

*Divine Feminine*

Women of Ravensbruck

## WOMEN OF RAVENSBRUCK

Ravensbruck was a notorious women's concentration camp during World War II, located in Northern Germany, 90 km north of Berlin near the village of Ravensbruck.

SS Leader Heinrich Himmler began construction of the camp in 1938. It was unusual in that it was a camp primarily for women. Himmler chose the site because it was out of the way and yet still easy to reach.

Some have suggested the reasons for this would become clear after the camp opened in May, 1939. First, there had been plans for medical experiments by leading Nazi doctors for sometime. This camp was selected as an ideal place to carry out some of the experiments planned because the surgeons involved could come and go with ease, and not be relegated to one location. Thus, in August of 1942, the now famous experiments using Polish women prisoners, nicknamed, "Rabbits," began. A total of 74 women would be operated on under this program, under the most inhumane conditions thinkable.

Secondly, Resistance movements against the Germans by civilians had sprung up almost immediately following Hitler's invasion of Poland. The "final solution" programs planned by Hitler initially kept secret. This allowed the plan to be implemented on Jews and other considered undesirable in the most efficient manner.

However, the Nazis, and other historians claimed all during the war and well after, that Ravensbruck was not an extermination camp.

Thanks to bravery of many, like Germaine Tillion these assertions were proven untrue. In fact, Ravensbruck had gas chambers, a Place of Execution, and a building for prisoners to receive brutal forms of punishment and torture. It was also considered an excellent source of slave labor for the war effort.

Ravensbruck was part of the "Night and Fog" program that was designed by the Nazis to be able to eliminate their opponents without a trace and with credible deniability. It was under this program that many of the women engaging in Resistance work captured by the Nazis were imprisoned at Ravensbruck.

The first prisoners at Ravensbruck, in 1939 numbered approximately 900 women. Between 1939 and 1945 over 132,000 female prisoners passed through the Ravensbruck camp system, with around 26,000 of those women being Jewish. Between 15,000 and 32,000 of that total survived. Although inmates came from every country in German-occupied Europe, the largest single national group incarcerated in the camp were Polish women.

There were children in the camp too. At first they came with mothers who were Gypsies or Jews or were born to imprisoned women. At first they came in small numbers, but represented almost all nations of Europe occupied by Germany. Between April and October 1944, their numbers increased considerably. There were mainly two groups responsible for the increase. One group was Roma





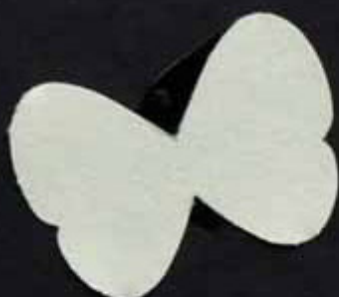
children with their mothers or sisters brought after the Roma camp in Auschwitz-Birkenau was closed. The other group was brought with Polish mothers sent to Ravensbruck after the collapse of the Warsaw Uprising of 1944. Accurate records were not kept of the children but it is estimated their numbers run well into the hundreds. What the Nazis did to these children is unspeakable. Children and unborn children received death sentences. Newborn babies were immediately separated from their mothers and either drown or thrown into a sealed room until they died. Most of the time this was done in front of the mother. There are dozens of testimonies about children thrown alive into the crematory, buried alive, poisoned, strangled or drowned. Several children were used for sadistic "medical experiments." Hundreds of little girls, sometimes only 8, were sterilized by direct exposure of genitals to X-rays. In the early months of Ravensbruck, children were immediately killed. The SS doctor and Rosenthal and his girlfriend, Gerda Quernheim, aborted by force pregnant women. This was done using crude instruments and bestial methods. Only the strongest of all the children who came to Ravensbruck survived. Those children had to work night and day with the women and help them with the heaviest labor. Only a very few of these children survived the war.

Every two or three weeks, the SS commandant of the camp and SS doctors Schwarzhuber and Pflaum selected the ill or weak women for transport to "Mittweida."

These women had to lift their skirts over the hips and run in front of the SS guards and doctors. Women with swollen feet, injuries, scars, or those simply too weak to run were immediately selected for a recovery period in "Uckermark." This "recovery" period consisted in fact of being jailed in sealed barracks without medical care and food until death. But most of the women never arrived in the Uckermark "youth camp." They were gassed in special vans converted into mobile gas chambers. The so-called "transport to Mittweida" was an SS code name for gassing. "Mittweida" was supposed to be a place where prisoners could recover from their slave labor. Of course, like so many other things, it was just a Nazi ruse.

Among the thousands executed by the Germans at Ravensbruck were four female members of the British World War II organization Special Operations Executive: Denise Bloch, Cecily Lefort, Lilian Rolfe and Violette Szabo. Other execution victims included the Roman Catholic nun Elise Rivet, Elizabeth de Rothschild (the only Rothschild to die in the Holocaust), Russian orthodox nun St. Maria Skobtsova, the 25-year old French Princess Anne de Bauffremont-Courtenay and Olga Benario, wife of the Brazillian Communist leader Luis Carlos Prestes. The largest group of executed women at Ravensbruck was composed of 200 young Polish patriots who were members of the Home Army.

In spite of the extreme horrors that took place at Ravensbruck, there was also what been come to be called, spiritual resistance. Women formed surrogate





familial relationships or "adopted" other prisoners as their sisters. The term used to describe these relationships was "Lager Schwestern" or camp sister.

Spiritual resistance also took the form of trying to diminish the suffering of other prisoners. Prisoners tried to lift one another's spirits through creating and giving small gifts, writing poetry and plays, recipe books, sharing information, and memorizing facts about families and family stories of inmates so that virtually everyone would be able to "survive" the camp. The fact that these kinds of practices were done everywhere in Ravensbruck was unique to the concentration camps in general.



Germaine Tillion



## GERMAINE TILLION

"All my life I have wanted to understand human nature, the world in which I was living."

