

Dancing

Belle Star

BELLE STARR

Belle Starr was born on February 5, 1848 as Myra Maybelle Shirley to John Shirley and Eliza Hatfield near Carthage, Missouri. Her family called her May. Her mother was related to the Hatfields of the famous family feud. In the 1860s her father sold the farm and moved the family to Carthage, where he bought an inn and livery stable on the town square.

May Shirley received a classical education and learned piano, while graduating from Missouri's Carthage Female Academy, a private institution that her father had helped to found.

After a Union attack on Carthage in 1864, the Shirleys moved to Scyene, Texas. It was at Scyene that the Shirleys became associated with a number of Missouri-born criminals, including Jesse James and the Youngers. May knew the Younger brothers and the James boys because she had grown up with them in Missouri. Her brother, John A. M. "Bud" Shirley, was called Captain Shirley by local Confederate sympathizers. He does not appear on any list of Quantrill's Raiders, but rode with a group who were called partisans. Bud Shirley was killed in 1864 in Sarcoxie, Missouri. A Confederate sympathizer was feeding him and another scout when Union troops surrounded the house. Bud was killed while attempting to escape.

Following the war, the Reed family also moved to Scyene and May Shirley married Jim Reed in 1866. Two years later, she gave birth to her first child, Rosie Lee (nicknamed Pearl). Belle always harbored a strong sense of style, which would later feed into her legend. A crack shot, she used to ride sidesaddle while dressed in a black velvet riding habit and a plumed hat, carrying two pistols, with cartridge belts across her hips.

Jim turned to crime and was wanted for murder in Arkansas. The family fled to California, where their second child, James Edwin (Eddie), was born in 1871.

Later returning to Texas, Jim Reed was involved with several criminal gangs. While Jim initially tried to go straight, he grew restless and fell in with bad company—the Starr clan, a Cherokee Indian family notorious for whiskey, cattle, and horse thievery in the Indian Territory, as well as his wife's old friends the James and Younger gangs. In April 1874, a warrant was issued for May's arrest despite a lack of any evidence for a stagecoach robbery done by her husband and others. Jim Reed was killed in August of that year in Paris, Texas, where he had settled down with his family.

In 1880, May married a Cherokee man named Sam Starr and settled with the Starr family in the Indian Territory. There, she learned ways of organizing,



planning and fencing for the rustlers, horse thieves and bootleggers, as well as harboring them from the law. Her illegal enterprises proved lucrative enough for her to employ bribery to free her cohorts from the law whenever they were caught. Somewhere during this time she also came by the nickname of Belle.

In 1883, Belle and Sam were charged with horse theft and tried before 'The Hanging Judge' Isaac Parker's Federal District Court in Fort Smith, Arkansas; the prosecutor was United States Attorney W. H. H. Clayton. She was found guilty and served nine months at the Detroit House of Corrections in Detroit, Michigan. Belle proved to be a model prisoner and during her time in jail.

In 1886, she escaped conviction on another theft charge. But on December 17, Sam Starr was involved in a gunfight with Officer Frank West. Both men were killed, while Belle's life as an outlaw queen—and what had been the happiest relationship of her life—abruptly ended with her husband's death.

For the last two-plus years of her life, gossips and scandal sheets linked her to a series of men with colorful names, including Jack Spaniard, Jim French and Blue Duck, after which, in order to keep her residence on Indian land, she married a relative of Sam Starr, Jim July Starr, who was some 15 years her junior.

On February 3, 1889, two days before her 41st birthday, she was killed. She was riding home from a neighbor's house in Eufaula, Oklahoma, when she was ambushed. After she fell off her horse, she was shot again to make sure she was dead. Her death resulted from shotgun wounds to the back and neck and in the shoulder and face. There were no witnesses and no one was ever convicted of the murder. Suspects with apparent motive included her new husband and both of her children, as well as Edgar J. Watson, one of her sharecroppers, because he was afraid she was going to turn him in to the authorities as an escaped murderer from Florida with a price on his head. Watson, who was killed in 1910, was tried for her murder, but was acquitted.

Although an obscure figure outside Texas throughout most of her life, Belle's story was picked up by the dime novel and National Police Gazette publisher, Richard K. Fox. Fox made her name famous with his novel *Bella Starr, the Bandit Queen, or the Female Jesse James*, published in 1889 (the year of her murder).



Blanche Stuart Scott

BLANCHE STUART SCOTT

Blanche Stuart Scott was born on April 8, 1885, in Rochester, New York, to Belle and John Scott. Her father was a successful businessman who manufactured and sold patent medicine. Scott became an early enthusiast of the automobile. Her father bought a car and she drove it about the city in a time before there were minimum driving age restrictions. In 1900 Scott's family considered her a tomboy and sent her to a finishing school.

In 1910 Scott became the second woman, after Alice Huyler Ramsey, to drive an automobile across the United States and the first driving westwards from New York City to San Francisco, California. The Willys-Overland Company sponsored the trip in a car named the "Lady Overland". Scott and her passenger, a woman reporter Gertrude Buffington Phillips, left New York on May 16, 1910, and reached San Francisco on July 23, 1910. The *New York Times* wrote on May 17, 1910:

"Miss Scott, with Miss Phillips as only companion, starts on long trip with the object of demonstrating the possibility of a woman driving a motor car across the country and making all the necessary repairs en route. Miss Blanche Stuart Scott yesterday started in an Overland automobile on a transcontinental journey that will end in San Francisco."

