The Autobiography of Alice B Toklas (1933)  
by Gertrude Stein

Chapter 1 - BEFORE I CAME TO PARIS

I was born in San Francisco, California 1877.
I have in consequence always preferred living in a temperate climate but it is difficult, on the continent of Europe or even in America, to find a temperate climate and live in it. My mother's father was a pioneer, he came to California in '49, he married my grandmother who was very fond of music. She was a pupil of Clara Schumann's father. My mother was a quiet charming woman named Emilie.

My father came of polish patriotic stock. His grand-uncle raised a regiment for Napoleon and was its colonel. His father left his mother just after their marriage, to fight at the barricades in Paris, but his wife having cut off his supplies, he soon returned and led the life of a conservative well to do land owner.

I myself have had no liking for violence and have always enjoyed the pleasures of needlework and gardening. I am fond of paintings, furniture, tapestry, houses and flowers and even vegetables and fruit-trees. I like a view but I like to sit with my back turned to it.

I led in my childhood and youth the gently bred existence of my class and kind. I had some intellectual adventures at this period but very quiet ones. When I was about nineteen years of age I was a great admirer of Henry James. I felt that The Awkward Age would make a very remarkable play and I wrote to Henry James suggesting that I dramatise it. I had from him a delightful letter on the subject and then, when I felt my inadequacy, rather blushed for myself and did not keep the letter. Perhaps at that time I did not feel that I was justified in preserving it, at any rate it no longer exists.
Up to my twentieth year I was seriously interested in music. I studied and practised assiduously but shortly then it seemed futile, my mother had died and there was no unconquerable sadness, but there was no real interest that led me on. In the story Ada in Geography and Plays Gertrude Stein has given a very good description of me as I was at that time.

Harriet Levy in the hat with Alice, 1908 (Paris)
Alice had been living in an apartment on rue Notre Dames des Champs within walking distance of rue de Fleurus with her San Francisco neighbor Harriet Levy. Harriet decided to return to San Francisco and asked Alice to handle shipping her furniture and paintings including a Matisse.

From then on for about six years I was well occupied. I led a pleasant life, I had many friends, much amusement many interests, my life was reasonably full and I enjoyed it but I was not very ardent in it. This brings me to the San Francisco fire which had as a consequence that the elder brother of Gertrude Stein and his wife came back from Paris to San Francisco and this led to a complete change in my life.

Alice and Clarence circa late 1880s

I was at this time living with my father and brother. My father was a quiet man who took things quietly, although he felt them deeply.
The first terrible morning of the San Francisco fire I woke him and told him, the city has been rocked by an earthquake and is now on fire. That will give us a black eye in the East, he replied turning and going to sleep again. I remember that once when my brother and a comrade had gone horse-back riding, one of the horses returned riderless to the hotel, the mother of the other boy began to make a terrible scene. Be calm madam, said my father, perhaps it is my son who has been killed. One of his axioms I always remember, if you must do a thing do it graciously. He also told me that a hostess should never apologise for any failure in her household arrangements, if there is a hostess there is insofar as there is a hostess no failure.

As I was saying we were all living comfortably together and there had been in my mind no active desire or thought of change. The disturbance of the routine of our lives by the fire followed by the coming of Gertrude Stein's older brother and his wife made the difference.

Mrs. Stein brought with her three little Matisse paintings, the first modern things to cross the Atlantic. I made her acquaintance at this time of general upset and she showed them to me, she also told me many stories of her life in Paris. Gradually I told my father that perhaps I would leave San Francisco. He was not disturbed by this, after all there was at that time a great deal of going and coming and there were many friends of mine going. Within a year I also had gone and I had come to Paris. There I went to see Mrs. Stein who had in the meantime returned to Paris, and there at her house I met Gertrude Stein. I was impressed by the coral brooch she wore and by
her voice. I may say that only three times in my life have I met a genius and each time a bell within me rang and I was not mistaken, and I may say in each case it was before there was any general recognition of the quality of genius in them. The three geniuses of whom I wish to speak are Gertrude Stein, Pablo Picasso and Alfred Whitehead.

Gertrude Stein  
(1874-1946)  
ca. 1878

Pablo Picasso  
(1881-1973)  
ca. 1905

Alfred North Whitehead  (1861-1947)

I have met many important people, I have met several great people but I have only known three first class geniuses and in each case on sight within me something rang. In no one of the three cases have I been mistaken. In this way my new full life began.
Chapter 2 - MY ARRIVAL IN PARIS
This was the year 1907. Gertrude Stein was just seeing through the press *Three Lives*\(^1\) which she was having privately printed, and she was deep in *The Making of Americans*, her thousand page book. Picasso had just finished his portrait of her which nobody at that time liked except the painter and the painted and which is now so famous,

and he had just begun his strange complicated picture of three women,

\(^1\) *Three Lives* by Gertrude Stein. Read online [here](https://example.com)
Matisse had just finished his Bonheur de Vivre, his first big composition which gave him the name of fauve or a zoo.

It was the moment Max Jacob has since called the heroic age of cubism. I remember not long ago hearing Picasso and Gertrude Stein talking about various things that had happened at that time, one of them said but all that could not have happened in that one year, oh said the other, my dear you forget we were young then and we did a great deal in a year.

There are a great many things to tell of what was happening then and what had happened before, which led up to then, but now I must describe what I saw when I came.

The home at 27 rue de Fleurus consisted then as it does now of a tiny pavilion of two stories with four small rooms, a kitchen and bath, and a very large atelier adjoining. Now the atelier is attached to the pavilion by a tiny hall passage added in 1914 but at that time the atelier had its own entrance, one rang the bell of the pavilion or knocked at the door of the atelier, and a great many people did both, but more knocked at the atelier. I was privileged to do both. I had been invited to dine on Saturday evening which was the evening when everybody came, and indeed everybody did come. I went to dinner. The dinner was cooked by Hélène. I must tell a little about Hélène.
Hélène had already been two years with Gertrude Stein and her brother. She was one of those admirable bonnes in other words excellent maids of all work, good cooks thoroughly occupied with the welfare of their employers and of themselves, firmly convinced that everything purchasable was far too dear. Oh but it is dear, was her answer to any question. She wasted nothing and carried on the household at the regular rate of eight francs a day. She even wanted to include guests at that price, it was her pride, but of course that was difficult since she for the honour of her house as well as to satisfy her employers always had to give every one enough to eat. She was a most excellent cook and she made a very good soufflé. In those days most of the guests were living more or less precariously, no one starved, some one always helped but still most of them did not live in abundance. It was Braque who said about four years later when they were all beginning to be known, with a sigh and a smile, how life has changed we all now have cooks who can make a soufflé.
Hélène had her opinions, she did not for instance like Matisse. She said a Frenchman should not stay unexpectedly to a meal particularly if he asked the servant beforehand what there was for dinner. She said foreigners had a perfect right to do these things but not a Frenchman and Matisse had once done it. So when Miss Stein said to her, Monsieur Matisse is staying for dinner this evening, she would say, in that case I will not make an omelette but fry the eggs. It takes the same number of eggs and the same amount of butter but it shows less respect, and he will understand. Hélène stayed with the household until the end of 1913. Then her husband, by that time she had married and had a little boy, insisted that she work for others no longer.

