

ANNIE OAKLEY

1 x 60



International

ANNIE OAKLEY

1 x 60

CONTACT

Tom Koch, Director
WGBH International
125 Western Avenue
Boston, MA 02134 USA
TEL 617-300-3893
FAX 617-779-7900
tom_koch@wgbh.org
wgbh.org/international

AMERICAN EXPERIENCE presents *Annie Oakley*, the story of a five-foot-tall sharpshooter who pulled herself out of the depths of poverty to become known the world over as a symbol of the Wild West. From producer Riva Freifeld, this one-hour film chronicles Oakley's life, from her childhood in Ohio to her world tours with Buffalo Bill's Wild West show.

Phoebe Anne Moses, called Annie, first picked up a gun in 1875 at age fifteen to save her family from destitution. She taught herself to shoot and hunted quail, which she sold to support her struggling family. "She was a market hunter, and turning a very nice profit," says women's studies professor Mary Zeiss Stange. "Certainly not something that was at all appropriate for a woman to be doing in that time and place." Thanks to her prowess with a shotgun, she became the primary breadwinner of her household and paid off the mortgage on the family farm.

Frank Butler, who was making a name for himself on the variety stage, soon noticed the shooting prodigy. Butler challenged that he could outshoot anyone around. The 100-pound Ohio teenager didn't just defeat the star—she also won Butler's heart. They married and went on tour as Butler and Oakley—the stage name that Annie adopted.

As Annie Oakley, she dazzled crowds around the world, first on the variety circuit, then with the circus, and eventually with Buffalo Bill's Wild West show. Oakley amazed audiences by splitting playing cards in two, hitting countless moving targets, even once shooting a cigarette out of Prince Wilhelm of Prussia's mouth at thirty paces. She could shoot with her left hand, her right hand, upside down, and sideways.

In 1885, Oakley entertained crowds in 40 cities across America. By 1895, that number grew to more than 130 cities around the world. She was a star at the Paris Exposition in 1889 and shone again in 1893 when Buffalo Bill set up shop just outside of Chicago's Columbian Exposition. The girl from Ohio had become a living symbol of the Wild West—a place that was fast disappearing.

In true celebrity style, the end of Oakley's career was plagued with scandal. Erroneous stories of Oakley stealing to pay for cocaine hit the papers in 1903, when the legendary shooter was 43 years old. She spent six years ensnared in legal battles trying to clear her name. She retired from public life in 1913, but continued working as an advocate of women's use of firearms, teaching thousands to shoot. Ever since her death in 1926, the legend of Annie Oakley has been kept alive on stage and screen.

06.01.100

AMERICAN EXPERIENCE™

CREDITS

Executive Producer: Mark Samels

Producer: Sharon Grimberg

Producer/Director: Riva Freifeld

An AMERICAN EXPERIENCE production by WGBH/Boston.

Cover Photo Credit: The Annie Oakley Center at Garst Museum