88.

to the general public. He defined "Aerobics" as "a variety of exercises that stimulate heart and lung activity for a time period sufficiently long to produce beneficial changes in the body" (p. 15). He stated that most previous fitness books were based on calisthenics, which strengthened the skeletal muscles but placed little demand on the cardiovascular system; calisthenic exercises were done in such short bursts that the participant never reached the "steady-state" of exertion necessary to experience a "training effect" (p. 32). "Calisthenics, then, should never be considered the foundation of any exercise program. They're just the bricks that go on top" (p.37). "The best exercises are running, swimming, cycling, walking, stationary running, handball, basketball, and squash, and in just about that order" (p. 31). Cooper cited the YMCA's "Run for Your Life" program (originated by Thomas Cureton) as an inspiration and a good example of aerobics (pp. 131, 210).

Cooper devoted a short section of *Aerobics* to women (he later co-authored *Aerobics for Women* with his wife, Millie¹²). He exhorted women to take up aerobics for both their health and their appearance. "There is hardly any excuse for hiding behind your sex as a means of avoiding

¹²Mildred Cooper and Kenneth H. Cooper, *Aerobics for Women* (New York: M. Evans & Co., 1972).

exercise. It's your health, and health has no sex."¹³ He recommended running as the "best and quickest way to work up a worthwhile sweat and get your points" (p. 137). "If running is not your cup of tea, however, swimming is second best and definitely ladylike. You can wear your pretty bathing suit and socialize around the pool" (p. 138).

Aerobics sold more than 100,000 copies in its original M. Evans & Co. edition, and was published in paperback by Bantam Books (New York) later in 1968. Cooper published *The New Aerobics* (New York: M. Evans) in 1970, which contained additional sports and exercises, revised point charts, and progressive point programs that were now age-adjusted. The impetus for these revisions came from Cooper's continuing research on military and civilian personnel, including a huge study of aerobic exercise that he performed on 15,146 men at five Air Force bases in 1968 (p. 15). *Aerobics for Women* (M. Evans) followed in 1972, and both *The New Aerobics* and *Aerobics for Women* were released in Bantam paperback editions (1970 and 1973, respectively). By 1978, Cooper's three books in paperback had cumulative sales of 5.3 million copies, and were still selling briskly; dozens of books had been published on running, jogging, walking, cycling, and swimming; and it was estimated that at least twenty million Americans were running or jogging with some degree of

¹³Cooper, *Aerobics*, p. 138.

regularity.¹⁴

In a 1978 article in *Publishers Weekly*, George C. de Kay, the president of publisher M. Evans & Co., noted that "the current exercise explosion 'got a great part of its impetus from Dr. Cooper and his books. He was the first to quantify the benefits of exercise.'" ¹⁵ The *Times* (London) stated in 1982 that "The drop in deaths from heart disease in America by 14 percent in the 1970s, is commonly credited to Dr. Cooper, as is the jogging boom which put more than 25 million Americans on the road by the end of that decade."¹⁶

In 1970 Cooper left the Air Force and founded the Cooper Aerobics Center in Dallas, Texas, which eventually included a fitness center with supervised exercise programs, a clinic offering comprehensive physical evaluations and counseling, a live-in wellness program, and a major research facility. Cooper's "Aerobics" received extensive media coverage, and were the direct inspiration for Jacki Sorensen's Aerobic Dancing program. Cooper did not include dancing in the point charts for his 1968 and 1970 books, and in *Aerobics for Women* (1972), he included point estimates only for modern dance and several types of social dancing.

¹⁴Daisy Maryles and Robert Dahlin, "Books on Running and Other Aerobic Exercises: A Current Checklist," *Publishers Weekly* 213, no. 23 (5 June 1978): pp. 63-70.

¹⁵Maryles and Dahlin, "Books on Running," p. 63.

¹⁶*Times* (London) excerpt is contained in "Kenneth H. Cooper, M.D.," biography from the Cooper Aerobics Center (p. 1). Neither this material nor the *Publishers Weekly* article give a source for the estimates of the number of Americans participating in running.

Evans salutes
Dr. Kenneth H. Cooper, the man
who started America running.

Aerobics, Dr. Cooper launched the term on an unsuspecting world back in 1968. The concept that the greatest health benefits come from exercise of the lungs and heart, rather than the muscles, created a revolution in the way Americans spend their leisure time.

Publishing has reflected that change—in the stampede of books about running and other aerobic exercises—but we should remember that it was Dr. Cooper, with his tremendous bestseller *AEROBICS* who fired the starting gun.

THE AEROBICS WAY
 New Data on the World's Most Popular Exercise Program \$10.00

AEROBICS \$6.95

THE NEW AEROBICS \$6.95

AEROBICS FOR WOMEN
 By Mildred Cooper and Kenneth H. Cooper, M.D. \$6.95

M. EVANS AND COMPANY
 216 East 49th Street, New York, N.Y. 10017

Figure 5.1. Ken Cooper in a 1978 advertisement for M. Evans and Company (his publisher)

Reprinted by permission of M. Evans and Company, Inc., from *Publishers Weekly* 213, no. 23 (5 June 1978), p. 62.

Even as late as 1978, Cooper did not include aerobic dance in his list of recommended aerobic activities¹⁷, although by this time research had been done on oxygen utilization during aerobic dance, and Sorensen herself had presented Cooper with information on the training effect of a twelve-week aerobic dance program (see Chapter 6).

The Women's Movement

Another powerful ingredient in the brew that provided succor for the rise of aerobic dance was the women's liberation movement that arose during the late 1960s in the United States. The first organized women's movement had taken place from the mid-nineteenth century to the 1920s, and had resulted in the expansion of women's legal and property rights, increased employment opportunities, increased admission into higher education, and finally in 1920, the passage of women's suffrage.¹⁸ "The entry of women into sports and physical activities was a significant part of the general movement for female emancipation.... Women's recreation now offered the potential for unprecedented physical activity and opportunities for

¹⁷See John Alexander, "Get Fit, Trim, Slim--and Grin," *Saturday Evening Post* 249 (October 1977): pp. 70-71; and Melva Weber, "Exercise and Healthy Lungs: Aerobics by Ken Cooper," *Vogue* 168 (September 1978):pp. 475, 499.

¹⁸Miriam Schneir, ed. and commentaries, *Feminism in Our Time: The Essential Writings, World War II to the Present* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), pp. x-xi.

physical liberation."¹⁹

After a period of relative dormancy during the 1930s and 1940s, feminist consciousness began to reawaken during the 1950s, and the feminist movement gained momentum in the 1960s--abetted by significant increases in the number of women working outside of the home and by the impetus of the civil rights and anti-Vietnam War movements.²⁰ President John F. Kennedy formed the President's Commission on the Status of Women in 1962, and although it was disbanded in 1963, many state commissions were subsequently set up across the country (pp. 39, 71). In 1964, a surprise amendment was attached to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act (which prohibited discrimination in employment based on race, color, religion, or national origin), barring sex as a basis for discrimination (p. 71). Betty Friedan's landmark book, *The Feminine Mystique*, was published in 1963; it questioned the dominant ideology that women could achieve happiness only through marriage and motherhood.²¹ In 1966, Friedan attended a national conference of women's-rights advocates in Washington, D.C., at which it was decided that a feminist pressure group was sorely needed. The National Organization

¹⁹M. Deborah Bialeschki, "The Feminist Movement and Women's Participation in Physical Recreation," *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance* 61 (January 1990): p. 45.

²⁰Schneir, *Feminism in Our Time*, p. xii.

²¹Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1963).

for Women (NOW) was thus founded, and Friedan was elected its first president.²² Another milestone was the publication in 1972 of the first mass-market periodical aimed at the feminist movement, *Ms.* magazine. It was co-founded by Gloria Steinem, a tireless activist who "organized protests, recruited supporters, raised money, founded new pressure groups, and made speeches..." (p. 408).

At the forefront of feminist concerns were equality with men in employment, education, and politics, the issue of reproductive rights, and the broader goals of "liberating women from sex-role stereotypes and reshaping sexist institutions" (p. xii). A women's health movement was spawned in reaction to the traditional health care system, and in 1971 the twelve-member Boston Women's Health Book Collective produced an influential and extremely popular book, *Our Bodies, Ourselves*.²³ The book was picked up for commercial publication by Simon & Schuster in 1973, and its numerous revisions have continued to sell well over the years.²⁴ It contained a variety of subjects ranging from birth control and venereal disease to pregnancy and menopause. There was a section devoted to nutrition and exercise which covered the importance of physical activity,

²²Schneir, *Feminism in Our Time*, pp. 95-96.

²³Boston Women's Health Book Collective, *Our Bodies, Ourselves* (Somerville, Mass.: New England Free Press, 1971).

²⁴Schneir, *Feminism in Our Time*, p. 352.

and provided many concrete suggestions for becoming involved in regular exercise or sports. In the preface to the 1973 edition, the authors stated that:

Our bodies are the physical bases from which we move out into the world; ignorance, uncertainty--even, at worst, shame--about our physical selves create in us an alienation from ourselves that keeps us from being the whole people that we could be. Picture a woman trying to do work and to enter into equal and satisfying relationships with other people--when she feels physically weak because she has never tried to be strong....²⁵

Those feminists who have addressed the issue of female fitness have focused primarily on women's participation in sports. In 1972, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act was amended by new legislation (the Title IX Educational Amendments Act) to cover educational institutions, which had previously been excluded. These amendments had broad applicability, but their greatest impact was in the area of athletics. By the late 1970s, there were dramatic increases in the number of women participating in high school, collegiate, and Olympic sports.²⁶ For the vast majority of women who were past college age, however, participation in organized sports was not a realistic option. Aerobic dance provided opportunities for women to increase their endurance and strength, improve their health, and achieve greater independence--in a comfortable social setting, close to home

²⁵The Boston Women's Health Book Collective, *Our Bodies, Ourselves* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1973), p. 13.

²⁶Allen Guttman, *Women's Sports: A History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991).

or work, and at convenient times.

For something to form part of most women's leisure it needs to be enjoyable, accessible, flexible, inexpensive, and preferably capable of being done either from home or in a place and at a time which fits in with women's dual roles and responsibilities, but also not incur men's individual or collective wrath....²⁷

Several feminist writers later criticized aerobics for pandering to women's anxiety over their body weight and appearance, reinforcing traditional female stereotypes, and placing too much emphasis on fashion and sexual appeal.²⁸

The argument can be made, however, that as women

gain in movement competence...they change. They change in confidence, in self-image, in interaction with others, and in the very ways in which they carry themselves and move throughout the world....We need to pay less attention to what is happening in women's athletics and more to the experience available to the ninety-nine percent of women and girls who have not had the opportunity or choice to experience themselves as whole and integrated beings through their moving selves.²⁹

Aerobic dance provided a joyful kinesthetic experience for many women, and its organization and administration created a "women's culture" among those who went into the business of providing classes.

²⁷Rosemary Deem, "Unleisured Lives: Sport in the Context of Women's Leisure," *Women's Studies International Forum* 10 (1987): p. 428.

²⁸See, for example, Mary A. Boutilier and Lucinda SanGiovanni, *The Sporting Woman* (Champaign, Ill.: Human Kinetics, 1983); Helen Lenskyj, *Out of Bounds: Women, Sport and Sexuality* (Toronto: Women's Press, 1986); and Nancy Theberge, "Sport and Women's Empowerment," *Women's Studies International Forum* 10 (1987), pp. 387-393.

²⁹Roberta S. Bennett et al., "Changing the Rules of the Game: Reflections Toward a Feminist Analysis of Sport," *Women's Studies International Forum* 10 (1987): p. 376.

Groundbreaking Programs in the 1960s

In the course of this research, it was discovered that numerous exercise programs were begun during the 1960s that contained an aerobic component. Notable among these were the YMCA programs, discussed in Chapter 4. Most programs were local in scope, with classes offered through schools, parks and recreation departments, YMCAs, YWCAs, and occasionally, a private entrepreneur or health spa. Several representative programs of this period have been selected to demonstrate the continuity between the European gymnastic systems, the early exercise pioneers, and the aerobic dance phenomenon of the 1970s.

Slimnastics

Across the country, there were a variety of classes offered during the 1960s which were called "Slimnastics." This name probably originated from Jack LaLanne's term for his television-show exercises during the 1950s, "Trimnastics," which itself was a reference back to the European gymnastic exercise systems. Slimnastics classes were usually geared towards women seeking weight loss and figure control, and were based on calisthenics (with and without music)--although some instructors also incorporated a cardiovascular segment such as walking/running, bench stepping, jumping rope, swimming, or tennis. Many of the classes utilized equipment such as chairs, hand weights,

balls, and broomstick handles.³⁰

One of the most famous purveyors of Slimnastics was Martha Rounds (born 1919). After having a baby in 1950, Rounds and two other mothers whom she met in the hospital all vowed that they would try to do something to stay "in shape." Over the next ten years, Rounds followed the fitness regimens of television personalities Jack LaLanne and Bonnie Prudden, and even took a ballet course that included some "figure exercises." When one of the other two mothers made an attempt at starting an exercise class, Rounds decided to try designing a class herself for "average housewives" who wanted to "look better and feel better." In 1962 she was hired by the Recreation Department of Kirkwood (a suburb of St. Louis), and she began offering a class she called Slimnastics.³¹

Rounds had no formal training other than childhood dance classes, and at first she relied heavily on the LaLanne, Prudden, and Royal Canadian Air Force exercises. She soon added big band music, and began to make the exercises more "feminine." The first thirty minutes of the class consisted of standing stretches, calisthenics, and marching variations; after a five-minute break for a short talk on a health topic, the remainder of the hour consisted

³⁰Franklin C. Hill, "Slimnastics--American Style," *Recreation* 54 (June 1961): pp. 305-306; and M. G. Sholtis, *Slimnastics is Fun* (Merrillville, Ind.: Leisure Services Publications, 1976).

³¹Martha Rounds, telephone interview by author, 19 May 1995.

of floor exercises and more stretching. Rounds emphasized body conditioning and relaxation, because she felt that women "didn't want to perspire and lose their hairdos."³²

The classes grew rapidly in popularity, and in 1965 she became an entrepreneur, renting additional locations in churches and schools for her Martha Rounds' Slimnastics program. She began training other instructors to teach the classes, and would hold meetings once a month to go over the format of the class and any new exercises or routines. The instructors were paid an hourly rate, with Rounds paying the advertising and rent expenses (in the beginning, many venues did not even charge them rent). The program spread across Missouri and Southern Illinois, especially as instructors would move to neighboring towns. By 1983, she had fifty instructors teaching 10,000 students.³³

With the advent of aerobic dance in the 1970s, Rounds began doing more choreography for the stand-up portion of the class. The instructors were expected to follow the aerobic and floor-exercise routines precisely, in the interest of safety and quality control. Rounds continued to use big band and mellow pop music (with no vocals), and she even had a recording studio combine different musical selections onto a single LP record which was then copied and

³²Rounds, telephone interview.

³³Rounds, telephone interview.

distributed to all of the instructors. Rounds' students were strictly women, although she later started separate classes for men.³⁴

Programs like Martha Rounds' Slimnastics spread primarily through two mechanisms: (1) an existing instructor would move away and would start a similar class in a new locale, or (2) an enthusiastic student would organize and begin teaching her own class--sometimes in a nearby area, and sometimes in a distant city as the result of a move. In either case, the new class was often not a part of the original program--the instructor simply "went out on her own," using the original program as the inspiration and jumping-off point for her own class format.³⁵ The following example illustrates this mechanism.

Sandy Donegan of Mill Valley, California was looking for an exercise program to help her lose weight during an extended visit to St. Louis in 1971. She became a student of Martha Rounds' Slimnastics, and when she returned to California, decided to start her own class in a church in Sausalito in 1972. Donegan had some dance background, and was an admirer of Ken Cooper's *Aerobics*. At first she structured the class very much like Rounds' format, but shortly thereafter, added one upbeat, three-minute song for

³⁴Rounds, telephone interview.

³⁵The spreading mechanism was a common theme in the vast majority of the 121 interviews conducted during the course of this research.

running in place; little by little, Donegan lengthened the aerobic segment, and added choreographed routines. She expanded to a second location, and began to train other instructors (twenty-two in all). She had an exercise show in 1980 on a local television station.³⁶

Donegan also exchanged ideas with Judy Berman Barr, an elementary school teacher who had started a dance exercise class in Mill Valley in 1970. Barr had grown up doing exercises with the *Jack LaLanne Show*, and in the 1960s had taken a dance exercise class (done to classical music) at the Jewish Community Center in San Francisco. She was inspired to start her own class, using pop, jazz, and classical records. Initially she used many traditional dance movements (such as pliés and lunges) and across-the-floor patterns. As aerobic dance came into vogue, Barr's format evolved into choreographed routines, usually done standing in one place. The classes became so popular that Barr trained six other instructors. One of Barr's students was Joanie Greggains, who became a prominent Jacki Sorensen instructor in the San Francisco area, and then went on to star in a nationally-syndicated television exercise program (see Chapter 6).³⁷

Sisters Debbie Rosas and Jennifer Fox, attended Sandy

³⁶Sandy Donegan, telephone interview by author, 5 May 1995.

³⁷Judy Berman Barr, telephone interview by author, 4 May 1995.

Donegan's classes in 1975, and were inspired to start a similar program. They designed their own set of choreographed routines, and started classes in San Rafael--being careful to retain the relaxation component that had been an important part of Martha Rounds' original program. Eventually they formed the Bod Squad, and by the late 1970s they had fifty instructors in twenty-seven locations in Marin County--each instructor utilizing choreography and music that was distributed by Rosas and Fox every Friday. Debbie Rosas and her husband Carlos later pioneered "Non-Impact Aerobics," which uses fluid, grounded movements drawn from dance, the martial arts, and yoga--and endeavors to engage the mind and spirit as well as the body during the workout.³⁸

Thus we see the "chain of influence" that extended from one instructor to another, creating an ever-widening circle of class offerings. It is important to note that the students in all of these programs were almost exclusively women, and that the psychosocial component of the classes was as important as the physical component. As eloquently stated by Debbie Rosas:

The people who came to the Bod Squad classes were all women. They tuned into their biological rhythms. They discovered they liked to move, and their feminine

³⁸Jennifer Fox, telephone interview by author, 18 February 1996; Debbie Rosas, telephone interview by author, 27 February 1996; and Debbie Rosas and Carlos Rosas, *Non-Impact Aerobics* (New York: Random House, 1987).

energy. When Jacki started [aerobic dance] it was a very feminine impulse, but later aerobics was taken over by the male patriarchy. It absorbed a male attitude--"go for the burn." Aerobics changed so many women because they found new wellsprings of energy and power they didn't know they had.³⁹

Ardenics

Arden Zin (born 1937) had been an amateur and professional dancer while attending Hunter College in New York, and after getting married, became a follower of Bonnie Prudden and her exercise system. In 1960 Zin began teaching a class based on Prudden's exercises at a community college in California, and continued teaching in several locations after she and her husband moved to Princeton, New Jersey in 1961. That year she attended an intensive training seminar at Prudden's facility in Stockbridge, Connecticut. Zin later traveled with Prudden to numerous seminars and speeches, demonstrating the exercises as Prudden lectured.⁴⁰

Zin moved to Atlanta in 1966, and started teaching her exercise classes in eleven different locations, including the YMCA. She appeared on a local television station in conjunction with the nationally-syndicated *Bonnie Prudden Show*, and in 1967 she began appearing twice-weekly on an Atlanta morning television show doing her "Ardenics" (as she now called them). From 1971 to 1974 she had her own half-hour exercise show on the Atlanta public television station,

³⁹Rosas, telephone interview.