To her great regret she left and later she always said that life at home was never as amusing as it had been at the rue de Fleurus. Much later, only about three years ago, she came back for a year, she and her husband had fallen on bad times and her boy had died. She was as cheery as ever and enormously interested. She said isn’t it extraordinary, all those people whom I knew when they were nobody are now always mentioned in the newspapers, and the other night over the radio they mentioned the name of Monsieur Picasso. Why they even speak in the newspapers of Monsieur Braque, who used to hold up the big pictures to hang because he was the strongest, while the janitor drove the nails, and they are putting into the Louvre, just imagine it, into the Louvre, a picture by that little poor Monsieur Rousseau, who was so timid he did not even have courage enough to knock at the door.
She was terribly interested in seeing Monsieur Picasso and his wife and child and cooked her very best dinner for him, but how he has changed, she said, well, said she, I suppose that is natural but then he has a lovely son.

We thought that really Hélène had come back to give the young generation the once over. She had in a way but she was not interested in them. She said they made no impression on her which made them all very sad because the legend of her was well known to all Paris. After a year things were going better again, her husband was earning more money, and she once more remains at home. But to come back to 1907.

Before I tell about the guests I must tell what I saw. As I said being invited to dinner I rang the bell of the little pavilion and was taken into the tiny hall and then into the small dining room lined with books. On the only free space, the doors, were tacked up a few drawings by Picasso and Matisse. As the other guests had not yet come Miss Stein took me into the atelier. It often rained in Paris and it was always difficult to go from the little pavilion to the atelier door in the rain in evening clothes, but you were not to mind such things as the hosts and most of the guests did not. We went into the atelier which opened with a yale key the only yale key in the quarter at that time, and this was not so much for safety, because in those days the pictures had no value, but because the key was small and could go into a purse instead of being enormous as French keys were.
Against the walls were several pieces of large Italian renaissance furniture and in the middle of the room was a big renaissance table, on it a lovely inkstand, and at one end of it note-books neatly arranged, the kind of note-books French children use, with pictures of earthquakes and explorations on the outside of them. And on all the walls right up to the ceiling were pictures. At one end of the room was a big cast iron stove that Hélène came in and filled with a rattle, and in one corner of the room was a large table on which were horseshoe nails and pebbles and little pipe cigarette holders which one looked at curiously but did not touch, but which turned out later to be accumulations from the pockets of Picasso and Gertrude Stein. But to return to the pictures. The pictures were so strange that one quite instinctively looked at anything rather than at them just at first. I have refreshed my memory by looking at some snap shots taken inside the atelier at that time. The chairs in the room were also all Italian renaissance, not very comfortable for short-legged people and one got the habit of sitting on one's legs. Miss Stein sat near the stove in a lovely high-backed one and she peacefully let her legs hang, which was a matter of habit, and when any one of the many visitors came to ask her a question she lifted herself up out of this chair and usually replied in French, not just now.
This usually referred to something they wished to see, drawings which were put away, some German had once spilled ink on one, or some other not to be fulfilled desire. But to return to the pictures. As I say they completely covered the white-washed walls right up to the top of the very high ceiling. The room was lit at this time by high gas fixtures. This was the second stage. They had just been put in. Before that there had only been lamps, and a stalwart guest held up the lamp while the others looked. But gas had just been put in and an ingenious American painter named Sayen, to divert his mind from the birth of his first child, was arranging some mechanical contrivance that would light the high fixtures by themselves. The old landlady extremely conservative did not allow electricity in her houses and electricity was not put in until 1914, the old landlady by that time too old to know the difference, her house agent gave permission. But this time I am really going to tell about the pictures. It is very difficult now that everybody is accustomed to everything to give some idea of the kind of uneasiness one felt when one first looked at all these pictures on these walls.

In those days there were pictures of all kinds there, the time had not yet come when there were only Cézannes, Renoirs, Matisses and Picassos, nor as it was even later only Cézannes and Picassos. At that time there was a great deal of Matisse, Picasso, Renoir, Cézanne but there were also a great many other things. There were two Gauguins, there were Manguins,²

² One click on the hyperlinks and the artist's artwork appears.
there was a big nude by Valloton that felt like, only it was not like,

the Odalisque of Manet,

there was a Toulouse-Lautrec.
Once about this time Picasso looking at this and greatly daring said, but all the same I do paint better than he did. Toulouse-Lautrec had been the most important of his early influences. I later bought a little tiny picture by Picasso of that epoch.

There was a portrait of Gertrude Stein by Vallotton that might have been a David but was not,

there was a Maurice Denis, a little Daumier, many Cézanne water colors, there was in short everything, there was even a little Delacroix and a moderate sized Greco.
There were enormous Picassos of the Harlequin period,

Pablo Picasso, 1905, Acrobat’s Family with a Monkey

Pablo Picasso, 1905, Family of Saltimbanques
there were two rows of Matisse, there was a big portrait of a woman by Cézanne and some little Cézannes, all these pictures had a history and I will soon tell them. Now I was confused and I looked and I looked and I was confused. Gertrude Stein and her brother were so accustomed to this state of mind in a guest that they paid no attention to it.

Then there was a sharp tap at the atelier door. Gertrude Stein opened it and a little dark dapper man came in with hair, eyes, face, hands and feet all very much alive. Hullo Alfy, she said, this is Miss Toklas. How do you do Miss Toklas, he said very solemnly. This was Alfy Maurer an old habitué of the house.

He had been there before there were these pictures, when there were only Japanese prints, and he was among those who used to light matches to light up a little piece of the Cézanne portrait. Of course you can tell it is a finished picture, he used to explain to the other American painters who came and looked dubiously, you can tell because it has a frame, now whoever heard of anybody framing a canvas if the picture isn't finished. He had followed, followed, followed always humbly always sincerely, it was he who selected the first lot of pictures for the famous Barnes collection some years later faithfully and enthusiastically.
It was he who when later Barnes\(^3\) came to the house and waved his cheque-book said, so help me God, I didn't bring him. Gertrude Stein who has an explosive temper, came in another evening and there were her brother, Alfy and a stranger.

She did not like the stranger's looks. Who is that, said she to Alfy. I didn't bring him, said Alfy. He looks like a Jew, said Gertrude Stein, he is worse than that, says Alfy. But to return to that first evening. A few minutes after Alfy came in there was a violent knock at the door and, dinner is ready, from Hélène. It's funny the Picassos have not come, said they all, however we won't wait at least Hélène won't wait. So we went into the court and into the pavilion, and dining room and began dinner.

