

## Acknowledgments

For several years I studied amateur baseball in Utah. While most sports historians have focused on the professional game, I discovered that town and semi-professional baseball played an important role in the state and in the nation's history. I thought I was finished studying sports until Stanford Layton, former editor of the *Utah Historical Quarterly* commented in *Red Stockings and Out-of-Towners: Utah Sports*, that no one had researched Utah basketball history.<sup>1</sup> I took that as a challenge, but I came up with a different project from what I envisioned. As I did preliminary research, I stumbled across information on LDS Church basketball, most notably the all-church tournaments. I sent out a press release to gather stories; that was followed up by an article and a picture of me in the *Deseret News* and the *Church News*.<sup>2</sup>

The response to my request for information was overwhelming. I received a few letters, occasional telephone calls, and hundreds of e-mails. People wanted to tell me about their experiences in church sports on all levels and in all sports. Since then I have added other Young Men and Young Women Mutual Improvement Association recreation. My work expands the time period and the areas of study that Richard Kimball started with his dissertation (since published by the University of Illinois Press).<sup>3</sup>

*Spiritualized Recreation* is based on oral history interviews conducted for the Charles Redd Center for Western Studies. Brian Q. Cannon, the center's director during the time of this study, supported the idea of an oral history project on this topic. Kris Nelson, the center's secretary, helped complete the final transcripts. They also read an early book manuscript and offered valuable suggestions. Richard Kimball and Larry Gerlach read an early version as peer reviewers. While I did not follow all their suggestions, their comments forced me to look more carefully at what I wanted to do with this study. Brian Cannon then reread the manuscript to sign off on the corrections.

The study also benefitted by careful reading by my thoughtful and wise sister Janet Embry and an excellent editor, former student, and friend Heather Seferovich. Another friend Claudia Shelton added her proofreading skills. Casey Glifford and Jason Edward Thompson also read through the manuscript and found embarrassing errors. Jason Thompson was very helpful in doing all the technology things to put the book on the internet.

Brigham Young University students conducted nearly all the oral history interviews in the Charles Redd Center for Western Studies LDS Sports and Recreation Oral History Project. I am grateful for their efforts. They discovered that scheduling interviews into their busy student schedules was not always easy, so some completed more interviews than others. These students included (listed in the order that they were hired): Justin Flake, Jenny Harris, Michael Cannon, Gary Huntington, Susan Wheelwright, Matthew Swenson, Ben Sandel, Erin Hutchings, Valerie Davis, Lisa Christensen, James Dalrymple, and Casey Schenk.

In addition to these Redd Center employees, students in my two sports history classes added interviews and information. The first class was on sports history in general. The class members were awesome. The students shared their feelings about the role of athletics in their lives and completed interviews about LDS sports. The class included a BYU football and soccer player. All the class members had participated in various sports on different levels and added to the discussions. I learned more from the class than I taught. Class members included Micah Alba, Bryan Bush, Krissa Campbell, Darin Childers, Esther Harris, Lawrance Nai, Heidi Rose, Aaron Smith, Brian Springer, Jeff Swift, and Fred Washburn. I thank the BYU History Department and Honors Program for sponsoring the class.

The second class was on LDS sports and recreation. The students read Richard Kimball's

book and very early drafts of *Spiritualized Recreation*. They also conducted individual research on LDS sports and recreation that provided valuable research material. The students included Sunny Ashton, Tyler Dunn, Brant Ellsworth, Kacy Cutts Hastings, Ryan Hastings, Timothy Johnson, Daniel Nielson, Jared Smith, and Adam Stewart. I especially thank Sunny for her research on LDS women's sports, Brant for his paper on the San Antonio Temple dedication program, and Kacy and Ryan for their work on regional softball..

The students in an American Studies 200 class during Winter Semester 2007 also shared their experiences with Mormon sports. These included Rachel Atkin, John Brumbaugh, Cynthia Clark, Sarah Goaslind, Sara Manning, Jake Davis, Joseph Hinckley, and Liesl Christensen. Clark asked her sons, sons—Andrew, Steve, and Jesse, to email about their experiences.

This book would not have been possible though without the more than one hundred men and women who agreed to be interviewed. Their willingness to share their memories made this study possible and will be valuable for other scholars who read the transcripts in the L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

1. Stanford Layton, ed. *Red Stockings and Out-of-Towners: Utah Sports* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2003),
2. *Deseret News*, May 28, 2003; *Church News*, June 21, 2003; <http://www.deseretnews.com>, retrieved January 15, 2008.
3. Richard Ian Kimball, *To Make True Latter-day Saints: Mormon Recreation in the Progressive Era* (Provo, Utah: Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for LDS Church History, 2000); Richard Ian Kimball, *Sports in Zion: Mormon Recreation, 1890-1940* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003).