The publicity surrounding automobile journey brought her to the attention of Jerome Fanciulli and Glenn Curtiss who agreed to provide her with flying lessons in Hammondsport, New York. She was the only woman to receive instruction directly from Curtiss. He fitted a limiter on the throttle of Scott's airplane to prevent it gaining enough speed to become airborne while she practiced taxiing on her own. On September 6 either the limiter moved or a gust of wind lifted the biplane and she flew to an altitude of forty feet before executing a gentle landing. Her flight was short and possibly unintentional but Scott is credited by the Early Birds of Aviation as the first woman to pilot and solo in an airplane in the United States. However, the Aeronautical Society of America credited Bessica Medlar Raiche's flight on September 16 as the first women's flight.

Scott subsequently became a professional pilot. On October 24, 1910, she made her debut as a member of the Curtiss exhibition team at an air meet in Fort Wayne, Indiana. She was the first woman to fly at a public event in America. Her exhibition flying earned her the nickname "Tomboy of the Air". She became an accomplished stunt pilot known for flying upside down and performing "death dives", diving from an altitude of 4000 feet and suddenly pulling up only 200 feet from the ground. In 1911 she became the first woman in America to fly long distance when she flew 60 miles non-stop from Mineola, New York. In 1912 Scott contracted to fly for Glenn Martin and became the first female test pilot when she flew Martin



prototypes before the final blueprints for the aircraft had been made. In 1913 she joined the Ward exhibition team. She retired from flying in 1916 because she was bothered by the public's interest in air crashes and an aviation industry which allowed no opportunity for women to become mechanics or engineers.

In the 1930s Scott worked as a scriptwriter for RKO, Universal Studios and Warner Brothers in California. She also wrote, produced and performed on radio shows aired in California and Rochester.

On September 6, 1948, Scott became the first American woman to fly in a jet when she was the passenger in a TF-80C piloted by Chuck Yeager. Knowing Scott's history as a stunt pilot, Yeager treated her to some snap rolls and a 14,000-foot dive. In 1954 Scott began working for the United States Air Force Museum, helping to acquire early aviation materials.

Scott died on Monday, January 12, 1970, at Genesee Hospital in Rochester, New York, at age 84.

On December 30, 1980, the United States Postal Service issued an airmail stamp commemorating Scott's achievements in aviation.



Maggie Kuhn

MAGGIE KUHN

Maggie Kuhn was born August 3, 1905 in Buffalo, New York. Her childhood was spent in Cleveland, Ohio, as well as Memphis, Tennessee.

In the 1930s and 1940s, Kuhn taught at the YWCA, where she educated women about unionizing, women's issues, and social issues. She caused controversy by starting a human sexuality class in which she discussed such topics as the mechanics of sex, birth control, sexual pleasure, pregnancy, and the difficulties of remaining single in a culture where marriage is the norm. She encouraged women to really study their own lives and their world. She once wrote to companies for samples of their products and created some controversies after introducing discussion of the products under topic names such as "truth in advertising," the profits made from cosmetics and drugs, the conditions under which they were made, and the role of women as "purchasing agents."

During World War II, she became program director for the YWCA-USO. This was a controversial career choice due to her opposition to the war. In spite of this, she continued to advocate progressive stands on issues such as desegregation, urban housing, McCarthyism, the Cold War, and nuclear arms.

During the 1950s and 1960s, Kuhn worked for the Presbyterian Church, where she hoped to give emphasis to the social dimension of the Gospel. While tradition confined most seminarians to fieldwork within churches, Kuhn declared that none of her students would pass unless they went out and found poverty within the local community.

Her interest in elder rights began, not as a personal issue, but as one of human rights and basic justice, when she attended the 1961 White House Conference of Aging as a member of the Presbyterian Church. When she began to visit Presbyterian retirement homes, which resident described as "a glorified playpen," she realized the need to reverse the cultural tendency to treat old people like children.

On her 65th birthday, the Presbyterian Church forced her to retire. She banded together with other retirees and formed the Gray Panthers Movement. Seeing all issues of injustice as inevitably linked, they refused to relegate themselves to elder rights, but focused also on peace, presidential elections, poverty, and civil liberties. Their first big issue was opposition to the Vietnam War.

After an elderly woman was killed and robbed of \$309 after cashing a check, Kuhn enlisted the help of Ralph Nader who set up a meeting with the president of the First Pennsylvania Bank. The bank agreed to establish special check-drawn savings accounts for people over 65 free of charge and make loans more accessible to older people.



The Gray Panthers' motto was "Age and Youth In Action," and many of its members were high school and college students. Kuhn believed that teens should be taken more seriously and given more responsibility by society. To her, this was but another example of our fast-paced, exploitative culture wasting vital human resources.

The Gray Panthers also combated the then popular "disengagement theory," which argues that old age involves a necessary separation from society as a prelude to death. Kuhn indicted the American lifestyle for treating the old as problems of society and not as persons experiencing the problems created by society. And she accused gerontologists of perpetuating the illusion of old people as incapacitated, noting that grant money only seemed to fund such research. She called into question the representation of old people in popular media.

Kuhn raised controversy by openly discussing the sexuality of older people. She noted that women outlived men by an average of 8 years. She shocked the public by arguing the sexuality of these women didn't have to die with their husbands and relationships with younger men should be as acceptable for women as it was for men. Furthermore, she advocated that lesbian choices for older women should also be viewed as acceptable and even normal.

She also took a stance on Social Security, arguing that politicians had created an intergenerational war over federal funds in order to divert public attention from the real budgetary issues: overspending on the military and extravagant tax breaks for the rich.

