

# **Troubled Waters: Fanny Durack's 1919 Swimming Tour of America Amid Transnational Amateur Athletic Prudery and Bureaucracy**

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From 1910 through 1918, Sarah ("Fanny") Durack (1889-1956) of Sydney, Australia, was the world's greatest female swimmer of all distances from the free-style sprints to the mile marathon. She was the Olympic gold medallist at the Stockholm Games of 1912, and amidst the ghastly days of the Great World War, she and her Olympic champion companion, Wilhehnina ("Mina") Wylie, tried to arrange a "barnstorm" cross-the-United States swim tour. But "barnstorm" is an inappropriate word to use about young, unmarried, female athletes travelling unescorted in a foreign land for an extended time. In this Edwardian era, proper young women needed a chaperone or lady attendant. Fanny and Mina attempted to travel to America in 1916 and 1918, without accompaniment. Their efforts to swim in the USA were denied and they had to wait until 1919 ... a trip across the country by these two young Australians filled with new experiences, including acrimony, bureaucracy, confusion, prudery, as well as some memorable swimming performances. This paper is an effort to recreate the events leading up to those five weeks in America, to look carefully at certain dimensions of the cultural ethos of the United States of America and Australia, and the concept and administration of "amateurism" that touched the lives of the two women, especially Fanny Durack.

The American Amateur Athletic Union of the United States (AAU), created in 1888, was, by the second decade of the twentieth century, the largest organisation of its kind in the world.<sup>1</sup> By far the central figure within the AAU during these years was the Irish-American publisher, author, and professional guardian of amateur athletics, James Edward Sullivan (1860-1914).<sup>2</sup> Headquarters of the AAU was New York City. The movement was nation-wide, however, with an eastern-based power-elite exclusively male, extremely wealthy, overwhelmingly Anglo-Saxon, and almost entirely composed of college graduates of the New England and eastern seaboard universities. Despite this WASP (White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant) heritage, and also because of this narrow-based WASP orientation, the AAU was the dominant

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athletic organisation, far stronger than the fledgling National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA 1906) and parent to the child of the AAU, the American Olympic Association (AOA).<sup>3</sup> Sullivan's death in 1914, at age 53, radically changed the configuration of the AAU, and among a great many things, made it possible in the United States for women to expand nation-wide amateur swimming competitions. Fanny Durack and Mina Wylie saw this change as an opportunity to travel to the great USA to show themselves to the American public and to test themselves against their swim sisters. It did not exactly work out that way.

## In Australia

Towards the end of the nineteenth century in Australia, recreational bathing in pools or the sea (sometimes with the provision of a bathing box to protect a lady's modesty at the latter location), was popular with both sexes. Although Australia had produced several internationally successful male competitive swimmers throughout the latter decades of the nineteenth century, such as Dick Cavill and the 1900 Olympic Games 200 metre gold medallist, Freddie Lane, it was not until the turn of the century that it became more socially acceptable for women to "race." A young Australian woman, Annette Kellerman (1886- 1975), sensationally emerged in the world of swimming, theatre, silent films, and public acclaim that was a true precursor to the Durack-Wylie duo of Olympic Games champions. In 1902, Kellerman was the fastest female swimmer in Australia,<sup>4</sup> and in that year possibly became the first woman to star in a sporting demonstration on the Australian stage.<sup>5</sup> Over the next few years, during which time she swam world-record stints,<sup>6</sup> she defied convention with her relatively scanty swimsuits in world-wide, highly publicised ultra-marathon swims. She was arrested in Boston for "indecent exposure" in 1906;<sup>7</sup> made Hollywood silent films (*Neptune's Daughter* in 1914 and *The Daughter of the Gods* in 1916) which "staggered America;"<sup>8</sup> and was proclaimed the woman "with the most beautiful body ever known." *Women Today* of September 30, 1911, wrote in the vernacular of the day: "[She] had made herself into the likeness of a Greek Sculpture ... this refreshing young woman flaying around like a nymph or a Rhine-maiden in the younger days of creation."<sup>9</sup>

Many decades later, MGM Studios produced the Annette Kellerman story, "Million Dollar Mermaid," starring Esther Williams, with Kellerman herself co-writing the screenplay and working as a consultant during the filming.<sup>10</sup> This Australian pioneer wrote *two* books, *How to Swim* and *Physical Beauty -How to Keep It*.<sup>11</sup> "Women are infinitely more graceful than men, in the water," she ventured. She was a star on Broadway and returned decades later in 1953, at age 66, "still a handsome figure, the woman whose figure had made the whole world gasp in 1910."<sup>12</sup> On the day Annette Kellerman won her first Australian swim title in 1902, an eleven year old named Fanny Durack was entered in the schoolgirl race-division of the championships.<sup>13</sup>

Fanny Durack, born in Sydney in 1889, learned to swim in Sydney's Coogee Baths using the breaststroke, the only style for which there was a championship for women. In 1906, the year of the formation of the New South Wales Ladies Amateur Swimming Association (NSWLASA), Durack won her first title. Over the next few

years, utilising first the trudgeon and then the Australian crawl swimming styles, she dominated the Australian swimming scene. In the 1910-11 swimming season, fourteen year old Mina Wylie, daughter of the proprietor of Wylie's Baths in Coogee, beat Durack in the 100 yards breaststroke and the 100 and 220 yards freestyle at the Australian championships at Rose Bay. It was then that Durack began to practice the Australian crawl introduced by the Solomon Islander, Alec Wickham, and the famous Cavill brothers.<sup>14</sup> This stroke had largely remained the preserve of male swimmers to this stage and although Wylie also switched to that style, Fanny Durack won a succession of Australian swimming titles at distances from 50 yards to a mile, with Mina Wylie a close second on every occasion.<sup>15</sup>

It was clear that both swimmers deserved selection for the inaugural swimming events for women at the 1912 Olympic Games in Stockholm. However, neither Durack's nor Wylie's selection was without controversy. The NSWLASA, formed in 1906, invoked a stipulation that their members could not appear in competition where men were present. Such a rule, of course, meant that neither Durack nor Wylie could swim in front of Olympic swimming selectors (who were male), nor could they swim in front of male spectators in Stockholm. After numerous meetings and much debate by member clubs of the NSWLASA, the rule was rescinded.<sup>16</sup> The President of the NSWLASA since its inception, Miss Rose Scott, an ardent feminist, resigned in protest, remaining steadfast in her views: "I think it is disgusting that men should be allowed to attend . . . I think it is horrible. We cannot have too much modesty, refinement or delicacy in the relation between men and women. There is too much boldness and rudeness now, and I am afraid that this new decision will have a very vulgar effect on the girls, and the community generally."<sup>17</sup>

Scott had received support for her views from the secretary of the NSW Amateur Swimming Association [men's], A. C. Hill, who at a Special Council Meeting of the NSWLASA had indicated that he was "decidedly against men being allowed to attend the carnivals, and was not in accord in attending lady swimmers in Stockholm."<sup>18</sup> Although there was public demand for the inclusion of Durack and Wylie on the 1912 Olympic team, five men had already been selected from Australasia,<sup>19</sup> and it was argued that only one individual event on the ladies swimming program in Stockholm did not justify the expense of another Australian representative. The wife of a Sydney entrepreneur, Mrs Hugh McIntosh,<sup>20</sup> raised the necessary expense money and Australian officials were forced to accept Durack. As a chaperone was required, Fanny's sister went, paying her own fare. Three weeks after the official team left, Mina Wylie gained permission to go, setting sail with her father as chaperone. Mina's father paid both fares.