⁴⁰Arden Zin, telephone interview by author, 6 August 1995.

and she made numerous guest appearances on radio, television, and at sporting events.⁴¹

In 1971 Zin opened a full-time exercise studio, with a padded floor, mirrors, and a professional sound system (she had previously carted a portable record player around with her). At this point she started training instructors, who were drawn from the ranks of her students. In 1975 she moved into a 19,500 square-foot facility that offered a full range of services. In 1979 she began franchising the "Arden Zin Studio," which grew to twenty-eight locations in five southern states--all closely controlled by Zin.⁴²

Ardenics was basically body contouring to music, incorporating elements of dance, calisthenics, isometrics, and yoga. After she became familiar with Cooper's *Aerobics*, Zin recommended to her students that they walk or do other aerobic exercise outside of class. In 1979 she finally added forty-five-minute "Tempo" classes to her schedule, allowing the instructors to do whatever style of aerobics they wished (choreographed or freestyle).⁴³

Martha Pipkin was a protege of Arden Zin's, and she started "Shape Up With Martha" in Memphis, Tennessee in 1972. Zin encouraged Pipkin to take a workshop from Bonnie Prudden, and Prudden inspired Pipkin to use more music and

⁴¹Zin, telephone interview.

⁴²Zin, telephone interview.

⁴³Zin, telephone interview.

rhythm in her classes. In 1977, when she finally added a fifteen-minute aerobic segment to her format, Pipkin had fifty instructors teaching 100 different classes, primarily in church and school facilities. She began a half-hour television exercise program for a Memphis cable channel in which continues to this day.⁴⁴

Arden Zin's students during the 1960s were almost exclusively housewives, but during the 1970s her clientele expanded to include a large number of working women and a much broader age range (20-65). (This was the case with virtually all of the programs encountered during the course of this research.) Zin felt that the most important attribute in an instructor was her ability to interact with the students and to communicate the "joy of movement," rather than her technical knowledge. The women stayed with the program because "it was a caring, noncompetitive, non-pressured environment. It was an oasis--a one-hour escape from the children, the family responsibilities, the job responsibilities."⁴⁵

Aerobic Slimnastics

Although it did not originate in the 1960s, Nancy Strong's Aerobic Slimnastics was another direct descendant of Bonnie Prudden's exercise program. Strong, who had been

⁴⁴Martha Pipkin, telephone interview by author, 20 July 1995.

⁴⁵Zin, telephone interview.

Prudden's neighbor in White Plains, New York in the 1950s, was an advocate of Prudden's program, especially a group of exercises that Prudden called "Sexercises."⁴⁶ Armed with Prudden's books, records, and some personal coaching over the phone, Strong started a Slimnastics class at a YMCA in Miami, Florida in 1971. The class was a mixture of conditioning exercises and cardiovascular work (jogging in circles or in place, knee lifts). Two years later Strong moved to Atlanta, added music to the format, and called her class Aerobic Slimnastics.⁴⁷

After teaching the class in Japan for several years (where she added some choreographed aerobic routines to the format), Strong settled in Westport, Connecticut in 1978. Here she first encountered Jacki Sorensen's Aerobic Dancing, and after attending several classes, decided to start a competing program which would still include Prudden's Sexercises, and would appeal to the "uncoordinated people in the back row." Drawing on her college background in motor learning, she launched Nancy Strong's Aerobic Slimnastics. She rented space in churches and other neighborhood facilities, and began training other instructors--whom she would provide with written choreography and a new music tape every two months. At first she met with the instructors

⁴⁶Nancy Strong, telephone interview by author, 10 May 1995. Bonnie Prudden later published her Sexercises in *Exer-Sex: Exercises for Sex, for Love, for Life* (Stockbridge, Mass.: Aquarian Press, 1978).

⁴⁷Strong, telephone interview.

weekly to practice the routines, but this dropped to monthly as the size of the company grew to 225 instructors across Connecticut and New York. In 1983 Strong produced an exercise book and audiocassette tape.⁴⁸

Cardio-Vascular Dancing

Sheila Cluff (born 1936) was a dancer and a professional ice-skater before completing college and becoming a physical education teacher at a junior high school in Ottawa, Canada in the late 1950s. In an effort to interest her female students in physical fitness, she devised some routines based on her skating movements and set them to pop music. At first she hired a piano player, but she soon started using 78-RPM records. The girls loved it, and in 1959 Cluff started "Cardio-Vascular Dancing" (referred to as CV Dancing) for adult women, with classes in several church halls and at the YMCA. In 1960 she moved to Plattsburgh, New York, and while continuing to work as a physical education teacher, she also formed Fitness, Inc., trained twelve instructors, and offered CV Dancing at the Plattsburgh YMCA. Sometime in the early 1960s, Cluff discovered Bonnie Prudden's exercise books and phonograph records, and subsequently attended (along with six of her instructors) a one-week workshop with Prudden in

⁴⁸Strong, telephone interview; and Nancy Strong with Susan Haas Lenci, *Nancy Strong's Aerobic Slimnastics* (New York: New American Library, 1983), with accompanying 90-minute New American Library audiocassette tape (no. NAL 454).

Connecticut. From 1966 to 1969 Cluff had a television show called *The NOW Show, With Sheila* (NOW stood for News of Women), which ran on the upstate New York/Vermont NBC station; the daily half-hour show featured a ten-minute CV Dancing segment.⁴⁹

From its inception, CV Dancing had a 30-minute aerobic segment, plus arm work (using hand weights, broom handles and streamers), floor work, and stretching. The aerobic portion consisted of simple dance steps done in patterns across the floor, in place, and in formations such as concentric circles. Most of the routines were choreographed to specific songs (Cluff particularly liked Broadway music), and the choreography was written down for the other instructors. In the 1970s she dropped the across-the-floor patterns, and allowed her instructors freer reign in designing their own choreography and music.⁵⁰

In 1969 Cluff moved to Ventura, California, where she taught CV Dancing classes and then recruited other instructors (many of whom were physical education teachers) out of those classes. Within a few years she had forty-five instructors in Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties, teaching primarily in parks and recreation facilities. Cluff was adept at generating publicity, and received extensive

⁴⁹Sheila Cluff, telephone interview by author, 20 February 1996; and Frances Huffman, "Role Model: Sheila Cluff," *Entrepreneurial Woman* (December 1991): pp. 1-3.

⁵⁰Cluff, telephone interview.

newspaper and television coverage, including appearances on *A.M. Los Angeles*, *Eyewitness Los Angeles*, *The Dinah Shore Show*, *The Home Show*, and others. Cluff was greatly influenced by Ken Cooper's *Aerobics*, and visited his Aerobics Center in Dallas. She also appeared on *The Jack LaLanne Show*, and remained close to Bonnie Prudden, whom she hired in 1972 to give a training seminar to her Fitness, Inc. staff.⁵¹

After becoming involved in the health-vacation field, Cluff opened a "wellness spa" in 1977, The Oaks at Ojai (California). In 1979 she added The Palms (Palms Springs, California), and both locations became nationally prominent health resorts, offering gourmet low-calorie food and Cluff's now-famous fitness classes (see fig. 5.2). During the 1980s Cluff produced several fitness books and videos, and had her own television show, *Shape Up With Sheila*.⁵² The existence of fitness classes in health spas contributed to the growing awareness of aerobics, as will be seen in the following section.

The Spa Connection

The Golden Door in Escondido, California, was the site of one of the seminal health-spa exercise programs, the "Da Vinci"--created by Anne Marie Bennstrom in 1959. Born in

⁵¹Cluff, telephone interview; and Fitness, Inc., "Sheila's Newsletter," Vol. 1, no. 3 (Ojai, Calif., November 1980).

⁵²Cluff, telephone interview; and Huffman, "Sheila Cluff."

Fig. 5.2. Sheila Cluff teaching a fitness class at her health spa, The Oaks at Ojai (California) in 1979

Photograph courtesy of Sheila Cluff.

Sweden, Bennstrom was trained in the Ling Swedish gymnastics system, and toured with the Stockholm *Flickorna*, a group of 100 girls who performed precise, rhythmic gymnastic exercises to piano music. Bennstrom came to the United States in 1952, and opened a chiropractic office in Vista, California. She immediately began offering exercise classes at night in the local Veterans' Hall, and they proved to be so popular that she soon expanded the classes into three other cities. Bennstrom initially called the program Jumpin' Jiminy, but later changed it to High Hopes. The one-hour classes consisted of a marching warmup, followed by calisthenics (based on Swedish gymnastics) designed to work each part of the body--all done to jazz records and popular "sing-along" songs. Her motto was, "If it's not joyful, it's not useful."⁵³

In 1959 Bennstrom became associated with Edmond and Deborah Szekely, who were opening the Golden Door spa in Escondido. The Szekelys wanted Bennstrom to devise an exercise program based on Leonardo Da Vinci's system of geometric movements for increasing oxygen flow to the body. Bennstrom incorporated balls, sticks, and hoops into the Swedish exercises she had been doing all along, added upbeat popular music, and the "Da Vinci" was born. She described the format as "interval training": a fast, rhythmic segment

⁵³Anne Marie Bennstrom, telephone interview by author, 5 February 1996.

might be followed by a slow, graceful segment, depending on the tempo of the song being played. The Golden Door was frequented by many Hollywood celebrities, and the Da Vinci program received national publicity. Judi Sheppard Missett taught both traditional dance classes and Da Vinci classes at the Golden Door when she first arrived in San Diego in 1972, and incorporated some of her own moves into the Da Vinci--as did other instructors who worked at the spa during the 1970s.⁵⁴

Bennstrom left the Golden Door in 1966, and in 1967 opened the Sanctuary, a health club in Los Angeles where she continued to offer her body-contouring exercise program. Like the Golden Door, the Sanctuary achieved great notoriety because of its show-business clientele. In 1975 Bennstrom closed the Sanctuary and opened the Ashram, a health resort in Calabasas, California; it was here that she finally added "traditional" aerobics classes to her schedule.

Susie Mitzkat Ramos, the twin sister of Jacki Sorensen's marketing director (Katrine Mitzkat), went to work for the Golden Door in 1975. In 1978, Ramos and her husband started the Exclusively Women Spa, which quickly grew to 24 locations in California and Arizona. In all of the spas, Ramos set up a standardized aerobics program that

⁵⁴Bennstrom, telephone interview; "Aerobics: Free-As-Air Beautifier," *Vogue* 166 (April 1976): pp. 162-163; and Judi Sheppard Missett, telephone interview by author, 20 June, 1995

included elements of both the Da Vinci and Sorensen's Aerobic Dancing.⁵⁵

Most traditional gymnasiums and health spas offered little in the way of group exercise classes until the 1970s. The experience of Anna and Harry Jenkins is a good illustration of the evolution of exercise classes in health clubs. The Jenkins owned and operated three Adam & Eve Health Clubs in Southern California from 1958 to 1968. Both men and women used the club, but on alternating days. Anna Jenkins designed and taught calisthenics classes (primarily floor exercises) right in the middle of the weight room. She hired several other instructors, and one of those instructors (who was from Sweden) inspired her to add music to the exercise classes. In 1968, the Jenkins became associated with the Jack LaLanne European Health Spas, and in 1970 moved to the San Francisco Bay area where they managed six franchise locations. Anna trained instructors and set up exercise classes to music in all of the locations.⁵⁶

The classes took place in the center of the equipment room on the "women-only" days of the week, and still consisted of calisthenics and stretching. The instructors wore gold-lame Grecian togas over black leotards, with gold

⁵⁵Susie Mitzkat Ramos Ellis, telephone interview by author, 30 January 1996. Ellis is Mitzkat's current married name.

⁵⁶Anna Jenkins, telephone interview by author, 27 June 1995.

slippers. In 1973 the Jenkins left the European Health Spas and founded the Spa Fitness Center in Santa Cruz, California. They took the same exercise format to the new club (which, until 1980, continued to segregate the sexes by day of the week), but their instructors soon added more cardiovascular conditioning and incorporated some dance-oriented routines into the classes. In 1980, the Jenkins finally built a large, separate room that was dedicated solely to exercise and aerobics classes (they called their aerobics "Spa Jazz").⁵⁷

This progression of offering floor exercise and body-contouring classes in the space available around the exercise equipment, adding music, and then finally moving the classes into a separate room and making them more "aerobic," was common in health clubs across the United States. Many of the Jack LaLanne franchises (which had a variety of different names) offered some sort of calisthenics classes in the 1960s and 1970s, usually taught by women in form-fitting tunics or zip-up mini-dresses, black or fishnet tights, and high-heeled shoes. Accounts of similar pre-aerobics exercise classes were received from instructors at Holiday Health Spas, Elaine Powers Figure Salons, Cosmopolitan Health Spas, and numerous local health

⁵⁷Jenkins, telephone interview.

clubs, country clubs, and tennis/racquetball clubs.⁵⁸

Marjorie Craig, who began offering body-contouring classes at the Elizabeth Arden Salon in New York in 1952, published an exercise book in 1968, *Miss Craig's 21-Day Shape-Up Program* (Random House), which went on to become a national bestseller; Craig's program was adopted at the Elizabeth Arden Salons nationwide.⁵⁹

The Education Connection

In the early part of the twentieth century, various gymnastics exercise systems (European and American) formed the backbone of most physical education programs in the United States. In 1915, for example, gymnastics were a major part of the curriculum of ninety-five percent of colleges and universities.⁶⁰ By World War II, however, the popularity of gymnastics had faded--"only 12 percent of the schools were giving it a place in their physical education programs" (p. 250). Where gymnastics had survived, they were primarily found in women's programs, and were most

⁵⁸Twenty-three former spa instructors were interviewed by telephone by the author. For example, Rhonda Green Johnson (29 April 1995) Jack LaLanne's European Health Spa, New York; Jayney Scandiff (17 June 1995) Jack LaLanne's Fair Lady, Illinois; Joan Pelico Boone (23 May 1995) Elaine Powers Figure Salon, Holiday Health Spa and others, California; Vivian Smith (30 April 1995) Holiday Health Spa, Georgia; Shelley Richardson (22 June 1995) Cosmopolitan Spa and others, Tennessee.

⁵⁹Marjorie Craig, "21-Day Shape Up Program," *McCalls* 96 (November 1968): pp. 114-117; and Solomon, "Rating the Exercise Programs," p. 186B (see Note 4).

⁶⁰Emmett A. Rice, John L. Hutchinson, and Mabel Lee, *A Brief History of Physical Education* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1969), p. 249.

often the Danish gymnastics of Niels Bukh, which "substituted rhythmic action for sustained positions and precision" (p. 252). Leading the fight to retain some form of gymnastic exercise systems in the schools was C. H. McCloy (1886-1958) of the University of Iowa, but the group of educators who wanted to build physical education around sports and dance prevailed after World War II (p. 290). In the 1950s, "gymnastics" did return to some women's programs, not as free-standing group exercises, but as individually-performed apparatus work and "free-exercise" routines, a combination of tumbling, acrobatics, and dance (p. 337). For clarity, this activity will be termed modern gymnastics.

It should be mentioned at this juncture that mass exercise demonstrations to music, pictured in Chapter 3 (fig. 3.10), have continued in many European and British-Commonwealth countries throughout this century. (Anne Marie Bennstrom, profiled earlier in this chapter, was a member of a Swedish group performing gymnastics to music). After receiving enormous public exposure at the 1976 Montreal Olympic ceremonies, "Rhythmic Gymnastics" (as they were now called) became a competitive event, often making use of garlands, hoops, balls, Indian clubs, streamers, jump ropes, and other equipment. In Canada, "Rhythmics" are considered

to be descended from Dio Lewis's New Gymnastics.⁶¹

In Great Britain, Ling's Swedish gymnastics and Bukh's Danish gymnastics both influenced the birth of the "Keep Fit" movement, which in 1943 was described as physical recreation for post-school age women "in which the greater part of the time is given up to free-standing exercises...taken to music."⁶² By the time the Keep Fit Association was formed in 1956, the goals of the Keep-Fit classes (which by then had incorporated many aspects of modern dance) were stated to be good health, trim figures, "movement for movement sake," social activity, and "the enjoyment derived from exercise to music"⁶³--the same goals later described for aerobic dance. Keep-Fitters also participated in large-scale performances and demonstrations: a gathering in 1981 at Albert Hall in London drew 101,000 women participants.⁶⁴

Dance entrenched itself into women's physical education programs in the United States during the twentieth century, and in the 1940s and 1950s modern dance became an integral part of many of those programs--especially at the college

⁶¹Patricia Vertinsky, "Rhythmics - A Sort of Physical Jubilee: A New Look at the Contributions of Dio Lewis," *Canadian Journal of History of Sport and Physical Education* 9 (May 1978): p. 31.

⁶²The Central Council of Physical Recreation, *Keep-Fit and Recreative Gymnastics* (London, 1943), p. 4.

⁶³Joyce Jarvis, *Keep Fit: A Guide for Leaders*, 2nd ed. (London: The Central Council of Physical Recreation, 1962), p. 1.

⁶⁴Vanessa Drucher, "The Keep Fit Association is 25 Years Old," *Sport and Leisure* (August/September 1981): p. 22.

level. Modern dance evolved from a number of American and foreign influences. Rudolph Laban (1879-1958), a famous German dance teacher who emigrated to England in 1936, formulated many of the ideas upon which modern dance and what is commonly called "movement education" are based.⁶⁵ Isadora Duncan is credited with initiating the modern dance revolution around 1900, but "her ideas had little effect in the United States for some years. Many of her ideas came to the United States from Germany after World War I through the tours of Mary Wigman." Wigman was a pupil of Rudolf Laban and Emile Jacques-Dalcroze. Here in the U.S., Ted Shawn and Ruth St. Denis established an important dance school in 1915 (St. Denis had studied the Eurhythmics of Dalcroze); the Denishawn School produced modern-dance giants Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, and Charles Weidman (Humphrey and Weidman were Bonnie Prudden's mentors).⁶⁶

Laban's movement education, which spawned "educational gymnastics" in Great Britain and also greatly influenced the Keep Fit movement, became a major force in U.S. physical education (at all grade levels) during the 1950s. This

⁶⁵Richard Kraus, *History of the Dance in Art and Education* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1969), pp. 157-158; and Robert G. Glassford and Gerald Redmond, "Physical Education and Sport in Modern Times," in *History of Physical Education and Sport*, rev. ed., ed. Earle F. Zeigler (Champaign, Ill.: Stipes Publishing Co., 1988), p. 124.

⁶⁶Kraus, *History of the Dance*, pp. 137-159; and Van Dalen and Bennett, *A World History of Physical Education*, pp. 464 (quote), 465.

occurred as result of teacher training and exchange programs, and emigration patterns. "Movement education encouraged a variety of activities and sought to apply the elements of space, force, time, and flow. Movements were performed with and without apparatus. Some of the equipment used were ropes, balls, hoops, bean bags, wands, and fixed apparatus for hanging, balancing, jumping, climbing, and swinging."⁶⁷

Many physical education teachers who were trained during the time when dance (especially modern dance) became prominent in collegiate physical education departments, found ways to incorporate dance exercise into their curriculums for girls. A number of former high school and college physical education teachers were interviewed during the course of this project, and described classes they had devised that used elements of modern dance, folk dance, square dance, social dance (ballroom and rock 'n' roll), calisthenics, and yoga. Carol Alberts, a high school physical education teacher in the Bellmore-Merrick District of New York from 1952 to 1989, is an example of a teacher who laid the groundwork for aerobic dance (like so many other physical education teachers of this period); in her case, however her influence extended far beyond her local

⁶⁷Van Dalen and Bennett, *A World History of Physical Education*, pp. 301, 539 (quote); Glassford and Redmond, "Physical Education," p. 125; and Jarvis, *Keep Fit*, "Acknowledgment."

area.

