The Lucille Anderson Collection

A Gift of Frank and Nancy Faulkner

Background and historical significance of the collection:

The popular movement to get women out of the house and enjoy the health benefits of swimming can be traced to the arrival in America of Australian swimmer Annette Kellerman, in 1908.

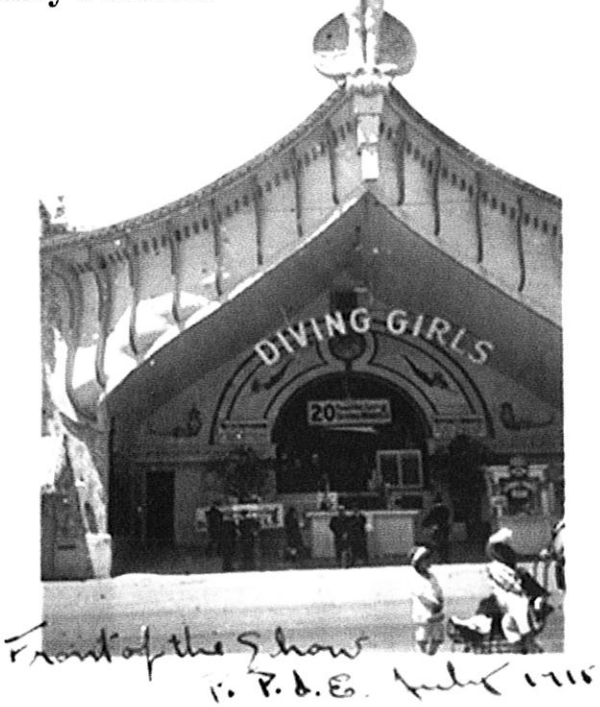
Panhandle Tobacco Card Circa 1910.

Billed as a modern day Venus de Milo, Kellerman took vaudeville by storm with a swimming and diving act wearing a costume that shocked early Victorian-era moral sensibilities. By 1910 she was the highest paid working woman in the world and one of the most famous. A great self-promoter who also promoted the health benefits of swimming, Kellerman inspired almost every young girl to be a swimmer, like her. She also inspired a number of competitors to her diving act, which led her to leave the vaudeville circuit for Hollywood. In 1914, she wrote and starred in Neptune's Daughter, the first film in history to gross $1 million dollars. In 1916, Daughter of the Gods was the first film to have a million dollar budget. Annette, Lucille Anderson and other girl swimming and diving acts featuring the Berlo Sisters and Inez Wood, played a major role in promoting swimming and creating the demand for swimming pools in every small town and city in the nation, leading to the Golden Age of Swimming – 1910 – 1950.

The Lucile Anderson Collection is an incredible photographic and documentary resource about the role female vaudeville and circus performers played in promoting swimming and female athleticism in the first half of the twentieth Century.

Lucille Anderson was born in Salt Lake City, Utah, in 1896. Her parents were part of a vaudeville troupe known as "The Anderson Comedy Company." In 1912, Lucille won an amateur diving competition at the Empress Theater in Kansas City, Missouri. She was discovered by a talent agent and the rest, as they say, is history.

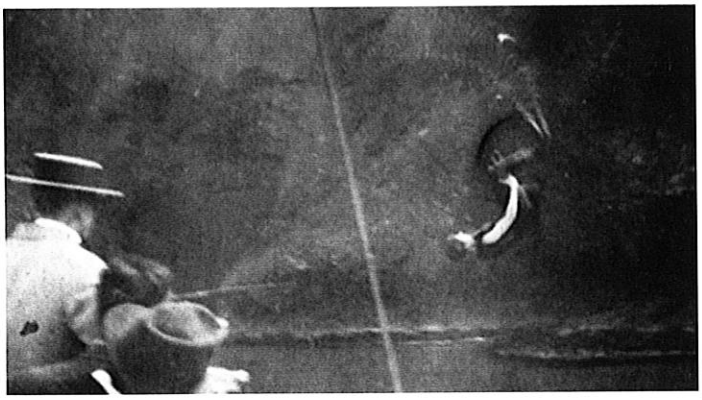
Lucille's first professional appearance was at the Empress, in 1913, as one "The Six Diving Nymphs," performing from a height of six feet into a stage tank that was five feet deep. She left the act in California and joined a group of women swimmers and divers in and around Los Angeles at the Bimini Baths, Los Angeles Athletic and Ocean Park. The group included Aileen Allen, who would coach Hall of Fame Olympic Gold medalists Georgia Coleman, Dorthy Poynton and Pat McCormick at the LAAC.