At the Olympic Games in Athens in 1896, Alfred Hajor of Hungary won the 100 metres freestyle in a time of 1:19.8 minutes. Durack almost equalled that time in the fast heat at the Stockholm Olympics. Following the final, the weekly sporting newspaper in Australia reported: "Quite a stir went through the crowded audience as the ladies appeared on the starting platform... the green caps and cloaks of the Australasians made them conspicuous figures...Miss Durack.. swimming a beautiful Australian crawl stroke won .. in the excellent time of 1 min. 22 1/5 secs."<sup>21</sup>

Fanny and Mina returned triumphantly to Australia with gold and silver, respectively. The Natator column of *The Referee* included Durack's views on mixed

bathing: "Our world's woman champion comes back more than ever satisfied that the objection to members of both sexes swimming together exists only in this section of the earth, and is strained prudery. Nowhere else it is taken exception to. Of course, Miss Durack does not know that there are lots of things done on the "Continong" and in other parts of the globe which would, very properly, not be allowed in Australia."<sup>22</sup>

## In America

It is probable that the American amateur sport boss, James Sullivan, was wholly unconvinced of the appropriateness of young women "cavorting" in front of men. In this pre-Great War era, American women's civic and legal rights were still limited. Equally narrow were opportunities for women in sport. Sullivan allowed no such "travesty" within the AAU jurisdiction, prompting one analyst to write: "Sullivan believed that sport was a morally questionable experience for women."<sup>23</sup> Sullivan, who died in September of 1914, had but one month earlier threatened expulsion of the Rye Beach (New York) Swimming Club if they allowed a single female to swim in its pool.<sup>24</sup> Mary Leigh interviewed long-time AAU secretary, Dan Ferris, who told her "Mr. Sullivan was the primary reason for the delay in American female swimmers."<sup>25</sup> "He's a narrow-minded bigot out of the Victorian nineteenth century," wrote a certain very angry Ida Schnall in the 1913 *New York Times*.<sup>26</sup> The capable AAU leader Sullivan had earned such fury after writing E. C. Brennan of the American Life Saving Society: "You have given school boy races with open races for women in the same tank on the same day - absolutely something that should not have been done."<sup>27</sup>

Sullivan refused to allow American women to compete in the proposed Berlin Olympics of 1916,<sup>28</sup> and, in 1915, a horrified male AAU member attempted to eliminate the new sport of women's competitive swimming because of the "wholly immodest one-piece bathing suit on a girl."<sup>29</sup>

So, American social justice for women was far from reality during the period 1912-1918, something Fanny Durack and Mina Wylie understood imperfectly. There was a proposal for the two Australians to compete in the Panama-Pacific Exposition in 1915, "but there was a hitch over the inability or unwillingness of the California organizers to pay the expenses of a third woman as chaperon and the two young women did not make the trip, much to their disappointment."<sup>30</sup> After double world records in the spring of 1916,<sup>31</sup> however, further negotiations began with the American AAU to cross the Pacific, and then "swim" their way across the country.<sup>32</sup>

Europe was involved in a blood-bath in 1916, but not so Australia and the United States. In the USA that year, at the fast AAU swimming championships for women in New York City, Claire Galligan swam 500 yards in a record 8 min. 5 2/5 secs.<sup>33</sup> Later that year Galligan, swimming in Atlantic City, also won the first officially authorised AAU 220 yards championship (time: 3.15 4/5); in Philadelphia Olga Dorfner broke the American record for 50 yards (time: 30 1/5 secs) - Fanny Durack held the world record in a time of 27 seconds.<sup>34</sup> It was opportune that the new president of NSWLASA, Mrs Hugh D. McIntosh, wife of the famous Sydney fight promoter, after visiting William Unmack,<sup>35</sup> a former vice-president of the AAU, travelled to New York in late August, 1916, to talk with AAU Secretary-Treasurer,

Frederick Rubien, and Miss Charlotte Epstein, Secretary of the National Women's Life Saving League (NSWSL).<sup>36</sup> Between them they engineered a plan for the Durack-Wylie duo to swim first in Honolulu,<sup>37</sup> then at San Francisco, Los Angeles, St Louis, Indianapolis, Chicago, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, New York City, Montreal, Toronto, and Portland, Oregon - a grand 3.5 month continental tour.<sup>38</sup> It was agreed that Australian regulations for women would be used, since, as Mrs. McIntosh said, American rules for female swimmers are "in [their] infancy . . . and so thoroughly organised in the Antipodes." *The New York Times* article alleged that Rubien and Epstein were pleased that the Australian dress code was so detailed and insisted that a chaperone or "manageress" be at all times close to the two young women. We have so thoroughly secured control of our sport, Mrs McIntosh told the two Americans, "that we never have the slightest trouble with our girls any more. Their costumes are regulated, and cannot be immodest under our rules. Every swimmer must wear a cloak from the time she leaves her dressing room virtually until the moment she hears the starting gun. She has what is called a cloak-maid, who stands behind her at the starting line, ready to receive her cloak as she doffs it preparatory to leaping into the pool."<sup>39</sup>

Mrs. McIntosh finished her "instructions" to Rubien and Epstein by stating that Australians are "oh-so-modern, and men are now allowed to sit in the stands at women's swimming competitions. I think it not likely that anyone in America will defeat Fanny and Mina." Finally, McIntosh concluded: "Some day your American women will separate themselves from the AAU and form their own governing body, "as we have done so well in Australia."<sup>40</sup>

News of the proposed tour had been well-received in Australia and Hugh McIntosh, upon being "spoken to by Mrs. Chambers regarding the venture, said at once that he would provide whatever money was needed to foot the bill of the tour, and thus relieve the Association of the task of endeavouring to collect it."<sup>41</sup> In a later letter to Chambers, Unmack reported having received a letter from Rubien authorizing him to draw up a "tentative plan of dates."<sup>42</sup> Unmack wrote to the NSWLASA (letter dated September 19) assuring that body of the financial guarantees which had been made for appearances in the cities of Seattle (\$300), San Francisco (\$750), Oakland (\$200), Los Angeles (\$200) and Philadelphia (\$100); negotiations for other cities in the east were continuing.<sup>43</sup>