In 1957, Alberts' school initiated a Girls' Sports Night, which included group-exercise routines to music as a competitive event. The girls enjoyed practicing the routines so much that in 1960, Alberts added them to her instructional program, calling them Slimnastics. Initially the routines were calisthenics to music (jumping jacks, toe-touches, bending at the waist etc.), but their nonstop, rhythmic nature made them very aerobic. In an effort to add creativity and fun to the activity, Alberts--who had a dance background and who also coached her school's girls (modern) gymnastics team--began to incorporate simple dance steps into the routines. Included were knee lifts, kicks, various lunges, the swing step (step-ball-change), and the "Twist." Alberts trained other physical education instructors in the district to teach the classes, most of whom also had a background in dance and choreographed their own routines.⁶⁸

Alberts was the president of the Association of Women in Physical Education in New York State (the AWPENYS), and the state chairperson of the New York AAHPER Girls' and Women's Sports Division. During the mid-1960s she presented her program at the conferences of both organizations, and in 1968 was approached by Kimbo Educational Records to create a

⁶⁸Carol Alberts, telephone interview by author, 22 August 1995; and Carol Alberts, *And the Beat Goes On for Physical Education: Secondary Through College*, Kimbo Educational Records, No. KEA 5020 (Deal, N.J., 1969); with accompanying booklet.

record album. The album (which included a booklet illustrating the steps for each routine) was called *And the Beat Goes On for Physical Education, Secondary Through College* (see fig. 5.3). It was released in 1969, as was a companion album for elementary grades created by another physical education teacher, Ambrose Brazelton. Both albums used the same twelve popular songs, including "Goin' Out of My Head," "Monday, Monday," "Wooly Bully," and "Do You Know the Way to San Jose?". The routines were designed to motivate students, provide a progressive "exercise challenge," improve endurance, strength, and flexibility, and "provide a vigorous slimming movement for vital parts of the body."⁶⁹

Alberts promoted the album at AWPENYS and AAHPER conferences in the Northeast. The record was also sold nationwide at various state and national physical education conferences, and through the Kimbo catalog which was distributed to physical education teachers throughout the country.⁷⁰ Kimbo Educational Activities produced many follow-up albums, including *And the Beatles Go On and On for Physical Education* (KEA 8080/8090) and *Country and Western Music for Rhythmic Exercises* (KEA 5030/5031). In 1972,

⁶⁹Alberts, telephone interview; and Alberts, "Introduction" to the booklet accompanying sound recording, *And the Beat Goes On*.

⁷⁰Alberts, telephone interview. Several physical education teachers who were interviewed specifically mentioned using this album, and one respondent actually provided me with the album and booklet.

Swing Step -- (step ball change) Bend right knee high and leap to right onto right foot. Bring left knee up high and cross it over in front of right leg, step onto ball of left foot. Switch weight quickly back to right foot. Repeat to left.

Jumping Jacks—Jump to feet apart with arms to sides at shoulder level. Jump again in this position. Jump to feet together with arms overhead. Jump again in this position. Jump to feet apart with arms to sides at shoulder level. Jump again in this position. Jump to feet together with arms at sides. Jump again in position.

Figure 5.3. A sample page from the booklet accompanying Carol Alberts' 1969 record album, *And the Beat Goes On* (Kimbo Educational Records, No. KEA 5020), page 2.

Reprinted by permission of Kimbo Educational.

Jacki Sorensen (who had a background in education) produced the first two of her eight records for Kimbo: *A Fitness Experience* (Elementary Grades, KEA 1110) and *Have Fun! Keep Fit!* (Secondary Grades, KEA 1120).

The use of these albums by many school teachers paved the way for a generation of aerobic dance students (primarily girls) who had become accustomed to this type of activity in school. Additionally, many physical education teachers themselves became aerobic dance instructors in the private sector. Over half of the aerobics instructors interviewed for this project had started their careers as physical educators. Gwen Hyatt was a physical education teacher in Michigan and had used Alberts' record album; she subsequently became involved with aerobic dance as a teacher at the University of Arizona, and then started her own company--Desert Southwest Fitness--which held 300 training seminars for 15,000 aerobics instructors between 1980 and 1988.⁷¹ Another physical education teacher, Ann Dugan of Evanston, Illinois, started an evening adult exercise program in 1965; besides writing four exercise books, she was one of the first entrepreneurs to offer her program for sale on videocassettes, releasing twelve tapes in 1978.⁷²

⁷¹Gwen Hyatt, telephone interview by author, 10 August 1995.

⁷²Barbara Stock, "Exercise? No Sweat!," *Suburban Tribune* (Evanston, Ill.), 30 June 1980, sec. VII, p. 7. The videocassettes (*Get Fit-Stay Fit*, *Super Exercises*, *Sports Conditioning* and others) were produced and distributed by Dugan's company, Health 'N Action, Inc. (Evanston, Ill.).

Nancy Kabriel and Mary Mayta are excellent examples of women who started national aerobic dance businesses after first offering their programs through the educational system. They will be profiled in Chapter 7.

Dance Exercise

One last ingredient that played a role in creating the environment from which aerobic dance emerged, was the existence of dance exercise classes at some dance schools during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. These classes usually consisted of the exercises that ballet and modern dancers used to warm-up, strengthen, and stretch their muscles, adapted for non-dancers. Like Sorensen and Missett, a number of aerobic dance instructors began their careers as professional dancers, and some of these instructors taught dance exercise classes before the advent of aerobic dance in the 1970s. Dancer Joy Prouty, who later became a leading trainer in the aerobics industry, taught a dance exercise class (to popular music) called "Adult Limbering" at the Imperial School of Ballet in Palm Beach, Florida from 1965 to 1976.⁷³ Another prominent figure in the aerobics industry who began as a professional dancer was Josie Gardiner; after teaching a dance exercise class in Peru in 1973, she opened Josie's Dance Exercise Studio in Beverly

⁷³Joy Prouty, telephone interview by author, 24 May 1995. Prouty also taught Marjorie Craig's toning program at an Elizabeth Arden Salon (1976-1979) before becoming involved in aerobics in 1981.

Farms, Massachusetts in 1975, several years before she became aware of aerobic dance.⁷⁴

Prior to the 1970s, a few articles featuring dance exercise appeared in national magazines, including: "Step By Step Dance to Slimness" (*McCall's*, March 1963); "The Disco Shape Up" (*Mademoiselle*, November 1965); "Shall We Dance?" (*Mademoiselle*, March 1966); "Rock It to Me Exercises" (*Seventeen*, Fall 1969); and "Dancing: A Dramatic Exercise in Beauty" (*Harper's Bazaar*, April 1970). During the 1970s, dozens of additional articles on dance exercise appeared in *McCall's*, *Vogue*, *Mademoiselle*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Redbook*, *Glamour*, *The Saturday Evening Post* and other magazines. Most of these articles were based on the specific programs at various dance studios, such as "Dancercise," offered by Jon Devlin at his two Dancercise studios in New York City. Dancercise was first mentioned in *Seventeen* in April, 1973, in an article titled "Body in Motion: What Moves You--Looking Good or Feeling Good? Dancercise is for Both." Devlin also produced a book and record album in 1975, *Total Exercise I*.⁷⁵

The first mention of Jacki Sorensen's program in a national magazine appeared in *Parade* in 1974, which described Aerobic Dancing as a highly recommended form of

⁷⁴Josie Gardiner, telephone interview by author, 15 June 1995.

⁷⁵"Dance Into Shape/Stretch Into Shape," *Mademoiselle* 81 (March 1975): p. 84.

dancing for physical fitness: "There's even a new type [of dancing] called 'aerobic dancing' that's especially recommended to tired housewives....It is chorus-girl-type dancing for housewives, with high kicks, and done to music. It's real work but fun." Of the twenty-seven fitness activities listed in the article, Aerobic Dancing was the only one illustrated with a photograph (see fig. 5.4).⁷⁶ By the end of the decade, Aerobic Dancing had been profiled in dozens of magazines, hundreds of newspapers, and Sorensen had appeared on over 200 local and national television shows, including *Today*, *Good Morning America*, *The Dinah Shore Show*, *Hour Magazine*, and *The Mike Douglas Show*.⁷⁷ The next chapter will describe in detail how Aerobic Dancing evolved in a single decade from one woman's creative idea for shaping up a group of U.S. Air Force wives, to a national phenomenon which spawned a multitude of imitations and variations.

⁷⁶E. D. Fales Jr., "The Name of the Game is Health," *Parade* (15 September 1974): p. 15.

⁷⁷Jacki Sorensen, letter to author, 8 December 1994; and "Jacki Sorensen Puts the Right Moves on Mike Douglas, Gary Collins, Dinah Shore, Regis Philbin and More," *Daily Variety* 189 (16 September 1980).

Fitness doesn't have to be dull: Jackie Sorensen leads a class in aerobic dancing. She originated this new exercise method that is rated as one of the best for health.

Figure 5.4. The first coverage of Aerobic Dancing in a national magazine. Photograph supplied by Aerobic Dancing, Inc. appeared in "The Name of the Game is Health" by E. D. Fales Jr., *Parade* magazine, September 15, 1974, page 15.

Reprinted by permission of Aerobic Dancing, Inc.

Chapter 6

JACKI SORENSEN'S AEROBIC DANCING

Jacki Sorensen (see fig. 6.1) was born Jacki Faye Mills in Oakland, California in 1942, and grew up in Castro Valley, a small town in the East Bay area of San Francisco.¹ She began her dance training at age six, and for the next ten years spent a dozen hours or more per week taking ballet, modern, jazz, tap and acrobatic lessons. She taught her first dance class at twelve, and at sixteen was dancing professionally. Jacki toyed with the idea of a dance career, but instead chose to attend the University of California at Berkeley, where she graduated in 1964 with a B.A. in Social Sciences. She continued to dance while in college, and became involved in choreographing a number of collegiate events for non-dancers.²

Jacki married Neil Sorensen in 1965. He had just joined the Air Force, and they moved to a base in Texas where Jacki became a partner in the Big Spring School of Dance. In 1966, Neil was assigned to an Air Force base in Sacramento, California, and Jacki completed her teaching credential and took a job as an elementary school teacher. She also taught dance to the wives and children on the base,

¹In this chapter, Jacki Sorensen will be referred to as Jacki, and her husband Neil Sorensen will be referred to as Neil, to prevent confusion. Also, Jacki was known professionally throughout the aerobics industry as "Jacki," and currently heads a company called Jacki's, Inc.

²Neil Sorensen, letter to author, 30 April 1995, p. 1.

Fig. 6.1. Jackie Sorensen in 1977

Photograph courtesy of Jackie's Inc.

an activity she continued in Puerto Rico when Neil was transferred there in 1968.³

About the time that the Sorensens moved to Puerto Rico, the Air Force was changing over from the Canadian Air Force 5BX and XBX exercise systems to Ken Cooper's "Aerobics" program. Jacki became interested in Cooper's program, and after reading *Aerobics*, took the twelve-minute run test. "She finished in the 'excellent' category, and up to that point she had not engaged in any of the activities he had documented as being 'aerobic' and therefore contributing to physical conditioning (running, swimming, cycling, handball, basketball, etc.). She concluded that the dancing she had done all her life had gotten her in such good shape."⁴ Jacki corresponded with Cooper, and he suggested that she test her theory on a group of women from the base.

Jacki gave the group the twelve-minute run test, and then, based on Cooper's recommendations, led the women three times a week for twelve weeks through continuous, rhythmic dance routines that she had devised. The first set of aerobic routines were performed to one side of a Lester Lanin record album, played straight through. She then retested the group and sent the results to Cooper, "who responded that the improvement was equivalent to what would be expected if the participants had been on a jogging

³N. Sorensen, letter (30 April 1995), p. 2.

⁴N. Sorensen, letter (30 April 1995), p. 2.

program."⁵

In 1969 Jacki arranged with the television station on the base to begin a regular live show featuring what she had now decided to call "Aerobic Dancing." She also approached an English-language station in San Juan (ninety miles away) about presenting a taped version of her show, and they agreed. The shows were an hour long, with a warmup, aerobic segment, and cooldown. Jacki selected upbeat music with a "lively spirit" from the music library at the base television station, using only instrumentals so that the lyrics would not interfere with her cues. "She did some experimenting with different steps, but by this time she had worked so much as a dance teacher and with non-dancing college students and Air Force wives that she had an excellent intuition about what the 'average' person could do....She did not work with a live group of exercisers, either on or off camera, for her shows."⁶

Neil left the Air Force in 1970, and the Sorensens moved to South Orange, New Jersey. Jacki taught her first Aerobic Dancing class for six women in January of 1971, in the basement of a church--under the auspices of the South Orange YMCA. The class proved to be so popular that she soon added classes at the nearby Livingston YMCA, at Seton Hall University, and at Bloomfield College--teaching a total

⁵N. Sorensen, letter (30 April 1995), p. 2.

⁶N. Sorensen, letter (30 April 1995), p. 3.

of twenty-two hours per week.⁷ The only change Jacki made to the class after leaving Puerto Rico was to begin with three minutes of abdominal work. "Then the students were on their feet for the rest of the class," a real departure from the body-contouring, floor-exercise type of classes which predominated at the time. There were no mirrors, and Jacki led with her back to the class to reduce self-consciousness. Students were encouraged to do the steps "feet first," and to add arm movements only when they felt ready.⁸

With access to a wider selection of music than was available to her on the base in Puerto Rico, Jacki chose a variety of popular songs and Broadway show tunes, and recorded them onto audiocassette tapes--which had just recently become available. At first she changed her routines every class, but the students wanted to do the dances more than once, so the idea of a twelve-week session was born. The students paid by the session, "the theory being that an up-front monetary commitment provided an incentive to adherence."⁹ They learned the dances over the course of the twelve weeks, and then all of the routines were changed for the next session. By the mid-1970s, Jacki was assigning a theme to each session, with many of the songs chosen to reflect that theme.

⁷Neil Sorensen, letter to author, 8 December 1994.

⁸N. Sorensen, letter (30 April 1995), p. 3.

⁹N. Sorensen, letter (30 April 1995), p. 4.

The Texas Schoolteacher Workshops

In addition to teaching Aerobic Dancing at Seton Hall University, Jacki undertook graduate work there in exercise physiology, and was also hired as the Director of Women's Intramurals. At a conference of the National Intramural Association, she met Sonny Rooker, then the Executive Director of the Texas State Governor's Commission on Physical Fitness, and he decided to bring Aerobic Dancing to the Texas public schools. In the summer of 1971, Jacki held a four-day workshop at the University of Texas at Austin for physical educators from all over Texas. These elementary and secondary schoolteachers were also given handwritten materials describing the routines to take home with them. Jacki held workshops in several other cities (including Fort Worth, Texas and Alva, Oklahoma) early in 1972, and then returned to Austin in the summer of 1972 with a batch of new material. These workshops brought Jacki to the attention of Casey Conrad, Executive Director of the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, who invited her to become a Clinician for the Council. For the next six years (1972-1978), Jacki traveled all over the United States, presenting Aerobic Dancing to thousands of physical educators (elementary through college level).¹⁰

¹⁰N. Sorensen, letter (December 8, 1994); Neil Sorensen, letter to author, July 16, 1995, p. 2; and Jamor Edwards Mochel, telephone interview by author, 31 January 1996.

In the fall of 1972, Jacki began an association with Kimbo Educational Records, and produced her first two record albums for physical educators, as noted in Chapter 5. These albums (one for elementary and one for secondary grades) were then distributed at the Aerobic Dancing physical-educator workshops, as were the later records and tapes that Jacki made for Kimbo. The records and tapes were also sold at national and state AAPHERD conferences.¹¹

One of the schoolteachers who had attended all of the early Texas workshops, Jamor Edwards Mochel, was hired by Sonny Rooker in 1973 to hold additional workshops at locations throughout Texas, utilizing the Aerobic Dancing materials. Many of the teachers who used Jacki's program in their high school physical education classes reported that the girls loved the program and begged to do Aerobic Dancing year-round. A number of the girls' mothers became aware of the classes, and some of the physical education teachers began offering Aerobic Dancing to adults through continuing education and recreation department classes--often at no charge to the participants. Mochel herself taught a class of fifty adult women at the local recreation department in Denton, Texas. Jacki continued this system of schoolteacher workshops in Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas until June of 1977, when she decided to convert completely to a commercial

¹¹N. Sorensen, letter (16 July 1995), p. 1; and Mochel, telephone interview.

operation in the region, managed by Mochel (this was the only area of the country where these teacher workshops were still being offered). Over the years, many of the physical education teachers had started their own private aerobic dance classes using the materials that they received once or twice a year at the workshops, with no compensation to Aerobic Dancing, Inc. (ADI). Mochel recruited some of the existing schoolteachers as ADI instructors, in addition to many of the adult Aerobic Dancing students who were eager to become instructors. Mochel also located facilities for the classes, and negotiated rents. In 1978 she became the regional manager for ADI's Central region.¹²

The Emergence of Aerobic Dancing, Inc.

Early in 1972, Jacki sent out a flyer to those East Coast YMCAs that had Women's Fitness Directors, announcing a workshop for her Aerobic Dancing program, to be held in South Orange (New Jersey). A handful of YMCAs from New Jersey, New York, and Maryland sent Directors to the one-day workshop in March of 1972, where Jacki taught them twelve routines and gave them a handwritten breakdown of each dance. Judy Wolff, the Women's Fitness Director of the Towson, Maryland YMCA, was one of the participants at this workshop, and she returned to Maryland very enthusiastic about instituting Aerobic Dancing in all of the Greater-

¹²Mochel, telephone interview; and "Aerobic Dance Aids Fitness," *Arlington (Texas) Daily News*, 14 August 1975, p. 9.

Baltimore-area YMCAs. Wolff had been given the mandate to promote programs for women within her branch, and she had already instituted fitness classes based on Bonnie Prudden's exercises and Ken Cooper's jogging program.¹³

In the summer of 1972, the Sorensens were faced with a move to Georgia as a result of Neil's aviation insurance business. Convinced that the Aerobic Dancing concept could stand on its own, they incorporated the business as Aerobic Dancing, Inc. (ADI), and trained six promising students to take over Jacki's classes at the South-Orange-area YMCAs and colleges. These instructors almost immediately expanded the number of YMCA classes offered, found additional venues (mainly schools and churches) where they offered the classes privately, and trained other students who wanted to become instructors. Additional East Coast YMCAs soon expressed interest in having their personnel teach Aerobic Dancing, so Jacki instituted a series of training clinics for the YMCA instructors. The clinics were held four times a year, one for each twelve-week Aerobic Dancing session. By the summer of 1974, Jacki was training instructors from fifty YMCAs, primarily in the Northeast (New England through Virginia), in addition to training instructors who offered Aerobic Dancing privately or through local recreation departments.¹⁴

¹³Judy Wolff, telephone interview by author, 24 January 1996.

¹⁴N. Sorensen, letters (8 December 1994 and 16 July 1995). Many YMCAs had "non-compete" policies which precluded instructors from operating commercial classes within the area served by the YMCA.

Realizing that she would need help with the burgeoning training activities, Jacki in 1973 designated several of her original six instructors, along with Judy Wolff of the Maryland YMCA, as "clinicians" (see fig. 6.2): Jacki would choreograph each new session and teach it to the clinicians, who would then hold training "clinics" for the Aerobic Dancing instructors. The clinicians also held workshops to train schoolteachers to use Jacki's Kimbo albums, and held some of the workshops for the Texas physical-educators (ADI made Jamor Mochel a clinician in Texas in 1975). The demand for Aerobic Dancing in the areas on the East Coast where it had been first introduced was incredible, and explosive growth was facilitated by the clinicians and instructors negotiating for additional space in schools, churches, and recreation department facilities. Jacki had a strict requirement that each student have a certain amount of square footage to move around in, so class enrollments were cut off at a number determined by the size of the room. Women would line up for hours in advance to register for a new Aerobic Dancing session, which added to its allure and created pressure for the addition of even more classes.¹⁵

From the very beginning Jacki had required that her

¹⁵Wolff, telephone interview; Connie Ridgeway, telephone interview by author, 30 May 1995; and Pat Holzel, telephone interview by author, 21 January 1996. Ridgeway and Holzel were two of the original six instructors, and both became stockholders and vice-presidents of Aerobic Dancing, Inc.