It's funny, said Miss Stein, Pablo is always promptness itself, he is never early and he is never late, it is his pride that punctuality is the politeness of kings, he even makes Fernande punctual.

Of course he often says yes when he has no intention of doing what he says yes to, he can't say no, no is not in his vocabulary and you have to know whether his yes means yes or means no, but when he says a yes that means yes and he did about tonight he is always punctual. These were the days before automobiles and nobody worried about accidents. We had just finished the first course when there was a quick patter of footsteps in the court and Hélène opened the door before the bell rang. Pablo and Fernande as everybody called them at that time walked in. He, small, quick moving but not restless, his eyes having a strange faculty of opening wide and drinking in what he wished to see. He had the isolation and movement of the head of a bull-fighter at the head of their procession.

---

\(^3\) Albert Coombs Barnes (1872 – 1951) was an American physician, chemist, businessman, eccentric art collector, writer, and educator, and the founder of the Barnes Foundation in Lower Merion, Pennsylvania.
Fernande was a tall beautiful woman with a wonderful big hat and a very evidently new dress, they were both very fussed.

I am very upset, said Pablo, but you know very well Gertrude I am never late but Fernande had ordered a dress for the vernissage tomorrow and it didn't come. Well here you are anyway, said Miss Stein, since it's you Hélène won't mind. And we all sat down. I was next to Picasso who was silent and then gradually became peaceful. Alfy paid compliments to Fernande and she was soon calm and placid. After a little while I murmured to Picasso that I liked his portrait of Gertrude Stein.

Yes, he said, everybody says that she does not look like it but that does not make any difference, she will, he said. The conversation soon became lively it was all about the opening day of the Salon Indépendant which was the great event of the year. Everybody was interested in all the scandals that would or would not break out. Picasso never exhibited but as his followers did and there were a great many stories connected with each follower the hopes and fears were vivacious.

While we were having coffee footsteps were heard in the court quite a number of footsteps and Miss Stein rose and said, don't hurry, I have to let them in. And she left.

When we went into the atelier there were already quite a number of people in the room, scattered groups, single and couples all looking and looking. Gertrude Stein sat by the stove talking and listening and getting up to open the door and go up to various people talking and listening. She usually opened the door to the knock and the usual formula was, de la part de qui venez-vous, who is your introducer. The idea was that anybody could come but for form's sake and in Paris you have to have a formula, everybody was supposed to be able to mention the name of somebody who had told them about it. It was a mere form, really everybody could come in and as at that time these pictures had no value and there was no social privilege attached to knowing any one there, only those came who really were interested. So as I say anybody could come in, however, there was the formula. Miss Stein once in opening the door said as she usually did by whose invitation do you come and we heard an aggrieved voice reply, but by yours, madame. He was a young man Gertrude Stein had met somewhere and with whom she had had a long conversation and to whom she had given a cordial invitation and then had as promptly forgotten.

The room was soon very very full and who were they all. Groups of Hungarian painters and writers, it happened that some Hungarian had once been brought and the word had spread from him throughout all Hungary, any village where there was a young man who had ambitions heard of 27 rue de Fleurus and then he lived but to get there and a great many did get there. They were always there, all sizes and shapes, all degrees of wealth and poverty, some very charming, some simply rough and every now and then a very beautiful young peasant.
Then there were quantities of Germans, not too popular because they tended always to want to see anything that was put away and they tended to break things and Gertrude Stein has a weakness for breakable objects, she has a horror of people who collect only the unbreakable. Then there was a fair sprinkling of Americans, Mildred Aldrich would bring a group or Sayen, the electrician, or some painter and occasionally an architectural student would accidentally get there and then there were the habitués, among them Miss Mars and Miss Squires whom Gertrude Stein afterwards immortalised in her story of Miss Furr and Miss Skeene.

On that first night Miss Mars and I talked of a subject then entirely new, how to make up your face. She was interested in types, she knew that there were femme decorative, femme d'intérieur and femme intrigante; there was no doubt that Fernande Picasso was a femme decorative, but what was Madame Matisse, femme d'intérieur, I said, and she was very pleased.

From time to time one heard the high Spanish whinnying laugh of Picasso and gay contralto outbreak of Gertrude Stein, people came and went, in and out. Miss Stein told me to sit with Fernande. Fernande was always beautiful but heavy in hand. I sat, it was my first sitting with a wife of a genius.

Before I decided to write this book my twenty-five years with Gertrude Stein, I had often said that I would write, The wives of geniuses I have sat with. I have sat with so many. I have sat with wives who were not wives, of geniuses who were real geniuses. I have sat with real wives of geniuses who were not real geniuses. I have sat with wives of geniuses, of near geniuses, of would be geniuses, in short I have sat very often and very long with many wives and wives of many geniuses.

---

4 Read the story of Miss Furr and Miss Skeene by Gertrude Stein online [here](https://example.com).
As I was saying Fernande, who was then living with Picasso and had been with him a long time that is to say they were all twenty-four years old at that time but they had been together a long time, Fernande was the first wife of a genius I sat with and she was not the least amusing. We talked hats. Fernande had two subjects hats and perfumes.

This first day we talked hats. She liked hats, she had the true French feeling about a hat, if a hat did not provoke some witticism from a man on the street the hat was not a success. Later on once in Montmartre she and I were walking together. She had on a large yellow hat and I had on a much smaller blue one. As we were walking along a workman stopped and called out, there go the sun and the moon shining together. Ah, said Fernande to me with a radiant smile, you see our hats are a success.

Miss Stein called me and said she wanted to have me meet Matisse.

She was talking to a medium sized man with a reddish beard and glasses. He had a very alert although slightly heavy presence and Miss Stein and he seemed to be full of hidden meanings. As I came up I heard her say, Oh yes but it would be more difficult now. We were talking, she said, of a lunchparty we had in here last year. We had just hung all the pictures and we asked all the painters. You know how painters are, I wanted to make them happy so I placed each one opposite his own picture, and they were happy so happy that we had to send out twice for more bread, when you know France you will know that that means that they were happy, because they cannot eat and drink without bread and we had to send out twice for bread so they were happy. Nobody noticed my little arrangement except Matisse and he did not until just as he left, and now he says it is a proof that I am very wicked, Matisse laughed and said, yes I know Mademoiselle Gertrude, the world is a theatre for you, but there are theatres and theatres, and when you listen so carefully to me and so attentively and do not hear a word I say then I do say that you are very wicked. Then they both began talking about the vernissage of the independent as every one else was doing and of course I did not know what it was all about. But gradually I knew and later on I will tell the story of the pictures, their painters and their followers and what this conversation meant.