The less-than-progressive men in charge of the American AAU debated for weeks before their 1916 annual convention whether there should be competitive swimming for girls and women and, if so, should they become part of the AAU national championships or strike out on their own?<sup>44</sup> Rubien said "yes" on the first question, but declared that American women "are not yet ready to strike out on their own." On November 20, 1916, at New York's Hotel Astor, an eight-hour debate took place, "one of the most tempestuous held in recent years." The amendment for "women's swim freedom" was defeated. The AAU would allow women to register only in swimming, to follow strictly its rules, and to "always wear neck-to-knee costumes of dark material."<sup>45</sup> We do not know how much Fanny and Mina knew about these AAU machinations, half a world away. On December 4, 1916, the AAU announced that "lack of funds have prevented the Australian women coming here." Western states' athletic clubs were not willing to guarantee in advance that all

expenses for the two women would be guaranteed.<sup>46</sup> In San Francisco, William Unmack, angry and disappointed at the Fanny-Mina trip cancellation, agreed with Mrs McIntosh that women needed to break away and form their own swimming federation. The AAU countered, somewhat, and in 1917 passed legislation that would pay all expenses for chaperones.<sup>47</sup>

In the months immediately prior to America's entry into the war in 1917, women's competitive swimming was coming into prominence. Claire Galligan won the first national AAU championship the year before, and Olga Dorfner of Philadelphia swam 440 yards across the "glass-like surface of the Delaware River and against a 9 mph current" in 7:53 2/5. The *New York Times* reported that "great numbers of immature maidens," in their desire to swim competitively, were registering with the AAU.<sup>48</sup> Another headline noted that "natatoriums are springing up everywhere" and women are responsible. An ambivalent Fred Rubien was pleased, but he would allow only the phrase "special contests" rather than "championships" for these females.<sup>49</sup> A contributing factor to this interest and uneasy acceptance by AAU moguls of women in pools was America's entry into the war, resulting in pool managers "forced to have women as lifeguards."<sup>50</sup>

The undaunted duo of Durack and Wylie looked forward to a summer 1918 swim tour of America and, despite the fury and terrifying conflict of the war in Europe, the women's movement in the United States was alive and well. New York State passed a women's suffrage referendum in 1917; President Woodrow Wilson appeared before Congress in early 1918 and pleaded for the enfranchisement of women. The suffrage amendment was passed in the House of Representatives of the 65th Congress on January 10, 1918, and by the Senate on June 4, 1919.<sup>51</sup>

Meanwhile, early in 1918 an exciting itinerary was organized for Misses Durack and Wylie who, although 29 and 28 years old, respectively, were to be accompanied by a "chaperone," Mrs. Mary Chambers, Secretary of the NSWLASA. Swimming competitions, exhibitions, and classes "teaching young girls to swim" were arranged for San Francisco, Los Angeles, Portland, Seattle, Vancouver, and points east. Once again, William Unmack of San Francisco was instrumental as a kind of intermediary between amateur athletic authorities in Sydney and New York City. The headline of the *New York Times* of February 3, 1918 read, "Sydney champion (Durack) to tour America," and the article stated that "the trip of the Sydney mermaids stands out as the feature of the year in aquatics."<sup>52</sup> An eastern "swing" was hoped for, since the New York International Exposition was planned for June 29, 1918, at the new Bronx pool and swimming sensations Charlotte Boyle and Claire Galligan were eager to take on the Australians in the huge 300 by 350 yards pool.<sup>53</sup> Fanny Durack and Mina Wylie crossed the Pacific and landed in San Francisco only to find there were credential irregularities and "a refusal to comply with the [AAU] regulations."<sup>54</sup> Sydney Cavill, "Fanny's spokesman" at the San Francisco Olympic Club, could not agree with broker William Unmack, both of whom found no common ground between the Amateur Swimming Union of Australia and the American AAU. It was one big mess, prompting one journalist to write: "If only Fanny could come to New York City to try and straighten out matters."<sup>55</sup> But there was more to it than that. A newspaper article written one year after this 1918 debacle revealed that the chaperone selected by the Australian swimming authorities to accompany them on the journey

was discarded ... and their own chaperone, a sister of Miss Durack was chosen. The Australian officials got in touch with the authorities of this country, and when the girls arrived at San Francisco they found the country barred to their proposed tour.<sup>56</sup> The whole situation was impossible and Fanny took the first available ship home.

Clearly, the whole affair was complex and became unsavoury, with gross accusations by the principal players being reported in the press on both sides of the Pacific. W. F. Corbett, swimming writer for the *Referee*, filled columns with the gossip, hearsay, and selected reports from Californian newspapers about the relationship between Durack and Unmack.<sup>57</sup> Corbett's column of August 28 was headed: "Women Swimmers Home from America - Misses Durack and Wylie: Flat, Stale and Unprofitable." Corbett wrote: "The commonplace, 'flat, stale and unprofitable', might be used to sum up the visit which Misses Fanny Durack and Mina Wylie paid to the United States. The two famous women swimmers returned to Sydney by the *Ventura* in a position somewhat similar to that of a great general in comic song who marched his forces up the hill and marched them down again."<sup>58</sup>

Once the "Australian mermaids," as the American press had dubbed them, were back home, Corbett's column tended to discredit Unmack's role in the whole affair. He did acknowledge that, since "neither of the girls was inclined to be further communicative," he did have to turn to American papers for information.<sup>59</sup> This information tended to focus on Durack as seeking excessive expenses to swim during the "Unmack tour."

Hope springs eternal and a June 21, 1919 sport headline in America trumpeted: "Women Swimmers Coming."<sup>60</sup> But in New York City, Fred Rubien, and his AAU colleagues, in an "emergency meeting of several hours," declared opposition to the two swimmers' proposed visit because Fanny and Mina had independently arranged their business with George H. Dowsing of Seattle, Washington. An exchange of telegrams, published in the *Referee*, between Rubien and M. E. Andrus, Secretary of the Pacific Athletic Association headquartered in San Francisco, revolved around the AAU's concern regarding travelling expenses.<sup>61</sup> Rubien's sharp response to the two swimmers back in Sydney was that the AAU would make all arrangements and select a suitable chaperone "at our expense."<sup>62</sup> The on-again, off-again charade continued,<sup>63</sup> and on July 26, 1919, AAU president Samuel J. Dallas announced that Durack and Wiley could swim in America, "but only as amateurs, to drop their own professional manager,<sup>64</sup> and tour the country under the jurisdiction of the National Championship Committee of the AAU."<sup>65</sup> An as yet undetermined exchange of communication took place, for the very next day it was announced that the two "Antipodean aquatic stars would tour 15 American cities under AAU supervision."<sup>66</sup> On that same day (July 26) a precocious teenager from New Rochelle, New York, Ethelda Bleibtrey, swam record-setting races at 220 yards and a startling 6:16 3/5 quarter-mile.