Kuhn criticized housing schemes for the elderly, calling them "glorified playpens". While admitting that they helped to keep seniors safe, she contended that they also segregated the elderly from mainstream society. During her years as a Gray Panther activist, she lived in her own home in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She shared that home with younger adults, who received a break on rent in exchange for their help with chores and their companionship. Kuhn founded the Shared Housing Resources Center.

Kuhn wrote her autobiography, *No Stone Unturned*, in 1991. Four years later, On August 22, 1995, she died of cardiac arrest in Philadelphia at the age of 89.



Yueni

Yuenü

Yuenü which means "the Lady of Yue," was a swordsman from the state of Yue in the modern province of Zhejiang, China. She is also known as Aliao and Maiden of the Southern Forest.

Yuenü lived during the reign of King Goujian of Yue (496-465 BCE). From a young age, she learned archery and how to use a sword by hunting with her father. The King of Yue had planned to attack the state of Wu and when he heard about her skills, he invited her to court. She compared the art of the sword to a door, which can be divided in yin and yang. While strengthening the spirit, one should remain outwardly calm.

Her exposition on the art of the sword impressed the king, who decreed that her skills be in training his army and gave her the title 'the Yue Woman' (越女) or *Lady of Yue*. The king appointed her to train his army officers, who in turn, instructed his army.

Hers is the earliest known exposition on the art of the sword, and influenced Chinese martial arts for generations.



Nellie Bly

NELLIE BLY

Nellie Bly was born Elizabeth Jane Cochran on May 5, 1864 in "Cochran Mills", Pennsylvania. Her father, Michael Cochran, was a mill worker who married Mary Jane.

In 1880, Cochran and her family moved to Pittsburgh. An aggressively misogynistic column entitled "What Girls Are Good For" in the *Pittsburgh Dispatch* prompted her to write a fiery rebuttal to the editor under the pseudonym "Lonely Orphan Girl". The editor George Madden was impressed with her passion and ran an advertisement asking the author to identify herself. When Cochran introduced herself to the editor, he offered her the opportunity to write a piece for the newspaper, again under the pseudonym "Lonely Orphan Girl". After her first article for the *Dispatch*, entitled "The Girl Puzzle", Madden was impressed again and offered her a full-time job. Female newspaper writers at that time customarily used pen names, and for Cochran the editor chose "Nellie Bly."

As a writer, Bly focused her early work for the *Dispatch* on the plight of working women, writing a series of investigative articles on female factory workers. But editorial pressure pushed her to the so-called "women's pages" to cover fashion, society, and gardening, the usual role for female journalists of the day. Dissatisfied with these duties, she took the initiative and traveled to Mexico to serve as a foreign correspondent. Still only 21, she spent nearly half a year reporting the lives and customs of the Mexican people; her dispatches were later published in book form as *Six Months in Mexico*.

Burdened again with theater and arts reporting, Bly left the *Pittsburgh Dispatch* in 1887 for New York City. Penniless after four months, she talked her way into the offices of Joseph Pulitzer's newspaper, the *New York World*, and took an undercover assignment for which she agreed to feign insanity to investigate reports of brutality and neglect at the Women's Lunatic Asylum on Blackwell's Island.

After a night of practicing deranged expressions in front of a mirror, she checked into a working-class boardinghouse. She refused to go to bed, telling the boarders that she was afraid of them and that they looked crazy. They soon decided that *she* was crazy, and the next morning summoned the police. Taken to a courtroom, she pretended to have amnesia. The judge concluded she had been drugged.

Several doctors examined her and declared her to be insane. The head of the insane pavilion at Bellevue Hospital pronounced her "undoubtedly insane".

The case of the "pretty crazy girl" attracted media attention: "Who Is This Insane Girl?" asked the *New York Sun*. The *New York Times* wrote of the "mysterious waif" with the "wild, hunted look in her eyes", and her desperate cry: "I can't remember I can't remember."

Committed to the asylum, Bly experienced its conditions firsthand. The





food consisted of gruel broth, spoiled beef, bread that was little more than dried dough, and dirty undrinkable water. The dangerous patients were tied together with ropes. The patients were made to sit for much of each day on hard benches with scant protection from the cold. Waste was all around the eating-places. Rats crawled all around the hospital. The bathwater was frigid, and buckets of it were poured over their heads. The nurses were obnoxious and abusive, telling the patients to shut up, and beating them if they did not. Speaking with her fellow patients, Bly was convinced that some were as sane as she was.

After ten days, Bly was released from the asylum at *The World's* behest. Her report, later published in book form as *Ten Days in a Mad-House*, caused a sensation. A grand jury launched its own investigation into conditions at the asylum, inviting Bly to assist. The jury's report recommended the changes she had proposed, and its call for increased funds for care of the insane prompted an \$850,000 increase in the budget of the Department of Public Charities and Corrections. They also made sure that future examinations were more thorough so that only the seriously ill actually went to the asylum.

In 1888, Bly suggested to her editor that she take a trip around the world, attempting to turn the fictional *Around the World in Eighty Days* into fact. At 9:40 a.m. on November 14, 1889, she began her 24,899-mile journey.

The New York newspaper *Cosmopolitan* sponsored its own reporter, Elizabeth Bisland, to beat the time of Bly. Bisland would travel the opposite way around the world.

Bly travelled using steamships and existing railroad systems. Rough weather on her Pacific crossing caused her to arrive in San Francisco two days behind schedule. However, Pulitzer chartered a private train to bring her home, and she arrived back in New York "Seventy-two days, six hours, eleven minutes and fourteen seconds after her Hoboken departure". Bisland arrived in New York four and a half days later. Bly's journey was a world record.