Fig. 6.2. Jacki Sorensen and a group of clinicians in 1977
Photograph courtesy of Jacki's Inc.

instructors be nonsmokers, but when ADI began holding the instructor training clinics, Jacki instituted two additional qualification tests that ADI adhered to religiously throughout the 1970s. First, each instructor had to take Ken Cooper's twelve-minute run test, euphemistically called the "fun run," and fall into either the "good" or the "excellent" category (Cooper's age-adjusted charts were used). This presented a challenge to many women who had never jogged or run before, and some of them reported taking the test several times at several different clinics before they finally passed. The second (and more controversial) test was the "weigh-in": an instructor was allowed 100 pounds for the first five feet of height, and five additional pounds for each inch over five feet. These two requirements created anxiety for many of the existing and potential instructors, since both tests were administered to everyone at the beginning of each clinic, and failure to meet either requirement meant not being allowed to teach until the deficiency was remedied. Some women remarked that these requirements added to the exclusivity and excitement that surrounded becoming an ADI instructor. In fact, by the mid-1970s, you had to be "invited" by existing ADI personnel (similar to being "asked out" by a sorority) in order to

become an instructor in many locations.¹⁶

In 1973 the Sorensens moved to the Los Angeles area (again because of Neil's business), and Jacki traveled to the East Coast to train the clinicians--in addition to maintaining her escalating activities with the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports. Early in 1975, Neil's business took the Sorensens to New York, where Jacki opened ADI's first business office and facility devoted full-time to Aerobic Dancing classes. Shortly thereafter, Neil decided to quit his job and devote himself exclusively to Jacki's business; he took over much of the administration of the corporation, along with Pat Holzel (one of the original instructors and clinicians, and a shareholder in ADI)--leaving Jacki free to concentrate on the creative side of the business. In 1976, the Sorensens moved to Northridge, California, where they worked out of their home. According to Neil, "Since we now shared a career we could make our own decisions about where to live. Nothing about our business dictated any particular location over another." Eventually ADI moved into corporate offices in Northridge, where the company remained until 1989.¹⁷

¹⁶This information was distilled from telephone interviews with 52 current and former ADI instructors and clinicians. Interestingly, Jacki was very active in a sorority when she was at U.C. Berkeley (Neil Sorensen, letter, 30 April 1995).

¹⁷N. Sorensen, letter (16 July 1995); and Holzel, telephone interview.

The Spread of Aerobic Dancing

The Northeast and the Midwest

Aerobic Dancing's spread into the New England states occurred when the Physical Education Director from a Baltimore YMCA transferred in 1973 to the Wakefield, Massachusetts YMCA (in the Greater Boston area), and recruited local resident Lylea Latham to attend one of ADI's training clinics in Maryland. Latham then started the Aerobic Dancing program in the Wakefield YMCA in January of 1974. After attending two more clinics in Maryland, Latham finally organized a group of YMCAs in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and upstate New York who were interested in the program, and in November of 1974, ADI began holding clinics in the New England area. The program soon expanded into YMCAs in the other New England states, and classes were also started outside of the YMCA-controlled areas in churches, schools and colleges, Knights of Columbus halls, fire stations--wherever space could be found. There was almost always local newspaper coverage when Aerobic Dancing would arrive in a new town. Latham soon became a clinician herself, and in the summer of 1975 she left the YMCA to work for ADI.¹⁸

Aerobic Dancing moved into the Midwest during the

¹⁸Lylea Latham, telephone interview by author, 27 January 1996; and "Aerobic Dance Clinic Held at the YMCA," *The Wakefield (Mass.) Ledger*, 6 November 1974, p. 19.

summer of 1974 when Jacki held a training clinic in Detroit for a group of YMCAs in the Great Lakes area (primarily Ohio and Michigan). Many of the YMCAs in the area had floor-exercise classes (usually called Slimnastics), and jogging programs. An exercise instructor at the Detroit YMCA, Marcia Post, had arranged for the clinic after seeing Jacki give an Aerobic Dancing demonstration at a 1973 conference of the Great Lakes Region Women and Girls' Commission. Post and one of her students, Marilyn Smith, attended the clinic, and then started classes at the Detroit YMCA. Smith also started a class at a local church; after receiving coverage from a Detroit newspaper, the church class grew from twenty to fifty people in three weeks.¹⁹

The program expanded as additional clinics were held, and as existing Aerobic Dance instructors and students moved to other cities and began programs in those new locations. As noted in the previous chapter, this was one of the prime methods by which many different aerobic dance programs spread across the country. Marcia Post moved to Chicago in 1975, and started Aerobic Dancing in the YMCAs there. Marilyn Smith moved to Toledo, Ohio (also in 1975), and established a thriving program with the help of publicity in *The Toledo Blade*. In 1976, Smith left the YMCA after the Sorensens revamped their relationship with this organization

¹⁹Marilyn Smith, telephone interview by author, 1 February 1996.

(as discussed later in this chapter), and Smith became a clinician and an employee of ADI. Within a year, she was responsible for the operation of ADI classes in eight Midwestern states.²⁰

The California Story

Aerobic Dancing was initially established on the West Coast as a result of two schoolteacher workshops similar to those offered in Texas. During Jacki's tenure as Director of Women's Intramurals at Seton Hall University in New Jersey, she learned of an adult fitness program run by Fred Kasch and Jack Boyer at San Diego State University in California. In 1972, Jacki attended one of the workshops put on by Kasch and Boyer, and demonstrated Aerobic Dancing (she was now a member of the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports). At that workshop she met Ash Hayes, Director of Physical Education for the City of San Diego School District. Hayes arranged for Jacki to hold an Aerobic Dancing workshop for San Diego physical education teachers in June of 1973, using the Kasch/Boyer facilities at San Diego State. Two women who worked for Kasch and Boyer in the University's exercise physiology laboratory, Kim Fitzgerald and Patty Hurl, also attended the workshop. They were both exercise instructors at the San Diego YMCA, and they began incorporating Jacki's program into their YMCA

²⁰Smith, telephone interview.

classes--even though they had signed waivers at the workshop stating that the ADI materials would be used only in the schools. Fitzgerald wrote to Jacki (who was living in Los Angeles at the time) asking for more material, and Jacki immediately came to San Diego to assess the situation. She was so struck by Fitzgerald's energy and enthusiasm that she hired Fitzgerald as a clinician, and utilized her to help with the Texas workshops and East Coast clinics.²¹

ADI held a second (and final) workshop for the San Diego physical education teachers in May of 1974, and then in November, Fitzgerald organized the first San Diego commercial instructor clinic. A few YMCAs sent instructors to the clinic, including the YMCA in Glendale, California. Most of the women who attended, however, became ADI employees, and were responsible for finding available facilities where they could start classes. Patty Hurl immediately started the ADI program at San Diego State University, where it remained until the early 1980s. Other new instructors found space in school cafeterias, churches, apartment complexes, at a swim/tennis club (see fig. 6.3), and on military bases. Fitzgerald continued to teach the San Diego clinics every three months (besides doing clinics elsewhere in the country), and the program grew

²¹Neil Sorensen, letter to author, 21 February 1996; Fred Kasch, telephone interview by author, 19 September 1995; Kim Fitzgerald (Winterrowd), telephone interview by author, 2 November 1995; and Patty Hurl (Tuffley), telephone interview by author, 13 Jan 1996.

SCRIPPS RANCH

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Aerobic Dancing

The Fun Way to Fitness

Because of its growing popularity across the country, in California, and here in Scripps Ranch, *Aerobic Dancing* will again be offered this fall, beginning the week of September 15. Both morning and evening classes will continue in their current time slots:

Mon. & Wed. 10:30 a.m.

Mon. & Thurs. 5:30 p.m.

Endorsed by the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, *Aerobic Dancing* is designed to develop and maintain physical fitness. *Aerobic Dancing* is a fitness sport we play for fun — each of us in our own style, at our pace — combining all the health benefits of jogging with the fun of dancing. Take out some *real* health insurance and come kick, jump, laugh and play your way to a firmer, fitter YOU!

Enrollment must be limited due to room size, and students will be accepted on a first come basis. *Aerobic Dancing* is offered as a 12 week, 2 day per week program. For more information contact the instructors Nancy Ciplickas, 271-8479 or Eileen Pickel, 271-0437. Classes are also held at Miramar NAS on Mon & Wed mornings at 9:10 a.m. for military dependents.

Fig. 6.3. An August 1975 announcement of Aerobic Dancing classes at a swim and tennis club (and at a Navy base) in the San Diego area. "Aerobic" was often confused with other terms such as aerobatic and Arabic.

Courtesy of ADI instructor Nancy Ciplickas.

spectacularly--partly as a result of coverage in *The San Diego Union* and other local newspapers. In September of 1975, Fitzgerald left the YMCA and opened an ADI administrative office in San Diego, which also offered a full schedule of Aerobic Dancing classes. Fitzgerald had a number of show-business connections (her cousins were the famous Lennon Sisters, who sang on *The Lawrence Welk Show*), and she promoted Aerobic Dancing on both local and Los Angeles-based television shows.²²

Fitzgerald arranged for instructor clinics to begin in the Los Angeles area in November of 1975, and the program grew there partly as a result of San Diego-area instructors migrating north. When the Sorensens moved to Northridge (a suburb of Los Angeles), they recruited a San Diego instructor, Katrine Mitzkat, as the Los Angeles Area Manager--and she soon became ADI's Director of Marketing. Mitzkat was in the first group of San Diego commercial instructors, and had become a clinician in 1975. She was teaching Aerobic Dancing on Coronado Island, including classes at the North Island Naval Air Station. Other ADI instructors also taught at a number of the military bases in the area, and the constant relocation of military personnel

²²N. Sorensen, letter (21 February 1996); Fitzgerald, telephone interview; and Hurl, telephone interview. Examples of newspaper coverage in *The San Diego Union* are "Dance Exercise Class Puts Them in Step With Fitness" (11 April 1975), "YMCA Offers Fun Way to Fitness" (11 May 1975), and "Aerobic Dancing--New Route to Fitness" (31 May 1976).

was one reason that the San Diego instructors and students were responsible for the spread of Aerobic Dancing into many new locations, including the Rocky Mountain states and the Pacific Northwest. (This was also a major factor in the spread of Jazzercise, which originated in the San Diego area.) San Diego instructor Patricia Herold, who was married to a Naval aviator, was hired by the Department of Defense to promote recreation programs in the Navy. Whenever Navy wives would accompany their husbands to the aviator training school at Miramar Naval Air Station (known as "Top Gun"), Herold would do an Aerobic Dancing demonstration, and would recruit some of the wives to start ADI classes at their home bases.²³

Aerobic Dancing came to the San Francisco Bay area when a YMCA instructor from New Jersey moved to Palo Alto, and started a class at the Palo Alto YMCA in 1974. After an article appeared in a local newspaper, demand for the program grew, and Kim Fitzgerald held a training clinic for Palo Alto, San Carlos, and San Mateo YMCA instructors in the Spring of 1976. In the meantime, Alameda resident Marcie Light had been attending San Diego State University (as a physical education major), where she was exposed to Aerobic Dancing. She attended a training clinic at the newly-opened

²³Fitzgerald, telephone interview; Katrine Mitzkat (Formby), telephone interview by author, 15 January 1996; Judi Sheppard Missett, telephone interview by author, 20 June 1995; and Patricia Herold (LoPresti), telephone interview by author, 1 February 1996.

San Diego ADI office, and upon returning to Northern California in 1976, started classes at various locations in Alameda County and at the Grace Cathedral in San Francisco. Several of Light's students wanted to become instructors, including Joanie Greggains, a charismatic physical education teacher at San Francisco's Roosevelt High School. Kim Fitzgerald held another clinic for both the YMCA and newly-recruited private instructors at the end of 1976, and Greggains began teaching in San Francisco and Marin counties.²⁴

Early in 1977, Greggains became the "exercise lady" on the television program *A.M. San Francisco*; she had numerous media connections and generated tremendous publicity for Jacki's program. Greggains left ADI in the fall of 1978 to start her own half-hour exercise program, *Morning Stretch*, which expanded to five U. S. cities in 1979 and then went into national syndication in 1981. *Morning Stretch* was notable in that it was the first exercise program on national television in the U.S. which featured a continuous "aerobics" segment. (Charlene Prickett, a dancer from Arkansas, created a similar program called *It Figures* for a television station in Calgary, Canada in 1976; *It Figures* was broadcast on the Cable Health Network in the U.S.

²⁴Fitzgerald, telephone interview; Peggy Elgart, telephone interview by author, 8 September 1995 (Elgart was a San Francisco ADI instructor trained in early 1977); and Karen Delong, "Aerobic Dancing Arrives in Alameda," *Alameda County Life* (July 1976), p. 6.

beginning in 1980.) In addition to continuing to produce and star in *Morning Stretch*, Greggains has made numerous exercise videocassettes and record albums, and currently hosts a talk show on radio station KGO in San Francisco.²⁵

Kim Fitzgerald's brother, Mike Lennon, took over administration of the independent (non-YMCA) ADI program in the Bay Area in 1977. Between the spring of 1977 and spring of 1979, the schedule expanded from seven cities to forty-three cities, including locations in Sacramento, Fresno, and Kings counties. An examination of the "1979 Aerobic Dancing Spring Schedule" shows classes in schools, churches, Jewish temples, community centers, parks and recreation department facilities, women's clubs, dance studios, tennis clubs, and a motley assortment of halls and lodges (Veteran's, Foresters, Masonic, American Legion, Carpenters' Union)! The YMCA program never grew beyond the San Francisco Peninsula, and ADI left those YMCAs in 1979.²⁶

The Mountain States and the Southern States

The Aerobic Dancing program in the Rocky Mountain states was started by Katherine Graves, who had been an ADI student on Coronado Island in San Diego when her husband was in the Navy. She moved to Denver and began teaching there

²⁵Joanie Greggains, telephone interview by author, 11 October 1995; Beth Ashley, "What's New? Aerobic Dancing," *Independent Journal* (Marin, Calif.), 30 May 1977, pp. 13-14; and Charlene Prickett, telephone interview by author, 23 February 1996.

²⁶Fitzgerald, telephone interview. The Aerobic Dancing class schedules (1977 through 1979) were supplied by Peggy Elgart.

in 1976. After a year of promoting the program, Graves recruited enough potential instructors to have a training clinic taught in Denver in 1977. Shortly thereafter, a story on Aerobic Dancing appeared on the front page of the "Lifestyle" section of the *Denver Post*. Local media coverage, combined with Graves' tireless efforts to secure space for classes and her willingness to do demonstrations anytime and anywhere, resulted in the rapid expansion of the program. By 1979 Graves had 70 instructors and 10,000 students in the Rocky Mountain area.²⁷

Aerobic Dancing's penetration into the Southern states occurred both as a result of instructors and students from other areas moving to the region, and as an offshoot of some of the schoolteacher workshops held in Texas and surrounding states. Arden Zin's program in Atlanta (see Chapter 5) was expanding into surrounding areas about the same time that ADI was entering the market in this region. Also slowing ADI's expansion was the fact that a number of instructors met with resistance from conservative Southern communities who were wary of an activity that took place in a skimpy costume and sounded like "Arabic Dancing." Instructor Tessa Berry, whose husband was in the military, moved to Memphis, Tennessee in 1977, and spent three months looking for a place to teach: "No Baptist Church would allow me to teach

²⁷Katherine Graves (Springfield), telephone interview by author, 1 March 1996.

A-E-R-O-B-I-C dancing! I had to spell the word Aerobic and explain what it was....By 1981, I had trained thirty-five instructors and had over 2,000 students--but the Baptist Church never allowed us to hold a class in their gymnasiums."²⁸

Aerobic Dancing's Exit from the YMCAs

ADI's relationship with the YMCA began to deteriorate in 1975, and over the next four years Aerobic Dancing slowly withdrew from YMCA locations across the nation. Many of the YMCA instructors became ADI employees, and their greatest challenge was trying to find space in which to operate their classes. The withdrawal occurred first in the Baltimore-area YMCAs, which had a very restrictive policy about independent ADI instructors operating anywhere in the vicinity. Judy Wolff, the Maryland YMCA clinician, terminated her relationship with the YMCA in 1975 and was made manager of ADI's Eastern Region; then when Aerobic Dancing began to leave the New England and Midwest YMCAs, Lylea Latham (of Massachusetts) took over the Northeast Region and Marilyn Smith (of Ohio) took over the Midwest Region, leaving Wolff as manager of the Southeast Region. (Jamor Mochel of Texas managed the Central Region, and Kim Fitzgerald of California managed the Western Region.) In general, the Sorensens felt that they received too little

²⁸Tessa Berry, letter to author, 2 May 1995.

compensation from the YMCAs, had too little control over the YMCA instructors, and were not allowed to meet the growing demand for Aerobic Dancing classes by going outside of the YMCA facilities. "They objected to our wanting to operate side-by-side with them as 'commercial' vendors rather than 'non-profit' as they were. We were experiencing an incredible demand and the YMCA just did not seem to be the vehicle for that expansion."²⁹

In anticipation of removing the very popular Aerobic Dancing from their schedules, many YMCAs created programs that closely followed Jacki's format, right down to the training clinics with the "fun-run" and "weigh-in" rituals. AIM (Aerobics in Motion) was started in the Maryland YMCAs by former Aerobic Dancing instructors, as was JOY in the New Jersey area YMCAs. Both programs were picked up by YMCAs in other areas of the East Coast. Dancaerobics was started in the Ohio YMCAs in 1978, and spread to several other states. The most universally adopted program was Joni Coe's Fitness Fantasia, which she originated in the Peoria, Illinois YMCA and then introduced at a national YMCA conference in 1975. Several of these programs will be discussed further in

²⁹Wolff, telephone interview; Latham, telephone interview; N. Sorensen, letter (21 February 1996), quote in on p. 2.

Chapter 7.³⁰**The Aerobic Dancing Uniform**

One important aspect of the aerobic dance phenomenon was the clothing worn by the participants. Until the 1970s, students in almost every modern exercise program wore leotards and were barefooted. Jacki started in leotards, tights, and tennis shoes, and when she discovered that many students did not feel comfortable wearing leotards, she encouraged a switch to T-shirts and shorts or pants. Jacki insisted that students wear athletic shoes for shock absorption because of the many poor surfaces in the wide assortment of rooms in which Aerobic Dancing classes were taught. In 1972, a special Aerobic Dancing tunic was created for Jacki, which she wore over a very brief pair of shorts, with pantyhose or tights (see fig. 5.4 for a picture of the tunic). "This soon became the 'uniform' of the Clinicians, and many instructors also adopted it so they would stand out from their class. The tunic was a handmade, custom item, so when the number of instructors grew...it wasn't practical for everyone to have a wardrobe of them." In 1973, the first Aerobic Dancing T-shirt was produced, and by 1976 the instructors and most of the students were

³⁰Ridgeway, telephone interview; Wolff, telephone interview; Jeri Lears (an Aerobic Dancing student who became one of the first instructors in the AIM program in Baltimore), telephone interview by author, 1 May 1995; Ann English (originator of Dancaerobics), telephone interview by author, 17 May 1995; and Joni Coe (Fitness Fantasia), telephone interview by author, 13 March 1996.

wearing Aerobic Dancing T-shirts, white shorts, pantyhose, and jogging or tennis shoes (see fig. 6.4). Shortly thereafter, ADI began putting on sale a unique T-shirt for each twelve-week session. (A number of instructors and students interviewed reported that they still have the T-shirts from every single session!) The first shoes designed specifically for aerobic dance did not appear until 1981 (the Freestyle by Reebok), and Jacki became the spokesperson for the Lotto Aerobic Dancing shoe in 1982.³¹ Once leotard manufacturers recognized the growing aerobic dance market and began to produce and promote a variety of new fabrics and styles in the 1980s, leotards and aerobic shoes became the costume of choice for participants in most aerobics programs, including Aerobic Dancing.