Germaine Tillion was born on May 30, 1907 in Allègre, Haute-Loire, France. She spent her youth with her family in Clermont-Ferrand.

She left for Paris to study social anthropology with Marcel Mauss and Louis Massignon, obtaining degrees from the École pratique des hautes études, the École du Louvre, and the INALCO. Four times between 1934 and 1940 she did fieldwork in Algeria, studying the Berber and Chaoui people in the Aures region of northeastern Algeria, to prepare for her doctorate in anthropology.

As she returned to Paris from the field in 1940, France had been defeated by Germany. As her first act of resistance, she helped a Jewish family by giving them her family's papers. She became one of the leading commanders in the French Resistance in the network of the Musée de l'Homme in Paris. Her missions included helping prisoners to escape and organizing intelligence for the allied forces from 1940 to 1942.

On August 13, 1942, the German occupying authorities arrested Germaine and her mother, Émilie Tillion, also a résistante, while at a Paris railway station. Robert Alesch, a maverick priest in the pay of the Abwehr organization, betrayed them. Abwehr had joined Tillion's resistance organization and gained her confidence. Held at the La Santé and Fresnes prisons, on October 21, 1943 she and her mother were transported to the infamous women's concentration camp of Ravensbrück. It was part of the "Night and Fog" program that was designed to eliminate political opponents of Nazism without a trace.

From her arrival on October 22 1943 she kept a secret diary in which she noted humorous observations of daily events at the camp. To help maintain spirits in the bleakest of environments, she would often read excerpts from her diary to fellow prisoners. She later turned the observations in her diary into an operetta called "The Campworker goes to Hell". At the same time she undertook a precise ethnographic analysis of the concentration camp.

Her mother was killed in the camp in March 1945. The Swedish Red Cross rescued Tillion in April of 1945 by an operation that had been negotiated by Folke Bernadotte. Tillion bravely smuggled the negatives that documented the experiments that had so cruelly been done on prisoners. These were activities that were vehemently denied by the Nazis. After the war she helped document the fact that Ravensbrück had been used as one of the Nazi "killing machines" through gas chambers and actual executions. Her voice stood in contrast to other scholars who were claiming that no gas chambers had existed at Ravensbrück.

Against incredible odds, she survived Ravensbrück, where possibly 90,000 women and children were murdered. She attributed her survival in Ravensbrück "to





luck, to anger, to the desire to bring these crimes to light, and finally to the ties of friendship\*.

In 1973, she published *Ravensbruck: An eyewitness account of a women's concentration camp*, detailing both her own personal experiences as an inmate as well as her remarkable contemporary and post-war research into the functioning of the camps, movements of prisoners, administrative operations and covert and overt crimes committed by the SS. She affirmed that executions escalated during the waning days of the war, a chilling tribute to the efficiency and automated nature of the Nazi "killing machines."

She documents the dual but conflicting purposes of the camps; on the one hand, to carry out the Final Solution as quickly as possible, and on the other, to manage a very large and profitable slave labor force in support of the war effort (with profits reportedly going to SS leadership, a business structure created by Himmler himself).

Finally, she gives chilling vignettes of prisoners, prison staff, and the "professionals" who were central to the operation and execution of increasingly bizarre Nazi mandates in an attempt to explore the twisted psychology and outright evil behavior of often average participants who were instrumental in allowing, and then nurturing the death machines.

After the war she worked on the history of the Second World War, the war crimes of the Nazis and the Soviet Gulags from 1945-1954. She started an education program for French prisoners. As a professor of the *École des hautes études en sciences sociales* she undertook 20 scientific missions in North Africa and the Middle East.

She returned to Algeria in 1954 to observe and analyze the situation at the brink of the Algerian War of Independence. She described as the principal cause of the conflict the pauperization of the Algerian population. In order to ameliorate the situation, she launched 'Social Centers' in October 1955, intended to make available higher education as well as vocational training to the rural population, allowing them to survive in the cities.

On 4 July 1957 during the battle of Algiers, she secretly met with National Liberation Front leader Yacef Saadi, at the instigation of the latter, to try to end the spiral of executions and indiscriminate attacks. Tillion was among the first to denounce the use of torture by French forces in the war.

In later years, she remained vocal on several political topics:

- against the pauperization of the Algerian population
- against the French use of torture in Algeria

- for the emancipation of women in the Mediterranean

In 2004 along with several other French intellectuals, she launched a statement against torture in Iraq.

To celebrate her 100th birthday, her operetta "Le Verfügbar aux Enfers" premiered in 2007 at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris.

She was Honorary Professor at France's School of Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences (EHESS) at the time of her death on April 18, 2008.

Tillion received the following honors:

- Grand-croix de la Légion d'honneur (Only five women ever received this award.)
- Grand-Croix de l'Ordre national du Mérite
- Prix mondial Cino Del Duca (1977)
- Croix de guerre 1939-1945
- Médaille de la Résistance
- Médaille de la déportation et de l'internement pour faits de Résistance
- Grand-Croix of the German Merit (2004)





Maya Angelou

## MAYA ANGELO

Maya Angelou, an American author and poet was born Marguerite Ann Johnson on April 4, 1928 to Vivian and Bailey Johnson, in St. Louis, Missouri. She was nicknamed Maya by her older brother Baily for "mya sister." Her parents' turbulent marriage ended when she was three. Her father sent Maya and her siblings to live with his mother, Annie Henderson, in Alabama because she owned a general store and made wise, sound financial decisions.

However, Maya was destined to lead a remarkable life; a life filled with discovery, pain, failure, triumph and wisdom. She is truly a woman of the new ages.