In 1895 Nellie Bly married millionaire manufacturer Robert Seaman, who was 40 years her senior. She retired from journalism, and became the president of the Iron Clad Manufacturing Co., which made steel containers such as milk cans and boilers. Nellie Bly was also an inventor in her own right, receiving a patent for a novel milk can and a patent for a stacking garbage can, both under her married name of Elizabeth Cochrane Seaman. For a time she was one of the leading female industrialists in the United States, but embezzlement by employees led her into bankruptcy.

Back in reporting, she wrote stories on Europe's Eastern Front during World War I and covered the Woman Suffrage Parade of 1913. Her headline for the Parade story was "Suffragists Are Men's Superiors" but she also predicted that it would be 1920 before women would win the vote.

She died of pneumonia at St. Mark's Hospital in New York City in 1922, at

age 57.

Nellie Bly was a pioneer in women's journalism and she launched a new kind of investigative reporting. In addition to her writing, she was also an industrialist and charity worker.



Mary Fields

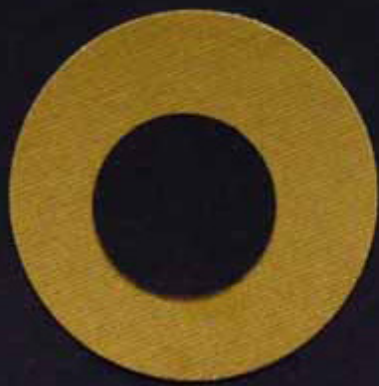
STAGECOACH MARY FIELDS

Stagecoach Mary was a black "gun-totin" female in the American Wild West. She was six feet tall, heavy, tough, and short-tempered. She could use her powerful fists as weapons and packed a pair of six shooters and an eight or ten-gauge shotgun.

Mary Fields was born as a slave in Tennessee during the administration of Andrew Jackson. She and Jackson had much in common. Both were feisty, had driving ambitions, audacity, and a penchant for physical altercations on a regular basis. Mary smoked rather bad homemade cigars. In 1884, well after the Civil War has loosened things up and as a free woman Mary made her way to Cascade County in West-Central Montana in search of improved sustenance and adventure. She took a job with the Ursuline nuns at their mission in the city of Cascade. Called St. Peter Mission, the nuns' simple frontier facility was relatively well funded. The nuns did a thriving business converting heathen savages more appropriately known as Native Americans, and others who dancing down the path towards hell other wise known as prostitutes to the true path of salvation. Unfortunately, the nuns considered salvation for the white men in the area was beyond the scope of their concern.

Mary was hired to do 'heavy work' and to haul freight and supplies to keep the nuns' operation functional and well fed. She chopped wood, did stone work and rough carpentry, dug certain necessary holes, and when reserves were low she did one of her customary supply runs to the train stop, or even to Great Falls, or the city of Helena when special needs arose. One night Mary's wagon was attacked by wolves, perhaps wanting some the dried beans or molasses. The terrified horses bolted and overturned the wagon. Mary and all her supplies were dumped onto the dark prairie. Mary claimed she kept the wolves at bay for the whole of the night with her revolvers and rifle. She survived the night and got the freight delivered. The nuns had spent more than \$30 for the supplies and were greatly relieved. At the same time, they had no hesitation to dock Mary's pay for the molasses that leaked from a keg that was cracked on a rock in the overturn. At least Mary was prepared for such inconveniences as wolves.

"Pugnacious" is not really an adequate word to describe her demeanor. She did not pay particular attention to her fashion statement, and otherwise failed to look at and act the part of a Victorian woman. Occasionally men would attempt to trample on her rights and hard won privileges. The Great Falls Examiner claimed she broke more noses than any other person in central Montana. Once a hired hand at the mission confronted her with the complaint that she was earning \$2 a month more than he was. He questioned how she, an uppity black women could think she was worth so much. To make matters worse, he made this same complaint and general description in public at one of the local saloons where Mary was a regular customer. He then followed that up with a more polite version directly to



Bishop Filbus Berwanger but to no avail. His insults made Mary's blood boil. The next time they saw each other they started shooting at each other. Bullets flew in every direction until the six-guns were empty and blood was spilt. Neither actually hit the other by direct fire. However, one of Mary's bullets ricocheted off the nunnery and hit the man in the left buttock. Not only that, but other bullets Mary fired passed through the laundry of the bishop, drying on the nun's clothesline, ventilating his drawers and two white shirts he'd shipped from Boston only the week before. The laundry incident made the bishop furious. He fired Mary and gave the injured man a raise.

Mary landed a job carrying the United States Mail in 1895. Given her independence and determination, the job fit perfectly. She delivered letters and parcels no matter what the weather or how rugged the terrain. She and her mule, Moses, plunged through everything from blizzards to blazing heat. They reached remote miner's cabins and other outposts with important mail that helped to further the land claim process, as well as other matters needing expeditious communication. She greatly helped the development of a considerable portion of central Montana. However, she has received little recognition for her efforts.

She was well into her sixties before the rigors of the job forced her to retire, but she still needed an income. At the age of seventy, she opened a laundry in Cascade. She did enough laundry to survive and spent the rest of her time in the local saloon, drinking whiskey and smoking her foul cigars. One man who'd ordered extra starch in the cuffs and collar he'd left for her to launder failed to pay. Hearing him out in the street she left the saloon and knocked him flat with one blow—at the age of 72. She told her fellow saloon patrons the satisfaction she got from that act was worth more than what he owed, so the score was settled. As luck would have it, the tooth she'd knocked out was well into decay anyway, so there was no reprisal. He was even grateful.

In 1914, she died of failure of her liver. Neighbors buried her in the Hillside Cemetery in Cascade, marking the spot with a simple wooden cross.