### Troubled Waters and the American Swim Tour of 1919

Fanny and Mina landed on the American West Coast in early August 1919. More than half a continent away, *The Chicago Sunday Tribune* reproduced a half-page photo of Mina and the fully robust Fanny with a headline exclaiming that these

“Champion women swimmers of the world” would be in Chicago the following weekend.<sup>67</sup> The ladies arrived in Chicago, only to announce that their agreement with Mr Rubien was to swim leisurely exhibition performances<sup>68</sup> - a scenario wholly unacceptable to the Chicago organisers who had, for more than a week, trumpeted the prospect of record-breaking competitions. Rubien’s telegram insisted on legitimate races ...“ or the tour would be cancelled.” The ladies conceded; Rubien and the Chicago Athletic Association (CAA) would have their way. The former great football star, Walter Eckersall, writing in the *Tribune*, described Mina’s narrow victory over Helen Thompson and Fanny’s wide-margin victory in the 400-yard race versus Thelma Darby of Indianapolis.<sup>69</sup> Despite these small victories, the two Australians remained quarrelsome and “declined to compete in any further competitive scratch races.”<sup>70</sup> They did, however, and the really big New York City confrontation loomed in the third week of August, 1919.

For a long time the most innovative American swim coaches had made progress in technique and, of course, the “new science” was shared with both sexes. Fanny Durack’s ten years of success with the world-famous “Australian Crawl” free-style arm and leg action was representative of many great Aussie swimmers of the era. But even more efficient ways of moving over water were evolving. The antiquated “trudgeon” kick had given way to what eventually became known as the “Australian crawl.” In New York City swim circles the “Six-Beat Trudgeon-Crawl” superfast stroke had been created.<sup>71</sup> In highly non-technical terms the American crawl used slow, powerful arm strokes and fast, continuous leg kicks, while the older and highly-successful Australian version did just the opposite. The evolution of the three strokes have been described in several publications published in later years,<sup>72</sup> but a most scientific explanation was provided contemporaneously in an article entitled “Miss Durack shows power,” in *The New York Times* on August 26, 1919.<sup>73</sup>

The great day arrived - veteran Olympic champion Fanny Durack versus super kid Ethelda Bleibtrey. Fanny and Mina, far from physically fit, were shocked to discover that the big race at Manhattan Beach, New York City, would take place in the Atlantic Ocean, in cold and rough water. The idea of swimming exhibition and handicap races across America, was designed to create as little stress as possible to Durack and Wylie. This strategy had not been successful.<sup>74</sup> Engagements were cancelled as meet promoters insisted on competitive races from scratch.<sup>75</sup> Despite all this, the two Australian ladies in the end agreed to swim America’s best. An unprecedented crowd of “10,000 aquatic enthusiasts circled the course and rooted themselves hoarse.”<sup>76</sup> The pontoon-encircled Atlantic lagoon nearly sank into the ocean as the huge crowd enveloped the pool. Because the great event was billed as a Metropolitan AAU championship, Fanny reluctantly agreed to swim from “scratch” in her 440 yards race. It was Durack versus Bleibtrey. Fanny was not exactly heady with self-confidence as she had arrived in New York but three days earlier, on Wednesday, August 13, 1919. She declared unhesitatingly, and without so much as a flicker of embarrassment, that she feared defeat at the hands of American swimmers.<sup>77</sup>

Starter Jack Lyons got the four women off their marks: Eleanor Uhl from Philadelphia’s Meadowbrook Swimming Club; Charlotte Boyle, representing the local Swim Association; Ethelda Bleibtrey, from the same club, and Australia’s

Fanny Durack. Few gave thought to the American record of 6:39 3/5, set by Claire Galligan Finney in 1917. Miss Bleibtrey took command at the start and was never headed. She flashed the first 110 yards in 85 seconds but could not pull away from the powerful stroke tempo of the Australian. Boyle also competed fiercely, "hanging" right on Durack's shoulder. Half-way home, the New York native was timed in 3:07, with Boyle and Durack very close. Eleanor Uhl trailed badly. At the 330 yard, which was passed in 4:52, Ethelda made a perfect turn, unlike Durack, who "lost some ground by missing her take-off," but still managed to open a few yards on Boyle. In fact, Fanny swam so furiously on the lap that she "was soon at Miss Bleibtrey's side." But the younger Ethelda accelerated her stroke and pulled away. Charlotte Boyle inched ahead of the Australian swimmer. Bleibtrey's winning time of 6:30 1/2 was a new American record a bit slower than Fanny's "quiet water" swimming pool mark recorded in Australia.<sup>78</sup>

Sheer delight! "Spectators slapped one another on the back, jumped into the air with glee," a few minutes of "pure...joy." Bleibtrey's three-yard victory was the greatest race of her young career; she had defeated a legend, and the crowd knew it. The thousands of fans, "frantic with excitement," pressed hard against the lagoon, "fondling and hugging one another." When approached, a weary Durack could only respond: "the water was awfully cold and rough."<sup>79</sup> It was over and the experts agreed with the noted American coach Handley . . . "that both were great champions, but there exists incontestable evidence that the American Crawl requires less effort than the older strokes."<sup>80</sup>

Then a youngster of 13, and future Olympic diving champion (Antwerp, 1920), Aileen Riggan watched this classic race from among the crowd, cheering "Thel" from start to finish. Decades later she reminisced on the event, remembering that Fanny Durack's stroke was obsolete: "The new American Crawl stroke, perfected by our volunteer coach, Mr. L. De B. Handley, won the day. Ethelda went on to the 1920 Olympic Games in Antwerp where she won 3 gold medals and would have won more . . . if there had been any more events."<sup>81</sup>

An edition of the *Referee* in November, 1919, featured an exposition of the American trudgeon-crawl stroke, including a series of five photographs depicting the action; the header read: "Victories of Norman Ross and of American Girls Over Fanny Durack Attributed to Superiority of Stroke."<sup>82</sup>

Buck Dawson, founding Director of the International Swimming Hall of Fame, was not in New York City during that post-war August race, but he had firm opinions: "Fanny Durack was a tough gal, and belongs in our Hall of Fame, but Ethelda Bleibtrey was just coming into her own, and that made the essential difference."<sup>83</sup>