Rare photo of the "Diving Girls" building at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition. The World's Fair of 1915.

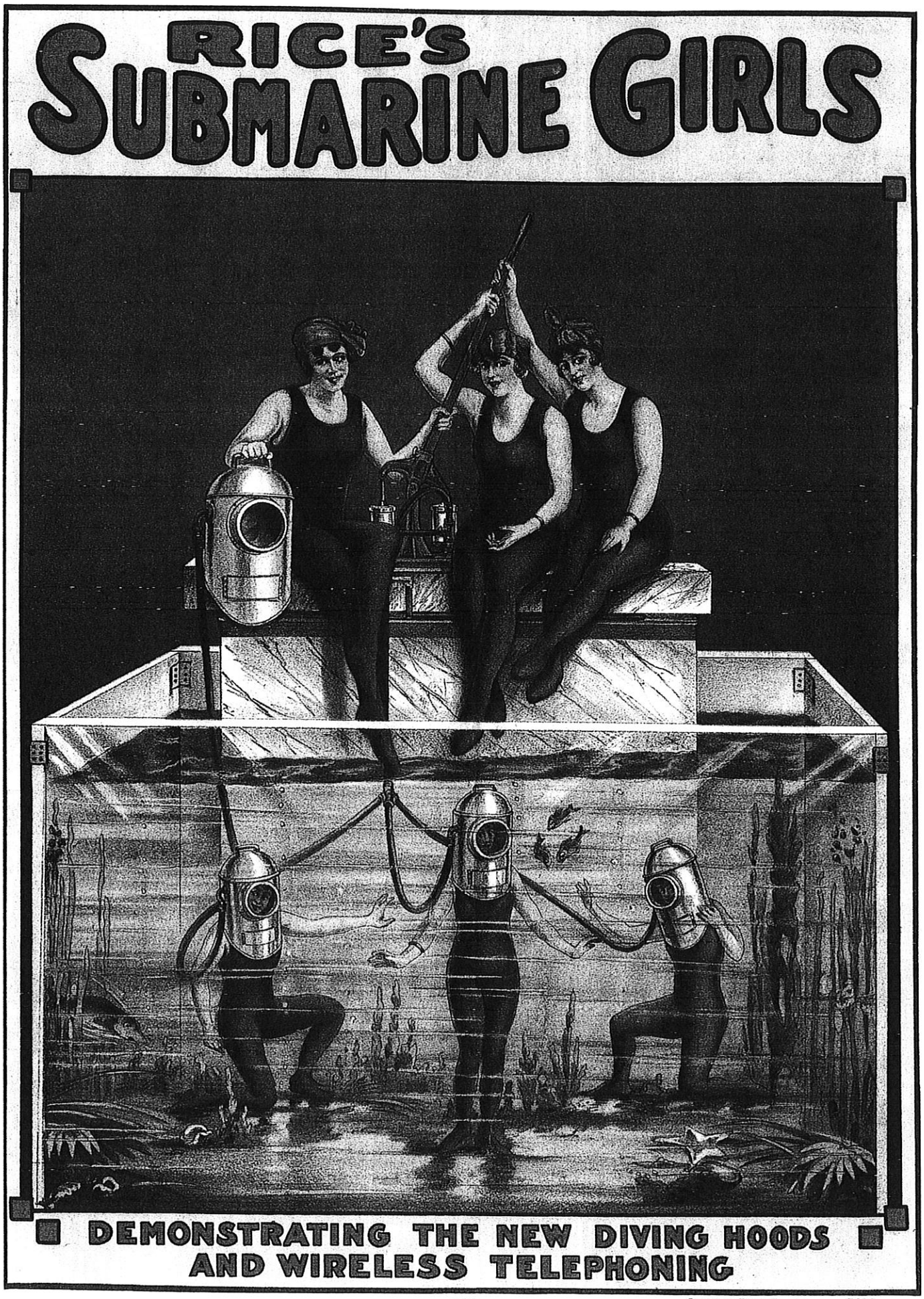
In 1915, Lucille and some other LA girls joined the cast of "Neptune's Daughter," a vaudeville act that was the feature of the "The Diving Girls" concession at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition, the San Francisco World's Fair.