Scientific Studies

Aerobic Dancing was the subject of several scientific studies during the 1970s. When Jacki was at Seton Hall University in 1972, she arranged with Professor Herb Weber of the Human Performance Laboratory at nearby East Stroudsburg State College in Pennsylvania to do a study measuring oxygen consumption during a thirty-minute Aerobic Dancing session. Weber presented the results at the May 1973 ACSM meeting, and an abstract was included in *Medicine*

³¹N. Sorensen, letter (16 July 1995), quote is on p. 3; and Aerobic Dancing, Inc., "Aerobic Dancing: The First Ten Years," (Northridge, Calif., Fall 1981), company newsletter.

Fig. 6.4. The Aerobic Dancing "uniform", circa 1977
Photograph courtesy of Jacki's Inc.

and *Science in Sports*. Weber also wrote an article for the lay public that appeared in the magazine *Fitness for Living*.³² Carl Foster, a Ph.D. student in the Physical Education Department at the University of Texas at Austin, also performed a study on the energy cost of Aerobic Dancing during Jacki's schoolteacher workshop held there in the summer of 1973. Foster's mentor had developed one of the first portable systems for collecting expired gases while exercising, but with all of the locomotion and turning involved in Jacki's choreography, the hoses kept popping off or getting tangled! Foster's results were published in *Research Quarterly* in 1975.³³ Finally, two researchers in the Physical Education Department at Columbia University's Teachers College again examined the energy cost of Aerobic Dancing, with the results published in *Research Quarterly* in 1978.³⁴ All three studies concluded that the "dance routines provide adequate stress to influence the efficiency of the cardiovascular system," and result in oxygen consumption on a par with other vigorous sports.³⁵

³²Herb Weber, telephone interview by author, 6 April 1995; Weber, "The Energy Cost of Aerobic Dancing," *Medicine and Science in Sports* 5, no. 1 (1973): pp. 65-66; and Weber, "The Energy Cost of Aerobic Dancing," *Fitness for Living* 8 (1974): pp. 26-30.

³³Carl Foster, telephone interview by author, 6 April 1995; and Foster, "Physiological Requirements of Aerobic Dancing," *Research Quarterly* 46 (1975): pp. 120-122.

³⁴Veronica Igbunugo and Bernard Gutin, "The Energy Cost of Aerobic Dancing," *Research Quarterly* 49 (1978): pp. 308-315.

³⁵Karolyn Schuster, "Aerobic Dance: A Step to Fitness," *The Physician and Sportsmedicine* 7 (August 1979): pp. 98-103.

Lenore Zohman, a physician specializing in cardiopulmonary rehabilitation at New York's Montefiore Hospital, met Jacki when Zohman joined the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports in 1974. Zohman invited Jacki to her laboratory, where she monitored Jacki's heart rate and other physical parameters while Jacki performed both Aerobic Dancing routines and bicycle ergometry. Zohman presented the results at a number of conferences, including the Symposium on Adult Fitness and Cardiac Rehabilitation held at the University of Wisconsin in 1974. Zohman's presentation received coverage in the press and on national television.³⁶

The Promotion of Aerobic Dancing

Until 1980, ADI did virtually no advertising. Besides word-of-mouth, the primary method used to promote classes was through demonstrations. Aerobic Dancing demonstrations were given at shopping centers, women's clubs, PTA meetings, and at any club or group to which an existing ADI student belonged. Instructors and students would place stories or announcements in local newspapers, in community or special-interest newsletters, and on bulletin boards. Fliers were made up to hand out at demonstrations and at any other

³⁶Lenore R. Zohman, "Special Considerations," in *Adult Fitness and Cardiac Rehabilitation*, ed. P. K. Wilson (Baltimore: University Park Press, 1975), pp. 172-183. This includes the material presented informally at the 1974 Symposium at the University of Wisconsin at LaCrosse.

distribution points that could be located by enterprising ADI personnel. A number of instructors and clinicians made appearances on local television shows, did half-time shows for their city's professional sport teams, and marched in holiday parades. In the early 1970s, Jacki became the spokesperson for L'Eggs Sheer Energy pantyhose, and she later promoted ADI through tie-ins with several other fitness and health-related products (including Kraft's low-fat dressings). By the time Jacki hired Katrine Mitzkat as Director of Marketing in 1977, so much publicity had been generated that Mitzkat had her hands full simply fielding calls for interviews and stories from national and local media.³⁷

One device that was used by Jacki from the very beginning to generate excitement for the program and promote camaraderie among the students, was a yearly luncheon or dinner given for all of the Aerobic Dancing students (and their families) in a given city or geographical area. This event included a big show that featured each class doing an Aerobic Dancing number. These shows became so elaborate that they involved rehearsals, special costumes, and the sale of tickets to the general public (see fig. 6.5). Jacki tried to personally appear at as many of these luncheons and

³⁷Mitzkat, telephone interview. Almost every ADI instructor interviewed participated in local promotional activities.

WEST COAST REGIONAL OFFICE
3255 FIFTH AVENUE
SAN DIEGO, CA 92103
(714) 299-5062

NEWS UPDATE ON THE SUNDANCE PARTY

WHAT? WHERE? WHEN?

Aerobic Dancing Sundance Party
Sheraton Harbor Island Hotel
Grand Ball Room
Wed. June 1st & Thurs. June 2nd
(see back page for who will dance when)

6:15 Cocktails & hors d'oeuvres
7:30 Show

Price \$4.25 per person-
includes hors d'oeuvres
and show

(Everyone must have a ticket
this year.)

WHY TWO SHOWS?

Many of you have asked why we decided to have two separate shows, and how you were divided into groups.

1. Dividing the show means everyone who wants to can dance, and everyone who wants a ticket can buy one.
2. Instructors were divided up regionally and according to the estimated numbers called in. Although we know the figures aren't exact, they were all we had to go on. After the groups were decided upon, the dances were assigned by random drawing. The hope is that everything is divided up as fairly as possible. We really tried!

SHOW REHEARSALS

Fri. May 6: Assignments & run
through 4:15 p.m.

Sat. May 14: Review instructor
dances

Fri. May 20 & 27:

2.30-3:00 Warm up
Bicycle Morning
Surfin USA
Sundance Party

3:00-4:00 Instructor dances:
Hawaii Five-0
Sunny Funny Instructors

4:00-4:30 Sundance Party
You are the Sunshine
Movies were Movies
Hooray for Hollywood
Cool Down

**

TICKETS & DOOR PRIZES

When you sell a ticket, write your name on the back, and ask your student to write her name as well. The admission tickets will be collected at the door and used for the Door Prize Drawing. The door prize of a free 12 week Aerobic Dancing Session will be awarded each evening.

DANCE FLOOR INFO

The dance area is 30 x 40 ft., on a wooden or tile-like surface. You might want to measure off an area this size when you practice with your class so everyone will know what to expect.

Fig. 6.5. Information sheet for the 1976 yearly Aerobic Dancing party and show in San Diego

Courtesy of Nancy Ciplickas, San Diego Area Manager in 1976.

dinners as possible.³⁸

In 1976, one of the San Diego Area Managers, Nancy Ciplickas, came up with the idea of doing a "Danceathon," and promoted the idea to Jacki and to the local chapter of the American Heart Association. The first Aerobic Danceathon was held in San Diego's Balboa Park in February of 1977; it lasted seven hours and netted \$14,000 for the Heart Association. The Sorensens were so impressed with the event (and the attendant publicity) that they hired Ciplickas as Director of Training. Eight more Danceathons were held over the next four years, raising \$400,000 for charity. Finally, Ciplickas orchestrated a nationwide Danceathon that was held simultaneously in 123 cities in November, 1981 (see fig. 6.6); it raised \$4,300,000 for the Special Olympics and generated national media coverage.³⁹

In 1979, Jacki published her first book, *Aerobic Dancing* (see fig. 6.7), and her publisher arranged for an extensive national book tour. In each city, Jacki would appear on several morning television news or talk shows. It was at this point that ADI finally hired a public relations firm to generate press releases and public relations kits. In 1980, Jacki released through Mirus Music a record album to accompany the book. During the 1980s, she produced a

³⁸Nancy Ciplickas (Dumey), telephone interview by author, 26 July 1995.

³⁹Ciplickas, telephone interview.

Fig. 6.6. Some of the Boston-area participants in the 1981 Danceathon

Photograph courtesy of Lylea Latham, ADI Northeast Regional Manager 1976 to 1990.

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PERMISSION TO REPRINT COULD NOT BE OBTAINED

Figure 6.7. A sample page from Jacki Sorensen's first book
Reprinted from *Aerobic Dancing* by Jacki Sorensen with Bill
Bruns (New York: Rawson, Wade Publishers, 1979), p. 77.

number of additional books, records, and audio and videocassette tapes.⁴⁰

The End of an Era

At its peak in 1981, ADI had grown to over 4,000 instructors, 70 clinicians, 150 staff members at the Northridge corporate headquarters, and 200 Area Managers and Area Coordinators operating 1,500 field offices in 45 states.⁴¹ ADI's management structure was top-heavy as a result of Jacki's desire to maintain strict control over the quality of her product. After choreographing the dances for a new session, she would exhaustively test all of the routines--first on a select group of clinicians, and then on a "test class" in New Jersey (one session ahead of release to all of the other ADI classes). After reworking the routines based on the feedback that she received, Jacki taught them to the clinicians, who then held two-day instructor clinics throughout the country. The Area Managers and Coordinators were responsible for monitoring their instructors' performance by "dropping in" on their classes, and by holding mid-session practices. Another factor that increased costs was that students in Aerobic Dancing classes were never packed closely together as they

⁴⁰Mitzkat, telephone interview. Jacki Sorensen had earlier written two pamphlets to distribute to potential participants: "It's Not Unladylike to Sweat: A New Concept by Jacki Sorensen" (1971), and "Aerobic Dancing--A Rhythmic Sport" (1972).

⁴¹Aerobic Dancing, Inc., "Aerobic Dancing: The First Ten Years," (Northridge, Calif., Fall 1981), company newsletter.

are in today's aerobics classes, because of Jacki's insistence on allowing enough room for patterns that utilized locomotion. This locomotion, combined with Aerobic Dancing's moderate pace and noncompetitive atmosphere, made for very few injuries, unlike the high-intensity, "go-for-the-burn" aerobics of the 1980s done almost entirely in the vertical plane.⁴²

By 1981, ADI was facing severe competition from Jazzercise, from other aerobic dance programs (many of them started by former ADI instructors), and from the newly-emerging health club industry which offered unlimited classes for a monthly fee. (The Sorensens tried unsuccessfully to copyright the name "Aerobic Dancing," claiming that numerous other programs used confusingly-similar names.) During its first decade, the majority of Aerobic Dancing instructors were ADI employees who were paid hourly, with no bonus or incentive plan based on the number of students in a class. Much of the longevity of Jazzercise can be attributed to the company's franchise system in which each instructor is an entrepreneur with a stake in the financial success of the classes. Facing rising costs and diminishing revenues, ADI dismantled most of its management structure during the 1980s, and converted its instructor training to a videotape system. Jacki added a program

⁴²Ciplickas, telephone interview; Holzel, telephone interview; and Ridgeway, telephone interview.

called the "Workout" which featured simpler choreography and was designed for the drop-in client who did not want to commit to a twelve-week session. ADI declared bankruptcy in 1989, and re-emerged as Florida-based Jacki's Inc., with a staff of only seven people (including Jacki and Neil) and a small group of instructors who became franchise-holders. The Sorensens eventually settled in Boise, Idaho, where Jacki still choreographs four twelve-week Aerobic Dancing sessions a year for distribution on videotape to the franchisees.⁴³

Hooked on Aerobic Dancing

In the process of interviewing fifty-two former and current Aerobic Dancing instructors, students, and management staff, this researcher compiled an enormous amount of data on the impact that this program had on the physical, financial, social, and psychological aspects of these women's lives. It is beyond the scope of this project to present these data; it is important, however, to summarize some of the reasons that these women gave for becoming "hooked" on Aerobic Dancing--especially considering that many of the women had not been previously involved in any other sport or structured fitness activity.

Over half of the respondents revealed that they had

⁴³Ciplickas, telephone interview; Sorensen, letter (21 February 1996); and Rochelle Munson Nelson (a current Jacki's Inc. staff member), telephone interview by author, 27 September 1995.

always harbored the secret desire to be a dancer, and that Jacki's incredible choreography satisfied that fantasy with simple-to-follow routines that made them feel as though they were performing on Broadway. A 1979 article quoted Jacki as saying "'Dancing isn't a substitute for jogging to them. They wouldn't do *anything* if they didn't dance.'" ⁴⁴ Almost universally mentioned as a reason for participation was the fun associated with Aerobic Dancing (see fig. 6.8); also cited were the camaraderie, and the supportive, all-female environment. The classes were almost exclusively women, most of them in their thirties and forties. ⁴⁵ Some respondents talked about the confidence that they gained as a result of improving their physical prowess. Others focused on the emotional release provided by an hour of dancing--an hour during which their problems could be "set aside." While many women named the desire to lose weight as the factor that motivated them to try Aerobic Dancing in the first place, most stated that it was the enjoyment-factor that kept them coming back session after session. The majority of ADI instructors--in fact, the majority of *all* the dance exercise instructors interviewed (regardless of the specific program)--felt an intense, life-changing connection to their new career. One instructor wrote:

⁴⁴Schuster, "Aerobic Dance," p. 98.

⁴⁵ADI briefly experimented with a program in the early 1980's called "Mainly for Men," but it was never very successful.

I feel that I need to impart to you that teaching Jacki's program gave me a sense of accomplishment, established my self image, nourished poise and confidence, and revealed the creative self that I always felt was there but never materialized. Instructing Aerobic Dancing was something totally mine apart from my husband and children. I have taught aerobics classes for 16 years and have a genuine love for the women in these classes, and have felt that I have constructively aided them in their general well-being. And they likewise have done the same for me by just showing up for class!⁴⁶

Finally, what did Jacki herself think about those first ten years, during which she inspired a huge industry by putting a new twist on an old idea? Neil Sorensen states that "the first 10 years were full of ambiguities and dichotomies. It was exhausting and intensely exciting. Jacki instinctively knew how much things would grow and change and yet she was constantly amazed by it. While our organization was dedicated to bringing Aerobic Dancing to as many places as possible, it was really not the result of an intricate plan....Jacki was a true guiding force, but it was more a case of guiding the herd where it wanted to go!"⁴⁷

⁴⁶Loretta Howell, letter to author, 8 May 1995. Howell became an Aerobic Dancing student in Reading, Mass. in 1976, and an instructor in 1979.

⁴⁷N. Sorensen, letter (16 July 1995), p. 3.

"This is a sport, not a dance," stresses Dinah Shore lookalike Jackie Sorensen, taking a turn at leading a class in Northridge, Calif.

**GETTING NO KICK OUT OF LIFE?
JACKI SORENSEN URGES WOMEN TO
TRY HER AEROBIC DANCING**

Fig. 6.8. "Getting No Kick Out of Life?" *People Weekly* (2 July 1979): p. 80.

Photograph by Tony Costa. Reprinted by permission.

Chapter 7

OTHER AEROBIC DANCE PIONEERS OF THE 1970S

Judi Sheppard Missett's Jazzercise

Judi Sheppard Missett (see fig. 7.1) created and refined her dance exercise program, Jazzercise, during the 1970s, but the program did not begin widespread expansion until 1979. Once this expansion began, however, Jazzercise grew very rapidly: by the end of 1980, the number of Jazzercise instructors had topped 1,000, and by 1982 there were 2,000 instructors in forty-eight states. Jazzercise is still a strong presence today, with approximately 4,400 franchised instructors and 400,000 students in the United States. Despite her localized presence in Southern California's San Diego County for most of the decade, Missett had a major influence on familiarizing the U.S. public with aerobic dance during the 1970s.¹

Missett was born Judi Sheppard in San Diego in 1944, and grew up in Red Oak, Iowa. She began dance lessons before she was three years old. Over the years, Missett's resourceful mother persuaded various dance instructors to commute to the small town of Red Oak by arranging for studio space and recruiting other students. Missett began teaching dance classes when she was ten, and performing

¹Judi Sheppard Missett, telephone interview by author, 20 June 1995; and Jazzercise, Inc., "Background and Bios: A History of Jazzercise," (Carlsbad, Calif., 1994), company brochure.

Figure 7.1. Judi Sheppard Missett, circa 1979

Photograph courtesy of Jazzercise, Inc.

professionally when she was fourteen. She attended Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, where she earned a B.S. degree in Speech in 1966. That same year she married Jack Missett, with whom she has two children.²

Missett continued to work professionally in theater and dance during college, and after graduating, she joined jazz-dance choreographer Gus Giordano's professional dance troupe. She also taught beginning dance classes at Giordano's Chicago studio, and noticed that many of her students would drop out after a few lessons. Missett felt that she was a well-trained dancer and a good teacher, and was frustrated by the constant turnover. She finally concluded that the classes were overly rigid and disciplined, and that most of the students had no desire to succeed professionally: they wanted to have fun, to relive their enjoyment of dance as youngsters, and to lose weight or maintain their figures. Traditional dance classes were too difficult, and calisthenics classes were too boring ("you were lucky if there was a little music tinkling in the background").³

Missett decided to try combining jazz dance with exercise. After receiving permission from Giordano to use

²Missett, telephone interview; and Mary Rowland, "The Passionate Pioneer of Fitness Franchising," *Working Woman* (November 1988): pp. 55-60. Judi's daughter Shanna (born 1968), is currently part of the management team at Jazzercise, Inc.

³Missett, telephone interview.

an empty studio, she began teaching the new class in 1969. She turned the students away from the mirror, and telling them "I will be your mirror," had them follow behind her. At first Missett used a warm-up that consisted of stretching and jazz isolations, but she soon switched to starting off the class with a spirited, upbeat number to "get things rolling" (this became a hallmark of the Jazzercise session). She kept the material extremely simple, and gave the women constant encouragement. The students were elated, and within a few weeks there were sixty students--all that the room would hold. Missett was heavily booked for dance and theater performances (still her first love at this point), but found that she really looked forward each week to the dance exercise class.⁴

In 1972, Missett moved to Carlsbad, California (in northern San Diego County), prompted by her husband's decision to leave his job as a television news reporter and become a freelance writer.⁵ Missett continued to work as a performer in television and theater by commuting to Los Angeles, and took a job teaching both dance and exercise classes at the Golden Door Health Spa--the home of Anne Marie Bennstrom's "Da Vinci" program.⁶ Missett also

⁴Missett, telephone interview.

⁵Rowland, "Passionate Pioneer," p. 57.

⁶See Chapter 5, "The Spa Connection." Missett remained at the Golden Door for about a year.

approached the Oceanside Department of Parks and Recreation, the Carlsbad Family Fun and Fitness Program, and the La Jolla YMCA about teaching her dance exercise classes; all three organizations agreed that they would provide her with space and list her classes in their schedules, in exchange for a small percentage of Missett's class fees.⁷

Drawing on her husband's media savvy, Missett sent out a press release to a number of local newspapers announcing a new concept in dance exercise "developed in Chicago." The classes filled up almost immediately, and she added additional class times and new locations, including several other YMCAs in the San Diego area. Missett began using the name "Jazzercise" in 1974, based on a suggestion from one of her students. Over the next few years, she refined the Jazzercise format: the classes were fifty minutes long, and started out with a twelve to fifteen-minute cardiovascular segment; next the students would "dance to the floor" and do toning exercises for each section of the body; finally they would "dance back up" and finish with a standing routine. At some point the cardiovascular segment was extended to twenty minutes, and eventually stabilized at thirty minutes. Every Jazzercise step had a name, and could be cued without stopping and starting. Missett also taught ninety-minute advanced classes, which included more jazz-dance steps and

⁷Missett, telephone interview; and Jazzercise, Inc., "Background & Bios," p. 1.

progressions across the floor.⁸

Like Jacki Sorensen, Missett choreographed each specific song, and wrote down the choreography using dance notation. Rather than recording all of the songs for a class onto a cassette tape, she used 45-RPM records ("singles"), allowing her to select whichever songs she wished on a particular day. She became adept at changing the records so rapidly that less than six seconds elapsed between songs. Missett choreographed new songs every week, and would mix them together in ever-changing combinations with the old (previously choreographed) songs. This was different from the Aerobic Dancing system, where the same songs were taught for a twelve-week session. Jazzercise was likewise offered in sessions--this being the payment format used by the YMCAs and by the Parks and Recreation Departments--but these sessions did not delineate a whole new set of choreographed songs. In later years, Jazzercise experimented with various payment options, including paying a fixed monthly fee, paying by the class, and purchasing an admission card good for a certain number of classes.⁹

By 1976, Missett's classes were so popular that she was teaching up to twenty-five hours per week, in addition to teaching traditional jazz-dance and tap-dance classes.