Later I was near Picasso, he was standing meditatively. Do you think, he said, that I really do look like your president Lincoln. I had thought a good many things that evening but I had not thought that. You see, he went on, Gertrude, (I wish I could convey something of the simple affection and confidence with which he always pronounced her name and with which she always said, Pablo.
In all their long friendship with all its sometimes troubled moments and its complications this has never changed.) Gertrude showed me a photograph of him and I have been trying to arrange my hair to look like his, I think my forehead does. I did not know whether he meant it or not but I was sympathetic. I did not realise then how completely and entirely American was Gertrude Stein. Later I often teased her, calling her a general, a civil war general of either or both sides. She had a series of photographs of the civil war, rather wonderful photographs and she and Picasso used to pore over them. Then he would suddenly remember the Spanish war and he became very Spanish and very bitter and Spain and America in their persons could say very bitter things about each other's country. But at this my first evening I knew nothing of all this and so I was polite and that was all.

And now the evening was drawing to a close. Everybody was leaving and everybody was still talking about the vernissage of the independent. I too left carrying with me a card of invitation for the vernissage. And so this, one of the most important evenings of my life, came to an end.

I went to the vernissage taking with me a friend, the invitation I had been given admitting two. We went very early. I had been told to go early otherwise we would not be able to see anything, and there would be no place to sit, and my friend liked to sit. We went to the building just put up for this salon. In France they always put things up just for the day or for a few days and then take them down again.

Gertrude Stein's elder brother always says that the secret of the chronic employment or lack of unemployment in France is due to the number of men actively engaged in putting up and taking down temporary buildings. Human nature is so permanent in France that they can afford to be as temporary as they like with their buildings.

(Leo Stein by Picasso)

We went to the long low certainly very very long temporary building that was put up every year for the independents. The long building was beautifully alight with Paris light.
When after the war or just before, I forget, the independent was given permanent quarters in the big exposition building, the Grand Palais, it became much less interesting. After all it is the adventure that counts.

In earlier, still earlier days, in the days of Seurat, the Indépendant had its exhibition in a building where the rain rained in. Indeed it was because of this, that in hanging pictures in the rain, poor Seurat caught his fatal cold.⁵

⁵ Seurat died in Paris in his parents’ home on 29 March 1891 at the age of 31. The cause of his death is uncertain, and has been variously attributed to a form of meningitis, pneumonia, infectious angina, and diphtheria.
Now there was no rain coming in, it was a lovely day and we felt very festive. When we got in we were indeed early as nearly as possible the first to be there. We went from one room to another and quite frankly we had no idea which of the pictures the Saturday evening crowd would have thought art and which were just the attempts of what in France are known as the Sunday painters, workingmen, hair-dressers and veterinaries and visionaries who only paint once a week when they do not have to work. I say we did not know but yes perhaps we did know. But not about the Rousseau, and there was an enormous Rousseau there which was the scandal of the show, it was a picture of the officials of the republic, Picasso now owns it, no that picture we could not know as going to be one of the great pictures, and that as Héléne was to say, would come to be in the Louvre.
There was also there if my memory is correct a strange picture by the same douanier Rousseau, a sort of apotheosis of Guillaume Apollinaire with an aged Marie Laurencin behind him as a muse.

That also I would not have recognised as a serious work of art. At that time of course I knew nothing about Marie Laurencin and Guillaume Apollinaire but, there is a lot to tell about them, later.

Then we went on and saw a Matisse. Ah there we were beginning to feel at home. We knew a Matisse when we saw it, knew at once and enjoyed it and knew that it was great art and beautiful.

It was a big figure of a woman lying in among some cactuses. A picture which was after the show to be at the rue de Fleurus. There one day the five year old little boy of the janitor who often used to visit Gertrude Stein who was fond of him, jumped into her arms as she was standing at the open door of the atelier and looking over her shoulder and seeing the picture cried out in rapture, oh la la what a beautiful body of a woman. Miss Stein used always to tell this story when the casual stranger in the aggressive way of the casual stranger said, looking at this picture, and what is that supposed to represent.

---

6 Henri Matisse, 1907, Blue Nude appeared at the 1907 Société des Artistes Indépendants, entitled Tableau no. III. Matisse shocked the French public. The painting, which may be classified as Fauvist had a strong effect on Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso, partially motivating Picasso to create Les Demoiselles D'Avignon.
In the same room as the Matisse, a little covered by a partition, was a Hungarian version of the same picture by one Czobel whom I remembered to have seen at the rue de Fleurus, it was the happy independent way to put a violent follower opposite the violent but not quite as violent master.

We went on and on, there were a great many rooms and a great many pictures in the rooms and finally we came to a middle room and there was a garden bench and as there were people coming in quite a few people we sat down on the bench to rest.

We had been resting and looking at every body and it was indeed the vie de Bohème just as one had seen it in the opera and they were very wonderful to look at. Just then somebody behind us put a hand on our shoulders and burst out laughing. It was Gertrude Stein. You have seated yourselves admirably, she said. But why, we asked. Because right here in front of you is the whole story. We looked but we saw nothing except two big pictures that looked quite alike but not altogether alike. One is a Braque and one is a Derain, explained Gertrude Stein. They were strange pictures of strangely formed rather wooden blocked figures, one if I remember rightly a sort of man and women, the other three women. Well, she said still laughing. We were puzzled, we had seen so much strangeness we did not know why these two were any stranger.
She was quickly lost in an excited and voluble crowd. We recognised Pablo Picasso and Fernande, we thought we recognised many more, to be sure everybody seemed to be interested in our corner and we stayed, but we did not know why they were so especially interested. After a considerable interval Gertrude Stein came back again, this time evidently even more excited and amused.

She leaned over us and said solemnly, do you want to take French lessons. We hesitated, why yes we could take French lessons. Well Fernande will give you French lessons, go and find her and tell her how absolutely you are pining to take French lessons. But why should she give us French lessons, we asked. Because, well because she and Pablo have decided to separate forever. I suppose it has happened before but not since I have known them. You know Pablo says if you love a woman you give her money. Well now it is when you want to leave a woman you have to wait until you have enough money to give her. Vollard has just bought out his atelier and so he can afford to separate from her by giving her half. She wants to install herself in a room by herself and give French lessons, so that is how you come in. Well what has that to do with these two pictures, asked my ever curious friend. Nothing, said Gertrude Stein going off with a great shout of laughter. I will tell the whole story as I afterward learnt it but now I must find Fernande and propose to her to take French lessons from her.