"Within the building we witness beautiful girls giving a display of their prowess in swimming, diving and allied sports," read the description of the concession in the Fair's program.



Lucille Anderson diving in Bloomer Suit at Coronado, CA in 1913.

The cast of Neptune's Daughter at the Panama-Pacific Exposition. Lucille Anderson is pictured 3rd from the right. The costumes, showing bare legs, were risque for the beach, but popular on stage.



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As a professional, Lucille Anderson did not compete in amateur competitions after 1913, but according to her press clippings she was one of the best swimmers and divers in the world. She was a member of the Ocean Park (California) Life Saving Corps along with Aileen Allen, appeared in Mack Sennett's Keystone Kops films and after the Panama-Pacific Exposition closed, Lucille joined W. H. Rice's "Submarine Girls" carnival act as the star performer. In the photo below you can see the concession exterior the cast, orchestra and other employees of the concession that traveled across the county. In the background, behind the flag, you can also see the high dive ladder which made Lucille famous.

Miss Anderson Says:

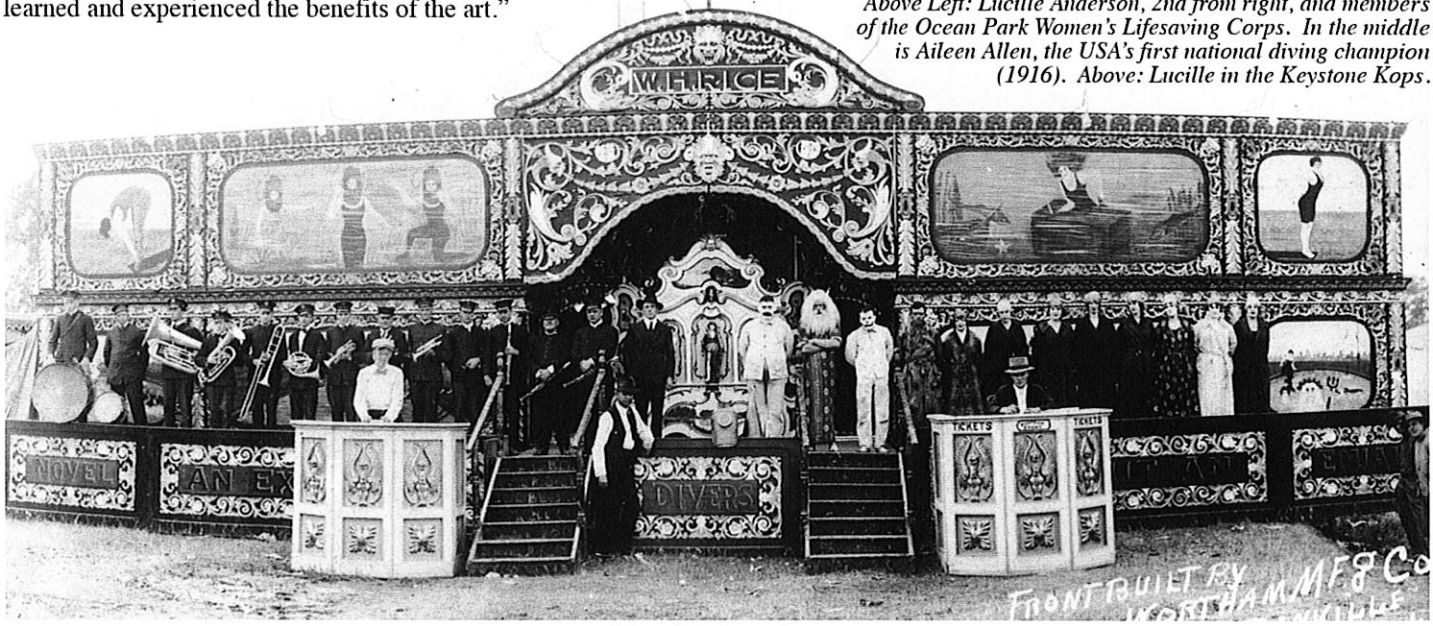
"There is no form of athletic calisthenics or gymnastics which is more healthful than the graceful art of swimming and it is a monstrous crime that so few efforts are made to encourage the sport among the school children of the country. A daily cold bath or plunge is a hygienic necessity, and the muscular stimulation derived from the motions used in the breast, trudgen, overhead and various floating strokes are of incalculable health value.