Four years after being sent to live with her grandmother she and her siblings were returned to their mother in St. Louis. At the age of eight, while living with her mother, Angelou was sexually abused and raped by her mother's boyfriend, Mr. Freeman. She told her brother, who told the rest of their family. Freeman was found guilty, but was jailed for only one day. Four days after his release, he was murdered. Angelou became mute for almost five years, believing, as she has stated, "I thought, my voice killed him; I killed that man because I told his name. And then I thought I would never speak again because my voice would kill anyone." It was during this period of silence that Angelou developed her extraordinary memory, her love for books and literature, and her ability to listen and observe the world around her.

Shortly after Freeman's murder, Angelou and her brother were sent back to their grandmother. Angelou credits a teacher and friend of her family, Mrs. Bertha Flowers, with helping her speak again. Flowers introduced her to authors such as Charles Dickens, William Shakespeare, Edgar Allan Poe, Douglas Johnson, and James Weldon Johnson, authors that would affect her life and career, as well as black female artists like Frances Harper, Anne Spencer, and Jessie Fauset. When Angelou was 14, she and her brother moved in with their mother once again. She had since moved to Oakland, California. During World War II, Maya attended George Washington High School while studying dance and drama on a scholarship at the California Labor School. Before graduating, she worked as the first black female streetcar conductor in San Francisco. Three weeks after completing school, at the age of 17, she gave birth to her son, Clyde (who later changed his name to Guy Johnson).

In 1951, Angelou married Greek electrician, former sailor, and aspiring musician Tosh Angelos despite the condemnation of interracial relationships at the time and the disapproval of her mother. She took modern dance classes during this time, and met dancers and choreographers Alvin Ailey and Ruth Beckford. Angelou and Ailey formed a dance team, calling themselves "Al and Rita". After Angelou's marriage ended in 1954, she danced professionally in clubs around San Francisco, including the nightclub The Purple Onion, where she sang and danced calypso music. At the strong suggestion of her managers and supporters at The

SUCCESS IS IMPORTANT.  
THRIVING IS ELEGANT.

MAYA ANGELOU



JUST WHEN THE CATAPILLAR THOUGHT  
THE WORLD WAS OVER...  
IT BECAME A BUTTERFLY.

MAYA ANGELOU

LIFE LOVES TO BE TAKEN BY THE LAPEL AND TOLD,

I'M WITH YOU KID,  
"LET'S GO."

MAYA ANGELOU





Purple Onion she changed her professional name to "Maya Angelou"; a name that set her apart and captured the feel of her Calypso dance performances.

Angelou met novelist James O. Killens in 1959, and at his urging, moved to New York to concentrate on her writing career. She joined the Harlem Writers Guild, where she met several major African-American authors and was published for the first time. In 1960, after meeting civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and hearing him speak, she and Killens organized "the legendary" *Cabaret for Freedom* to benefit the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), and she was named SCLC's Northern Coordinator. According to scholar Lyman B. Hagen, her contributions to civil rights as a fundraiser and SCLC organizer were successful and "eminently effective".

Angelou next traveled to Accra, Ghana, in Africa. There she met South African freedom fighter Vusumzi Make; they never officially married. She and her son Guy moved to Cairo with Make where Angelou worked as an associate editor at a newspaper. In 1962 her relationship with Make ended, and she and Guy returned to Accra, Ghana. He was to attend college, but was seriously injured in an automobile accident. Angelou remained in Accra for his recovery and stayed until 1965.

In Accra, she became close friends with Malcolm X during his visit in the early 1960s. Angelou returned to the U.S. in 1965 to help him build a new civil rights organization, the Organization of Afro-American Unity; he was assassinated shortly afterward. Devastated and adrift, she joined her brother in Hawaii, where she resumed her singing career, and then moved back to Los Angeles to focus on her writing career. She acted in and wrote plays, and returned to New York in 1967. She met her lifelong friend Rosa Guy and renewed her friendship with James Baldwin. Her friend Jerry Purcell provided Angelou with a stipend to support her writing. James Baldwin was instrumental in the publication of her first autobiography.

In 1968, Martin Luther King asked Angelou to organize a march. She agreed, but "postponed again", and in what Gillespie calls "a macabre twist of fate", King was assassinated on her 40th birthday (April 4). Devastated, she was encouraged out of her depression by her friend James Baldwin. As Gillespie states, "If 1968 was a year of great pain, loss, and sadness, it was also the year when America first witnessed the breadth and depth of Maya Angelou's spirit and creative genius". Despite almost no experience, she wrote, produced, and narrated "Blacks, Blues, Black!" a ten-part series of documentaries about the connection between blues music and black Americans' African heritage. Angelou called this the "Africanisms still current in the U.S." She produced it for National Educational Television, the precursor of PBS. Also in 1968, she wrote her first autobiography, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, published in 1969, which brought her international recognition and acclaim.



LET NOTHING DIM THE LIGHT  
THAT SHINES WITHIN.

MAYA ANGELOU

You only are free when you realize  
you belong no place – you belong  
every place – no place at all. The  
price is high. The reward is great.



WE DELIGHT IN THE BEAUTY THAT  
IS THE BUTTERFLY,  
BUT RARELY ADMIT THE CHANGES  
IT HAS GONE THROUGH  
TO ACHIEVE THAT BEAUTY.

MAYA ANGELOU



Angelou then married ex-husband of Germaine Greer, Paul du Feu, in San Francisco in 1973. In the next ten years, she wrote articles, short stories, TV scripts and documentaries, autobiographies and poetry, and produced plays. She was also named as a visiting professor to several colleges and universities. In 1973 she was nominated for a Tony Award for her role in *Look Away*.

She returned to the south in 1981 after divorcing de Feu. Since then, she has taught at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, where she holds the first lifetime Reynolds Professorship of American Studies. She considered herself "a teacher who writes".

Since the 1990s she has made around eighty appearances a year on the lecture circuit, something she continued into her eighties. In 1993, Angelou recited her poem "On the Pulse of Morning" at President Bill Clinton's inauguration, the first poet to make an inaugural recitation since Robert Frost at John F. Kennedy's inauguration.

