

Little Miss Sure Shot

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by Preston Shah

The BOOT HILL® Game includes an extensive list of historical NPCs converted to game statistics. But one very famous lady was omitted from this roster: Annie Oakley.

Combining historical data from various published sources, I have pieced together a fairly comprehensive personal history for Annie, which should provide enterprising referees with a wealth of role-playing opportunity. Her game statistics were developed using historical references and other stories as guidelines.

Since her skills were used mainly for entertainment, she has no kills on record, and no rewards are offered. However, her natural talents make her a formidable opponent. Played properly, Annie can give egotistical characters the surprise of their lives. At 5'0" and 102 lbs., she doesn't look like much of a threat, but she will not hesitate to put characters foolish enough to cross her in their places.

Personal History

Annie Oakley was born Phoebe Anne Moses on August 13, 1860 in Darke County, Ohio. She was the fifth child of Jacob and Susan Moses. She grew up in a one-room cabin near Greenville, Ohio with her parents, her brother John, and her three sisters, Sarah Ellen, Lyda, and Elizabeth. Her family called her Annie.

After her father died during a blizzard in 1868, the children all had to help run the household. While her sisters and brother took over most of the chores, 8-year-old Annie was relegated to bringing home food for the family, which she did very well. She hunted in the woods with a neighbor boy named Tom Walsh, and the two often passed the time by making nickel bets on Annie's next shot. When hunting, Annie made it a rule never to shoot a motionless animal, and never to shoot for any part but the head. (Shooting an animal anywhere else may ruin the meat and the pelt.) Selling pelts to local fur traders brought Annie both a small income and a reputation for hunting prowess. But many people thought that "Annie" was "Andy," so she lost out on a lot of credit.

Eventually, various hardships caused the family to scatter. At the age of nine, Annie was sent to live at a poorhouse. There, she was overworked, beaten, and teased by the other children, who called her "Moses Poses." She hated the nickname so much that she later changed her family name to Mozee, and she never quite forgave her brother John for keeping the old family name.

After two years of this abuse, Annie got fed up with the poorhouse and walked back home, where she learned that her mother had remarried. Her new stepfather was a Civil War veteran named Joseph Shaw. All of her older sisters were also married, so Annie took up hunting again and went back to earning meat for the family.

In 1875, Annie's sister Lyda invited her to Cincinnati for a visit. Once there, Annie became intrigued with the city's shooting galleries, and she would shoot for hours without a single miss. Her brother-in-law was so impressed that he arranged for Annie to challenge sharpshooter Frank Butler to a shooting match. Annie shot so well that she won both the match and her opponent's heart. She and Frank were married the following year, and they began

touring the country performing shooting tricks. Eventually, Frank decided that Mozee was not a catchy enough name, so he suggested that Annie Mozee adopt the name "Annie Oakley."

In 1895, Annie and Frank joined Buffalo Bill Cody's circus. The two became good friends with Buffalo Bill. Annie stayed with the circus for seventeen years. Her act consisted of various trick shots, such as shooting the wicks out of moving candles, shooting glass balls thrown into the air, and shooting the ashes off of cigarettes.

Annie toured the U.S. and much of Europe with the circus. During her travels in the western United States, she was adopted into the Sioux nation by Chief Sitting Bull, who dubbed her "Little Miss Sure Shot."

In the course of her European tour, Annie performed for several of the crowned heads of Europe, including Edward and Alexandra (the Prince and Princess of Wales), the King of Denmark, the King of Saxony, the King and Queen of Belgium, the King of Greece, the Crown Prince of Austria, Grand Duke Michael of Russia, and the Crown Prince and Princess of Germany. Her audiences were impressed, and often requested special tricks or tried her skill themselves. Grand Duke Michael of Russia challenged her to a shooting match; she beat him forty-seven to thirty-five out of a possible fifty. In Germany, the Kaiser asked Annie whether she could shoot a cigarette out of his mouth. She made the shot successfully at 50 feet.

After they returned to America, Frank and Annie bought a home in Nutley, New Jersey, where they often entertained such famous people as Will Rogers and Teddy Roosevelt.

Annie had a special love for orphans, and she often performed free shows for them. Because of her way with children, Annie was the official guardian of the other performers' children and of the minors who joined the circus. In due time, she became the circus babysitter.

During this time, Frank retired to become Annie's manager. He made a hobby of exposing frauds who claimed to be sharpshooters just as good as Annie — and he found many such frauds.

In 1901, an injury sustained in a train accident left Annie partly paralyzed, and her hair turned snow white. Determined, she dyed her hair back to its original black and returned to show business with a leg brace and a cane to continue her career. In her later years, Annie played the lead part in the silent movie, "The Western Girl." During WWI, Annie and Frank gave shooting lessons to the soldiers.

Though she seemed to be her old self, Frank was worried that Annie was straining herself too much. In 1921, Annie was seriously injured in an automobile accident. On top of her injuries, she also suffered from pernicious anemia. Knowing that she would die soon, Annie moved back to Ohio. There, "Little Miss Sure Shot" died in her sleep in 1926.

Notes for Play

Annie's reaction rolls are normal in most cases, but modifiers apply when something happens which relates to a particularly emotional aspect of her life. For example, apply a penalty of -1 to her reaction to any character who calls her "Moses," and a -4 penalty for anyone foolish enough to call her "Moses Poses," due to her experi-

Base Ability Scores for Annie Oakley¹ (Age 25)

SPD	GAC	TAC	BRV	EXP	ST	WPN	BSP	BAC	DATES	PRO
+22	+20	—	+4/+15	—	16	15R	21	85	60-26	Sharpshooter
DAR6	31	1sg	21							

ences in the poorhouse. Modifiers ranging from -2 to +2 apply with respect to those who have dealings with her husband Frank or her friend Buffalo Bill, depending upon how those men are treated by the individuals in question.

During shows, Annie receives a +10 bonus to her BAC due to her intense concentration.

Suggested Scenarios

Annie Oakley makes an interesting and viable NPC in almost any phase of her life. Before placing her in your campaign, decide what portion of her career you wish to highlight in play. Below are some outlines for possible scenarios which feature Annie.

Thieves in the Woods

As a little girl, Annie is taking some furs into town after one of her many hunting trips. She is armed with a musket. The player characters encounter her *en route* just as two bandits level their guns at her and try to steal her day's catch.

	Short	Medium	Long	Extreme	Rate	Reload	WS
Musket	0-10	11-20	21-35	36-50	1 1/4	VS	

Danger at the Circus

During her circus career, the adult Annie is threatened by a psychopath, whose advances she had previously spurned. He has decided that if he can't have her, no one can. He intends to kill her, and is currently watching her every move and threatening her with death. Frank is away when this occurs, but Bill Cody has appealed to the local authorities, who have found nothing so far. In the typical slasher movie tradition, this should be played with lots of suspense, and one or murders might be connected with it. In any case, the killer should be portrayed as a very twisted individual. Though deranged, Annie's adversary is a tactical genius, planning his moves carefully to avoid direct confrontation with an armed and angry Annie Oakley. The player characters are hired by Bill Cody to catch the psychopath.

Bandit Annie

Shortly after one of Annie's shows in Europe, the royal family's jewels are stolen. Witnesses swear that the thief looked just like Annie. Frank hires the player characters to find the thief and clear his wife's name.

No matter how you handle it, the presence of Annie Oakley should add some color to your BOOT HILL Game campaign.

1. Statistical layout from BOOT HILL® Game, © 1984 TSR, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