"While swimming, as in no other exercise – all of the many bodily muscles are in action and the natural stimulation to the blood circulation can only be appreciated by those who have learned and experienced the benefits of the art."

Wireless Under Water

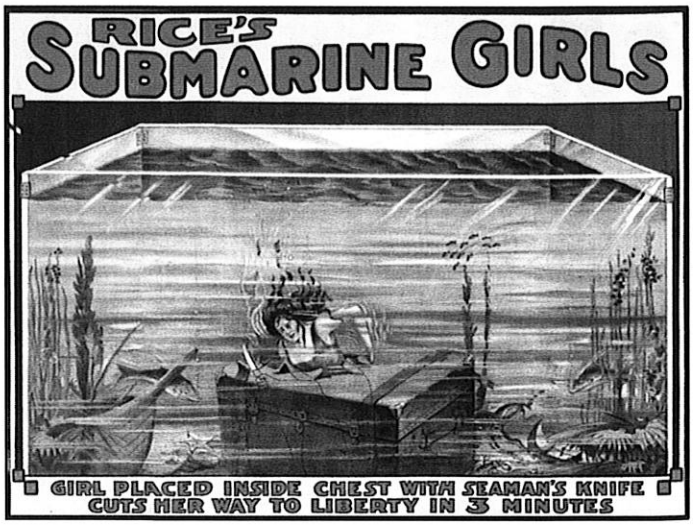
Miss Anderson and her wireless telephone, which she uses under water, are well worth seeing. You can stand in the audience and talk with Miss Anderson, by means of the wireless telephone while she is six feet under water. This talented under water marvel is also the holder of the record for under water work in a carnival tank, having stayed down for four and three-quarter minutes yesterday during her exhibition of endurance with the Great Chest Escape Mystery, thus exceeding the former record by over half a minute.

Above Left: Lucille Anderson, 2nd from right, and members of the Ocean Park Women's Lifesaving Corps. In the middle is Aileen Allen, the USA's first national diving champion (1916). Above: Lucille in the Keystone Kops.



From left, the orchestra, promoters, barkers and cast of W. H. Rice's Submarine Girls.