I wandered about and looked at the crowd, never had I imagined there could be so many kinds of men making and looking at pictures. In America, even in San Francisco, I had been accustomed to see women at picture shows and some men, but here there were men, men, men, sometimes women with them but more often three or four men with one woman, sometimes five or six men with two women.
Later on I became accustomed to this proportion. In one of these groups of five or six men and two women I saw the Picassos, that is I saw Fernande with her characteristic gesture, one ringed forefinger straight in the air. As I afterwards found out she had the Napoleonic forefinger quite as long if not a shade longer than the middle finger, and this, whenever she was animated, which after all was not very often because Fernande was indolent, always went straight up into the air. I waited not wishing to break into this group of which she at one end and Picasso at the other end were the absorbed centres but finally I summoned up courage to go forward and draw her attention and tell her of my desire. Oh yes, she said sweetly, Gertrude has told me of your desire, it would give me great pleasure to give you lessons, you and your friend, I will be the next few days very busy installing myself in my new apartment. Gertrude is coming to see me the end of the week, if you and your friend would accompany her we could then make all arrangements. Fernande spoke a very elegant French, some lapses of course into montmartrois that I found difficult to follow, but she had been educated to be a schoolmistress, her voice was lovely and she was very very beautiful with a marvellous complexion. She was a big woman but not too big because she was indolent and she had the small round arms that give the characteristic beauty to all French women. It was rather a pity that short skirts ever came in because until then one never imagined the sturdy French legs of the average French woman, one thought only of the beauty of the small rounded arms. I agreed to Fernande's proposal and left her.

On my way back to where my friend was sitting I became more accustomed not so much to the pictures as to the people. I began to realise there was a certain uniformity of type. Many years after, that is just a few years ago, when Juan Gris whom we all loved very much died, (he was after Pablo Picasso Gertrude Stein's dearest friend) I heard her say to Braque, she and he were standing together at the funeral, who are all these people, there are so many and they are so familiar and I do not know who any of them are. Oh, Braque replied, they are all the people you used to see at the vernissage of the independent and the autumn salon and you saw their faces twice a year, year after year, and that is the reason they are all so familiar.

Gertrude Stein and I about ten days later went to Montmartre, I for the first time. I have never ceased to love it. We go there every now and then and I always have the same tender expectant feeling that I had then.

It is a place where you were always standing and sometimes waiting, not for anything to happen, but just standing. The inhabitants of Montmartre did not sit much, they mostly stood which was just as well as the chairs, the dining room chairs of France, did not tempt one to sit. So I went to Montmartre and I began my apprenticeship of standing.
We first went to see Picasso and I then we went to see Fernande. Picasso now never likes to go to Montmartre, he does not like to think about it much less talk about it. Even to Gertrude Stein he is hesitant about talking of it, there were things that at that time cut deeply into his Spanish pride and the end of his Montmartre life was bitterness and disillusion, and there is nothing more bitter than Spanish disillusion.

But at this time he was in and of Montmartre and lived in the rue Ravignan.

---

8 'LE BATEAU LAVOIR' in Montmartre. Studio of Picasso 1907
We went to the Odeon and
there got into an omnibus, that is we mounted on top of an omnibus, the nice old horse-pulled omnibuses that went pretty quickly and steadily across Paris and up the hill to the place Blanche.
There we got out and climbed a steep street lined with shops with things to eat, the rue Lepic,
and then turning we went around a corner and climbed even more steeply in fact almost straight up and came to the rue Ravignan, now place Emile-Goudeau but otherwise unchanged,
with its steps leading up to the little flat square with its few but tender little trees, a man carpentering in the corner of it, the last time I was there not very long ago there was still a man carpentering in a corner of it, and a little café just before you went up the steps where they all used to eat, it is still there, and to the left the low wooden building of studios that is still there.

We went up the couple of steps and through the open door passing on our left the studio in which later Juan Gris was to live out his martyrdom but where then lived a certain Vaillant, a nondescript painter who was to lend his studio as a ladies dressing room at the famous banquet for Rousseau, and then we passed a steep flight of steps leading down where Max Jacob had a studio a little later, and we passed another steep little stairway which led to the studio where not long before a young fellow had committed suicide, Picasso painted one of the most wonderful of his early pictures of the friends gathered round the coffin, we passed all this to a larger door where Gertrude Stein knocked and Picasso opened the door and we went in.

Evocation (The Burial Of Casagemas) 1901, Pablo Picasso
A run-down piano factory at **13 Rue Ravignan** in Montmartre in Paris’s 18th arrondissement became the creative hub for some of the 20th century’s most famous artists. It was the scene of the most radical experiments in modern art. The **Bateau Lavoir** — named by the poet and painter Max Jacob for its resemblance to the laundry boats that worked the Seine — was the home of Pablo Picasso, Juan Gris, Kees van Dongen and Amedeo Modigliani, with Henri Matisse, Gertrude Stein, Guillaume Apollinaire, Maurice Utrillo, Max Jacob, Constantin Brâncuși, Marie Laurencin, Maurice de Vlaminck and André Derain being among its regular visitors.
He was dressed in what the French call the singe or monkey costume, overalls made of blue jean or brown, I think his was blue and it is called a singe or monkey because being all of one piece with a belt, if the belt is not fastened, and it very often is not, it hangs down behind and so makes a monkey.

His eyes were more wonderful than even I remembered, so full and so brown, and his hands so dark and delicate and alert. We went further in. There was a couch in one corner, a very small stove that did for cooking and heating in the other corner, some chairs, the large broken one Gertrude Stein sat in when she was painted and a general smell of dog and paint and there was a big dog there and Picasso moved her about from one place to another exactly as if the dog had been a large piece of furniture. He asked us to sit down but as all the chairs were full we all stood up and stood until we left. It was my first experience of standing but afterwards I found that they all stood that way for hours. Against the wall was an enormous picture, a strange picture of light and dark colors, that is all I can say, of a group, an enormous group and next to it another in a sort of a red brown, of three women, square and posturing, all of it rather frightening. Picasso and Gertrude Stein stood together talking. I stood back and looked. I cannot say I realised anything but I felt that there was something painful and beautiful there and oppressive but imprisoned. I heard Gertrude Stein say, and mine. Picasso thereupon brought out a smaller picture, a rather unfinished thing that could not finish, very pale almost white, two figures, they were all there but very unfinished and not finishable. Picasso said, but he will never accept it. Yes, I know, answered Gertrude Stein. But just the same it is the only one in which it is all there. Yes, I know, he replied and they fell silent. After that they continued a low toned conversation and then Miss Stein said, well we have to go, we are going to have tea with Fernande. Yes, I know, replied Picasso. How often do you see her, she said, he got very red and looked sheepish. I have never been there, he said resentfully. She chuckled, well anyway we are going there, she said, and Miss Toklas is going to have lessons in French. Ah the Miss Toklas, he said, with small feet like a Spanish woman and earrings like a gypsy and a father who is king of Poland like the Poniatowskis, of course she will take lessons. We all laughed and went to the door. There stood a very beautiful man, oh Agero, said Picasso, you know the ladies. He looks like a Greco, I said in English. Picasso caught the name, a false Greco, he said. Oh I forgot to give you these, said Gertrude Stein handing Picasso a package of newspapers, they will console you. He opened them up, they were the Sunday supplement of American papers, they were the Katzenjammer kids. Oh oui, Oh oui, he said, his face full of satisfaction, merci thanks Gertrude, and we left.
We left then and continued to climb higher up the hill. What did you think of what you saw, asked Miss Stein. Well I did see something. Sure you did, she said, but did you see what it had to do with those two pictures you sat in front of so long at the vernissage. Only that Picassos were rather awful and the others were not. Sure, she said, as Pablo once remarked, when you make a thing, it is so complicated making it that it is bound to be ugly, but those that do it after you they don't have to worry about making it and they can make it pretty, and so everybody can like it when the others make it.