With the publication of *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, Angelou publicly discussed aspects of her personal life. She has made a deliberate attempt to challenge the common structure of the autobiography by critiquing, changing, and expanding the genre.

Maya Angelou has published seven autobiographies, three books of essays, and several books of poetry, and is credited with a list of plays, movies, and television shows spanning more than fifty years. She has received dozens of awards and over thirty honorary doctoral degrees. Angelou is best known for her series of seven autobiographies which stretch over time and place from Arkansas to Africa and back to the U.S., and from World War II to the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. She published her seventh autobiography *Mom & Me & Mom* in 2013, at the age of 85.

"All my work, my life, everything I do is about survival, not just bare, awful, plodding survival, but survival with grace and faith. While one may encounter many defeats, one must not be defeated."

In 1969 Angelou was hailed as a new kind of memoirist, one of the first African American women who was able to publicly discuss her personal life. Hilton Als said that *Caged Bird* marked one of the first times a black autobiographer could, "write about blackness from the inside, without apology or defense".

Als claimed that Angelou's writings, have freed other female writers to "open themselves up without shame to the eyes of the world."

TO THOSE WHO HAVE GIVEN UP ON LOVE,  
I SAY, "TRUST LIFE A LITTLE BIT."



I would like  
to be known  
as an *intelligent* woman,  
a *courageous* woman,  
a *loving* woman,  
a *woman who teaches*  
by being.  
-Maya Angelou



Lois Mailou Jones

## LOIS MAILOU JONES

Lois Mailou Jones was an American painter during the Harlem Renaissance who achieved international acclaim.

Born on November 3, 1905 in Boston, Massachusetts, Her mother took her and her brother to Martha's Vineyard where she became lifelong friends with novelist Dorothy West. She attended the High School of Practical Arts in Boston. Meanwhile she took Boston Museum of Fine Arts evening classes and worked as an apprentice in costume design. She held her first solo exhibition at the age of 17. From 1923 to 1927 she attended the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston studying design, taking night courses at the Boston Normal Art School. She also pursued graduate work at the Design Art School and Harvard University. She continued her education even after beginning work, attending classes at Columbia University and receiving her bachelor's degree from Howard University in 1945, graduating *magna cum laude*.

In 1928 she was hired by Charlotte Hawkins Brown after some initial reservations, and founded the art department at Palmer Memorial Institute in [North Carolina]. As a prep school teacher, she coached a basketball team, taught folk dancing, and played the piano for church services. Only one year later, she was recruited to join the art department at Howard University in Washington D.C., and remained as professor of design and watercolor painting until her retirement in 1977. While developing her own work as an artist, she was also known as an outstanding mentor.

In 1934 Jones met Louis Vergniaud Pierre-Noel, who would become a prominent Haitian artist, while both were graduate students at Columbia University. They corresponded for almost twenty years before marrying in the south of France in 1953. Jones and her husband lived in Washington, D.C. and Haiti. They had no children. He died in 1982.

Her main source of inspiration was Céline Marie Tabary, also a painter, whom she worked with for many years. Tabary submitted Jones' paintings for consideration for jury prizes since works by African-American artists were not always accepted. Jones traveled extensively with Tabary, including to the South of France, and they frequently painted each other. They taught art together in the 1940s.

Jones's numerous oils and watercolors inspired by Haiti are probably her most widely known works. In many of her pieces one can see the influence of the Haitian culture, with its African influences, which reinvigorated the way she looked at the world.

In 1968 she documented work and interviews of contemporary Haitian artists for Howard University's 'The Black Visual Arts' research grant. And continued the project in 1969 and 1970, traveling to eleven African countries. Her report *Contemporary African Art* was published in 1970 and in 1971 she delivered 1000





slides and other materials to the University as fulfillment of the project. In 1973-74 she researched "Women artists of the Caribbean and Afro-American Artists."

Her research inspired Jones to synthesize a body of designs and motifs that she combined in large, complex compositions. Jones's return to African themes in her work of the past several decades coincided with the black expressionistic movement in the United States during the 1960s. Skillfully integrating aspects of African masks, figures, and textiles into her vibrant paintings, Jones continued to produce exciting new works at an astonishing rate of speed, even in her late eighties and into her nineties.

Jones felt that her greatest contribution to the art world was "proof of the talent of black artists." The African-American artist is important in the history of art and I have demonstrated it by working and painting here and all over the world." But her fondest wish was to be known as an "artist"—without labels like black artist, or woman artist. She has produced work that echoes her pride in her African roots and American ancestry. Jones died June 9, 1998 and is buried on Martha's Vineyard in the Oak Bluffs Cemetery.





Zora Neal Hurston



## ZORA NEAL HURSTON

Hurston was born to John and Lucy Ann Hurston on January 7, 1901 in Notasuga, Alabama. Her father was a preacher, tenant farmer, and carpenter, and her mother was a schoolteacher.

The family moved to Eatonville, Florida, when she was three. It was one of the first all-black towns to be incorporated in the United States. Hurston felt that Eatonville was her true home. Hurston would later glorify Eatonville in her stories as a place where African Americans could live, as they desired.

In 1904, Hurston's mother died and her father married Matte Morge. Hurston's father and stepmother sent her to a boarding school in Jacksonville, Florida. Hurston was eventually expelled from the school for lack of payment of her tuition.

In 1917, Hurston attended the high school division of Morgan State University. Perhaps to qualify for a free high school education, the 26-year-old Hurston began claiming 1901 as her year of birth. She graduated from high school in 1918.

