

THREE IN A FAMILY SWIM THEIR WAY TO FAME; ELEANOR UHL, CHAMPION, ABHORS 'MODERN GIRL'

Holder of Middle-Atlantic States Title Says Women Should Engage in Business and Sports but Draws the Line at Politics

BUSHEL OF MEDALS, CUPS AND HONORS GALORE, ARE HEAPED UPON SWIMMERS

Parental Objections to Exhibitions Overcome by Girl Who Goes to Antwerp for Women's Olympic Games and Leaves Sick Bed to Compete

WHATEVER it was that Father Mendel is said to have discovered as he sat on his garden stool watching beans sprout and peas blossom, he could doubtless prove it by the Uhl family of Lansdowne.

A family of homozygotes. If you don't know what that means that's your lookout.

Anyhow, it doesn't matter much and it has only a very abstruse relation to swimming championships and to athletic prowess, generally. But the point for the moment is that here is a family of five—father, three sons and a daughter who, save for the points of age and sex, can hardly be told from one another. They are of the same approximate height and of the same prodigious bodily development. They have the same matty blonde hair, the same distinct cephalic measurements, the same passive features and they share the same remarkable psychology.

Books bore them. Conversation for its own sake distresses them. Philosophy appalls them. Pedantry finds them impregnable. They dislike Charlie Chaplin.

They profoundly pity women who eat candy between meals, girls who fear to go in the water, children afraid to climb trees, and young men who make a haunt of pool-rooms.

They admire Tom Mix, great soldiers, musicians, football heroes, directors of musical comedy choruses and their own competitors.

They are fond of arithmetic and of business.

Drama leaves them cold and they say so.

They have never cut verses from a magazine and pasted them in scrapbooks. They have never looked at the moon and made three wishes. They have never had themselves psychoanalyzed. They have never wanted to be emperors, anthropologists, celebrated chefs, cartoonists, social leaders or foreign missionaries.

Boy Brings Championship Into the Uhl Family

Such is the family of Uhl, with whom the Middle Atlantic swimming championship has been more or less dynastic since 1918, when Raymond Uhl, then a sixteen-year-old school-boy, took it at the indoor meet in the West Philadelphia Y. M. C. A.

The glory is more or less incidental, and even somewhat accidental. That is to say that it is not championship but swimming itself that concerns the Uhl's. Not to swim because it gets you into a race and you win it, and somebody gives you a cup and somebody else puts your name in the paper, but to swim because—well, because swimming is such a blooming good thing, such a perfect justification for having arms and legs and lungs.

When William J. X. Uhl, the father, was a young man living in downtown Philadelphia, it was his habit when the nights were hot or when he was otherwise moved, to walk along the bank of the Delaware. When he found a decent spot he would slip off his clothing, jump in and swim the river a half dozen times or so. Then he would dress and go home feeling better.

He never entered any races. Probably it never occurred to him to do so. It was pretty much the same with Ernest, the oldest boy. He learned to swim almost as soon as he learned to walk, and pursued each in pretty much the same fashion. He liked to walk,

Ernest Uhl Captures Championship at Sixteen

ERNEST UHL, sixteen years old, astonished the swimming enthusiasts of the country last July 24 by winning the men's free-style outdoor Middle Atlantic championship race of 250 yards at Pittman, N. J. His time was 2 minutes, 37.3 seconds.

Among his competitors were George F. Paulina, Carl Urban and Samuel Evans and James Sahpligh. Uhl started the race, assuring his father he would never finish the swim. Due to her nervousness he started several seconds after the gun.

On August 25, 1922, he capped this year by winning the 100-yard outdoor Middle Atlantic free-style championship, beating such star performers as Burman, Crocrouver, Bardo and Nuss.

he liked to swim, just as he liked to eat and, without thinking much about it, to breathe.

The next boy, Raymond, however, was caught by the athletic spirit that pervades almost all the schools of the country. If Raymond could swim better than the best swimmer of West

chester High School, he owed it to his own school to prove it. This was persistently pressed upon him, until he became first the champion of Delaware County, then of all the counties round about and finally of all the Middle Atlantic States.

However, under coaxing lasting several months he finally yielded.

Eleanor then went to practice three times a week in the pool of the First Regiment Armory. Almost at once she won a race for novices. The following spring she captured another and the last rampart of her father's prejudice. A few years later, without a murmur, he let her go to Antwerp with the women's Olympic team.

Miss Uhl is now twenty, a fact to be gleaned only after devious questioning. She stands about as tall as an average man, but the lines of her figure have the heroic grace of Jim's. For one so large she walks with a swift step, extraordinarily resilient. Her skin, though obviously very white to begin with, has been burned by the sun to the approximate color of a shellback's. Her eyes are very clear, very blue and very brightly set. Her forehead is broader than most persons'. Her hair, because she wears it so tightly, suggests jute, but its hue is the same as the hair of the traditional Aphrodite. When she smiles, her teeth show white and square and precisely spaced.

She will answer questions in a simple, straightforward sufficient manner, but will not on any account supply information of her own accord. She frankly dislikes publicity, or as she chooses to call it "notoriety." She grows dubious when surrounded by interviewers.