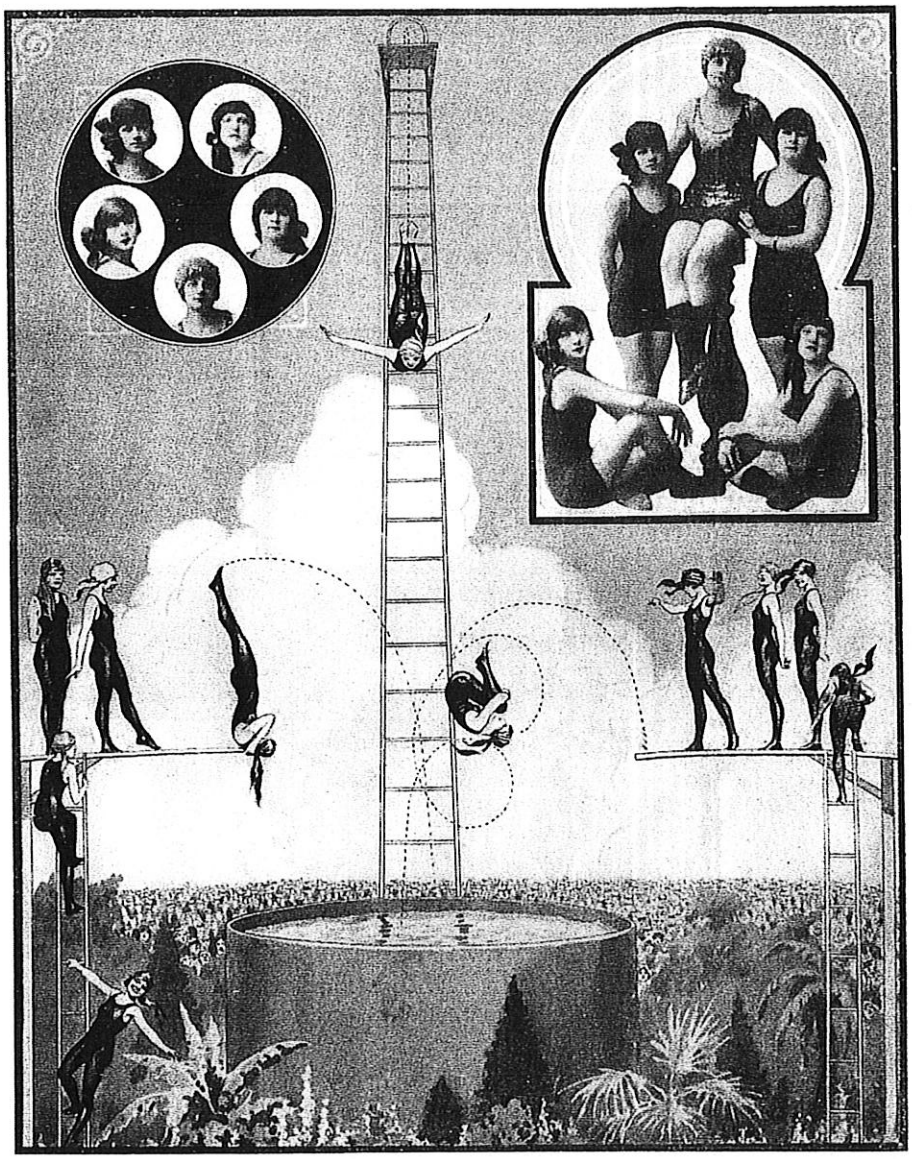
William Rice and the Submarine Girls, backstage.



The Season's Most Striking Exhibition

LUCILE ANDERSON

And Her Bevy of Diving Nymphs



Fascinating and Beautiful Girls in an Entrancing Performance of Trick, Fancy and Somersault Diving

Concluding with MISS ANDERSON'S 65-FOOT HIGH DIVE

WE FURNISH EVERYTHING BUT THE WATER

EVERY ACT *IN THIS CATALOG CONTROLLED EXCLUSIVELY* BY **WORLD AMUSEMENT SERVICE ASSOCIATION**

"SERVICE and SATISFACTION"

MADELINE BERLO

THE ORIGINAL NEW YORK HIPPODROME DIVING STAR

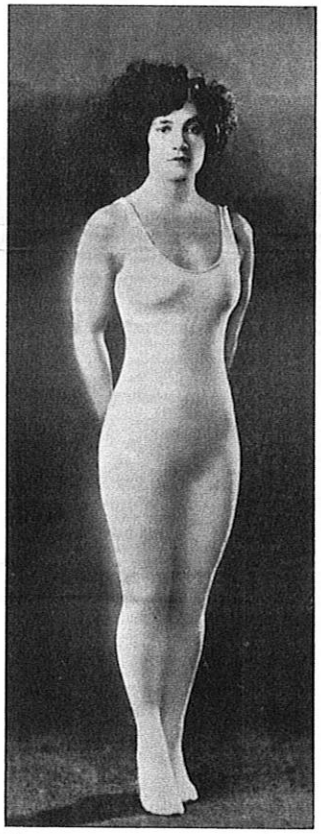
Featured fancy diver in the mammoth water scenes in the New York Hippodrome successes "Cheer Up," "Good Times" and "Better Times"

Thrilling, Daring, Sensational High Trapeze Dive

The only act in the world performing a high dive into a small glass tank, 4 ft. wide, 8 ft. long and 4 ft. deep.

