



Fighting the Current: The Rise of American Women's Swimming, 1870-1926

Lisa Bier

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In 1926, Gertrude Ederle became the first female to swim the English Channel--and broke the existing record time in doing so. Although today she is considered a pioneer in women's swimming, women were swimming competitively 50 years earlier. This historical book details the early period of women's competitive swimming in the United States, from its beginnings in the nineteenth century through Ederle's astonishing accomplishment. Women and girls faced many obstacles to safe swimming opportunities, including restrictive beliefs about physical abilities, access to safe and clean water, bathing suits that impeded movement and became heavy in water, and opposition from official sporting organizations. The stories of these early swimmers plainly show how far female athletes have come.

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