It is hard to transcribe Miss Uhl's hard to make it plain that she suggests not stolidity but solidity; that she is not wanting imagination, but merely the vicarious imagination of sedentary individuals.

She Found Girls Bore Some So Played With the Boys

To expand: When Miss Uhl was a little girl she never played with other little girls. She played with her brothers, and with the boys they played with. It was not that she disliked or despised little girls, but that she found them boring. They were tame. There were no swift bold movements to the things they did. They were concerned with dolls and Eleanor could never thrill over a doll. They were like picture books, such poor substitutes for actuality. At best one could only weave romances about them, and why do that with life so full of its own romance? The world was an infantile republic, in which the best and most earnest players governed, in which there was no line of demarcation between men

ing the trudgeon and the crawl, Mr. Uhl raised a massive hand against it. "Swimming is all right," said Mr. Uhl. "Swimming is very good. But no daughter of mine will ever swim in public exhibitions."

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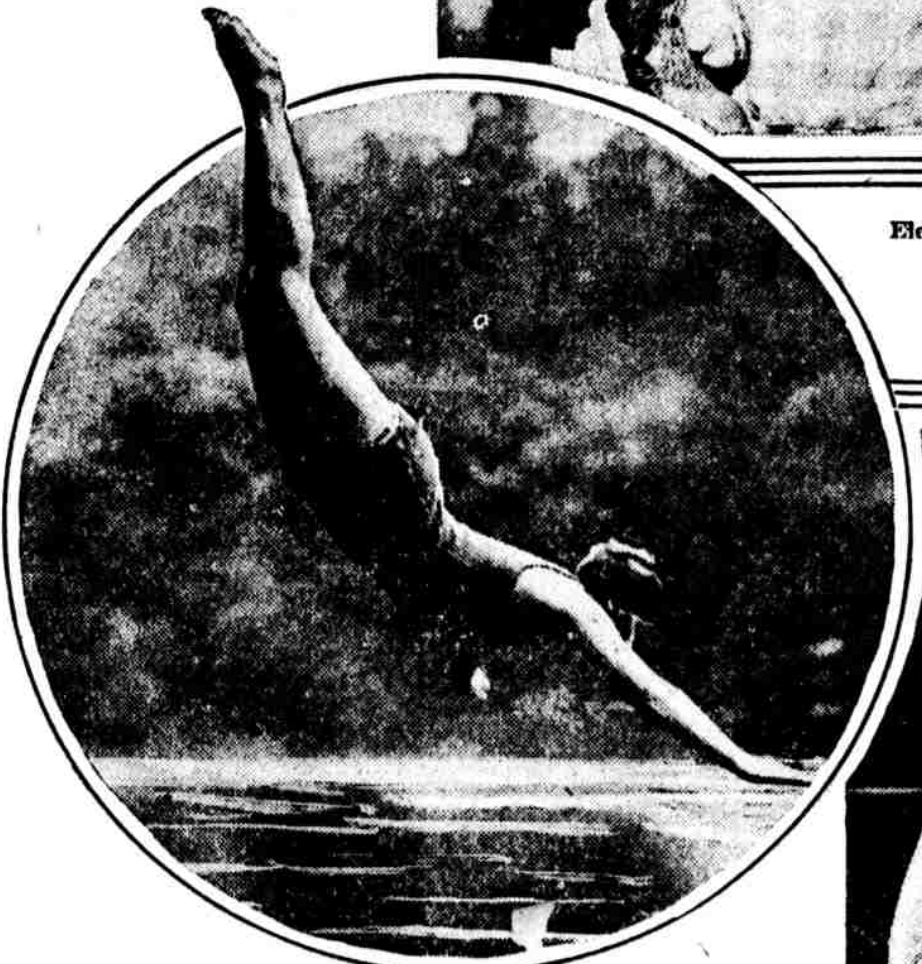
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Eleanor Uhl at home



Miss Uhl in fancy diving trials



Ernest Uhl proudly displaying some of trophies he won



Ernest Uhl is a tennis player of note

Some of the cups won by Eleanor, Raymond W. and Ernest Uhl in their various swimming contests

Peaks in the Swimming Record of Raymond Uhl

- 1915—Intercollegiate championship at Pittsburgh at age of fifteen.
- 1916—Defeated John Knight Shrock in Middle Atlantic fifty-yard race. Time—26 3-5 seconds.
- 1916—Won Sackett cup at Lafayette 100-yard course, setting record time of 60 4-5 seconds.
- 1917—Beaten by Gilbert Tomlinson for some cup, regaining it by covering opponent's time of 63 4-5 seconds.
- 1917—Again won Middle Atlantic championship.
- 1918—Won Middle Atlantic championship a third time.

and in the great business of which there were almost as many opportunities for girls as for boys. If girls chose to stay out and to play with dolls, that was their affair.

Later, she confesses, she revised this viewpoint a little, and began ardently to wish that she had been born a boy and to try to surpass what handicaps the accident of femininity had put upon her. She strove constantly to beat the boys at their own games—baseball, rowing, skating and so on.