⁸Howland, "Passionate Pioneer," p. 57; and Missett, telephone interview.

⁹Missett, telephone interview.

Class enrollments were usually cut off at sixty people, and there were huge waiting lists. Women would sometimes start lining up at six in the morning to register for a new session, and Missett had to turn hundreds of people away. She was receiving calls every week with requests for new classes. She had arranged for several of her best students to substitute for her whenever she was sick, but she still felt exhausted and was experiencing problems with her voice.¹⁰

A friend counseled Missett to start training other instructors, so that Jazzercise could be expanded. Missett was reluctant to take this step: "'I thought that what made me a success was my willingness to give my guts to every class I taught. I didn't think simply teaching other people the routines would do.'"¹¹ She finally decided to give it a try, and in 1977 began training some of her students-- including those who had been substituting for her. The potential instructors followed Missett around to her classes for several months writing down her routines, and they scrambled to locate their own copies of the 45-RPM singles that she used. When Missett deemed an instructor to be "ready," that instructor took over several existing classes

¹⁰Missett, telephone interview; and Mary Nuckles MacGyver, telephone interview, 4 June 1995. MacGyver was one of the first ten Jazzercise instructors, and became an administrative assistant to Missett.

¹¹Judi Sheppard Missett, and quoted by Howland in "Passionate Pioneer," p. 58.

and/or started new classes. Missett was pleasantly surprised at the reaction from the students: they loved the new instructors, and were thrilled at the expansion of the schedule. Soon there were five new Jazzercise instructors, and by the end of 1977, a total of ten instructors had been trained.¹²

In 1978, Missett began holding workshops in Carlsbad for students interested in becoming instructors; she would teach them the basics of her movements, and then after a few weeks (to allow them time to practice), she would audition them. Those women who were accepted went out and found their own facilities. Each instructor was an independent contractor, and paid Jazzercise 10% of her gross receipts; the percentage was later changed to 20% of net receipts (after rent), and then finally to 30% of net receipts. Faced with pressure from the IRS to convert all of the instructors to employees, Missett and her staff were successful in changing California's franchise laws in 1983 to allow the Jazzercise instructors to become franchisees. Each new instructor paid a small upfront fee and royalties of about 20%, in exchange for initial training, thirty new choreographed routines every ten weeks, advertising, and

¹²Missett, telephone interview; and Claudia Acri (one of the first five instructors), telephone interview by author, 3 August 1995.

continuing education materials.¹³

Beginning in 1977, Missett and her instructors met each Friday afternoon at a church in Carlsbad, where Missett would demonstrate several new routines while the instructors wrote them down. By the following year, Missett herself was notating the dances and distributing a copy to each instructor. Like Sorensen, Missett used a wide variety of music: current Top-40 hits (including disco music), oldies, Broadway songs, jazz, and holiday songs. The instructors were responsible for locating the 45-RPM records, and they soon devised a system where one woman tracked down the singles and purchased copies for everyone else. Several of Missett's early students also became her advisors, and formed the core of her administrative staff. She finally rented a small office in Carlsbad in 1978 for her staff and for the instructor meetings, and then expanded into larger offices later that year; the company was incorporated in 1979, and a huge Jazzercise Workout Studio was added adjacent to the corporate offices in 1980.¹⁴

¹³MacGyver, telephone interview; Terry Deneen (an instructor who was trained early in 1978 and is still a franchisee), telephone interview by author, 8 May 1995; and Rod Riggs, "Jazzercise: Classes Started for Fun, but Passion Pays Off in Millions," *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, 20 September 1995, pp. C-1, C-2.

¹⁴MacGyver, telephone interview; Deneen, telephone interview; Bobbi Janikas (one of the first five Jazzercise instructors), telephone interview by author, 2 August 1995; and Jazzercise, Inc., "Background & Bios," p. 1. Instructor Judy Ritter eventually started a business, "Jazzercise Records" to provide the instructors with music. Jazzercise currently utilizes audiocassette singles, and plans to convert soon to CD singles.

In 1978, two key events occurred that initiated the spread of Jazzercise. First, Jeri Sipe, the wife of Cleveland Browns quarterback Brian Sipe, and a devoted student of Missett's at the Encinitas (California) YMCA, asked to take the Jazzercise program to Cleveland during the football season. Missett agreed, and Sipe immediately began setting up classes in Ohio, and then recruiting other instructors out of those classes. Because of Jeri Sipe's high visibility as the wife of a football star, she obtained extensive media coverage for the new dance exercise program. Also in 1978, one of Missett's original ten instructors, Connie Williams, moved to the San Francisco Bay area and set up classes, primarily in the East Bay. Missett had just published a Jazzercise book¹⁵, and in conjunction with its promotion, she and Williams did a series of Jazzercise demonstrations in the Bay Area. Within a few months, Williams was training a group of new instructors out of her home. For a time, both Sipe and Williams returned to Carlsbad to learn the new routines that Missett had choreographed, but as other San Diego instructors and students began to move away and take the program with them, Missett started distributing the new routines by mailing out her written notes. There were a number of Navy and Marine Corps bases in San Diego County, and many of the military

¹⁵Judi Sheppard Missett with Donna Meilach, *Jazzercise: A Fun Way to Fitness* (New York: Bantam Books, 1978).

wives wanted to become Jazzercise instructors when their husbands were transferred away to other locations.¹⁶

Mary Nuckles MacGyver, who was one of the first ten Jazzercise instructors and an administrative assistant of Missett's, moved to the Los Angeles area in 1979. She negotiated space for Jazzercise classes in the Santa Monica YMCA, in Los Angeles City Parks and Recreation Department facilities, and in the recreation facilities of a several other cities in the area. MacGyver became the Los Angeles Area Director, and within two years she had forty instructors working for her. Connie Williams had already been designated the Area Director of Northern California, Jeri Sipe the Area Director of Ohio, and several other instructors were Area Directors in San Diego County (which had the heaviest concentration of classes). MacGyver devoted her full energies to promotional activities in the Los Angeles area, including giving demonstrations, performing at fundraising events, and appearing at 10K races to warm-up the runners. At one point she did these race warm-ups for forty-eight consecutive weekends.¹⁷

Missett continued to hold weekly training sessions at the Carlsbad office; one San Diego instructor who had moved

¹⁶Missett, telephone interview; MacGyver, telephone interview; and Irene Larson, telephone interview by author, 3 August 1995. Larson was one of the instructors in the first Northern California group trained by Connie Williams.

¹⁷MacGyver, telephone interview; and Missett, telephone interview.

to the California desert and who commuted to Carlsbad each Friday for the meeting, brought with her a professional videocassette recorder/camera unit and videotaped the training sessions. The unit was so massive that it took up the entire back seat of the woman's car! Missett was experiencing difficulties with the distribution of her new routines via written notes (each instructor seemed to interpret the notes differently), and this new video technology immediately struck her as the key to the spread of Jazzercise. She purchased a camera in 1979, and with the help of her husband, began videotaping the routines in her backyard and then making multiple copies of each new tape. Jazzercise bought a fleet of VCR machines, which were made available for purchase to the instructors; initially just a few instructors had their own VCR's, and they would arrange for the other instructors in their area to come to their homes to watch the videotapes. Once the system was in full swing, however, a tape with new routines was distributed to each instructor every two months. Missett's adoption of a videotaping system greatly facilitated training and the ongoing dissemination of her choreography, and fueled Jazzercise's rapid, nationwide growth that began in 1980.¹⁸

When women in other parts of the country wanted to

¹⁸Missett, telephone interview; MacGyver, telephone interview; Larson, telephone interview; and Jazzercise, Inc., "Background & Bios," p. 1.

become Jazzercise instructors, they at first had to travel to Carlsbad in order to be certified--except in a few locations where Area Directors like MacGyver (Los Angeles) and Williams (San Francisco) were allowed to train and certify new instructors. Missett finally put together a team that would fly to various locations and hold workshops for prospective instructors. Two weeks later, the team would return to audition each prospect and give them a written test. Those who were selected then went through additional training that covered teaching techniques, exercise physiology, and the business aspects of starting and maintaining a Jazzercise program. Once Missett began videotaping her routines, the system was streamlined by sending applicants a videotape (and written materials) to use in preparation for the audition and written test.¹⁹

Missett worked hard to promote the Jazzercise concept, even before she began to expand the program in 1977. She and her students did Jazzercise demonstrations throughout the San Diego area at college campuses, shopping malls, Rotary Club meetings, PTA meetings, and Amway conventions. She sent out press releases to local newspapers with photographs of Jazzercise classes in action. Beginning in the mid-1970s, she made presentations to physical educators

¹⁹Missett, telephone interview; and Sharon Pahl (an Ohio instructor), telephone interview by author, 13 February 1996. The first formal workshops took place in Ohio, and then expanded into Illinois. Each applicant was allowed to audition up to three times.

at CAHPERD conventions.²⁰ In 1977 Missett began writing a book, *Jazzercise: A Fun Way to Fitness*, which was published in 1978 by Bantam Books and eventually sold 418,000 copies. In 1978, Missett became a regular on the local television show *Sun Up, San Diego*, and made her first appearance on a national television show, *The Dinah Shore Show*. In 1980 she signed a contract with Westinghouse Broadcasting to appear weekly on *P.M. Magazine*. By the end of 1982, Missett had appeared on dozens of television shows, produced a *Jazzercise* record album and videocassette tape (both for MCA Records and Tapes), done a national promotional tour, and commenced writing a nationally-syndicated newspaper column. Beginning in 1979, *Jazzercise* instructors performed at many professional sporting events, and in 1984, they participated in the opening ceremonies of the Olympics in Los Angeles.²¹

From the inception of her program, Missett always dressed in leotards and tights, and she taught barefooted until the early 1980s (see fig. 7.2). The other *Jazzercise* instructors and most of the students followed suit, although some did begin wearing shoes in the 1970s. (One *Jazzercise* instructor reported teaching barefooted as late as 1983.)²²

²⁰John Cates, telephone interview by author, 8 February 1996. CAHPERD is the California Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance.

²¹Missett, telephone interview; MacGyver, telephone interview; *Jazzercise, Inc.*, "Background & Bios," pp. 1-2. The newspaper column was distributed by the *Los Angeles Times* Syndicate.

²²Kathryn Walker, telephone interview by author, 28 June 1995.

Figure 7.2. Judi Sheppard Missett teaching a Jazzercise class in 1974

Photograph courtesy of Jazzercise, Inc.

Missett and many of the other aerobic dance pioneers who had come out of the dance world and whose roots were deeply planted in modern and jazz dance, resisted for many years wearing athletic shoes--and only relented in the interest of injury prevention. Missett did become a spokesperson for Nike aerobic footwear later in the 1980s.²³

During Missett's 1978 appearance on *The Dinah Shore Show*, she silk-screened "Jazzercise" onto her leotard to make sure the viewers would be able to identify the name of her program. Missett's students saw the show and wanted a similar leotard, so she had instructor Connie Williams (who was an artist) design a logo. The logo was then silk-screened onto brightly-colored lycra leotards, which had just recently been introduced by Gilda Marx (see the section "Body Design by Gilda" later in this chapter). In 1980, Missett's company launched Jazzertogs, which sells Jazzercise apparel and merchandise through a mail-order catalog.²⁴

Jazzercise competed directly with Aerobic Dancing during the late 1970s and early 1980s, especially in the quest to find suitable facilities. A number of copycat programs also sprang up (including one called "Jazz

²³Missett, telephone interview. Dancer Jacki Sorensen was an exception: she and her students wore some sort of athletic shoes from the very beginning of her program.

²⁴Missett, telephone interview; and Howland, "Passionate Pioneer," p. 58.

Aerobics"), which were often the creation of former Jazzercise or Aerobic Dancing instructors. Missett tried not to let these defections affect her personally, although some of the other Jazzercise instructors were devastated when women they had trained "abandoned the family."²⁵ An important reason behind Jazzercise's long-term survival was its system of instructor compensation: during the late 1970s, many Jazzercise instructors (who were independent entrepreneurs) were making from \$35 to \$50 an hour after rent and royalties, while Aerobic Dancing employees were being paid \$8 to \$10 an hour.²⁶ Jazzercise was regularly listed as one of the top twenty-five franchises in the U.S. by *Franchise* magazine, and Missett received recognition as a top woman entrepreneur from a number of sources, including President Ronald Reagan (1986), *Entrepreneur* magazine (1988) and *Working Woman* magazine (1988).²⁷

Missett was not involved in any early scientific studies about the physiological effects of her exercise program, but she did regularly consult with exercise physiologists. She provided informative handouts to her instructors and to the Jazzercise students, and included an exercise physiology segment in the written test required for

²⁵Missett, telephone interview.

²⁶MacGyver, telephone interview; and Howland, "Passionate Pioneer," p. 58.

²⁷Riggs, "Jazzercise," *The San Diego Union-Tribune* (20 September 1995), p. C-2; and Jazzercise, Inc., "Background & Bios," p. 3.

instructor certification. Missett stated in a 1993 magazine article that Jazzercise is "'a lovely combination of art and science--the art of dance and the science of exercise physiology.'" She felt lucky that she had recruited outstanding people (most of them women) to focus on the business and scientific aspects of the program, allowing her to concentrate on the more artistic, creative aspects.²⁸

Although she did no formal marketing research during the 1970s, Missett instinctively knew who her audience was. In a survey performed by Jazzercise, Inc. in 1993, it was revealed that 99% of Jazzercise participants were women, 80% were between the ages of 18 and 45, 75% were married, 85% were employed outside of the home, and 77% had attended or graduated from college. Only 60% of those surveyed had children.²⁹

Missett credited the women's liberation movement with creating the environment that encouraged her to pursue her dreams, and spurred so many women into becoming involved with her program. Numerous instructors and students mentioned the metamorphosis that they went through when they started attending Jazzercise classes. At first they would stand quietly in the back row, hardly moving, dressed in old

²⁸Missett, telephone interview; and K. C. Patric, "Shanna Missett and Juniors in Jazzercise," *Dance Teacher Now* (March 1993), p. 46 (quoting Judi Sheppard Missett).

²⁹Jazzercise, Inc., "Facts & Figures," (Carlsbad, Calif., 1993), company brochure.

black leotards. Within a few months they would be standing much closer to the front, bouncing around in colorful leotards and shouting the Jazzercise "whoop." They felt loose and free and uninhibited, and they were part of "the show." They could not believe how much fun it was, and how good it made them feel. It was like therapy! They felt that they were taking control of their bodies and of their lives. This was a fitness activity that was not lonely or boring, and it was not highly competitive. The participants were women of all shapes, sizes, and ages, and they were very supportive of each other. They would get together over coffee, or for lunch. As happened with Aerobic Dancing students, a real subculture emerged which bonded these women together.³⁰

Body Design by Gilda

Gilda Marx was born Gilda Wilstein in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania in 1935. She grew up in Los Angeles, and after training as a dancer for sixteen years, she began her career as a dance teacher, choreographer, and performer in 1956. In 1963 Marx was called on to choreograph the dance numbers for a charity variety show, and she put together a dance exercise class to "shape up" the women who would be

³⁰Missett, telephone interview; MacGyver, telephone interview; Larson, telephone interview; Janikas, telephone interview; Aciri, telephone interview; and Terry Pavelco, telephone interview by author, 3 August 1995. Similar input was received from fifteen other Jazzercise instructors and students.

performing in the show. When the performance was over, the women begged her to continue the class, so Marx started teaching the program out of her home in Encino (a suburb of Los Angeles). In 1964 she moved into a small studio at the back of a beauty salon, and became known as "Gilda of Encino." She created the classes in her head from years of training and conditioning as a dancer: they were a combination of jazz-dance movements, calisthenics, muscle isolations and contractions, stretching, and yoga--all performed to popular music. She varied the tempo of the songs, so that a fast number which raised the heart rate was usually followed by a slower number.³¹

News of the "Gilda of Encino" classes spread, and by 1967, Marx was teaching six classes a day, five days a week. In 1968, actor Shirley MacLaine heard about the classes, and hired Marx as her personal trainer. Now divorced with two small children, Marx was supporting herself solely with her exercise business, so she decided to expand into larger quarters. She moved first into a karate studio, and then in 1969 into a ballet school, where she trained one of her students to help her teach the program. In 1972, she moved out of Encino and into an Arthur Murray Dance Studio in Beverly Hills. She changed the name of the business to "Body Design by Gilda," and garnered her first media

³¹Gilda Marx, telephone interview by author, 20 July 1995.

attention (July 1972 in *The Los Angeles Times*). In 1973 she rented space in the Stanley Holden School of Dance, where many of her students were from the entertainment industry. That same year she married Robert Marx, the son of Gummo Marx (of the Marx Brothers), and her new husband designed and built the first Body Design by Gilda Studio, which opened in Century City (near Los Angeles) in 1975.³²

Once she was installed in her new facility, Marx began to hire and train other instructors. Her emphasis was still on toning, firming, and shaping the body, but by 1977 she had instituted a system where her instructors used a cooking timer to set the minimum length of the cardiovascular segment at twelve minutes. Some of the instructors that Marx hired brought their own styles and methods to the studio, which she graciously accommodated. Ken Alan was hired in 1977, and he was an advocate of freestyle aerobics, in which the choreography is sequential (each step is performed for a certain number of beats) and not tailored to a particular song. This style was facilitated by the advent of disco music, which had a steady, powerful drum beat and none of the odd breaks or chorus-verse changes traditionally found in popular music. Many disco albums were released that maintained an even tempo through a continuous series of songs (with no gaps between songs). This was ideal for

³²Marx, telephone interview.

freestyle aerobic dance, and Alan (who later became an important figure in the aerobics industry) helped pioneer in the 1980s the production of audiocassette tapes for aerobics that blended together a continuous mix of songs.³³

Marx taught her classes in leotards and tights, but was unhappy with the choice of colors and fabrics available from existing dancewear companies such as Danskin. She was a buxom woman, and felt that the existing leotard fabrics were unflattering, uncomfortable, and provided poor support for most women. She began searching for a better fabric in 1975, and in 1977 she and her husband Robert formed the Flexatard, Inc. company to design and produce colorful, high-quality leotards made of lycra. The leotards and unitards (see fig. 7.3) were an instant success, and revolutionized the dancewear industry.³⁴

In 1979 Marx decided to expand her studio operations, and she opened the first of three Body Design by Gilda Studios in New York City in 1980. She also developed a separate franchise operation that eventually resulted in twenty-six franchise locations. Marx wrote a complete training manual (copyrighted in 1979) that covered all of the aspects of running a studio, including the design and implementation of the classes. Personnel from each of the new locations came to the Los Angeles studio to be trained

³³Ken Alan, telephone interview by author, 13 July 1995.

³⁴Marx, telephone interview.