Jacqueline Cochran

Jacqueline Cochran

Jacqueline Cochran, born May 11, 1906, Bessie Lee Pittman, in the Florida Panhandle, was the youngest of the five children of Mary (Grant) and Ira Pittman. Contrary to some accounts, there was always food on the table and she was not adopted, as she often claimed.

Cochran became a hairdresser and got a job in Pensacola, eventually winding up in New York City. There, she used her looks and driving personality to get a job at a prestigious salon at Saks Fifth Avenue. Somewhere along the line, she chose to change her name from Miss Bessie Pittman to Miss Jackie Cochran. Although Cochran changed her name, she remained in touch with her family and provided for them over the years.

Cochran apparently wanted her personal life to remain private and she succeeded in this until after her death.

Later in adulthood, Cochran met Floyd Bostwick Odlum, founder of Atlas Corporation and CEO of RKO in Hollywood. He was reputed to be of the 10 richest men in her life. He was fourteen years her senior. Odlum became enamored with Cochran and offered to help her establish a cosmetics business.

After a friend offered her a ride in an aircraft, Cochran began taking flying lessons at Roosevelt Airfield, Long Island in the early 1930s. She obtained her commercial pilot's license within two years.

Odlum, whom she married in 1936, was an astute financier and savvy marketer who recognized the value of publicity for her business. Calling her line of cosmetics *Wings*, she flew her own aircraft around the country promoting her products.

Known by her friends as "Jackie", and maintaining the Cochran name, she flew in the MacRobertson Air Race in 1934. In 1937, she was the only woman to compete in the Bendix race and worked with Amelia Earhart to open the race to women. That year, she also set a new woman's national speed record. By 1938, she was considered the best female pilot in the United States. She had won the Bendix and set a new transcontinental speed record as well as altitude records.

Cochran was the first woman to fly a bomber across the Atlantic. She won five Harmon Trophies as the outstanding woman pilot in the world. Sometimes called the "Speed Queen", at the time of her death, no other pilot held more speed, distance or altitude records in aviation history than Cochran.

Before the United States joined World War II, Cochran was part of "Wings for Britain", an organization that ferried American built aircraft to Britain, becoming the first woman to fly a bomber (a Lockheed Hudson V) across the Atlantic. In Britain, she volunteered her services to the Royal Air Force. For several months she worked for the British Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA), recruiting qualified women pilots in the United States and taking them to England where they joined the ATA.



In September 1940, Cochran wrote to Eleanor Roosevelt to introduce the proposal of starting a women's flying division in the Army Air Forces. She felt that qualified women pilots could do all of the domestic, noncombat aviation jobs necessary in order to release more male pilots for combat. The WAAC was given full military status on July 1, 1943, thus making them part of the Army. At the same time, the unit was renamed Women's Army Corps (WAC).

That same year, Cochran wrote a letter to Lt. Col. Robert Olds, who was helping to organize the Air Corps Ferrying Command for the Air Corps. Ferrying Command was originally a courier/aircraft delivery service, but evolved into the air transport branch of the United States Army Air Forces as the Air Transport Command. In the letter, Cochran suggested that women pilots be employed to fly non-combat missions for the new command.

In spite of pilot shortages, Lt. General Henry H. "Hap" Arnold was the person who needed to be convinced that women pilots were the solution to his staffing problems. Arnold, Chief of the Air Corps, continued as commanding General of the Army Air Forces upon its creation in June 1941. He knew that women were being used successfully in the ATA in England. Arnold suggested that Cochran take a group of qualified female pilots to see how the British were doing. He promised her that no decisions regarding women flying for the USAAF would be made until she returned.

When Arnold asked Cochran to go to Britain to study the ATA, Cochran asked 76 of the most qualified female pilots come along and fly for the ATA.

Three hundred hours of flying time was required, but most of the women has over 1000 hours. Those that made it to Canada found out that the washout rate was also high. A total of 25 women passed the tests and, two months later in March 1942 they went to Britain with Cochran to join the ATA.

While Cochran was in England, in September 1942, General Arnold authorized the formation of the Women's Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron (WAFS) under the direction of Nancy Harkness Love. The WAFS began at Castle Air Base in Wilmington, Delaware, with a group of female pilots whose objective was to ferry military aircraft. Hearing about the WAFS, Cochran immediately returned from England.

Cochran's experience in Britain with the ATA convinced her that women pilots could be trained to do much more than ferrying. Lobbying Arnold for expanded flying opportunities for female pilots, he sanctioned the creation of the Women's Flying Training Detachment (WFTD), headed by Cochran. In August 1943, the WAFS and the WFTD merged to create the Women Air force Service Pilots (WASP) with Cochran as director and Nancy Love as head of the ferrying division.

As director of the WASP, Cochran supervised the training of hundreds of women pilots at the former Avenger Field in Sweetwater, Texas. For her war



efforts, she received the Distinguished Service Medal and the Distinguished Flying Cross.

At war's end, Cochran was hired by a magazine to report on global postwar events. In this role, she witnessed Japanese General Tomoyuki Yamashita's surrender in the Philippines and was then the first non-Japanese woman to enter Japan after the War. She also attended the Nuremberg Trials in Germany.

In 1948, Cochran joined the U.S. Air Force Reserve where she eventually rose to the rank of lieutenant colonel.

Postwar, Cochran began flying the new jet aircraft, setting numerous records; most conspicuously, she became the first woman pilot to "go supersonic."

Encouraged by then-Major Chuck Yeager, with whom Cochran shared a lifelong friendship, on May 18, 1953, at Rogers Dry Lake, California, Cochran flew a Canadair F-86 Sabre jet borrowed from the Royal Canadian Air Force at an average speed of 652.337 mph, becoming the first woman to break the sound barrier.