The string had run out on Mina and Fanny. They were disappointed and tired of their American tour - only three swim experiences in three months. They ended their tour in Philadelphia on a sour note. Australian sport historian Jim Webster described Mina and Fanny as "frustrated" and "defiant" on the eve of their August 28, 1919 Philadelphia race. At first they refused to swim and were threatened with life-time domestic and international disqualification. Facing such an ultimatum, they swam. Durack took off her swimming robe in preparation for a 300-yard race and without hesitation dove in and started to swim down the pool. Halfway down the course, she

swam to the side, climbed out and defiantly informed swim officials: "There, I swam, didn't I!"<sup>84</sup>

Reet and Max Howell present a different view of these proceedings. Citing a passage from the *Referee*, they spin a tale that Durack was told by the handicapper she would be given a head-start, with Bleibtrey on scratch.<sup>85</sup> Indignantly, Fanny refused and was threatened with permanent expulsion from swimming if she did not swim. Reported the *Referee*: "The 300 yards handicap was called. Immediately, without a word of warning, Miss Durack plunged into the pool and left her prospective opponents on the mark. She swam a few laps by herself, then made a hasty exit."<sup>86</sup>

Coach Handley published his own views on the ill-fated race. In an article published in the *Referee* some months after the Philadelphia event, Handley stated that Durack was only a spectator during the day's feature race--a match race from scratch between Bleibtrey and Boyle, which ended in a dead heat, a result perhaps contrived by the two friendly competitors.<sup>87</sup> Handley then related that Durack, scheduled to swim a 300 yards handicap race against "local second-raters," entered the pool in advance of her fellow competitors, swam a few laps, and exited, refusing to continue.<sup>88</sup>

The New York Times reported the entire affair in even more confusing fashion, relating that "Miss Eleanor Uhl" was Fanny's opponent in the "Philadelphia 300." The *Times* also reported that constant unkind shouts from the audience directed at Fanny resulted in her premature entry into the water, "where she paddled up and down the tank several times and then jumped from the water, refusing to race. AAU secretary Rubien announced that the [Durack and Wylie] will never again compete in this country."<sup>89</sup>

Durack and Wylie "have caused trouble for the AAU from the moment they started in their first exhibition in Chicago," wrote American journalist A. C. Cavagnaro.<sup>90</sup> "Now these two Australian women," wrote the agitated writer, "want to compete in handicap races-in-reverse, that is to give their rivals liberal head-start allowances." "Further," stated Cavagnaro, "they demanded that this unacceptable practice be enacted in any future race, including the "Philadelphia '300' versus Misses Boyle and Bleibtrey."<sup>91</sup> According to eye-witness Cavagnaro, the two American women gave an easy exhibition over 300 yards, breaking the national record by ten seconds. "Following this," according to Cavagnaro, "Miss Durack was 'booed' for many minutes when she appeared to race against Miss Eleanor Uhl, a Quaker mermaid. Miss Durack resented this treatment, and after swimming alone several times up and down the tank, left the building."<sup>92</sup>

The Philadelphia Inquirer gave major space to this infamous "non-race" with an article headed: "Australians' Tour Proved a Fizzle."<sup>93</sup> Following Fanny's reported "strange behaviour," Rubien wired the Philadelphia AAU that both women were finished. Commenting that both women intended to go home as soon as possible, Rubien added that Fanny's latest "bizarre ploy" was to insist on giving away huge handicaps and thus "she would have been in a position to offer an alibi had she been defeated." At Philadelphia's new Columbia Pool, Fanny, reported Handley in the *Referee* some months later, insisted illogically that the "two New Yorkers" (Bleibtrey and Boyle) be given handicaps.<sup>94</sup> "It is likely," speculated the *Referee*, "that the two

(Durack and Wiley) intend to go home as soon as possible . . . we have seen the last of these two mermaids."<sup>95</sup> By that time Mina had already left for home and Fanny followed soon after aboard the ship *Sonoma*.

At home in Australia, Mina Wylie continued to win national championships at a half-dozen distances into the mid-1920s; she spent the rest of her life teaching and died in 1984 at the age of ninety-three.<sup>96</sup> At age 31, Fanny Durack the gold medalist at the 1912 Stockholm Olympics prepared to defend her title at the 1920 Antwerp Olympic Games, but an appendectomy, typhoid fever, followed by pneumonia ended her swimming career. She married in 1921, and coached for much of the remainder of her life. Her life was, in the words of the Howells, "a milestone in the history of Australia women's sport, a bastion against unnecessary conservatism, and an inspiration for generations of women swimmers to press for their rights in sport."<sup>97</sup> "Miss Durack may have swum her last competitive race," wrote a *New York Times* writer, "but she will ever remain a conspicuous figure in the history of swimming for women."<sup>98</sup>

Wilhelmina Wylie and, especially, Fanny Durack were important pioneers in the early days of Australian and international swimming, at a time when proof after proof was very much needed that girls and women could train hard, swim fast, and remain whole and healthy in every dimension of their being. During her American tour, Fanny's conduct was obdurate<sup>99</sup> and wildly wavering as to the essential purpose of her trip. As far as the athletic establishment was concerned, in both Australia and the United States, Fanny Durack was frequently uncooperative and an excessively free spirit. Upon her return to Australia aboard the *Sonoma*, she was reported as declining to talk about her experiences in the United States but, regarding her treatment by the AAU, commented, "I think that the wrong people are in power."<sup>100</sup> At several levels, regarding highly competitive, physically demanding athletics for women, she reflected the chaotic state of mind of physicians, coaches, administrators, and male and female physical education professionals. There was no consensus, none at all in those early days, and the Durack-Wylie odyssey was a kind of not-so-grand experiment.

The 1919 trip proved very little but, remarkably, the two women occasionally shared sport headlines with men - even the great ones of their era. With reference to the comment by Mrs Hugh D. McIntosh during her visit to the United States in 1916, that American women should separate themselves from the AAU and form their own governing body, "as we have done so well in Australia,"<sup>101</sup> it is noteworthy that one month after the 1919 tour ended, the general control of swimming for both males and females was, with recognition by the NSWLASA, to be under the control of the NSW Amateur Swimming Association.<sup>102</sup> Corbett of the *Referee* was puzzled: "The lady swimmers will now be bossed by their brothers. Just how our mermaids were cajoled into this position I am unaware. Whatever in the nature of a conference took place was not made public to my knowledge. There can be no legitimate objection to what has occurred. It will, perhaps, prove better for the ladies that they have been taken into the arms of the masculine section of our water athletes, to be closely hugged henceforth and for evermore."<sup>103</sup>

Clearly, this aspect of the cultural and sporting ethos of the USA and Australia, and the continued male dominance in the amateur bureaucracy, generally, and in swimming in particular, is worthy of further research and analysis.