Next Hurston attended Howard University. In 1925 received a scholarship to Barnard College, Columbia University; where she was the only black student. She graduated with a B.A. in anthropology in 1928 at age 37. She did graduate work at Columbia University and conducted fieldwork in African American folklore all over the South. Out of Hurston's four novels, *Their Eyes are Watching God* is often considered to be her finest. In addition she published more than 50 short stories, plays, and essays. She taught for some years at what is now North Carolina Central University and won a Guggenheim fellowship to pursue her writing. In 1928, sponsored by a wealthy philanthropist, Hurston immersed herself in the American South and local cultural practices. She continued her research in lumber camps and commented on the practice of white men in power taking black women as sexual concubines, including having them bear children. This was later referred to as "paramour rights." Her book, *Mules and Men*, published in 1934 exposed the fact that the power structures white men had exercised over black women during slavery had continued. Her work was often controversial and Hurston did suffer personal consequences.

In 1948, Hurston was falsely accused of molesting a 10-year-old boy. Although the case was dismissed after Hurston produced evidence that she was in Honduras when the crime was to have occurred in the U.S., her personal life was seriously disrupted by the scandal.

In the last decade of her life Hurston worked as a freelance writer. Sam Nunn, editor of the *Pittsburg Courier* engaged her to cover the Florida murder trial of Ruby McCollum. McCollum a wealthy, married, black woman was accused of murdering a prominent, married, white doctor, and local politician. McCollum claimed the man had forced her have sex and bear his child.





Unfortunately, knowledge of Hurston's work preceded her death, and she imposed a gag order on the defense and local residents, in the case. Hurston maintained the town residents' attitude had more to do with Dr. Adams' alleged involvement with Sam McCollum's gambling operations. McCollum was convicted and Hurston did not get paid for her work because of a pay dispute with her boss. Instead, another journalist whom she'd recruited for help in covering the appeal, wrote a best selling book using a good deal of Hurston's material. She received no compensation and only a brief acknowledgement in the book.

True to her character, Hurston, celebrated that "McCollum's testimony in her own defense marked the first time a woman of African American descent was allowed to testify as to the paternity of her child by a white man." Hurston firmly believed that Ruby McCollum's testimony sounded the death toll for "paramour rights" in the Segregationist South.

In later life Hurston moved to Fort Pierce, Florida, taking jobs where she could find them. Financial difficulties forced her to enter St. Lucie County Welfare Home, where she suffered a stroke. She died there on January 28, 1960 and was buried in an unmarked grave at the Garden of Heavenly Rest, Fort Pierce, Florida. In 1973 novelist Alice Walker and literary scholar found an unmarked grave in the general area where Hurston had been buried, and marked it as hers with a proper stone.





Annie Oakley



## ANNIE OAKLEY

"Aim at a high mark and you will hit it. No, not the first time, not the second time and maybe not the third. But keep on aiming and keep on shooting for only practice will make you perfect. Finally you'll hit the bull's-eye of success."

Annie Oakley was one of America's first female superstars. She overcame poverty, prejudice, physical setbacks and her inner modesty to become a star sharpshooter and a woman who broke barriers for other women in the entertainment industry, and in the trapshooting, sport hunting and self-defense arenas. She believed in and campaigned for women's rights to hold paid employment, earn equal pay, participate in sports, and defend themselves in their homes and on city streets.

Annie came from humble beginnings and was born August 13, 1860, Phoebe Ann Mozy, in a cabin in Darke County, Ohio to Susan and Jacob Mozy. She was one of seven children. Her father died in 1865 and her mother married Daniel Brumbaugh. Her mother had another daughter, with Mr. Brunbaugh who died shortly thereafter.

At the age of nine, Annie was placed in the Drake County Infirmary in March of 1870. Here she was taught to sew and decorate. Shortly thereafter, she was "bound out" to a local family to help care for their infant son on the false promise of fifty cents a week. The couple really wanted someone to do manual labor. The couple was often mentally and physically abusive to Annie. On one occasion, the wife got angry because Annie had fallen asleep while doing some darning. As a punishment she put her out in the cold without shoes. Annie endured this cruelty for two years until her mother married for a third time and she was able to return home. Annie often referred to the couple as "the wolves," but thought it too unkind to reveal their names.

After returning home, she became so proficient in hunting, trapping and shootings she sold the game she shot for money to locals in Greenville, as well as restaurants and hotels in southern Ohio. By age 15 she was able to pay off the mortgage on her mother's farm. These activities made her a well-known figure in the region.

On Thanksgiving Day in 1875 the Baughman and Butler shooting act was performing in Cincinnati. Francis E. Butler (1850-1926), part of the shooting act, placed a \$100 bet with Jack Frost, Cincinnati Hotel Owner, that he, Butler, could beat any local fancy shooter. Frost accepted the bet and arranged the match. Butler was shocked to see a five-foot-tall, 15 year old Annie show up as his opponent. After missing on his 25<sup>th</sup> shot, Butler lost the match and the bet. Enamored with Annie, he soon began courting her, and they married on August 23,





1876. Their marriage produced no children but lasted more than half a century.

In 1882 Butler's male partner fell ill and Annie took his place. Annie adopted the stage name Oakley. It is believed she took the name from the Cincinnati's neighborhood of Oakley, where they had resided shortly after they were married.

In 1884 Chief Sitting Bull had the opportunity to watch Annie shoot. He gave her the nickname of "Watanya Cicilla," which translates into Little Sure Shot. This name was used in public advertisements thereafter.

In 1885 Annie and Frank joined Buffalo Bill's Wild West show. However, things didn't go well for Annie. An intense rivalry developed between Annie and another sharpshooter, Lillian Smith. Annie left the show as result, but returned after Smith eventually left the show.

Oakley never failed to delight her audiences with her feats of marksmanship. One of Oakley's most famous tricks was her ability to repeatedly split a playing card, on-edge, and put several more holes in the card before it could touch the ground. This was done with a .22 caliber rifle at a distance of 90 feet. Other tricks included shooting off the end of a cigarette held in her husband's lips, and shooting distant targets while looking into a mirror. She would also shoot holes through cards thrown into the air before they landed, inspiring the practice of punching holes in a free event ticket being referred to as an "Annie Oakley."