Cochran was also the first woman to land and take off from an aircraft carrier, the first woman to reach Mach 2 in a Northrop T-38 Talon, the first woman to pilot a bomber across the North Atlantic (in 1941) and later to fly a jet aircraft on a transatlantic flight, the first pilot to make a blind (instrument) landing, the only woman ever to be president of the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale (1958-1961), the first woman to fly a fixed-wing, jet aircraft across the Atlantic, the first pilot to fly above 20,000 ft. with an oxygen mask, and the first woman to enter the Bendix Transcontinental Race. She still holds more distance and speed records than any pilot living or dead, male or female.

In the 1960s, Cochran was a sponsor of the Mercury 13 program, an early effort to test the ability of women to be astronauts. Thirteen women pilots passed the same preliminary tests as the male astronauts before the program was cancelled. It was never a NASA initiative. Though Cochran initially supported the program, she later wrote many letters expressing that program wouldn't be run in accordance with NASA goals.

Congress held hearings to determine whether or not the exclusion of women from the astronaut program was discriminatory, during which John Glenn and Scott Carpenter testified against admitting women to the astronaut program. Cochran herself argued against bringing women into the space program at that time. None of the women who had passed the tests were military jet test pilots, nor did they have engineering degrees, which were the two basic experiential qualifications for potential astronauts. On average, however, they all had more flight experience than the male astronauts.

NASA required all astronauts to be graduates of military jet test piloting programs and have engineering degrees. In 1962, since woman couldn't meet these requirements, the Mercury 13 program ended.

Cochran died on August 9, 1980 at the home she shared with her husband in Indio, California.

Cochran's aviation accomplishments never gained the attention given those of Amelia Earhart. Nonetheless, she deserves a place of history as one of the greatest aviators ever, and a woman who frequently used her influence to advance the cause of women in aviation.

In 1949, France awarded her the Legion of Honor and again in 1951 with the French Air Medal. She is the only woman to ever receive the Gold Medal from the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale.



Isadora Duncan

ISADORA DUNCAN

Angela Isadora Duncan was born in San Francisco, California to Joseph Charles Duncan and Mary Isadora Gray May 27, 1877. Duncan was the youngest of four children.

Her parents were divorced by 1889, and her mother moved with her family to Oakland. She worked there as a pianist and music teacher. In her early years, Duncan did attend school but she soon dropped out. She and her sister both gave dance classes to aid the family income.

In 1898, her father, along with his third wife and their daughter, died in the sinking of the British passenger steamer SS Mohegan.

Duncan's different approach to dance is evident in these preliminary classes, in which she "followed her fantasy and improvised, teaching anything that came into her head."

A desire to travel brought Duncan to Chicago where she auditioned for many theater companies. She found a place in Augustin Daly's company. This job took her to New York City where her unique vision of dance clashed with the popular pantomimes of theater companies.

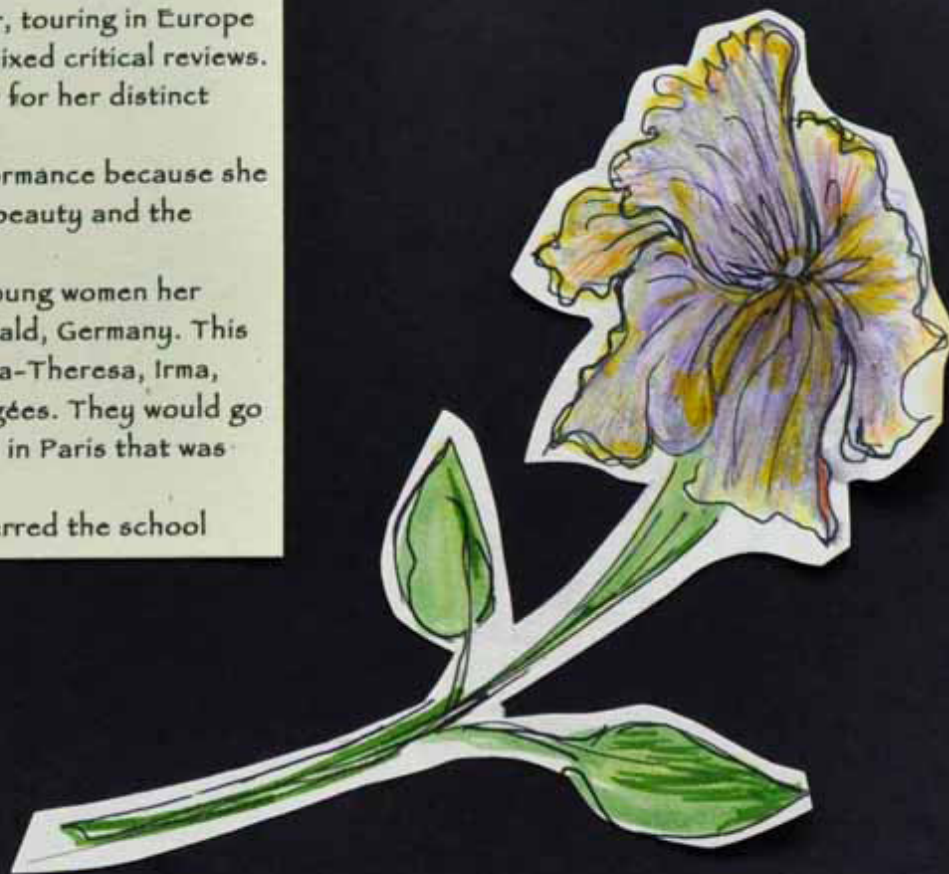
Feeling unhappy and limited, Duncan decided to move to London in 1898. There she found work performing in the drawing rooms of the wealthy and inspiration from the Greek vases and bas-reliefs in the British Museum. The money she earned from these engagements allowed her to rent a dance studio to develop her work and create larger performances for the stage. From London, Duncan traveled to Paris, where she drew inspiration from the Louvre and the Exposition Universelle of 1900.