We went on and turned down a little street and there was another little house and we asked for Mademoiselle Bellevallee and we were sent into a little corridor and we knocked and went into a moderate sized room in which was a very large bed and a piano and a little tea table and Fernande and two others.

One of them was Alice Princet. She was rather a madonna like creature, with large lovely eyes and charming hair. Fernande afterwards explained that she was the daughter of a workingman and had the brutal thumbs that of course were a characteristic of workingmen. She had been, so Fernande explained, for seven years with Princet who was in the government employ and she had been faithful to him in the fashion of Montmartre, that is to say she had stuck to him through sickness and health but she had amused herself by the way. Now they were to be married. Princet had become the head of his small department in the government service and it would be necessary for him to invite other heads of departments to his house and of course he must regularise the relation. They were actually married a few months afterward and it was apropos of this marriage that Max Jacob made his famous remark, it is wonderful to
long for a woman for seven years and to possess her at last. Picasso made the more practical one, why should they marry simply in order to divorce. This was a prophecy.

It was what the French call un coup de foudre, or love at first sight. They went quite mad about each other. Princet tried to bear it but they were married now and it was different. Beside he was angry for the first time in his life and in his anger he tore up Alice's first fur coat which she had gotten for the wedding. That settled the matter, and within six months after the marriage Alice left Princet never to return. She and Derain went off together and they have never separated since. I always liked Alice Derain.

She had a certain wild quality that perhaps had to do with her brutal thumbs and was curiously in accord with her madonna face.

The other woman was Germaine Pichot, entirely a different type. She was quiet and serious and Spanish, she had the square shoulders and the unseeing fixed eyes of a Spanish woman. She was very gentle.

She was married to a Spanish painter Pichot, who was rather a wonderful creature, he was long and thin like one of those primitive Christs in Spanish churches and when he did a Spanish dance which he did later at the famous banquet to Rousseau, he was awe inspiringly religious.
Germaine, so Fernande said, was the heroine of many a strange story, she had once taken a young man to the hospital, he had been injured in a fracas at a music hall and all his crowd had deserted him. Germaine quite naturally stood by and saw him through. She had many sisters, she and all of them had been born and bred in Montmartre and they were all of different fathers and married to different nationalities, even to Turks and Armenians. Germaine, much later was very ill for years and she always had around her a devoted coterie. They used to carry her in her armchair to the nearest cinema and they, and she in the armchair, saw the performance through. They did this regularly once a week. I imagine they are still doing it.

The conversation around the tea table of Fernande was not lively, nobody had anything to say. It was a pleasure to meet, it was even an honour, but that was about all. Fernande complained a little that her charwoman\textsuperscript{10} had not adequately dusted and rinsed the tea things, and also that buying a bed and a piano on the instalment plan had elements of unpleasantness.

Otherwise we really none of us had much to say.

Finally she and I arranged about the French lessons, I was to pay fifty cents an hour and she was to come to see me two days hence and we were to begin. Just at the end of the visit they were more natural. Fernande asked Miss Stein if she had any of the comic supplements of the American papers left. Gertrude Stein replied that she had just left them with Pablo.

Fernande roused like a lioness defending her cubs. That is a brutality that I will never forgive him, she said. I met him on the street, he had a comic supplement in his hand, I asked him to give it to me to help me to distract myself and he brutally refused. It was a piece of cruelty that I will never forgive. I ask you, Gertrude, to give to me myself the next copies you have of the comic supplement. Gertrude Stein said, why certainly with pleasure.

As we went out she said to me, it is to be hoped that they will be together again before the next comic supplements of the Katzenjammer kids come out because if I do not give them to Pablo he will be all upset and if I do Fernande will make an awful fuss. Well I suppose I will have to lose them or have my brother give them to Pablo by mistake.

Fernande came quite promptly to the appointment and we proceeded to our lesson. Of course to have a lesson in French one has to converse and Fernande had three subjects, hats, we had not much more to say about hats, perfumes, we had something to say about perfumes. Perfumes were Fernande's really great extravagance, she was the scandal of Montmartre because she had once bought a bottle of perfume named Smoke and had paid eighty francs for it at that time sixteen dollars and it had no scent but such wonderful color, like real bottled liquid smoke. Her third subject was the categories of furs.

\textsuperscript{10} charwoman: a woman employed to clean houses or offices.
There were three categories of furs, there were first category, sables, second category ermine and chinchilla, third category martin fox and squirrel. It was the most surprising thing I had heard in Paris. I was surprised. Chinchilla second, squirrel called fur and no seal skin.
Our only other conversation was the description and names of the dogs that were then fashionable. This was my subject and after I had described she always hesitated, ah yes, she would say illuminated, you wish to describe a little Belgian dog whose name is griffon.
There we were, she was very beautiful but it was a little heavy and monotonous, so I suggested we should meet out of doors, at a tea place or take walks in Montmartre. That was better. She began to tell me things. I met Max Jacob.

Fernande and he were very funny together. They felt themselves to be a courtly couple of the first empire, he being le vieux marquis kissing her hand and paying compliments and she the Empress Josephine receiving them. It was a caricature but a rather wonderful one.

Then she told me about a mysterious horrible woman called Marie Laurencin who made noises like an animal and annoyed Picasso. I thought of her as a horrible old woman and was delighted when I met the young chic Marie who looked like a Clouet.

Max Jacob read my horoscope. It was a great honour because he wrote it down. I did not realise it then but I have since and most of all very lately, as all the young gentlemen who nowadays so much admire Max are so astonished and impressed that he wrote mine down as he has always been supposed never to write them but just to say them off hand. Well anyway I have mine and it is written.
Then she also told me a great many stories about Van Dongen and his Dutch wife and Dutch little girl. Van Dongen broke into notoriety by a portrait he did of Fernande. It was in that way that he created the type of almond eyes that were later so much the vogue. But Fernande's almond eyes were natural, for good or for bad everything was natural in Fernande.

Of course Van Dongen did not admit that this picture was a portrait of Fernande, although she had sat for it and there was in consequence much bitterness. Van Dongen in these days was poor, he had a Dutch wife who was a vegetarian and they lived on spinach.