Oakley was a top earner for the Wild West Show and via her additional exhibition work, sharing money with her extended family and giving donations to charities for orphans. During World War I, Oakley volunteered to organize a regiment of female sharpshooters, but her petition was ignored, so, instead, she helped to raise money for the Red Cross with exhibition money at army camps.

Buffalo Bill took his Wild West Show to Europe where Annie performed before Queen Victoria of the United Kingdom, King Umberto I of Italy, President Marie Francois Sadi Carnot of France and other crowned heads of state. Impressed by Oakley's superb aim, German Kaiser Wilhelm II, asked her to shoot the ashes off of a cigarette while he was holding it in his mouth. This incident with the Kaiser led to a bit of controversy for Annie. According to her foundation, "Some uncharitable people upon learning of this event later ventured that if Annie and shot Wilhelm and not his cigarette, she could have prevented World War I." Unfortunately, this quote was widely repeated but wrongly attributed to Annie herself. After the outbreak of World War I, Annie sent a letter to the Kaiser requesting a second shot, but the Kaiser did not respond.

Oakley promoted the service of women in combat operations for the United States armed forces. She wrote a letter to President William McKinley on April 5, 1898, "Offering the government the services of a company of 50 'lady sharpshooters' who would provide their own arms and ammunition should the U.S.





go to war with Spain.

The Spanish-American War did occur, but Oakley's offer was not accepted. Theodore Roosevelt, did, however, name his volunteer cavalry the "Rough Riders" after the "Buffalo Bill's Wild West and Congress of Rough Riders of the World" where Oakley was a major star.

The couple toured with the show for more than a decade and a half, with Oakley receiving the spotlight and top billing while Butler worked as her manager, assisting Oakley with her stunning displays of marksmanship.

After Oakley and Butler were in a railroad accident in 1901, she was partially paralyzed for a time, yet she recovered and continued to perform. She did stage work in the 1903 melodrama, *The Western Girl*, and joined the Young Buffalo Show in 1911. Oakley and Butler retired in 1913 settling in Cambridge, Maryland, and adopting a dog, Dave who would become part of their later shows.

During her retirement, Oakley pursued such hobbies as hunting and fishing and taught marksmanship to other women. In the early 1920's Oakley and Butler were involved in a car accident in which they were both severely hurt, but she did manage to perform again for a time in 1924.

Her philanthropic work, done quietly, was often overlooked. She helped orphans, widows, and young women who wanted to further their education. She gave benefit exhibitions in addition to making her own financial contributions for these causes. There is evidence to show that she funded college and professional training for at least 20 young women.

Annie continued to set records in her 60's even after suffering a debilitating automobile accident that caused her to wear a steel brace on her right leg.

Annie Oakley died on November 3, 1926, in Greenville, Ohio. The news of her death saddened the nation and brought forth a wave of tributes. Butler died on November 23, 1926.

"God intended women to be outside as well as men, and they do not know what they are missing when they stay cooped up in the house."



# Taoist Women



## A FEW TAOIST WOMEN

Among religions, Taoism is unique in that it has always included intrinsic feminine qualities of the divine by incorporating internal psychological, spiritual changes encouraging both women to be more empowered. Taoism has always recognized God has two sides, female and male, also known as Yin and Yang.

Yin aspects of Taoist mythology and practice have focused on internal regeneration and spiritual refinement. While both principles are necessary for both men and women, there are differences in application of practices for each.

There are several women who have been most influential in the teachings and legends of Taoism. However, actual documentation of their lives, works and teachings are scarce. Reasons for this are said to be contained in the Chan Buddhist belief that a true female adept "enters the water without a ripple," and the "the skilled artisan leaves no trace." There is a fundamental belief of caution that is common among many religions that promote secrecy and guardedness of their innermost teachings. This is also true of the practices of Taoism among seekers.

Taoists generally believe that knowledge is power and power is often the bane of the human condition. One need only to turn on any current news program to be bombarded by power struggles in all levels of our current society and world. Another common concern of teaching the practices of Taoism is opening the door to unbridled greed. Again the history of Wall Street is fraught with it, and in recent years we have had the real estate bubble burst and the take over of almost every part of our modern society by big government and large industry. We also have the problem of greed on an individual level as well. We have teachers cheating to allow their students to get higher scores on achievement tests, we have recorded votes of persons who reside in local cemeteries, and recent home invasion statistics as reported by the federal government are up 37% from the year 2012 to 2013. According to Taoists, and many other organized groups we have the breakdown of greed into violence...some purposeful, some wanton. One needs only to look at the record number of murders committed in Chicago over Easter weekend of 2014 to wonder if this is indeed true. Finally, there is the Taoist belief that knowledge may be power, but knowledge does not necessarily evolve into wisdom. This idea had crept into popular fiction and entertainment. It is one of the themes of a current television show entitled, "Belief." This is the story of a secret organization that has identified children with unusual gifts and is using scientific methods to test and develop those gifts in those individuals. A few of the organization members have questioned the motives of the head of the organization and have escaped with one of the gifted children, a little girl. The organization is attempting to turn all the gifted children under its care into weapons to be sold to the highest bidder.

The Taoist women featured below are from the first to the twelfth century. Some of the women are more documentable than others.





## SUN BU-ER

Sun Bu-er is one of the most beloved real women of Taoism and has become mixed with Chinese lore as well. Her Taoist title is Free and Clear Human Being.

In documented history Sun Bu-er lived in the twelfth century. She was married and both she and her husband were disciples to a Taoist master named Wang Zu. She had three children and didn't devote herself solely to Taoism until age 51.

Sun Bu-er's devotion to Taoism began with a dream of her husband's. In his dream he met the famed Wang Zhu. In the dream, Wang Zhu talked extensively to Ma, Sun's husband, telling him how to become really alive. Subsequently, Ma went to Wang Zhu and became his student. One day Wang came to Sun and Ma's home when Ma was away. Pretending to be drunk, Wang staggered across their courtyard, into their bedroom and fell, in a drunken stupor on their bed. Alarmed, Sun locked Wang into the room until her husband returned home. When they unlocked the door together, they found no one was there. They then went to where Wang was staying and found him fast asleep.