Fancy and Trick Diving.

This Novelty Act can be secured for Parks, Fairs, Beaches and Outdoor Celebrations.



The N. Y. Tribune says—

There was something about Madeline Berlo aside from her fancy diving into the tank that provided enjoyment. The candid ablutions of Madeline were performed in the Hippodrome's famous pool, into which she descended from high spring boards, cleaving the water like shapely razor blades. It is said that a spectacle to be worth while should possess poetry, as well as trained elephants; and here it is in "Better Times" by the graceful Madeline. She charms the scene and stimulates the imagination, though she may not satiate the intelligence. Through her, and her moist fleshlings I suspect Mr. Dillingham glorifies the American girl even more thoroughly than does Mr. Ziegfeld. By Percy Hammond.

The N. Y. Sun says—

Madeline Berlo at the New York Hippodrome presents the most pleasing vista of female pulchritude as she flashes through the air in a series of thrilling, daring dives.

Madeline Berlo, the premier mermaid, was referred to as the Modern Venus by Dr. D. A. Sargent, at whose Harvard School of Physical Culture she was swimming instructor. She is known as one of America's long distance champion swimmers, who has broken amateur and professional records in every part of the country, and is considered the superior of all other lady swimmers and divers.

Physical Culture Magazine—

Pronounced by Bernarr MacFadden (dean of physical culture) as "The Body Beautiful." Perfect poise and symmetry, vibrant happy health such as Madeline Berlo displays comes from the persistent practice of physical culture.

Buck Printing Co. Boston, Mass.

"I consider the Diving Act of Inez Wood and Her Water Nymphs to be one of the best routined features and most elaborately finished, it has ever been my pleasure to witness."
KENDALL HANNARD,
Mid-City Park, Albany, N. Y.

INEZ WOOD
AND HER
WATER NYMPHS

A BEVY OF DIVING FEMININE DIVINITIES

A Diving Performance That Is Alluringly Artistic and Sensationally Daring. Each Lady in This Troupe Is the Very Essence of Physical Perfection.

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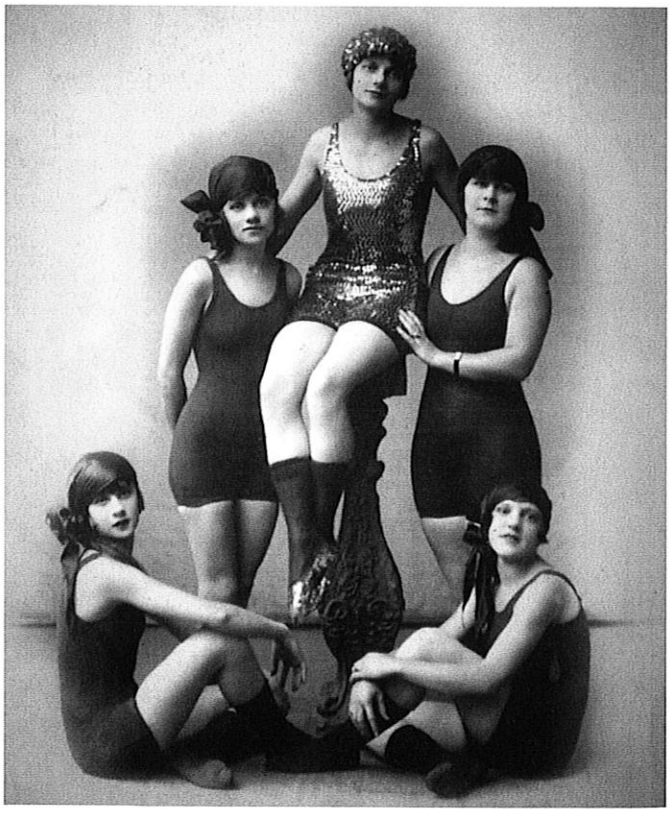


Lucille (above center, wearing a silver sequined suit which is now on display at ISHOF) spawned a group of competitors in the diving business including Madeline Berlo (standing on the left in the photo above) and sister, Inez Anderson Wood (pictured sitting above, lower left).

