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Throughout the nineteenth century the development of English swimming relied heavily on the activities of swimming professors and their families who promoted the sport through challenges and competitions and established classes for the teaching of swimming and lifesaving. Like many of their contemporaries, the leading swimming family of the period, the Beckwiths, expanded these activities to include summer seasons at seaside resorts as well as appearances in crystal tanks on the stages of variety theatres and music halls. Female members of the family proved particularly popular and Agnes Beckwith became the most recognised and acclaimed natationist of the period. Her visit to America in 1883 was very well received and consolidated her reputation internationally. Five years later the *New York Clipper* was reporting that a Clara Beckwith was due to appear in a tank scene at the Providence Museum and advertisements began appearing in 1893 for a Cora Beckwith, "Champion Lady swimmer of the World" and demonstrator of the "famous Beckwith Backward Sweep". This paper explores the life courses of these two natationists who appeared regularly on stage and in travelling fairs in America over the decades following Agnes's visit. In newspaper advertisements and interviews both women emphasised their British roots and their connections to the Beckwith dynasty as well as claiming credit for outstanding swimming feats. In announcing her desire to swim Niagara Falls in 1901 Cora, born Cora E. MacFarland in Maine in 1870, asserted that she had previously swum the English Channel alongside Matthew Webb. Clara, born Clara Maria Sabean in Nova Scotia in 1870, was even more forthcoming about her entitlement to the Beckwith name by stating in her 1893 autobiography that she had been born in Lambeth in October 1867, and identifying her father as William Manning Beckwith, Champion Swimmer of England. Both women not only appropriated the Beckwith name but they also annexed the Beckwith routines, including endurance floating and ornamental swimming, and this paper will consider and comment on similarities and differences between these imitators and the original.

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