Sun became a student of Wang. He taught her the way of pure, serene awareness and other Taoist arts. Later Sun would also study with an advanced adept who was said to be a teacher of Wang Zhu.

Sun Bu-er attracted a group of followers but was better known for her talent of divination. Sun Bu-er is also known for her writings. Prior to Thomas Cleary editing and translating these writings in his book, IMMORTAL SISTERS, Secret Teachings of Taoist Women, many of these verses have remained largely secret.

It is believed Taoist adepts, some known, and some unknown gave many of these writings to her. These texts outline the method for reaching a state of being where one can transcend the cause and effects of human conditioning.

A translated example applicable to both men and women reads follows:

\*Before our body existed,  
One energy was already there.  
Like Jade, more lustrous as it's polished,  
Like Gold, brighter as it's refined.  
Sweep clear the ocean of birth and death,  
Stay firm by the door of total mastery  
A particle at the point of open awareness,  
The gentle firing is warm.\*

Sun Bu-er also wrote verses to help women transform internally.  
A translation of one such verse by Thomas Cleary follows.

\*A spring like autumn's balmy breeze reaches afar.  
The sun shines on the house of the recluse.  
South of the river;  
They encourage the December apricots  
To burst into bloom:  
A simplehearted person  
Faces unsimplehearted flowers.\*





## THE HOLY MOTHER OF DONLING

The story of this adept originates from the fourth century C.E. This young adept was a follower of Fan Yunqiao. This adept was in a difficult marriage. Her husband did not believe in Taoism and was always getting angry at her attempts to practice it.

Despite her husband's feelings, she often felt compelled to leave their home to heal the sick and do various other things to be of help to people.

Finally, her husband had had enough, denounced his wife to the local magistrate and had her thrown into prison. After a short time in prison, she exercised the art of disappearance attributed to a certain class of Taoist adepts and "flew out of the window of the prison," leaving only her shoes behind.

Word of this feat soon spread and this adept became known as the Mother of Dongling. Shrines were set up to her in many places and those seeking help would find it by making supplication at one of these shrines. It was said that if a bird were present at the shrine at the same time a person was there seeking to find the identity of a thief, the bird would fly to the thief who had stolen the objects in question. The overall result was that crime in this region was drastically reduced.

In general, Taoism is concerned with both men and women, and with the female and male nature of the divine. It is concerned with practicing the true nature of human life, which is spirit.



## THE WIFE OF CHEN WEI

This is the story of the wife of Chen Wei, a high-ranking official of Han dynasty. Like many women healers, shamans and adepts her name seems to have been lost to the sands of time. However, this woman was adept in the Taoist arts. Some of these included transmutations and communications with spirits.

Apparently, she was also adept at keeping these things hidden from her husband. Accidentally discovered by her husband while she was performing an alchemy task, he was astonished to learn of her gifts and immediately wanted her to teach him. She refused. Angry at her refusal he demanded to know why. She simply told him that such attainments were already present at birth and then when called, the person had to heed the call to follow her destiny.

Not willing to accept her explanation Cheng tried showering her with gifts and kind treatment. When this failed he decided to threaten her with violence. She then told him the person had to be suitable, and lacking suitability, all the secrets and knowledge would be of no use to him.

Finally, she resorted to pretending to go mad and covered her body with mud. She then "left her body and vanished."





Marion Woodman



## MARION WOODMAN

Marion Woodman was born August 15, 1928, in Ontario, Canada. Her father recognized her as academically gifted and began her intellectual education at age three. By the time she was old enough to attend school, she was skipped to grade three. At age six, she lacked developmentally what other schoolmates' aged eight or nine had already achieved. This developmental gap created feelings of inferiority within her and she paid as little attention to her body as she could. At age fifteen she got severe sunstroke and nearly died. She had no idea what was happening to her. After that she was forced to pay more attention to what was going on with her body. She believes out of this she has developed a life long pattern of God speaking to her through illness. She describes herself as going along without a care in the world until she is suddenly pulled down by some malady. Through experiencing several different illnesses and also observing these same patterns in others she concluded the body must be involved in one's psychological healing, because the body can hold on to memories and images that are otherwise inaccessible. She has found dream images combined with bodywork are often the keys to healing.

In 1968, while she was traveling in India, a debilitating illness brought her to a crisis and changed her relationship with her body and her Western culture.

She is married to Ross Woodman who is Professor Emeritus at the University of Western Ontario.

In the early 1970's she and her husband, moved to London, England where he studied at London University. It was there she met E.A. Bennet, a Jungian analyst who transformed her life by helping her distance herself enough from her intellect to get in touch with her own feelings.

For the first twenty-five years of her adult life Marion was an English teacher. She thoroughly enjoyed it, but during that time she gradually developed edema. She was starving herself trying to remain thin, but to no avail. She felt she was being punished for some unknown crime.

Unbeknownst to her, she was allergic to a myriad of foods, but she was too disconnected from her body to know what was needed. Her dreams began to guide her towards a solution. She had to let go of her vision of her self as a victim and discover what was wrong with the choices she was making. In short, she had to grow up. She became desperate with her condition of edema before she was willing to risk change. Her dreams suggested she would find the answers to her edema through the training she would do in Zurich en route to becoming a Jungian analyst. Ultimately, she was in such agony, she left the teaching job she loved and took leave of her husband—not knowing if their marriage would survive—and went to Zurich. She began to listen to her body taking a crucial step in her learning to live her own life.