Van Dongen frequently escaped from the spinach to a joint in Montmartre where the girls paid for his dinner and his drinks.
The Van Dongen child was only four years old but terrific. Van Dongen used to do acrobatics with her and swing her around his head by a leg. When she hugged Picasso of whom she was very fond she used almost to destroy him, he had a great fear of her.
There were many other tales of Germaine Pichot and the circus where she found her lovers and there were tales of all the past and present life of Montmartre. Fernande herself had one ideal. It was Evelyn Thaw the heroine of the moment. And Fernande adored her in the way a later generation adored Mary Pickford, she was so blonde, so pale, so nothing and Fernande would give a heavy sigh of admiration.

The next time I saw Gertrude Stein she said to me suddenly, is Fernande wearing her earrings. I do not know, I said. Well notice, she said. The next time I saw Gertrude Stein I said, yes Fernande is wearing her earrings. Oh well, she said, there is nothing to be done yet, it's a nuisance because Pablo naturally having nobody in the studio cannot stay at home. In another week I was able to announce that Fernande was not wearing her earrings. Oh well it's alright then she has no more money left and it is all over, said Gertrude Stein. And it was. A week later I was dining with Fernande and Pablo at the rue de Fleurus. I gave Fernande a Chinese gown from San Francisco and Pablo gave me a lovely drawing.

And now I will tell you how two Americans happened to be in the heart of an art movement of which the outside world at that time knew nothing.
During Gertrude Stein's last two years at the Medical Schools Johns Hopkins, Baltimore, 1900-1903, her brother was living in Florence. There he heard of a painter named Cézanne and saw paintings by him owned by Charles Loeser. When he and his sister made their home in Paris the following year they went to Vollard's the only picture dealer who had Cézanne for sale, to look at them. Vollard was a huge dark man who lisped a little. His shop was on the rue Laffitte not far from the boulevard.
Further along this short street was Durand-Ruel\textsuperscript{11} and still further on almost at the church of the Martyrs was Sagot the ex-clown.

Higher up in Montmartre on the rue Victor-Masse was Mademoiselle Weill who sold a mixture of pictures, books and bric-a-brac and in entirely another part of Paris on the rue Faubourg-Saint-Honore was the ex-café keeper and photographer Druet. Also on the rue Laffitte was the confectioner Fouquet where one could console oneself with delicious honey cakes and nut candies and once in a while instead of a picture buy oneself strawberry jam in a glass bowl.

The first visit to Vollard has left an indelible impression on Gertrude Stein. It was an incredible place. It did not look like a picture gallery. Inside there were a couple of canvases turned to the wall, in one corner was a small pile of big and little canvases thrown pell mell on top of one another, in the centre of the room stood a huge dark man glooming. This was Vollard cheerful. When he was really cheerless he put his huge frame against the glass door that led to the street, his arms above his head, his hands on each upper corner of the portal and gloomed darkly into the street. Nobody thought then of trying to come in.

They asked to see Cézannes. He looked less gloomy and became quite polite. As they found out afterward Cézanne was the great romance of Vollard's life. The name Cézanne was to him a magic word.

\textsuperscript{11} Paul Durand-Ruel (1831, Paris 1922) was a French art dealer who is associated with the Impressionists and the Barbizon School. He was one of the first modern art dealers who provided support to his painters with stipends and solo exhibitions.
Ambroise Vollard’s shop on rue Laffitte |

Artists (L-R)
Odilon Redon, Vuillard, K.X. Roussel, Vollard, Maurice Denis, Serusier, Mellerio, Ranson, Bonnard,

Madame Maurice Denis- viewing a painting by Paul Cezanne

Painted by Maurice Denis in 1900

Click the artists to see their artwork.

Paul Cezanne in front of "Les Grandes Baigneuses" 1904

Portrait of Ambroise Vollard by Paul Cezanne 1899
He had first learned about Cézanne from Pissarro the painter. Pissarro indeed was the man from whom all the early Cézanne lovers heard about Cézanne. Cézanne at that time was living gloomy and embittered at Aix-en-Provence.

Pissarro told Vollard about him, told Fabry, a Florentine, who told Loeser,\(^2\) told Picabia, in fact told everybody who knew about Cézanne at that time.

---

\(^2\)Charles Loeser. Born in New York 1864. Loeser settled in Florence and was one of the first to recognize the genius of Cézanne, and acquired a number of his paintings, which he installed in the private rooms of the Villa.
There were Cézanne[s] to be seen at Vollard's. Later on Gertrude Stein wrote a poem called Vollard and Cézanne, and Henry McBride printed it in the New York Sun. This was the first fugitive piece of Gertrude Stein's to be so printed and it gave both her and Vollard a great deal of pleasure. Later on when Vollard wrote his book about Cézanne, Vollard at Gertrude Stein's suggestion sent a copy of the book to Henry McBride. She told Vollard that a whole page of one of New York's big daily papers would be devoted to his book. He did not believe it possible, nothing like that had ever happened to anybody in Paris. It did happen and he was deeply moved and unspeakably content. But to return to that first visit.

They told Monsieur Vollard they wanted to see some Cézanne landscapes, they had been sent to him by Mr. Loeser of Florence. Oh yes, said Vollard looking quite cheerful and he began moving about the room, finally he disappeared behind a partition in the back and was heard heavily mounting the steps. After a quite long wait he came down again and had in his hand a tiny picture of an apple with most of the canvas unpainted. They all looked at this thoroughly, then they said, yes but you see what we wanted to see was a landscape. Ah yes, sighed Vollard and he looked even more cheerful, after a moment he again disappeared and this time came back with a painting of a back, it was a beautiful painting there is no doubt about that but the brother and sister were not yet up to a full appreciation of Cézanne nudes and so they returned to the attack. They wanted to see a landscape. This time after even a longer wait he came back with a very large canvas and a very little fragment of a landscape painted on it. Yes that was it, they said, a landscape but what they wanted was a smaller canvas but one all covered. They said, they thought they would like to see one like that. By this time the early winter evening of Paris was closing in and just at this moment a very aged charwoman came down the same back stairs, mumbled, bon soir monsieur et madame, and quietly went out of the door, after a moment another old charwoman came down the same stairs, murmured, bon soir messieurs et mesdames and went quietly out of the door. Gertrude Stein began to laugh and said to her brother, it is all nonsense, there is no Cézanne. Vollard goes upstairs and tells these old women what to paint and he does not understand us and they do not understand him and they paint something and he brings it down and it is a Cézanne. They both began to laugh uncontrollably. Then they recovered and once more explained about the landscape.

Ambroise Vollard (1866-1939) is regarded as one of the most important dealers in French contemporary art at the beginning of the 20th century. His portret was painted by various artists (view [here](https://www.artstack.com/artists/ambroise-vollard) on ArtStack)
They said what they wanted was one of those marvellously yellow sunny Aix landscapes of which Loeser had several examples.