Figure 7.3. Gilda Marx in one of her lycra unitards
Photograph courtesy of Gilda Marx.

by Marx and Ken Alan. In 1985 Marx closed down the franchise operation, and eventually she closed or sold off all of her wholly-owned studios to devote herself completely to her very successful clothing business--which is now called Gilda Marx Industries.³⁵

Like other aerobic dance pioneers, Marx promoted her program in the media, appearing regularly in newspaper and magazine articles, and on local television shows such as *Good Morning L.A.* and *A.M. Los Angeles*. In 1984 she wrote a book titled *Body By Gilda*, for which she did an extensive promotional tour.³⁶ Her greatest impact on the aerobics industry, however, came about as a result of her influence on some of the celebrity figures who were her students. While she was teaching at the Stanley Holden School of Dance in 1974, Richard Simmons became interested in her program and attended some of her classes; in 1975 he opened his own exercise salon in Beverly Hills, The Anatomy Asylum.³⁷ The *Richard Simmons Show*, which contained a segment featuring Simmons exercising to music with members of his audience, debuted on television in 1980, and by November of 1981, the show was syndicated in 173 cities.³⁸ Barbra Streisand was a

³⁵Marx, telephone interview; and Alan, telephone interview.

³⁶Marx, telephone interview; and Gilda Marx, *Body By Gilda: Redesign Every Line* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1984).

³⁷Marx, telephone interview.

³⁸"Richard Simmons, the Sultan of Svelte, Applies Both the Carrot and the Shtick," *People Weekly* 16 (2 November 1981): pp. 93-100.

devoted student at the Body Design by Gilda Studio in Century City, and she included a sequence of Marx teaching a class at the studio in the 1979 film *The Main Event*.³⁹

Another enthusiastic student was Jane Fonda, who decided to open her own studio, the Workout, in Santa Monica in 1979; she hired away one of Marx's instructors, Leni Cazden, and Cazden helped design Fonda's "Workout" program. Fonda published *Jane Fonda's Workout Book* in 1981, and produced her first *Jane Fonda's Workout* videocassette tape in 1982--both of which were phenomenal bestsellers and set the stage for the huge exercise videotape industry that followed. It should be noted that Fonda's first book and videotape contained primarily body-contouring exercises (very similar to Marx's program), with only a few minutes of cardiovascular conditioning.⁴⁰ Kathy Smith, another important purveyor of exercise videotapes in the 1980s, also learned "the business" at the Gilda Marx studio, and was Marx's first Flexatard model.⁴¹

Marx described the mechanism underlying the spread of dance aerobics as follows: "You would train a teacher, and she would leave and open up her own little business. She

³⁹Marx, telephone interview; Alan, telephone interview.

⁴⁰Marx, telephone interview; Jack McCallum, "Everybody's Doin' It," *Sports Illustrated* (3 December, 1984): pp. 84-85); and Jane Fonda, *Jane Fonda's Workout Book* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1981). Fonda's book was examined for similarities to Marx's book, *Body by Gilda*.

⁴¹Marx, telephone interview.

would hang her shingle out front, copy what you were doing, and add her own touch to it....The industry grew like a tree: a trunk was formed and then branches grew out of it, and other branches grew out of those branches."⁴²

Nancy Kabriel's Rhythmic Aerobics

Nancy Kabriel (born 1943) watched Jack LaLanne on television as a teenager growing up in Grandfield, Oklahoma, and was inspired to become a physical educator. After graduating from college, she worked as a Physical Education Specialist for the Tulsa, Oklahoma elementary schools from 1965 to 1971. She included folk dancing and square dancing in the physical education programs that she designed for her students, and when she discovered *And The Beat Goes On* from Kimbo Records and several other dance exercise albums for children, she incorporated them into her classes. She completed her Master's degree in physical education in 1971, and was hired that year by the Physical Education Department at Oral Roberts University in Tulsa.⁴³

Oral Roberts himself had read Ken Cooper's book, *Aerobics*, and he sent Kabriel and several other staff members to Cooper's Aerobics Institute in Dallas in the summer of 1972--in preparation for opening a new aerobic-activity center on campus. Coincidentally, Jacki Sorensen was holding a three-day Aerobic Dancing workshop for

⁴²Marx, telephone interview.

⁴³Nancy Kabriel, telephone interview by author, 24 July 1995.

physical educators at Northeastern State University in Alva, Oklahoma that same summer, and because Kabriel wanted to learn everything she could about "aerobics," she decided to attend. Kabriel's mother was a music teacher, and Kabriel had a real passion for music and for dancing (she had always imagined herself as Mitzi Gaynor or Jane Powell). She fell in love with aerobic dance, and immediately started classes at the University using Sorensen's material. Every Oral Roberts student was required to take an aerobic activity class, and Kabriel's "Aerobic Movement" classes proved to be extremely popular with the female students. Kabriel was invited by Sorensen to help with the Aerobic Dancing workshop held at the University of Texas at Austin later that same summer (1972), and Kabriel continued to attend Sorensen's schoolteacher workshops for the next several years.⁴⁴

In 1976, Kabriel left Oral Roberts University to become the supervisor of physical education programs for all of the Tulsa public schools. Using Sorensen's Aerobic Dancing as her template, she developed her own aerobic dance program for both the secondary and elementary schoolteachers. She provided the teachers with both choreographed routines and theoretical training, and had them take a written certification test. Because of her location in the "Bible

⁴⁴Kabriel, telephone interview; Neil Sorensen, letter to author, 16 July 1995.

Belt," Kabriel wanted to avoid the word "dance" in the title of her program, so she settled on the name Rhythmic Aerobics (see fig. 7.4).⁴⁵

After initiating her program for the Tulsa physical education teachers, Kabriel decided to start a commercial program independent of the school system. She held her first three-day workshop in the summer of 1976, where she taught the participants her Rhythmic Aerobics routines, reviewed material on exercise physiology and nutrition, and gave them a certification exam. The attendees were required do a one-mile run as an assessment of their fitness levels, but they were not subjected to a "weigh-in." Kabriel soon received hundreds of additional requests for her training program, and began holding workshops on weekends and during her summer breaks in locations throughout Oklahoma and surrounding states; over the next four years she trained over 6,000 instructors. She held all of the workshops herself, with the help of one or two assistants.⁴⁶

Some of the instructors trained by Kabriel used the Rhythmic Aerobics material as a jumping-off point for their own programs, but many instructors kept returning to additional workshops in order to obtain new routines. In 1980, Kabriel left the Tulsa public schools to devote herself full-time to her business and to the creation of

⁴⁵Kabriel, telephone interview.

⁴⁶Kabriel, telephone interview.

Figure 7.4. Nancy Kabriel and her Rhythmic Aerobics logo
Photograph courtesy of Nancy Kabriel.

three new Rhythmic Aerobics sessions per year. She recruited about a dozen clinicians from among her best instructors; using a system patterned after Aerobic Dancing, Kabriel taught the routines she had choreographed for each new session to these clinicians, who would then hold instructor training clinics in various locations all over the country. The Rhythmic Aerobics instructors were not employees, but were independent contractors who paid a fixed fee for the clinics and for the new material. They were responsible for finding and renting their own facilities, which were often in schools, churches, YMCAs, and community recreation centers.⁴⁷

A Rhythmic Aerobics class was an hour long, and consisted of a ten-minute warmup, twenty minutes of choreographed aerobic dance routines (later extended to twenty-five minutes), a cooldown, floor exercises, and stretching. For each new session, Kabriel recorded the songs onto an audiocassette tape, and gave the instructors a written choreography sheet and fresh educational materials. The instructors and most of the students wore Rhythmic Aerobic T-shirts, shorts, and athletic shoes (in the early 1980s, Kabriel endorsed the Reebok aerobic shoes which came

⁴⁷Kabriel, telephone interview; and Val Peterson, telephone interview, 26 June 1995. Peterson attended an Aerobic Dancing workshop for schoolteachers at Kansas State University in 1975, and after teaching Sorensen's program for a year, switched to Kabriel's Rhythmic Aerobics in 1976.

onto the market).⁴⁸

Kabriel hired a group of Area Coordinators to screen instructor applicants and to help organize the training for each state. She also had a corporate headquarters in Tulsa, an administrative staff, a small group of assistant choreographers, a training manual, a newsletter ("The Grapevine"), and a catalog of clothing. In 1983 she began distributing the new routines on videotape, and eventually the training-clinic system was abandoned. During its existence from 1976 to December of 1994, Rhythmic Aerobics trained a total of about 10,000 instructors in forty-four states--although its strongest presence was in Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas, Kansas, Nebraska, Utah, and Montana.⁴⁹

Kabriel initially became involved with aerobic dance because she thought it would be a wonderful tool for her public school physical education teachers, and she was surprised when it blossomed into such a big business: "It was like giving birth to a baby and watching it grow." Rhythmic Aerobics students were almost exclusively women, and the program had the same elements of fun and camaraderie cited by so many Aerobic Dancing participants. Instructors and students who loved to dance could do so in Rhythmic Aerobics classes, without having to find a partner who was willing to take them out dancing, and without having to

⁴⁸Kabriel, telephone interview.

⁴⁹Kabriel, telephone interview.

"hang out in a bar." Kabriel received hundreds of letters from women whom she had never met, telling her how Rhythmic Aerobics had changed their lives and their health, and had helped them through a depressing time, such as a divorce or the loss of a loved one.⁵⁰

Mary Mayta

Mary Mayta (born 1932) was a Physical Education teacher at a small college in Colby, Kansas from 1965 to 1975. In 1968 she decided that she wanted to offer an exercise program for the community-at-large. She was familiar with Martha Rounds' Slimnastics program, and drawing upon that source along with her own dance background, Mayta started Slimnastics classes at the college and at other community locations in Colby. Within a few years, the classes had evolved from more traditional calisthenics into an aerobic dance format with routines choreographed to popular songs. Mayta trained several other instructors, and the classes were expanded into a number of surrounding communities. The vast majority of the students were women, and Mayta always endeavored to attract a broad spectrum of participants, including children, seniors, and the handicapped.⁵¹

In 1973, Mayta attended one of Jacki Sorensen's schoolteacher workshops at Kansas State University (in Manhattan, Kansas). She was amazed to find that Aerobic

⁵⁰Kabriel, telephone interview.

⁵¹Mary Mayta, telephone interview by author, 8 June 1995.

Dancing was very much akin to what she had already been doing in her Slimnastics classes. Mayta credits Sorensen's program with helping her to shape and refine her own program. Mayta also attended Nancy Kabriel's Rhythmic Aerobics workshops in Oklahoma in 1976, and considers Kabriel to be another major influence.⁵²

Mayta was hired by Wichita State University in 1975, and the following year she became the coordinator for the fitness programs in all of the Wichita YMCAs. She trained the YMCA instructors to teach her aerobics classes, which she called "Brighten Your Day the Aerobic Way" (later changed to "Fit For Life"). Soon there were twelve YMCA instructors and 1,200 students, and Mayta was holding training seminars three times a year to distribute her new routines. The instructors were given a music list and were responsible for finding their own 45-RPM records. (Mayta eventually changed over to an audiocassette tape system.) The class format consisted of a warmup, twenty to thirty minutes of aerobic dance, floor exercises, and a stretching and relaxation section. Like Martha Rounds, Mayta felt that the relaxation segment was a very important component of her classes. Mayta's students wore T-shirts, shorts, and athletic shoes. News of the program spread, and Physical Directors from YMCAs in other Kansas cities sent their

⁵²Mayta, telephone interview; Neil Sorensen, letter to author, 16 July 1995; Kabriel, telephone interview, 24 July 1995.

instructors to Mayta's training seminars in Wichita, which she continued to hold until the mid-1980s.⁵³

In 1978 Mayta assembled a team of experts from Wichita State University, including a cardiologist, an exercise physiologist, and a nutritionist, and together they created a workshop for people interested in getting into the aerobics business. Mayta designed the practical portion of the workshop and the other experts designed the theoretical portion; she and her team then wrote a series of manuals to be distributed in conjunction with the hands-on training. The first workshop was a week long, but Mayta soon reduced the length to four days. On the last day of the workshop, the participants took a written certification test. In 1979 Mayta began traveling to locations throughout the U.S. to give a weekend version of her workshop (Friday afternoon to Sunday evening). That same year she also incorporated her business, which she now called Fit For Life. Mayta held these workshops almost every weekend for the next ten years, and organized a system of twenty representatives who assisted her with teaching the workshops in various regions of the country. Mayta was inducted into the IDEA (International Association of Fitness Professionals) Hall of Fame in 1991, joining Jacki Sorensen, Judi Sheppard Missett,

⁵³Mayta, telephone interview.

Jack LaLanne, Kenneth Cooper, Jane Fonda and others.⁵⁴

The YMCA Programs

Jacki Sorensen's Aerobic Dancing was born in the YMCAs in New Jersey, Maryland, and New York, and became an integral part of the YMCA's physical fitness programs for women in many locations throughout the United States. As discussed in Chapter 6, Sorensen began to withdraw from the YMCAs in 1975, and many YMCA branches made the decision to find and implement other dance exercise programs so that Aerobic Dancing could be replaced.

AIM (Aerobics in Motion) was started in the Maryland YMCAs in 1974 by several former Aerobic Dancing instructors. JOY (Joy of Movement Aerobics) was started about the same time in New Jersey by one of Sorensen's original six instructors, Dottie Kyle, and soon spread to YMCAs in New York and New England. Both programs cloned the Aerobic Dancing format, including new sessions with fresh songs and choreography every twelve weeks, the instructor training clinics, the twelve-minute run test and weigh-in, and the instructor uniform (white shorts, logo T-shirts, support hose, and tennis shoes). AIM and JOY were eventually imported into a number of YMCA branches in the Eastern part of the country, while other branches started their own

⁵⁴Mayta, telephone interview; and Kathie Davis (president and founder of IDEA), telephone conversation, 24 October 1996. Ten of the respondents interviewed for this project cited Mayta's workshop as an important factor in inspiring or redirecting their careers.

homegrown aerobic dance programs.⁵⁵

Another good example of a YMCA-replacement program was found in Ohio, where one of Sorensen's first instructors in the Great Lakes region, Ann English, started Dancaerobics in 1978. English, who had been a physical education teacher until she was hired by the Findlay, Ohio YMCA as Women and Girls Director in 1970, started teaching Sorensen's program in 1974. In 1978 she moved to Lima, Ohio, and the YMCA there asked her to start a dance exercise program to replace Aerobic Dancing: "I remember the pangs of hesitation I felt when I was offered a wonderful opportunity by the YMCAs in the Great Lakes region to develop my own program. I still felt so loyal to Jacki Sorensen, who was the catalyst for the huge aerobics industry we know today." English designed a program that closely duplicated Aerobic Dancing. At its peak, Dancaerobics had contracts with YMCAs in Ohio and Kentucky, and was providing training four times a year for 150 instructors with a total of about 5,000 students. In addition, the company also developed a network of independent instructors, located primarily in five

⁵⁵Connie Ridgeway, telephone interview by author, 30 May, 1995; Jeri Lears, telephone interview by author, 1 May 1995; and Terry Stocker, telephone interview by author, 22 May 1996. Ridgeway was one of the six original Aerobic Dancing instructors in New Jersey; Lears was an Aerobic Dancing student at a Baltimore-area YMCA, who became an AIM instructor in 1975; Stocker was a JOY instructor in Cape Cod, Mass., and subsequently started her own program in the Rhode Island YMCAs called Dance Aerobics.

Midwestern States.⁵⁶

Joni Coe's Fitness Fantasia

The program that was most widely adopted by YMCAs across the United States was Fitness Fantasia, started by Joni Coe in the Peoria, Illinois YMCA in 1975. Coe (see fig. 7.5) was born in England in 1938, and during her youth, she received a solid foundation in gymnastic exercise systems, dance, and sports. After obtaining a degree in Physical Education from Leiston College in Suffolk, she came to the United States in 1959, where she married and began raising a family. During the 1960s, Coe's role models were Jack LaLanne and Bonnie Prudden; she would "flip on the television" to exercise with both of these fitness pioneers, and she also attended several of Prudden's workshops.⁵⁷

Coe went to work as the Physical Director for the Peoria YMCA in 1970, and her mandate was to design exercise programs that would attract women and girls. Drawing on both her dance background and Prudden's exercise system, she implemented classes called "Exercise to Music." Initially she used a piano player, but within a few years she had switched to phonograph records, and was choreographing calisthenics and some dance movements to popular songs. She also had her own exercise show on a local television

⁵⁶Ann English, telephone interview by author, 17 May 1995 (quote); and Ann English, letter to author, 9 June, 1995.

⁵⁷Joni Coe, telephone interview by author, 13 March, 1996.

Figure 7.5. Joni Coe of Fitness Fantasia in 1979
Photograph courtesy of Joni Coe.

station, WRAU-TV.⁵⁸

In 1973 Coe attended a conference of the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports at which Jacki Sorensen presented a workshop. Coe was struck by Aerobic Dancing's similarity to her own program, and she immediately recognized the potential for aerobic dance in the YMCA. She was on the planning committee for the YMCA's second national conference, the National YMCA Consultation on Cardiovascular Health (held October, 1975), and she took a group of her Peoria students to the conference to demonstrate her aerobic dance program, which she now called Fitness Fantasia.⁵⁹

Coe adopted Sorensen's system of choreographing a set of routines for each new session, with all of that session's songs recorded onto an audiocassette tape. She began training instructors from other YMCAs in her region; soon she had so many requests for the workshops that she recruited two women from other YMCA regions to help her create the new session materials every three months, and to hold the training in their own regions. The requests continued to escalate, and Coe hired a group of trainers (similar to Sorensen's clinicians) to hold the workshops.

⁵⁸Coe, telephone interview; and Joe Wootten, "Joni Coe: Illini PD of the Year," *The Journal of Physical Education* (November/December 1975): p. 37.

⁵⁹Coe, telephone interview; and "Proceedings of the National YMCA Consultation on Cardiovascular Health (October 1975)," *The Journal of Physical Education* (Summer 1976): pp. 194-195. The First National YMCA Consultation on Physical Fitness was held in 1971 (see note 43 in Chapter 4).

At one point, Fitness Fantasia had 30 trainers, and was found in YMCAs in thirty-six states. In 1980 Coe formed an independent company whose sole client was the YMCA. Eventually Coe distributed the new routines on videotape, and the workshops and trainers were no longer necessary.⁶⁰

From 1975 to 1979, all of the YMCAs that had offered Aerobic Dancing terminated their relationship with Jacki Sorensen,⁶¹ and most either started their own aerobic dance program or selected one of the internally-produced programs as a replacement. It was up to each individual YMCA branch to decide which program it wanted, and the national YMCA office in Chicago provided data about the various programs only when queried for information by branch personnel. At the third National YMCA Consultation in 1982, Fitness Fantasia, AIM, and JOY all made presentations. Coe worked for the national YMCA for five years as a program director, which gave her additional clout in the promotion of Fitness Fantasia after the YMCA's relationship with Jacki Sorensen's Aerobic Dancing ended in divorce.⁶²

⁶⁰Coe, telephone interview; and "An Interview With Joni Coe," *The Peoria Woman* (September 1994), pp. 20-21.

⁶¹See Chapter 6, "Aerobic Dancing's Exit from the YMCAs."

⁶²Coe, telephone interview; and "An Interview With Joni Coe," *The Peoria Woman*, p. 21.

Chapter 8

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The roots of modern aerobic dance can be traced back to the early nineteenth century, when the gymnastic exercise systems that had been developed in Europe were adapted for women in the United States by Catharine Beecher and Dio Lewis. Both Beecher and Lewis devised programs that featured continuous, rhythmic exercises performed to music. By the beginning of the twentieth century, German gymnastics had gained a foothold in both public schools and private gymnasiums in the U.S., and had evolved to include rhythmic movement to music. In the 1920s, Neils Bukh's Fundamental (Danish) Gymnastics and Emile Jaques-Dalcroze's Eurhythmics, both of which were more dance-oriented, became popular in physical education programs for women. The gymnastic exercise systems were finally replaced in the schools during the 1930s and 1940s by dance and sports, but a number of modern fitness pioneers who had been exposed to gymnastic exercises when they were young subsequently popularized programs which incorporated many elements of those early gymnastics. Two of those pioneers--Jack LaLanne and Bonnie Prudden--took their message to the media in the 1950s and 1960s; as a result, their exercise programs gained national attention, influencing many future aerobics teachers and students and helping to set the stage for the fitness "revolution" of the 1970s. In the academic arena, Thomas

Kirk Cureton, Jr. developed a landmark adult fitness program at the University of Illinois (1941 to 1969), where his mentor was Seward C. Staley. (Staley had developed Gymnastic Dancing in the 1920s, which Jacki Sorensen's Aerobic Dancing somewhat resembled.) Cureton's cardiovascular exercise programs influenced a generation of exercise professionals in schools, colleges, YMCAs, YWCAs, and municipal recreation departments, and helped pave the way for the Royal Canadian Air Force exercise programs, Ken Cooper's "Aerobics," and the subsequent jogging craze of the late 1960s and the 1970s.