Marion Woodman has become a writer, international teacher, workshop leader, and a Jungian analyst. She helped to establish The Marion Woodman Foundation. She is one of the most widely read authors on analytical and feminine psychology. A graduate of the C. G. Jung Institute of Zurich, Ms. Woodman is the author of the following books:

*The Owl Was a Baker's Daughter: Obesity, Anorexia Nervosa, and the Repressed Feminine*, 1980 Inner City Books.

*Addiction to Perfection: The Still Unravished Bride*, 1982 Inner City Books.

*The Pregnant Virgin: A Process of Psychological Transformation*, 1985 Inner City Books.

*The Ravaged Bridegroom: Masculinity in Women*, 1990 Inner City Books.

*Leaving My Father's House: A Journey to Conscious Femininity* (co-authored with Kate Danson, Mary Hamilton, Rita Greer Allen), 1992 Shambhala Publication.

*Conscious Femininity: Interviews With Marion Woodman*, 1993 Inner City Books.

*Dancing in the Flames: The Dark Goddess in the Transformation of Consciousness* (co-authored with Elinor Dickson), 1996 Shambhala Publications.

*Coming Home to Myself: Daily Reflections for a Woman's Body and Soul* (co-authored with Jill Mellick), April 2001, Conari Press.

*The Maiden King: The Reunion of Masculine and Feminine* (co-authored with Robert Bly), November 1998, Henry Holt & Co.

*Bone: Dying into Life*, 2000 Viking Press.





Dr. Tina Strobos



### Dr. TINA STROBOS

Tina Strobos was a Dutch physician and child psychiatrist who, while a medical student during World War II living in Amsterdam, helped shelter more than 100 Jewish refugees as part of the Dutch resistance during the Nazi occupation of The Netherlands. In 2009, Strobos was honored for her work by the Holocaust and Human Rights Education Center of New York.

Her actions as a young medical student were recognized as extraordinary by Holocaust organizations like Yad Vashem, which listed her with other rescuers as one of the Righteous Among the Nations.

Dr. Strobos was born Tineke Buchter in Amsterdam on May 19, 1920, the daughter of Ms. Schotte and Alphonse Buchter, who later divorced.

The Nazis closed her school while Dr. Strobos was studying medicine because she and other students refused to sign a loyalty oath. But she continued to study her medical books while working for the underground.

"You have to be a little bit selfish and look after yourself; otherwise you just die inside, you burn out," she said.

Strobos was well-educated and fluent in German. At one time she had a Jewish fiancé, Abraham Pais, whom she did not marry and who went on to become a particle physicist.

During the German occupation of the Netherlands between 1940 and 1945, Strobos, together with her mother, Marie Schotte and grandmother, set up a sanctuary in their home which sheltered over 100 Jewish refugees—four or five at a time in a gabled attic in their home.

Their home was a three-story boarding house at 282 Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal located behind the Royal Palace in the heart of Amsterdam.

"A carpenter came with a toolbox one day and said, 'I'm a carpenter from the underground,'" Dr. Strobos recalled in a 2009 interview with The New York Times. "Show me your house and I'll build a hiding place."

The refugees stayed on the upper floors and attic of the family's boarding house, where there was also a secret compartment for hiding two or three people.

A changing cast of Jews, Communists and other endangered individuals spent days or weeks on the upper floors.

If the Gestapo visited, an alarm bell on the second floor allowed Dr. Strobos and her mother to alert the fugitives.

They also drilled them in clambering out a window to the roof to reach the relative safety of an adjoining school. Most Jews stayed in the hideout for brief periods until the Dutch resistance could find more reliable sanctuaries.

"We never hid more than four or five at a time," Dr. Strobos said. "We didn't have enough food."

The Gestapo searched the rooming house several times. But Dr. Strobos, a tall, soft-spoken woman, beguiled the Germans with her fluency in their language



Tina Strobos and Her Mother, Marie Schotte  
1938



Among the Jews she helped hide was a close friend, Tirtsa Van Amerongen; an Orthodox couple with five children who brought their own kosher food; and her fiancé for a time, the particle physicist Abraham Pais. They also hid artist Martin Monnickendam (1874-1943.)

Her grandmother had a radio transmitter hidden in the house, which was used to send clandestine messages from the underground to Britain.

Strobos said of her grandmother, "She is the only person I know who scared the Gestapo."

Dr. Strobos rode her bicycle for miles outside the city to carry ration stamps to Jews hiding on farms. She transported radios to resistance fighters and stashed their guns. She created fake identity cards — ones that were not stamped with a J — either by stealing photographs and fingerprinted documents from legitimate guests at the boarding house or making deals with pickpockets to swipe documents from railway travelers.

She was cold and hungry when she took those risks and was interrogated nine times by the Gestapo. Once, she was left unconscious after an official threw her against a wall.

"It's the right thing to do," she said when asked why she had taken such gambles.

"Your conscience tells you to do it. I believe in heroism, and when you're young you want to do dangerous things."

Their house was only a ten-minute walk from Anne Frank's house at 263 Prinsengracht, Amsterdam.

Dr. Strobos finished her medical degree after the war and studied psychiatry with Anna Freud in London. In the early 1950s, she and her first husband, Robert Strobos, a neurologist, traveled to New York, where she completed her residency in psychiatry and neurology at Westchester Medical Center in Valhalla. They divorced in 1964.

In 1967 she married Walter Chudson, an economist, who died in 2002.

Donna Cohen, executive director of the Holocaust and Human Rights Education Center in White Plains, said that Dr. Strobos found ways to help the beleaguered throughout her life.

She worked as a family psychiatrist, specializing in the mentally impaired, Ms. Cohen said, and used her modest fame to speak out against the torture of terrorists. After Hurricane Katrina, when she was in her 80s, she worked diligently, though unsuccessfully, to find homes for displaced Southerners at her senior-citizens residence in Rye.

She and her mother, Marie Schotte, were awarded the Righteous Among the Nations Award by Yad Vashem in 1989. Tina Strobos died on February 27, 2012 in Rye, New York of cancer. She was surrounded by family.