Of course, Fanny Durack was not without fault during the confusing trip across America. But there existed in both Australia and the United States not a single consensus on anything regarding the serious female athlete. Her training regimen, her competitive schedule, her dress, personal conduct and decorum were debated with maximum heat and emotion and a minimum of scientific evidence. For every five male and female lay persons or professionals who supported vigorous athletics for women, there were ten who found everything unredeeming - physiologically and culturally - about such business. Possibly, without even realising it, Fanny, and Mina Wylie, were caught up in this international whirlpool of ambivalence.

## Notes

1. Although no satisfactory history of the AAU has been written, information about this significant organisation can be gleaned from: Robert Korsgaard, "A history of the Amateur Athletic Union of the United States," Columbia University Teachers College, unpublished Ed.D., 1952; John Lucas, "A Centennial History of the AAU of the United States 1888-1988", privately published manuscript, 1989.
2. No substantial biography of James Sullivan has been written; information about Sullivan's Olympic involvement may be gleaned from John Lucas, "Early Olympic antagonists Pierre de Coubertin versus James E. Sullivan," *Stadion*, Vol 3. 1977, pp. 258-272.
3. See Robert E. Lehr, "The American Olympic Committee 1896-1940: From Chaos to Order", Ph.D. Dissertation, The Pennsylvania State University, 1985; Arnold Flath, "A History of the Relations between the NCAA and the AAU", PhD dissertation, The University of Michigan, 1963; Jack Falla, *NCAA: The Voice of College Sports*, NCAA, 1981.
4. *The Referee* (hereafter cited as *Referee*, Sydney, 19 February, 1902, p. 9.
5. *Age*, 8 June, 1903, p. 7, as cited in Richard Fotheringham, *Sport in Australian Drama*, Sydney (Cambridge University Press, 1992), p.56.
6. Kellerman travelled to England with her father in 1905, where she made three attempts to swim the English Channel; she was in the water for 10.5 hours in her final effort, a women's record that stood for seventeen years. See Wray Vamplew, Katharine Moore, John O'Hara, Richard Cashman & Ian Jobling (eds), *Oxford Companion to Australian Sport*, 2nd Edition, (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 230.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Fotheringham, *Sport in Australian Drama*, p. 181.
9. Kellerman's description is reproduced in Reet Howell, *Her Story in Sport: A Historical anthology of women in Sport*, New York: Leisure Press, 1982, p.162. The most revealing look at Kellerman is her essay "How I swam into fame and fortune", *The American Magazine*, No.83, March 1917, pp.33-37.

10. Fotheringham, *Sport in Australian Drama*, p. 181.
11. Kellerman's two books are reviewed in the *New York Times Book Review*, 19 June, 1918, pp. 269, 274.
12. *New York Times* (hereafter *NYT*), 9 October, 1953, p.29.
13. Kellerman won the inaugural New South Wales women's championship; Durack swam in the schoolgirl race on the same day. See Marion Stell, *Half the Race: A History of Women's Sport* (North Ryde: Angus and Robertson, 1991), p. 65.
14. Jack Pollard, *Ampol's Australian Sporting Records*, Wollstonecraft: Pollard Publishing Co. ,1969, pp.493-494.
15. *Referee*, Sydney, 8 February, 1911, p.8; *Daily Mirror*, Sydney, 21 July, 1976, p.62.
16. Ian Jobling and Pamela Barham, "Early Development of Women in Australian Sport: Socio-Historical Issues," *Australian Sports Commission - Third Report of the National Sports Research Programme*, Canberra, Australian Sports Commission, 1990, p. 15.
17. Cited in a press clipping (no date, no paper) in the Rose Scott Papers, Mitchell Library, NSW, Vol ML 38/57 p. 255.
18. Unnamed newspaper clipping, March 1912 in Rose Scott Papers, op.cit., p. 247 Hill contended that "a girl who was in the habit of exposing herself at public carnivals was liable to have her modesty blighted." Ibid. p. 253.
19. Australia and New Zealand competitors at the 1912 Olympics were members of what was known as an "Australasian" team.
20. Hugh McIntosh had staged the world heavyweight boxing championship between Jack Johnson and Tommy Burns in Rushcutter's Bay, Sydney in 1908.
21. *Referee*, 23 August, 1912, p. 8.
22. *Referee*, 12 October, 1912, p. 8.
23. Paula Welch, "The emergence of the American woman in the Summer Olympic Games, 1900-1972," Ed.D.. dissertation, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 1975, p. 18.
24. "AAU after organisation that allowed female athletes to compete," *NYT*, 12 August 1914, p. 7.
25. Mary Leigh, "The Evolution of Women's Participation in the Summer Olympic Games 1900- 1948," Ph.D. dissertation, The Ohio State University, 1974.
26. *NYT*, 19 July 1913, p. 5.
27. See "Bar mixed athletics," *NYT*, 13 July 1913, Secn. 4, p. 2. History does not record whether the socially prominent Mrs O H P Belmont knew about such blatant prejudice, but she contributed a full page essay in the *NYT* saying, in part: Women of today are making their mark as modern world builders. After the war is over, those who have fed their sons to the cannon's mouth will insist that they also be consulted. (22 November 1914; Secn. 5, p. 10).

28. *NYT*, 31 March 1914, p. 9, and, earlier, "AAU ban on women", 18 January 1914, Secn. 4, p. 1.
29. See Korsgaard, "A History of the Amateur Athletic Union of the United States," p. 281, taken from the AAU Minutes 1915, pp. 97-98.
30. *Referee*, 13 September 1916, p. 9.
31. In Sydney during the month of March, 1916, Fanny Durack swam 220 yards in 2 min. 53 secs. and Mina Wylie accomplished 1 min. 28 3/8 secs. for 100 yards breaststroke - both world records. *NYT*, 19 March 1916, p. 2.
32. *Referee*, 21 June 1916, p.16.
33. *NYT*, 19 March 1916, Secn. 8, p. 2 and 1 April 1916, p.11.
34. *Referee*, 2 August 1916, p. 9.
35. Following a meeting between Unmack and McIntosh, Unmack wrote to Mrs W. Chambers, Secretary of the NSWLASA; extracts from the letter, which was published in the *Referee*, 30 August 1916, p.16, include the following: "...I explained to Mrs McIntosh that it would be impossible at this time to advance the expenses of a tour of three or any number of swimmers, but it is possible for me, as an official of the Amateur Athletic Union of this country, to arrange for a visit of your girls if you (sic) Association desires to send them over. ....Knowing that it is out of the question for an amateur to handle money, except under special conditions, I suggested that the chaperone should be officially known as the manager of the team, and consequently the representative of your Association, and be recognised as such by the American Amateur Athletic Union. If, after the tour closed, a surplus existed, it would be handed over to your organisation."
36. Corbett, writing about the problems associated with the 1919 tour of America with Dowsing, stated: "The pity of it is that Miss Durack did not listen to reason when, over two years ago, Mr H.D. McIntosh offered to send her and Miss Wylie to America under the auspices of the Sydney Referee, and pay first class expenses everywhere, with the understanding that they should act in strict accord with amateurism and have the full endorsement of the New South Wales Ladies' Association [*Referee*, 22 October 1919, p.11].
37. There was correspondence regarding the possibility of Durack swimming against American Olga Dorfner at the annual mid-pacific water carnival in February, 1917 - *Referee*, 6 September 1916, p.16.
38. When it was assumed that Durack would be making the tour, letters requesting visits and exhibitions came from all parts of the USA - *Referee*, 28 June 1916, p. 16.
39. "Australians to try for all US titles," *NYT*, 23 August 1916, p. 11.
40. *Ibid*.
41. *Referee*, 30 August 1916, p.16.
42. *Referee*, 20 September 1916, p. 9. The swimming journalist, W. F. Corbett, commented on the proposed itinerary as outlined by Unmack, which called upon Durack and Wylie appearing in two races each night throughout the tour of three months. "What Mr Unmack proposes is absolutely impossible. His idea is akin to what the theatrical man knows as one-night shows."