Her mother died when she was still a little girl and a grandmother came to keep house for them. Eleanor learned to sew a little but not to cook. She confesses now she cannot even successfully make toast, and repeats a saw by her grandmother that the technique of boiling potatoes is beyond her.

Eleanor passed out of this period without too deep regret. She did not abandon sports, but specialized her sphere in them. When she played basketball it was with girls, and when she entered swimming races it was against girls and women. The girls she had left to their dolls in the beginning became her intimates, and when she went to dances and met her old playmates it was on a new ground fenced by many rituals.

At high school she was one of the forwards of her basketball team for three years, and in those three years the team held the championship of the county. She resumed the girl's swimming championship for Lansdowne High School from any possible doubt, for as long as she remained there.

Miss Uhl was barely out of high school when she was chosen for the women's Olympic team, and taken to Antwerp. Soon after the team arrived there she was taken seriously sick with tonsillitis and sent to a hospital. It began to appear that she would miss the races. Nevertheless, at the time she appeared and won the 200

yards race, and in those three years the team held the championship of the county. She resumed the girl's swimming championship for Lansdowne High School from any possible doubt, for as long as she remained there.

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Youngest of Family Wins 100-Yard Outdoor Middle-Atlantic Race

ANOTHER CUP ADDED TO LIST

Eleanor Found Girls Bore Some as a Child, So Played With Boys

meters race. She then started in the final and finished fourth behind Miss Ethelda Bleibtrey, of New York. She collapsed at the finish line and it was necessary to drag her from the water.

Women in Politics Meets Her Disapproval

The Olympics, of course, have been so far the peak of Miss Uhl's swimming career. She has won since then a good many races—but what may be called, perhaps, her life ashore is growing rapidly. She has become president of the local chapter of the Daughters of Columbus, a Catholic organization, and one of the bookkeepers in the Lansdowne Title Savings Fund and Trust Company. She would like to have become, she says, a physical director in some young ladies' seminary, but not at the cost of her amateur standing. However, there is almost as much appeal in banking, and there are no such things as amateur banking contests to worry one.

About Miss Uhl, it is curious and worth remark that she does not at all believe in the modern young woman. She is sincerely rejoiced over the return of long skirts. She does not approve of women in politics, and doubts very much if she will ever cast a vote. "Let the men run the country and the women run the men."

Women in athletics are something else again. Surely, she thinks, women have as much right to swim and to run as to walk and ride horses. Let them golf, too, if they want to; let them drive cars, and go into the professions. But in the nature of things a line must be drawn somewhere. So why not draw it in politics?

Ernest, the youngest Uhl is a gem of taciturnity in this taciturn family. What may have been his feelings at Pittman a few weeks since, when he beat George F. Pauling, of the great Philadelphia Swimming Club, by one-fifth of a second in a furlong race for the Middle States championship, is a matter of mystery. Somewhat younger he is even more difficult of approach than his sister.

Ernest entered the Middle Atlantic championship races at the command of his father, and under his own protest that he would be unable to finish the distance. He had picked up swimming like his brothers and sisters at Griffith Park, but his practice had been mostly desultory and without training.

He continued swimming in the remarkable form he has hit upon this year, and won the 100-yard outdoor Middle Atlantic free-style championship, which was held in the open-air pool of the Germantown Boys' Club, at 25 West Penn street, August 25.

The youthful blond-haired merman, who has swept everything in the way of opposition out of his path so far this season, defeated a field of fourteen starters and lifted the crown from the head of Al Burman, star swimmer of the Hyacin Swimming Club, of Atlantic City. Burman won the title when he defeated, among others, Charles Crocrouver, the pride of Girard College, in the titular match at the Ambassador Swimming Club's pool six months ago.

Ed Bardo, of the Wilmington Y. M. C. A., finished second to Uhl, while Milton R. Nuss, formerly of Girard College and now of the Germantown Boys' Club, was third. Burman pulled up to the finish line in fourth place.

Bushel of Medals, Many Cups Among Their Trophies

Among them the Uhl's have won close to a bushel of medals and more cups than they can find room for, and the single proof to the stranger that they have felt a definite emotion about it is that the top of the piano in the parlor is covered with possibly a third of the cups.

There are often evening concerts in the Uhl parlor in which Eleanor is usually the accompanist. Sometimes at a profound presence, a cup is overturned, and the concert is interrupted until it has been reverently replaced.

Whether it is Ernest's cup or Eleanor's or Raymond's, all reach with the one instinct toward it, if the cup has been dented and it is as much a source of concern to Ervin who has no cups and to Mr. Uhl, who has none other, as to the others.

Mr. Uhl's parents came here from Germany, but those of his wife, by devious ways from Ireland. How you may reconcile this with the indubitable homozygosity of the Uhl's is your own lookout. Maybe it was that two brothers who journeyed into Europe from the Asiatic steppes were reunited in the 907,000th generation, or that a Milesian yeoman knocked over from his galley had been washed ashore on the Baltic.