By the end of the 1960s, there were a number of local and national television programs that featured fitness personalities or incorporated exercise segments into their formats; paperback books outlining exercise programs by LaLanne, Prudden, the Royal Canadian Air Force and others had become bestsellers; the medical community was actively investigating the link between exercise and cardiovascular health; many YMCA branches had added running programs and group exercise classes (primarily calisthenics and body-contouring classes) to their schedules; Ken Cooper's book *Aerobics* had been published (in 1968); and the women's liberation movement was underway, setting the stage for fitness programs that were created and run by women for other women. Localized programs such as Martha Rounds' *Slimnastics*, Sheila Cluff's *Cardio-Vascular Dancing*, Arden

Zin's Ardenics, and Anne Marie Bennstrom's Da Vinci (at the Golden Door Health Spa) were in full swing, and some health clubs were offering group calisthenics and "body-shaping" classes. In the educational arena, many physical education teachers had been trained during a time when dance (especially modern dance) was prominent in collegiate physical education departments, and these teachers found ways to incorporate dance exercise into their curricula. This led to the creation in the 1960s of a number of dance exercise albums for the educational market. Dance-based exercise programs for adults also began to gain popularity and media attention during the 1960s and early 1970s.

In 1971, Jacki Sorensen began teaching her innovative Aerobic Dancing program, which she based on the principles espoused in Ken Cooper's *Aerobics*. From its beginnings in a New Jersey YMCA, the program expanded into a nationwide presence by 1981. This expansion occurred as a result of: communication among various YMCA branches; Aerobic Dancing's promotion as an exercise option for physical education teachers in schools; Sorensen's visibility in the media and as a clinician for the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports; the decision by many Aerobic Dancing students to become instructors and start their own classes; the initiation of classes in new locales by instructors and students who had moved away; Sorensen's implementation of a nationwide training system; and in general, communication by

word-of-mouth from one enthusiastic Aerobic Dancing student to another.

Judi Sheppard Missett created her dance exercise program, Jazzercise, during the 1970s, and although her program did not begin widespread expansion until 1978, she was well-known in the fitness industry because of her promotional activities in California. Once the spread of Jazzercise began, it moved rapidly, primarily as a result of Missett's high profile in the media; the publication of her *Jazzercise* book in 1978; the exceptional mobility of many of the original Jazzercise instructors and students because of their connection to the military; the videotaping system Missett pioneered to recruit new instructors and train existing ones; and most importantly, the independent-entrepreneur status of her instructors, which motivated them to promote their classes and expand their schedules.

A number of other aerobic dance programs implemented during the 1970s were created by women (such as Mary Mayta) who had ideas similar to Jacki Sorensen's but who refined and enlarged their activities only after Aerobic Dancing had set a precedent. Some entrepreneurs (such as Nancy Kabriel) patterned both their class formats and training systems directly after Aerobic Dancing. There were also programs such as Body Design by Gilda Marx which developed completely independently of Aerobic Dancing, but which added a greater cardiovascular component to their formats when aerobic dance

became popular. Marx was notable for her influence on Jane Fonda and other celebrities who became aerobics "superstars" in the 1980s. Finally, the YMCA originated its own aerobic dance programs, including Joni Coe's Fitness Fantasia, to replace Aerobic Dancing classes when Sorensen and the YMCA parted ways.¹

It is important that additional research be done to trace the history of aerobic dance during the 1980s. It was during this decade that "aerobic dance" evolved into "aerobics." Significantly, many men entered the industry as program-innovators, instructors, and trainers, and in an effort to attract a broader base of participants (including males), the dance aspects of aerobics were watered down or eliminated. Resistance equipment was added, bench-stepping was introduced, aerobics competitions were instituted, and there was a new emphasis on "working up a sweat" and "going for the burn." Health clubs became the main setting for aerobics classes, and while they boasted superior facilities, many women felt uncomfortable exercising in revealing clothing in a coeducational setting. Further research is needed to document the continuing history of the aerobics movement during this decade, including the formation of professional organizations for educating and

¹See Appendix C for a listing of some of the aerobic dance programs and pioneers which could not be included in this study because of space limitations.

certifying aerobics instructors. In addition, the audiovisual materials associated with the history of aerobic dance (phonograph records, audiocassette tapes, videotapes, photographs, and illustrated manuals and books) need to be collected and preserved.

After completing the research for this study, it was useful to re-examine the working hypotheses that were described in Chapter 1:

1. Aerobic dance was independently conceived of and popularized by two different women at about the same time: Jacki Sorensen and Judi Sheppard Missett. Primarily as a result of their charismatic personalities and self-promotional efforts, news of their classes spread and a variety of imitation classes were spawned.

2. Aerobic dance gestated in the cauldron of the aerobic fitness and women's liberation movements of the late 1960s.

Sorensen and Missett certainly conceived of their programs independently of each other, but neither woman was operating in a vacuum. A number of fitness pioneers had laid the groundwork for, and in some cases directly trained, innovators who had started dance exercise programs prior to 1970. What differentiated Sorensen's and Missett's creations from most of the programs that immediately preceded them, was their emphasis on cardiovascular fitness and on the joyful aspects of the activity--attributes that

were also present in some of the gymnastic exercise systems of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Sorensen's Aerobic Dancing was popularized long before Missett's Jazzercise made its appearance as a major player on the national scene. Although the spread of both programs was spearheaded by the personal efforts of Sorensen and Missett, it was the passion and zeal of the *subsequent* instructors in these programs that truly oiled the machinery which produced the national aerobic dance phenomenon.

The important ingredients that went into the cauldron from which aerobic dance emerged were as follows:

1. The advent of television (and to a lesser extent, mass-market paperback books) gave pioneers such as Jack LaLanne, Bonnie Prudden, and other local and regional fitness advocates a highly-influential forum for bringing their exercise programs to a vast audience. Television also greatly increased the awareness and popularity of Aerobic Dancing and Jazzercise when they appeared in the 1970s.

2. Aerobic dance was embraced by a number of physical education teachers, many of whom had dance backgrounds and were already utilizing some form of dance exercise in their school programs. These women were experienced, skilled teachers, and they formed the backbone of the corps of early aerobic dance instructors.

3. The aerobic fitness movement of the late 1960s focused attention on cardiovascular health, and caused a

number of women to search for an aerobic activity which provided a less solitary alternative to jogging. Also, many women loved to dance, and were attracted to a program that fulfilled that desire without requiring special talent or years of training.

4. The women's liberation movement created the environment which encouraged Sorensen and Missett to focus their lives on developing and expanding their businesses, and more importantly, encouraged thousands of women to become involved as instructors and administrators, and to branch out into full-time careers in fitness and health. The aerobic dance industry in the 1970s was conceived, nurtured, and administered almost exclusively by women; its product was delivered by women (the instructors); and the vast majority of its consumers were women. While many participants may have initially attended aerobic dance classes because of a desire to lose weight, their continued participation was based on the enjoyment of the dance movement and the music, the camaraderie, the comfortable, supportive environment, and on the discovery that they felt healthier and more energetic as a result of the classes.

This research project was undertaken because of a desire to gain an historical perspective on the birth and development of the aerobic dance movement--a movement which has had a profound effect physically and emotionally on the researcher herself. The enthusiastic response from the

aerobics community to the project has been astonishing, and has confirmed the suspicion that many lives have been deeply affected by aerobic dance, that its pioneers are greatly in need of a forum to communicate their stories, and that those who love aerobic dance have a strong interest in learning more about the roots of this modern fitness activity.

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APPENDIX A. CONSENT FORM

I, _____ give my consent to be interviewed in conjunction with the study "A History of the Rise of Aerobic Dance, 1969-1980" being performed by Beth Swanson as part of the Master's Degree program at San Jose State University.

I understand that I may refuse to answer any question that is asked of me, and may terminate the interview at any time. I also understand that my remarks may be tape-recorded during the interview, and that at any time I may request that the recording be suspended.

There are no foreseeable risks to the subjects in this study anticipated by the investigator. It is believed that this research will benefit the subjects by providing them with a forum to communicate their personal stories to the aerobic dance community, and will provide that community with a greater awareness of its roots.

I give permission for my remarks to be paraphrased, summarized, or quoted in full in the resulting San Jose State University Master's Degree thesis. I also grant permission for the publication of material excerpted from that thesis, with the understanding that prior to publication I have the right to review manuscript passages in which I am identified or quoted or in which information is attributed to me, and the right to make changes or to withdraw approval for the use of my remarks.

I understand that this consent and any information that I may have provided may be withdrawn at any time.

In the event that I have any questions, I may contact the research investigator, Beth Swanson, at (800) 375-4808. Complaints about this research may be directed to the Chair of the Human Performance Department at San Jose State Univ., Dr. James Bryant, at (408) 924-3010. In addition, questions or complaints about this research, subjects' rights, or research-related injury may be presented to Dr. Serena Stanford, Associate Academic Vice President for Graduate Studies and Research, at (408) 924-2480.

Signature of Interview Subject

Date

Signature of Investigator (Beth Swanson)

Date

APPENDIX B. LIST OF PERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS
REFERENCED IN THESIS

TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Interview Date</u>
Acri, Claudia One of the first five Jazzercise instructors; she later took the program to Santa Barbara, Calif.	3 August 1995
Alan, Ken Instructor for Gilda Marx; he helped pioneer freestyle aerobics, and later became a leading aerobics trainer	13 July 1995
Alberts, Carol Originator of dance exercise program in the New York public schools, <i>And the Beat Goes On</i> record album	22 August 1995
Barr, Judy Berman Originator of early dance exercise program in the San Francisco area	4 May 1995
Bennstrom, Anne Marie Originator of Da Vinci program at Golden Door Spa in Calif., owner of Sanctuary and Ashram spas in Calif.	5 February 1996
Boone, Joan Pelico Exercise instructor at Elaine Powers Salon, Holiday Health Spa and others in Los Angeles - Started an aerobics training program, Masters of Motion	23 May 1995
Cates, John University of California at San Diego educator who serves on the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness	8 February 1996
Ciplickas, Nancy (now Dumey) Early San Diego instructor who originated the idea of the Danceathon in 1976, and became ADI's Director of Training	26 July 1995
Cluff, Sheila Originator of Cardio-Vascular Dancing in 1959 in Ottawa, health spa pioneer, television personality	20 February 1996
Coe, Joni YMCA Director who originated Fitness Fantasia, which became the largest aerobic dance program in the YMCAs after the departure of Aerobic Dancing	13 March 1996

- Deneen, Terry 8 May 1995
Early San Diego Jazzercise instructor (1978); she currently operates a full-time Jazzercise facility
- Donegan, Sandy 5 May 1995
Started an exercise program in the San Francisco area inspired by Martha Rounds Slimnastics
- Elgart, Peggy 8 September 1995
Early San Francisco Aerobic Dancing instructor who became an Area Manager
- English, Ann 17 May 1995
Ohio YMCA Aerobic Dancing instructor who created Dancaerobics as a replacement for ADI in the YMCAs
- Fitzgerald, Kim (now Winterrowd) 2 November 1995
Brought Aerobic Dancing to San Diego, and became ADI's Western Regional Manager
- Foster, Carl 6 April 1995
Researcher who did a study on Sorensen's Aerobic Dancing while a Ph.D. student at University of Texas
- Fox, Jennifer 18 February 1996
Co-founder of Bod Squad in San Francisco area, inspired by Sandy Donegan's exercise program
- Gardiner, Josie 15 June 1995
Dance exercise instructor in Massachusetts, now a leading aerobics trainer
- Gillingham, John 24 May 1995
Originated Cardiovascular Calisthenics in the Denver YMCA in 1964; gave workshops for other YMCAs
- Golding, Lawrence A. 29 February 1996
Architect and editor of *Y's Way to Physical Fitness*
- Graves, Katherine (now Springfield) 1 March 1996
San Diego Aerobic Dancing instructor who took the program to the Rocky Mountain states
- Greggains, Joanie 11 October 1995
Early San Francisco Aerobic Dancing instructor who became a media star and started her own syndicated television program, *Morning Stretch*
- Herold, Patricia (now LoPresti) 1 February 1996
Early San Diego Aerobic Dancing instructor who spread program through her connections with the Navy

- Holzel, Pat 21 January 1996
One of Sorensen's first six instructors, and later Vice-President of ADI and assistant to Sorensen
- Hurl, Patty (now Tuffley) 13 January 1996
Early San Diego Aerobic Dancing instructor who took the program to San Diego State University
- Hyatt, Gwen 10 August 1995
Physical education teacher who started Desert Southwest Fitness in Arizona (instructor training seminars)
- Janikas, Bobbie 2 August 1995
One of the first five Jazzercise instructors
- Jenkins, Anna 27 June 1995
Early health club owner in California and creator of spa exercise classes
- Johnson, Rhonda Green 29 April 1995
Exercise instructor at Jack LaLanne European Health Spa in New York
- Kabriel, Nancy 24 July 1995
Physical educator who created the nationwide Rhythmic Aerobics program, patterned after Aerobic Dancing
- Kasch, Fred 19 September 1995
Co-founder (with Jack Boyer) of San Diego State University's landmark adult fitness program
- LaLanne, Jack 20 September 1995
One of the key fitness pioneers of the 1950s and 1960s
- Larson, Irene 3 August 1995
One of the first Northern California Jazzercise instructors trained by Connie Williams (who brought Jazzercise to Northern California)
- Latham, Lylea 27 January 1996
Brought Aerobic Dancing to New England YMCAs, and became ADI's Northeast Regional Manager
- Lears, Jeri 1 May 1995
One of the first instructors in the YMCA's AIM program in Maryland, which replaced Sorensen's Aerobic Dancing
- MacGyver, Mary Nuckles 4 June 1995
One of the first ten Jazzercise instructors; she became an administrative assistant to Missett, and later took the program to Los Angeles

- Marx, Gilda 20 July 1995
 Creator of a dance exercise class in 1963 which evolved into Body Design by Gilda studios in 1975; she also started the Flexatard (leotard) company, and influenced several future aerobics media superstars
- Mayta, Mary 8 June 1995
 Physical educator who designed fitness classes for the general public (including the YMCAs) and pioneered aerobic dance instructor training seminars
- Missett, Judi Sheppard 20 June 1995
 Creator of Jazzercise
- Mitzkat, Katrine (now Formby) 15 January 1996
 Early San Diego Aerobic Dancing instructor who became ADI's Marketing Director
- Mochel, Jamor Edwards 31 January 1996
 Physical education teacher who was involved with ADI's Texas schoolteacher workshops and later became manager of ADI's Central Region
- Nelson, Rochelle Munson 27 September 1995
 Early Los Angeles-area Aerobic Dancing instructor who became an ADI corporate staff member, and who is currently on the staff of Jacki's, Inc.
- Pahl, Sharon 13 February 1996
 An Ohio Jazzercise instructor who went through the audition process
- Pavelco, Terry 3 August 1995
 One of the first ten Jazzercise instructors
- Peterson, Val 26 June 1995
 Aerobic Dancing and Rhythmic Aerobics instructor in the Midwest
- Pipkin, Martha 20 July 1995
 Creator of "Shape Up With Martha" (in Memphis), inspired by Arden Zin and Bonnie Prudden
- Prickett, Charlene 23 February 1996
 Arkansas dancer who started the television aerobics program, *It Figures*, in Calgary (Canada) in 1976
- Prouty, Joy 24 May 1995
 Dance exercise instructor in Florida in the 1960s, now a leading aerobics trainer

- Prudden, Bonnie 10 August 1995
One of the key fitness pioneers of the 1950s and 1960s
- Ramos, Susie Mitzkat (now Ellis) 30 January 1996
Golden Door instructor who co-founded Exclusively Women Spas in California and Arizona
- Richardson, Shelley 22 June 1995
Started aerobics classes at Cosmopolitan Spa and others in Nashville and Memphis; later produced an aerobics album as part of a Pepsi Cola promotion
- Ridgeway, Connie 30 May 1995
One of Sorensen's first six instructors, and later Vice-President of Aerobic Dancing, Inc.
- Rosas, Debbie 27 February 1996
Co-founder of Bod Squad in San Francisco area (inspired by S. Donegan) and co-developer of Non-Impact Aerobics
- Rounds, Martha 19 May 1995
Creator of Martha Rounds' Slimnastics in St. Louis
- Scandiff, Jayney 17 June 1995
Exercise instructor at the Fair Lady and other spas in the Chicago area; later produced an aerobics album
- Smith, Marilyn 1 February 1996
YMCA instructor who brought Aerobic Dancing to the Midwest, and became ADI's Midwest Regional Manager
- Smith, Vivian 30 April 1995
Dance aerobics instructor at Holiday Health Spa in Georgia
- Stocker, Terry 22 May 1995
Instructor in the Cape Cod YMCA's JOY program, who later started her own program, Dance Aerobics, in the Rhode Island YMCAs
- Strong, Nancy 10 May 1995
Creator of Aerobic Slimnastics in the Northeast, inspired by Bonnie Prudden and by Aerobic Dancing
- Walker, Kathryn 28 June 1995
San Francisco-area Jazzercise instructor
- Weber, Herb 6 April 1995
Researcher at a Pennsylvania college who examined the energy cost of Aerobic Dancing in 1973

Wolff, Judy 24 January 1996
 YMCA instructor who brought Aerobic Dancing to
 Maryland, and became ADI's Southeast Regional Manager

Zin, Arden 6 August 1995
 Creator of Ardenics in Atlanta, inspired by B. Prudden

COMMUNICATIONS BY LETTER:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date of Letter</u>
Berry, Tessa Aerobic Dancing instructor who started a large program in Memphis, Tennessee	2 May 1995
Howell, Loretta Aerobic Dancing student and instructor in Reading, Massachusetts	8 May 1995
Sorensen, Neil Husband of Jacki Sorensen (the creator of Aerobic Dancing), and later president of Aerobic Dancing, Inc.	8 December 1994
Sorensen, Neil	24 February 1995
Sorensen, Neil	30 April 1995
Sorensen, Neil	16 July 1995
Sorensen, Neil	21 February 1996
Sorensen, Neil	8 March 1996

Office of the Academic Vice President • Associate Academic Vice President • Graduate Studies and Research
One Washington Square • San Jose, California 95192-0025 • 408/924-2480

TO: Beth S. Swanson
1162 Kirkside Court
San Jose, CA 95126

FROM: Serena W. Stanford
AAVP, Graduate Studies & Research

DATE: March 15, 1995

The Human Subjects-Institutional Review Board has approved your request to use human subjects in the study entitled:

"A History of the Rise of Aerobic Dance, 1969-1980"

This approval is contingent upon the subjects participating in your research project being appropriately protected from risk. This includes the protection of the anonymity of the subjects' identity when they participate in your research project, and with regard to any and all data that may be collected from the subjects. The Board's approval includes continued monitoring of your research by the Board to assure that the subjects are being adequately and properly protected from such risks. If at any time a subject becomes injured or complains of injury, you must notify Dr. Serena Stanford immediately. Injury includes but is not limited to bodily harm, psychological trauma and release of potentially damaging personal information.

Please also be advised that each subject needs to be fully informed and aware that their participation in your research project is voluntary, and that he or she may withdraw from the project at any time. Further, a subject's participation, refusal to participate, or withdrawal, will not affect any services the subject is receiving or will receive at the institution in which the research is being conducted.

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FIGURE 3.9

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