43. *Referee*, 1 November 1916, p. 12.
44. "AAU may discard women's swimming," *NYT*, 31 October 1916, p.10.
45. "Amendment to drop women's swimming fails to pass," *NYT*, 21 November 1916, p. 12.
46. "Swimming invasion off," *NYT*, 5 December 1916, p. 12.
47. AAU Minutes, p.25 - quoted by Korsgaard, "A History of the American Athletic Union of the United States," pp. 281-282.
48. *NYT*, 5 August 1917; Part III, p. 2.
49. *NYT*, 27 May 1917; Part III, p. 4.
50. Ellen W. Gerber, et. al. *The American Woman in Sport* (Reading: Wesley Pub. Co., 1974), p.122. Otto Wahl of the New York Athletic Club tried to explain the new wave with a full page article in the Sunday *NYT*, 18 March 1917, Part III, p. 1.
51. See John R. Alden, *Rise of the American Republic* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), p.651; and Thomas C. Cochran and Wayne Andrews (eds), *Concise Dictionary of American History* (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1961), p. 1023.
52. *NYT*, 3 February 1918, Section 2, p .8; also *NYT*, 22 March 1918, p. 14.
53. *NYT*, 16 June 1918, p. 16.
54. See *NYT*, 21 June 1919, p. 13; *Referee*, 17 July 1918, p. 11.
55. "Swimming star hopes to settle difficulties with the AAU," *NYT*, 17 June 1919, p. 11.
56. "Australian swimmers run counter to AAU rules," *NYT*, 17 July 1919, p. 11.
57. See the *Referee* of 17, 24, July, 14, 21 August, 1919.
58. *Referee*, 22 August 1918, p. 11.
59. *Referee*, 28 August 1918, p. 11. For example, Corbett prefaced a report from the *New York Globe* of June 5 with the remark, "Readers of the *Referee* will need no telling how little of Mr. Unmack's latest tale is correct, and what a great deal of it is not." (*Referee*, 11 September 1918, p. 11) It is worth noting that Unmack had written to Corbett on June 17 (published in the *Referee*, 17 July) berating him for "slamming me" (Unmack) in his columns.
60. *NYT*, 21 June 1919, p. 13. This press report stated: "it is not clear whether or not the two champions propose to undertake any competition while here or whether their efforts will be limited to exhibitions." It also reminded readers of the troubles the pair had the previous year over "the credentials required of foreign contestants by the AAU" and that they "aroused considerable feeling by refusing to comply with the regulations."
61. Telegram from Rubiens to Andruss, 1 July 1919 - published in the *Referee*, 6 August 1919, p. 11. Dowsing advised Rubiens by telegram on July 3: "In order that

the tour be successful am willing to waive all claim for moneys, other than legitimate travelling expenses.”

62. *NYT*, 17 July 1919, p. 11.

63. *The Referee*, 30 July 1919, included an item from New York (dated July 17) which stated that AAU had ruled that Durack and Wylie “cannot appear under amateur auspices, because the swimmers insist that the manager’s expenses should be defrayed by the club’s where they appear.” Another report in that *Referee* stated the Canadian Amateur Swimming Association had decided not to allow the swimmers to participate in any of the events in amateur swimming in that country [Dowsing had made tentative arrangements for Durack and Wylie to swim in Victoria, Toronto, Quebec and several other Canadian cities. (*Referee*, 6 August 1919, p. 11)

64. American journalist, L. de B. Handley, explained in a column published in the *Referee* of 5 November 1919, p. 14, that Dowsing should have known he could not “act as the swimmers’ ‘guardian’ and charge up his expenses against the guarantees offered by the clubs, which is strictly forbidden by the AAU laws.”

65. “Ban on swimmers removed,” *NYT*, 26 July 1919, p.10.

66. *NYT*, 27 July 1919, p. 20.

67. *The Chicago Sunday Tribune*, 3 August 1919, Part 2, p. 2.

68. There was considerable confusion about this issue; the press reported Durack and Wylie stating on several occasions that there was an undertaking with Rubien which precluded them from taking part in races other than handicaps. (*Referee*, 27 August 1919, p. 13)

69. See *NYT*, 10 August 1919, p.20; Walter Eckersall, “Misses Durack and Wylie refuse to swim,” *The Chicago Sunday Tribune*, 10 August 1919, Part 2, p. 1; *NYT*, 11 August 1919, p. 12; *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 11 August 1919, p. 13; Walter Eckersall, “Australian girls take feature races in water carnival,” *The Chicago Daily Tribune*, 11 August 1919, p. 14.

70. *NYT*, 14 August 1919, p. 17.

71. See the article, “New stroke beats visiting swimmer,” *NYT*, 24 August 1919, p. 21. The merits of the American style are outlined in great detail.

72. The nineteenth century “trudgeon” stroke required both arms to recover over the water. The Australians coordinated this with synchronised, vertical leg action, bending from the knees, and rhythmic breathing. American swimmers Charles Daniels and Duke Kahanomoku refined the “Australian crawl” into an even more efficient American freestyle version. Debate and discussion in the period ensued, see *Referee*, 28 June 1916, p.16. For a historical discussion, see John Arlott (ed) *The Oxford Companion to World Sport and Games* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), pp.1014-1015; Frank Menke, *The Encyclopedia of Sports* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co, 1977) p. 905.

73. *NYT*, 26 August 1919, p. 14.

74. Handley stated that Durack evidently contemplated making her tour non-competitive, merely giving exhibitions, but the AAU was opposed to this because “the American public felt that a champion officially credited with all world’s records should be willing to race all-comers once the opportunity presented,

particularly since she was asking the public to defray the cost of her visit." (*Referee*, 5 November 1919, p. 14.)

