



Smithsonian

*National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center*

## Guide to the Mille Gade Corson Collection

NMAH.AC.0063

NMAH Staff

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
<b>Title:</b>	Mille Gade Corson Collection
<b>Date:</b>	1920-1930.
<b>Identifier:</b>	NMAH.AC.0063
<b>Creator:</b>	National Museum of American History (U.S.). Division of Community Life Stoyanoff, Esther Corson, Mille Gade , 1898- (swimmer)
<b>Extent:</b>	0.5 Cubic feet (2 boxes)
<b>Language:</b>	Some materials in Danish.
<b>Digital Content:</b>	<a href="#">Image(s): Mille Gade Corson Collection</a>

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Collection donated by Esther Stoyanoff, October 25, 1981.

### Provenance

Mrs. Corson gave this material to her friend, Esther Stoyanoff, who donated it to the Division of Community Life (now Division of Cultural and Community Life) in 1981. The collection subsequently was transferred to the Archives Center in 1983.

### Related Archival Materials

Artifacts from this accession located in Community Life collections (now Division of Cultural and Community Life).

### Processing Information

Collection processed by NMAH Staff, undated

### Preferred Citation

Mille Gade Corson Collection, 1920-1930, Archives Center, National Museum of American History. Gift of Esther Stoyanoff.

### Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

### Conditions Governing Use

Collection items available for reproduction, but the Archives Center makes no guarantees concerning copyright restrictions. Other intellectual property rights may apply. Archives Center cost-recovery and use fees may apply when requesting reproductions.

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## Biographical Note

Mille Gade was born in Denmark into the Gade family of noted musicians. At 16 she was awarded the Royal Life Saving Medal (only five in the world at that time) by the king. She also received recognition and a cash award from the Carnegie Foundation for her life-saving feats. She emigrated to the United States in 1919. In 1921 she became the second woman to swim around Manhattan Island and in the same year swam from Albany to New York City. On Sept. 21, 1921 she married Clemington Corson. Her first English Channel attempt was in August 1923, when she was forced to abandon the effort within two miles of the French coast. On Aug. 27 and 28, 1926, she swam the English Channel (France to England) in 15-3/4 hours, the first mother and only the second woman to conquer the Channel.

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## Scope and Contents

Three scrapbooks and two albums containing photographs of Corson; news clippings about the swim; a Certificate of Life Membership in the Danish American Athletic Club; a certificate from the American Red Cross; sheet music; a tribute to her which contains a picture of her and her children; programs with images of her; advertisements; and a Navy chart showing her route and time. Vaudeville appearances, product endorsements, and civic honors are depicted in photographs and playbills.

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## Arrangement

Arranged into two series

Series 1: Photographs, undated

Series 2: Scrapbooks, circa 1926

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## Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- English Channel -- 1920-1930
- Sports -- 1920-1930
- Swimmers -- 1920-1930
- Swimming -- 1920-1930
- Vaudeville

Types of Materials:

- Albums -- 1920-1930
- Certificates -- 1920-1930
- Clippings -- 1920-1930
- Photographs -- 1900-1950
- Playbills
- Programs -- 1920-1930
- Scrapbooks -- 20th century
- Sheet music -- 1920-1930

Names:

Danish American Athletic Club.  
Red Cross

Places:

Denmark -- Emigration and immigration -- 1920-1930

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Photographs, undated

Box 1, Folder 1	<a href="#">Family Photographs (includes Corson family members), undated</a>
Box 1, Folder 1	<p><a href="#">[Mille Gade Corson with her two children. black &amp; white photoprint], Circa 1925</a></p> <p>1 Item (Silver gelatin on paper.; 10.0" x 8.0".)</p> <p>Collector: Corson, Mille Gade , 1898- (swimmer)</p> <p>Language: English.</p> <p>Notes: AC0063-0000001 (AC Scan)</p> <p>Unrestricted research use on site by appointment. Photographs must be handled with cotton gloves unless protected by sleeves.</p> <p>All three are wearing swimming suits.</p> <p>Topic: Swimming Swimmers</p> <p>Genre/Form: Black-and-white photographs</p>
Box 1, Folder 1	<p><a href="#">[Corson at kitchen table with her family, black &amp; white photoprint], Circa 1926</a></p> <p>1 Item (Silver gelatin on paper.; 8.0" x 10.0".)</p> <p>Collector: Corson, Mille Gade , 1898- (swimmer)</p> <p>Language: English.</p> <p>Notes: AC0063-0000004 (AC Scan)</p> <p>Unrestricted research use on site by appointment. Photographs must be handled with cotton gloves unless protected by sleeves.</p> <p>Mille Gade Corson standing at the table mixing something in a bowl with husband and children seated at both ends.</p> <p>Topic: Family life Swimmers</p> <p>Genre/Form: Black-and-white photographs</p>
Box 1, Folder 2	<a href="#">Mille Gade Corson Photographs (swimming related), undated</a>
Box 1, Folder 2	<p><a href="#">Mrs. Corson going strong, [black &amp; white photoprint], Circa 1926</a></p> <p>1 Item (Silver gelatin on paper.; 8.0" x 10.0".)</p> <p>Collector: Corson, Mille Gade , 1898- (swimmer)</p> <p>Language: English.</p> <p>Notes: AC0063-0000002 (AC Scan)</p> <p>Unrestricted research use on site by appointment. Photographs must be handled with cotton gloves unless protected by sleeves.</p> <p>Mille Gade Corson swimming.</p> <p>Topic: Swimming</p>

Swimmers  
Genre/Form: Black-and-white photographs

Box 1, Folder 2

[\[Corson completing the English Channel swim with large crowd watching, black & white photoprint\]](#), Circa 1926

1 Item (Silver gelatin on paper.; 8.0" x 10.0".)

Collector: Corson, Mille Gade , 1898- (swimmer)

Language: English.

Notes: AC0063-0000003 (AC Scan)

Unrestricted research use on site by appointment.  
Photographs must be handled with cotton gloves unless protected by sleeves.

Mille Gade Corson swimming.

Topic: Swimming

Swimmers

Genre/Form: Black-and-white photographs

Box 1, Folder 3

Mille Gade Corson Photograph Album (English Channel Swim), circa 1926

Box 1, Folder 4

Mille Gade Corson Photograph Album (English Channel Swim), circa 1926

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## Series 2: Scrapbooks, 1921-1927

Box 2, Folder 1	Miscellaneous loose materials, undated
Box 2, Folder 2	<a href="#">Mille Gade Corson Swimming Scrapbook, 1921</a>
Box 2, Folder 3	Mille Gade Corson Swimming Scrapbook, 1926
Box 2, Folder 4	Mille Gade Corson Swimming Scrapbook, 1927 , 1927

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