One day in 1902, Loie Fuller visited Duncan's studio and invited Duncan to tour with her. This took Duncan all over Europe creating new works using her innovative dance technique. This style consisted of a focus on all natural movement. She spent most of the rest of her life in this manner, touring in Europe as well as North and South America, where she performed to mixed critical reviews. Despite the critics' mixed reactions, she became quite popular for her distinct style and inspired many artists to create works based on her.

Duncan disliked the commercial aspects of public performance because she felt they distracted her from her real mission: the creation of beauty and the education of the young.

To achieve her mission, she opened schools to teach young women her dance philosophy. The first was established in 1904 in Grunewald, Germany. This institution was the birthplace of the "Isadorables." Anna, Maria-Theresa, Irma, Lisel, Gretel, Erika, Isabelle and Temple were Duncan's protégées. They would go on to continue her legacy. Later, Duncan established a school in Paris that was shortly closed due to the outbreak of World War I.

In 1914, Duncan moved to the United States and transferred the school



there.

Otto Kahn, the head of Kuhn, Loeb & Co. gave Duncan use of the very modern Century Theatre for her performances and productions.

In 1921, her leftist sympathies took her to the Soviet Union where she founded a school in Moscow. However, the Soviet government's failure to follow through on promises to support her work caused her to move west and leave the school to Irma.

Duncan's goal through her dance was to restore it to a high art form. She sought the connection between emotions and movement.

"I spent long days and nights in the studio seeking that dance which might be the divine expression of the human spirit through the medium of the body's movement."

Duncan wrote of American dancing: "let them come forth with great strides, leaps and bounds, with lifted forehead and far-spread arms, to dance." Her focus on natural movement emphasized steps, such as skipping, outside of codified ballet technique. She believed movement originated from the solar plexus, which she thought was the source of all movement. It was this philosophy and new dance technique that garnered Duncan the title of the creator of modern dance.

Duncan bore two children, both out of wedlock. The first, Deirdre was born September 24, 1906, fathered by theatre designer Gordon Craig. The second child, Patrick was born May 1, 1910 fathered by Paris Singer. Both children died in an accident on the Seine River on April 19, 1913. The children were in the car with their nurse, returning home after lunch. The driver stalled the car while attempting to avoid a collision with another car. He got out to hand-crank the engine, but forgot to set the parking brake. The car rolled across the Boulevard Bourdon, down the embankment and into the river. The children and the nanny drowned.

Following the accident, Duncan spent several months recuperating in Corfu with her brother and sister.

In her autobiography, Duncan relates that she begged a young Italian stranger, the sculptor Romano Romanelli, to sleep with her because of her desperation to have another baby. She did become pregnant after the deaths of her elder two children. She gave birth to a son, who lived only a few hours and was never named.

In 1922 she married the Russian poet Sergei Yesenin who was 18 years her junior. Yesenin accompanied her on a tour of Europe and the United States. The following year he left Duncan and returned to Moscow.

By the end of her life Duncan's performing career had dwindled and she became as notorious for her financial woes, scandalous love life and all-too-frequent public drunkenness as for her contributions to the arts. She spent her final years moving between Paris and the Mediterranean, running up debts at hotels. She spent short periods in apartments rented on her behalf by a



decreasing number of friends, many of whom attempted to assist her in writing an autobiography.

Duncan's fondness for flowing scarves was a contributing factor to her death in an automobile accident in Nice, France, at the age of 50. On the night of September 14, 1927, Duncan was a passenger in the Amilcar automobile of a French-Italian mechanic Benoit Falchetto. Before getting into the car, she said to her friend Desti and some companions, "Farewell my friends. I am off to love."

Her silk scarf, a gift from Desti, draped around her neck, became entangled around the open-spoke wheels and rear axle, hurling her from the open car and breaking her neck.

As *The New York Times* noted in its obituary: "Isadora Duncan, the American dancer, tonight met a tragic death at Nice on the Riviera. According to dispatches from Nice, Miss Duncan was hurled in an extraordinary manner from an open automobile in which she was riding and instantly killed by the force of her fall to the stone pavement."

Breaking with convention, Duncan traced the art of dance back to its roots as a sacred art. She developed within this idea, free and natural movements as well as an approach to the new American athleticism which included skipping, running, jumping, and leaping.

In 1987, she was inducted into the National Museum of Dance's Mr. & Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt Whitney Hall of Fame.



Martha Graham

MARTHA GRAHAM

She danced and choreographed for over seventy years. Graham was the first dancer ever to perform at the White House, travel abroad as a cultural ambassador, and receive the highest civilian award of the USA: the Presidential Medal of Freedom. In her lifetime she received honors ranging from the Key to the City of Paris to Japan's Imperial Order of the Precious Crown. She said, in the 1994 documentary *The Dancer Revealed*, "I have spent all my life with dance and being a dancer. It's permitting life to use you in a very intense way. Sometimes it is not pleasant. Sometimes it is fearful. But nevertheless it is inevitable."

Martha Graham was born May 11, 1894 in Allegheny City, which today is part of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Her father George Graham was what in the Victorian era was known as an "alienist", a practitioner of an early form of psychiatry. The Grahams were strict Presbyterians. Her mother Jane Beers was a sixth generation descendant of Puritan Miles Standish.