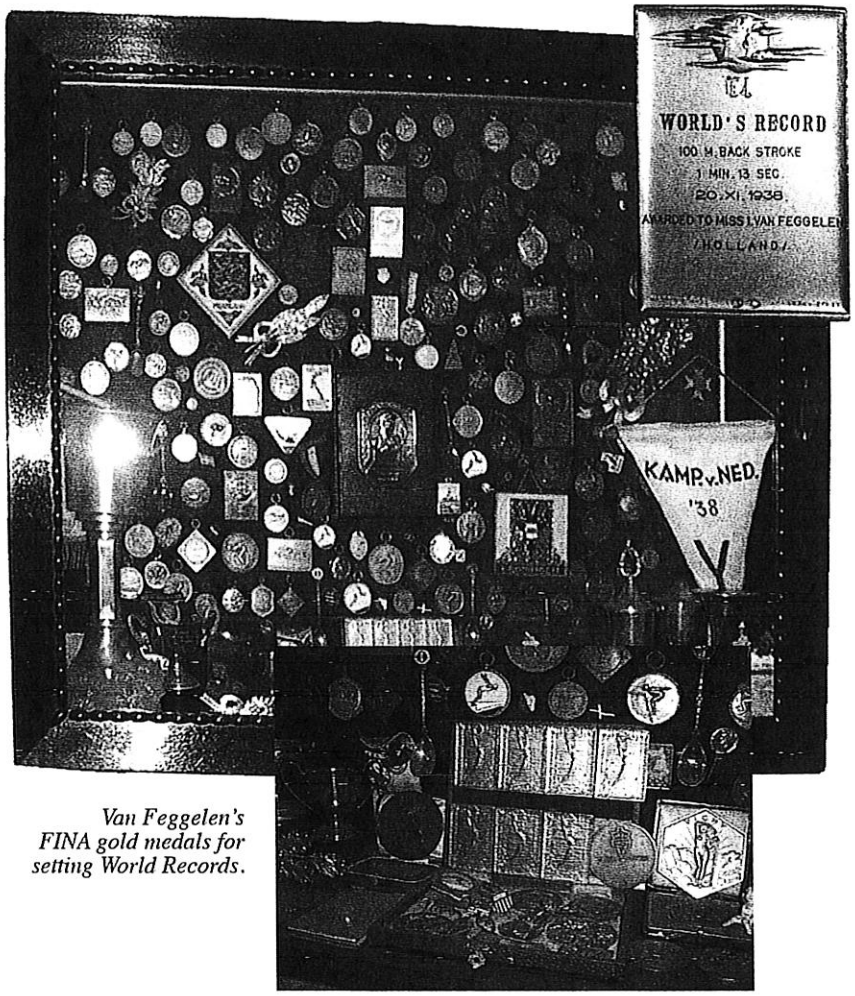
Iet van Feggelen Collection

When Iet van Feggelen recently moved into an assisted living home, she and her family decided to donate her swimming memorabilia to the International Swimming Hall of Fame. It is one of the finest collections of European artifacts ever given to ISHOF.

Iet van Feggelen hit her swimming prime following the Olympic Games of 1936. In 1938 and 1939, she set eight World's backstroke Records in distances from 100 yards to 400 meters. Her Olympic ambitions were denied when World War II prevented her from competing in the cancelled Games of 1940 and 1944.

Almost ten years after setting her first World Record, she swam on Holland's 3x100 Medley Relay teams setting three world records in the process. In 1947, she toured the USA with Hall of Fame teammate Nel van Vliet, during which time she discovered synchronized swimming.

Upon her return to Holland, she started the first synchronized swimming team in Holland and Europe. Holland's Jan Armbrust followed Iet's Dutch synchro success with his own team a few years later eventually becoming very active in the International synchronized swimming scene. The Dutch Swimming Federation selected her as a coach for the Olympic swimming teams of 1964 and 1968. She currently resides in Holland.



Van Feggelen's FINA gold medals for setting World Records.

Iet Van Feggelen with her trophy and medal case, at her home in Holland.