

## Beatrix Potter

*Author; Illustrator*

Born: July 28, 1866  
Birthplace: Middlesex, England.  
Died: 1943

An English author, Beatrix Potter is known throughout the world for the Peter Rabbit books, which she both wrote and illustrated. Her many books for children include such tales as *Jemima Puddleduck*, *Jeremy Fisher*, *Two Bad Mice*, *The Tale of Tom Kitten*, *The Tailor of Gloucester* and *Roly Poly Pudding*, all of which are popular stories readily available in bookstores today. Beatrix Potter lived most of her life in Sawrey, Westmoreland County, in a quiet country cottage. There she kept many small animals as pets, which appeared time and again as the lovable characters in her stories. She began writing and sending her stories to delight sick children, and these were first produced as small books that were easy for small children to handle. Besides her charming watercolors of animals, her illustrations depict in delicate detail the English countryside with which she was so familiar. Her books have been translated into many languages. *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* has sold over 6 million copies, becoming the world's best selling children's book.

© 1995, Beth Brownfield

## Margot Adler

*Writer, Feminist*

Born: April 16, 1946  
Birthplace: Little Rock, AR  
Died 2014

Margot Adler has appeared on National Public Radio programs such as "All Things Considered" and "Morning Edition." She holds a degree in political science from the University of California at Berkeley and a masters in journalism from Columbia University. From 1972 - 1990 she was host for three different live TV talk shows. At various times she has been a reporter, a newscaster, and a producer. In 1971 Adler was chief of Pacifica's Washington Bureau. From 1979 to the present, she has been a correspondent for National Public Radio based in New York. A committed social activist, she was arrested in 1964 for participation in the Free Speech movement and worked for civil rights in Mississippi in the 1960's. "We have to find a way to carry memory forward," she writes, "so our children won't have to start from scratch." Adler has served on the Board of CUUPS, the Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans. She is the author of *Drawing Down the Moon*, a classic study of contemporary goddess religion and neo-pagan spirituality published by Penguin in 1979, and also *Heretic's Heart, a Journey Through Spirit and Revolution* published by Beacon Press in 1997. Adler is a member of New York's Unitarian Church of All Souls.

© 2001, Beth Brownfield

## Annie Bizzell Jordan Willis

*Universalist Educator*

Born: 1893  
Birthplace: Suffolk - ?  
Died: 1977

Annie Willis's father was one of the first black Universalist ministers, a teacher who won support of the Universalist convention for the establishment of the Suffolk Normal Training School for Black students. Annie was educated in her father's school. Having grown up studying education from observing her father, she became principal of the Suffolk school after her father's death in 1929. During the difficult years of the Great Depression, Willis instilled pride of accomplishment and a love of learning in her students, many of whom went on to become successful surgeons, teachers, lawyers, political figures, and preachers. Funded by a local Universalist agency, her school also received donations of clothing, books, and supplies from other Universalist and Black congregations. "Miss Annie" provided daily meals for her young students, sometimes financed out of her own meager salary, and her school included classes for 3-year olds, long before the idea of preschool became commonplace. In the 1940's as opportunities for public education for Blacks improved, Willis' grade school was phased out and Suffolk was renamed the Jordan Neighborhood House, and only the kindergarten remained. Annie Willis continued working in her school until well past her retirement in 1974.

© 2001, Beth Brownfield

## Maria Louise Baldwin

*Educator, Activist*

Born: 1856  
Birthplace: Cambridge, MA  
Died: 1922

Maria Baldwin was the daughter of a Haitian father and an African-American mother, both of whom were determined to give their daughter a solid education. She grew up in the Civil War era and experienced the cruelties of racism throughout her life. Her motto became "I dare not fail." She became such an excellent teacher, a committee of Black citizens had her appointed in 1887 to teach all seven elementary grades at the interracial Agassiz Grammar School in Cambridge, where she became principal in 1889, a post she served for 30 years. In 1916, the school was renovated and her position was elevated; Baldwin became the only Black master principal in New England. She continued her studies at both Boston and Harvard Universities, and collected a large library, which she shared with friends and colleagues at her Prospect Street home in Cambridge. She drew together for study and literary discussion a weekly class of Black students from Harvard. Her many friends included Unitarian ministers Thomas Higginson and Edward Everett Hale. In 1907 she became a member of the Unitarian Church of the Disciples in Boston. After her death at age 65, a scholarship fund was established in her memory for Cambridge children.

© 2001, Beth Brownfield