In the mid-1910s, she began her studies at the newly created Denishawn School of Dancing and Related Arts, founded by Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn, at which she would stay until 1923. In 1922 Graham performed one of Shawn's Egyptian dances with Lillian Powell in short silent film by Hugo Riesenfeld that attempted to synchronize a dance routine on film with a live orchestra and onscreen conductor.

In 1925, Graham was employed at the Eastman School of Music where Rouben Mamoulian was head of the School of Drama. Among other performances, together they produced a short two-color film called *The Flute of Krishna*, featuring Eastman students. Mamoulian left Eastman shortly thereafter and Graham chose to leave also, even though she was asked to stay on.

In 1926, the Martha Graham Center of Contemporary Dance was established. On April 18 of the same year, Graham debuted with her first independent concert, consisting of eighteen short solos and trios that she had choreographed. She would later say of the concert: "Everything I did was influenced by Denishawn." On November 28, 1926 Martha Graham and others in her company gave a dance recital in New York City. One of Graham's students was heiress Bethsabée de Rothschild with whom she became close friends.

When Rothschild moved to Israel and established the Batsheva Dance Company in 1965, Graham became the company's first director.

In 1936, Graham made her defining work, "Chronicle", which signaled the beginning of a new era in modern dance. The dance brought serious issues to the stage for the general public. Influenced by the Wall Street Crash of 1929, the Great Depression that followed, and the Spanish Civil War, it focused on depression and isolation, reflected in the dark nature of both the set and costumes.

In 1938 Erick Hawkins was the first man to dance with her company. The



following year, he officially joined her troupe, dancing male lead in a number of Graham's works. They were married in 1948. He left her troupe in 1951 and they divorced in 1954.

On April 1, 1958, The Martha Graham Company premiered the ballet *Clytemnestra*, and it became a huge success and a great accomplishment for Graham. With a score by Egyptian-born composer Halim El-Dabh, this ballet was her largest scale of work and her only full-length work. Graham originally choreographed the title role for herself, with the ballet's principal dancer spending almost the entire duration of the performance on the stage. The ballet was based on the Greek mythology of the same title. It tells a tale of Queen Clytemnestra who is married to King Agamemnon. Within the ballet, Clytemnestra has an affair with Aegisthus, while her husband is away battling at the Trojan War. Upon Agamemnon's victorious return he discovers his wife has had an affair, and in revenge Agamemnon offers their daughter, Iphigenia to be sacrificed. Later on within the ballet, Clytemnestra is murdered by her other child, her son, Orestes and the audience experiences Clytemnestra in the afterworld. This ballet was deemed a masterpiece of 20th Century American modernism and was so successful it had a limited engagement showing on Broadway.

Graham's mother died in Santa Barbara in 1958. Her oldest friend and musical collaborator Louis Horst died in 1964. She said of Horst, "His sympathy and understanding, but primarily his faith, gave me a landscape to move in. Without it, I should certainly have been lost."

There were a few notable exceptions to her dances being taped. Graham considered Philippe Halsman's photographs of "Dark Meadows" the most complete photographic record of any of her dances. Halsman also photographed in the 1940s: "Letter to the World", "Cave of the Heart", "Night Journey" and "Every Soul is a Circus".

In her 1991 autobiography, *Blood Memory*, Graham herself lists her final performance as her 1970 appearance in "Cortege of Eagles" when she was 76 years old.

In the years that followed her departure from the stage Graham sank into a deep depression fueled by views from the wings of young dancers performing many of the dances she had choreographed for herself and her former husband. Graham's health declined precipitously as she abused alcohol to numb her pain.

In *Blood Memory* she wrote,

"It wasn't until years after I had relinquished a ballet that I could bear to watch someone else dance it. I believe in never looking back, never indulging in nostalgia, or reminiscing. Yet how can you avoid it when you look on stage and see a dancer made up to look as you did thirty years ago, dancing a ballet you created with someone you were then deeply in love with, your husband? I think that is a circle of hell Dante omitted."



"When I stopped dancing I had lost my will to live. I stayed home alone, ate very little, and drank too much and brooded. My face was ruined, and people say I looked odd, which I agreed with. Finally my system just gave in. I was in the hospital for a long time, much of it in a coma."

After a failed suicide attempt she was hospitalized. Graham not only survived her hospital stay but she rallied. In 1972 she quit drinking, returned to her studio, reorganized her company and went on to choreograph ten new ballets and many revivals. Her last completed ballet was 1990's *Maple Leaf Rag*.

Graham choreographed until her death in New York City from pneumonia on April 1, 1991, aged 96.

Graham has been sometimes termed the "Picasso of Dance," in that her importance and influence to modern dance can be considered equivalent to what Pablo Picasso was to modern visual arts. Her impact has been also compared with the influence Stravinsky had on music, or Frank Lloyd Wright had on architecture.

Martha Graham has been said to be the one that brought dance into the twentieth century. Due to the work of her assistants, Ron Protas and Linda Hodes, much of Graham's work and technique have been preserved. They taped interviews of Graham describing her entire technique, and videos of her performances. As Glen Tetley told Agnes de Mille, "The wonderful thing about Martha in her good days was her generosity. So many people stole Martha's unique personal vocabulary, consciously or unconsciously, and performed it in concerts. I have never once heard Martha say, 'So-and-so has used my choreography.'" An entire movement was created by her that revolutionized the dance world and created what is known today as modern dance.

The Martha Graham Dance Company is the oldest dance company in America, founded in 1926.



By Marcia Fountain-Blacklidge