75. Durack and Wylie 'announced' they would swim in handicap events; telegrams to Rubien clarified the matter which was again taken up when the swimmers arrived in New York and met at the AAU headquarters. (*Referee*, 5 November 1919, p. 14)

76. "Miss Bleibtrey beats Miss Durack in record time," *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 26 August 1919, p. 9.

77. See "The Australian swimmers," *NYT*, 18 August 1919, p. 13.

78. See *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 17 August 1919, p. 2; A.C. Cavagnaro's essay, "Miss Bleibtrey sets record in winning title," *New York Tribune*, 17 August 1919, p. 19; and "Australia yields to American girls," *NYT*, 17 August 1919, p. 19.

79. An interesting additional comment was provided in a letter to the *Referee* from Joseph Loughton, an Australian residing in New York who wrote: "To men she (Durack) complained of the water being heavy, and the swimming pool being in the open. It was an ideal pool, sheltered, but one end was open, otherwise it differed little from our own baths." (*Referee*, 19 November 1919, p. 9)

80. L. De B. Handley, *Swimming for Women* (New York: American Sports Publishing Co., 1931), p. 15.

81. Aileen Riggan Soule to John Lucas, personal correspondence dated 4 March 1992.

82. *Referee*, 12 November 1919, p. 16. This feature was supplied to the *Referee* by L. De B. Handley, the coach attributed with having developed the "new" stroke.

83. Buck Dawson to John Lucas, personal correspondence dated 19 February 1992.

84. Jim Webster, "Beauty and the beast," in Neil Cadigan, Don Hogg, Brian Mossop, Venetia Nelson, Richard Sleeman, Jim Webster and Phil Wilkins (eds.) *Blood, Sweat and Tears. Australians and Sport* (Melbourne: Lothian Pub. Co., 1989), p. 159.

85. Reet and Max Howell, *Aussie Gold: The Story of Australia at the Olympics* (Albion: Brooks Waterloo, 1988), p. 55.

86. *Ibid.*

87. Handley states, "the New York girls swam the course in 4 min 15sec, with Miss Durack holding a watch on them, and made it a dead-heat." (*Referee*, 15 November 1919, p.14)

88. *Ibid.*

89. "Anzac mermaids cancel their tour," *NYT*, 30 August 1919, p. 8.

90. "Foreign Mermaids bring their tour to sudden end," *New York Tribune*, 30 August 1919, p. 11.

91. *Ibid.*

92. *Ibid.*

93. *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 31 August, 1919, p. 19. For additional extracts from United States newspapers of the Philadelphia "race", see the *Referee*, 19 November 1919, p. 9.

94. Handley clarifies the situation re: handicaps, and provides his version of Durack's actions, in his column published in the *Referee*, 5 November 1919, p. 14, which was written in New York on September 5. Much of it is reproduced here to place in context previous extracts which appear in the text of this article:

"A third carnival had been arranged by a Philadelphia club, whose people knew nothing of the swimmers' intention to compete only in handicaps so that they had listed a 300 yards Durack-Bleibtrey race and 100yds Wylie-Boyle sprint, both scratch. On reaching the city Miss Durack immediately made known her wishes and after some discussing - for the Philadelphians said they would never have paid 150 dollars to see handicaps - the point was conceded.

It is the custom in this country to handicap visitors from other cities or countries on their best performances only for the first race. After that the official handicapper erred allowances on the previous latest actual time or times. As a result, the Philadelphia handicapper naturally placed Bleibtrey and Miss Boyle on scratch, and gave allowances to Misses Durack and Wylie. At this Miss Durack became indignant, and refused to start unless permitted to give, instead of receive, time. The handicapper argued in vain that he could not possibly allow defeated contestants to concede marks to their vanquishers. Miss Durack said with finality that it was that or nothing.

The handicapper pointed out what had happened in Brooklyn, suggested again scratch races, called attention to the A.A.U. practice of suspending swimmers refusing to accept the marks allotted to them, and begged Miss Durack not to persist in making a fizzle of the meet. But it was to no purpose. In the end, to save the day, those in charge asked the Misses Bleibtrey and Boyle to engage in a match at 300yds, and pressed into service local second-raters for scheduled 100 and 300 yards. The New York girls (Bleibtrey and Boyle) swam the course in 4min 15sec, with Miss Durack holding a watch on them, and made it a dead-heat.

Then the 300yds handicap was called. As the contestants stood on the mark it was announced that is Durack's individual time would be taken. Immediately, without a word of warning, Miss Durack plunged in to the pool and left her prospective opponents on the mark. She swam a few laps by herself, then made a hasty exit. Shortly after she stated she was through with competition in the United States. Meanwhile the Philadelphia A.A.U. delegates have written to the national committee asking that Miss Durack be sus-

pended from activities for refusing to keep an engagement and not accepting the marks officially allotted by the district handicapper. So there the matter rests. It seems a great pity that the tour should have had an unpleasant end; but at least here in New York we did our best to avoid the least trouble.

95. Ibid.

96. Marion Stell, *Half the Race*, p. 104.

97. Howell and Howell, *Aussie Gold*, pp. 55-56.

98. "Miss Durack ends swimming career," *NYT*, 22 January 1921, p. 12.

99. L. De B. Handley provides an example of some of the difficulties Durack and, it seems to a lesser extent, Wylie caused. He relates from the meeting at the AAU headquarters in New York following their Chicago swim in September: (Durack and Wylie) . . . wishes in regard to handicaps were not only complied with, but they were asked to name the events in which they would rather start at each meet, and all programmes were changed accordingly. Suggestions they made concerning alterations in courses were also followed, and Mrs. Muhleberg, captain of the New York Women's Swimming Association, then and there undertook to pilot the swimmers to the Manhattan Beach bath, where they were to do their first competing, and where we all thought they would prefer to train. As things turned, Miss Durack was not satisfied with the site, stating she wanted to practise in a bath; so Mrs Muhleberg invited her to swim that evening with the NYWSA girls in the Association pool and proceeded at once to secure for following days the use of the bath closest to the place of residence of Miss Durack. She trained there, and she and Miss Wylie were allowed to have the bath entirely to themselves while at practice. (*Referee*, 5 November 1919, p.14)

100. *Referee*, 10 December 1919, p. 13.

101. *NIT*, 23 August 23 1916, p. 11.

102. *Referee*, 17 September 1919, p. 15.

103. Ibid. Corbett also wrote of his "oft repeated contention, that the NSWASA had no right at all to act in opposition to the position taken up by the Ladies' ASA with regard to the first (1917) wild goose chase to America, wherein Misses Wylie and Durack were engaged."