Once more Vollard went off and this time he came back with a wonderful small green landscape. It was lovely, it covered all the canvas, it did not cost much and they bought it. Later on Vollard explained to every one that he had been visited by two crazy Americans and they laughed and he had been much annoyed but gradually he found out that when they laughed most they usually bought something so of course he waited for them to laugh.

From that time on they went to Vollard's all the time. They had soon the privilege of upsetting his piles of canvases and finding what they liked in the heap. They bought a tiny little Daumier, head of an old woman.

They began to take an interest in Cézanne nudes and they finally bought two tiny canvases of nude groups.

14 View Honore Daumier's sculptures, caricatures and paintings here on WikiArt
They found a very very small Manet\textsuperscript{15} painted in black and white with Forain in the foreground and bought it, they found two tiny little Renoirs. They frequently bought in twos because one of them usually liked one more than the other one did, and so the year wore on.

\textit{Paul Gaugain (1848-1903)}

In the spring Vollard announced a show of Gauguin and they for the first time saw some Gauguins.\textsuperscript{16} They were rather awful but they finally liked them, and bought two Gauguins.\textsuperscript{17} Gertrude Stein liked his sunflowers but not his figures and her brother preferred the figures.

\textit{The joint collection of Gertrude and Leo Stein began in late 1904 when Michael Stein announced that their trust account had accumulated a balance of 8,000 francs. They spent this at Vollard's Gallery, buying Gauguin's Sunflowers and Three Tahitians, Cézanne's Bathers and two Renoirs.}

\textsuperscript{15} View Manet's paintings \url{here} on WikiArt
\textsuperscript{16} View Gaugain's paintings \url{here} on WikiArt
\textsuperscript{17} Sunflowers are famously associated with Van Gogh. However, Vincent’s friend, colleague, and sometimes nemesis, Paul Gauguin, created his own interpretations of the golden floral symbol of southern France where Van Gogh and Gauguin once resided together.
It sounds like a great deal now but in those days these things did not cost much. And so the winter went on.

There were not a great many people in and out of Vollard's but once Gertrude Stein heard a conversation there that pleased her immensely. **Duret**\(^{18}\) was a well known figure in Paris. He was now a very old and a very handsome man.

Duret\(^{18}\) was a well known figure in Paris. He was now a very old and a very handsome man.

He had been a friend of **Whistler**, and Whistler had painted him in evening clothes with a white opera cloak over his arm.

He was at Vollard's talking to a group of younger men and one of them Roussel, one of the **Vuillard, Bonnard**, the post impressionist group, said something complainingly about the lack of recognition of himself and his friends, that they were not even allowed to show in the salon.

---

\(^{18}\) **Théodore Duret** (1838-1927) French journalist, author and art critic. He was one of the first advocates of impressionism.
Les Nabis (pronounced nah-BEE) were a group of Post-Impressionist avant-garde artists who set the pace for fine arts and graphic arts in France in the 1890s. Initially a group of friends interested in contemporary art and literature, most of them studied at the private art school of Rodolphe Julian (Académie Julian) in Paris in the late 1880s. In 1890, they began to participate successfully in public exhibitions, while most of their artistic output remained in private hands or in the possession of the artists themselves. By 1896, the unity of the group had already begun to break.
Duret looked at him kindly, my young friend, he said, there are two kinds of art, never forget this, there is art and there is official art. How can you, my poor young friend, hope to be official art. Just look at yourself. Supposing an important personage came to France, and wanted to meet the representative painters and have his portrait painted. My dear young friend, just look at yourself, the very sight of you would terrify him.

You are a nice young man, gentle and intelligent, but to the important personage you would not seem so, you would be terrible. No they need as representative painter a medium sized, slightly stout man, not too well dressed but dressed in the fashion of his class, neither bald or well brushed hair and a respectful bow with it. You can see that you would not do. So never say another word about official recognition, or if you do look in the mirror and think of important personages. No, my dear young friend there is art and there is official art, there always has been and there always will be.

Before the winter was over, having gone so far Gertrude Stein and her brother decided to go further, they decided to buy a big Cézanne and then they would stop. After that they would be reasonable. They convinced their elder brother that this last outlay was necessary, and it was necessary as will soon be evident. They told Vollard that they wanted to buy a Cézanne portrait. In those days practically no big Cézanne portraits had been sold. Vollard owned almost all of them. He was enormously pleased with this decision. They now were introduced into the room above the steps behind the partition where Gertrude Stein had been sure the old charwoman painted the Cézannes and there they spent days deciding which portrait they would have.

There were about eight to choose from and the decision was difficult. They had often to go and refresh themselves with honey cakes at Fouquet's. Finally they narrowed the choice down to two, a portrait of a man and a portrait of a woman, but this time they could not afford to buy twos and finally they chose the portrait of the woman.

Vollard said of course ordinarily a portrait of a woman always is more expensive than a portrait of a man but, said he looking at the picture very carefully, I suppose with Cézanne it does not make any difference. They put it in a cab and they went home with it.

This 1878 Cezanne portrait was the first in Gertrude and Leo Stein’s collection. Cezanne has painted his wife's right eye completely black.

---

19 The source of the Steins’ income explained in this article from Smithsonian Magazine.
20 Cleaning lady
It was this picture that Alfy Maurer used to explain was finished and that you could tell that it was finished because it had a frame.

It was an important purchase because in looking and looking at this picture Gertrude Stein wrote *Three Lives*.  

She had begun not long before as an exercise in literature to translate *Flaubert's Trois Contes* and then she had this Cézanne and she looked at it and under its stimulus she wrote *Three Lives*.

The next thing that happened was in the autumn. It was the first year of the autumn salon, the first autumn salon that had ever existed in Paris and they, very eager and excited, went to see it. There they found Matisse's picture afterwards known as *La Femme au Chapeau*.

This first autumn salon was a step in official recognition of the outlaws of the independent salon. Their pictures were to be shown in the Petit Palais opposite the Grand Palais where the great spring salon was held.

That is, those outlaws were to be shown there who had succeeded enough so that they began to be sold in important picture shops. These in collaboration with some rebels from the old salons had created the autumn salon. The show had a great deal of freshness and was not alarming. There were a number of attractive pictures but there was one that was not attractive. It infuriated the public, they tried to scratch off the paint. Gertrude Stein liked that picture, it was a portrait of a woman with a long face and a fan. It was very strange in its color and in its anatomy. She said she wanted to buy it.

---

21 Read Gertrude Stein's *Three Lives* online [here](#).

22 Read Flaubert's *Trois Contes* (English version) online [here](#).
Her brother had in the meantime found a white-clothed woman on a green lawn and he wanted to buy it. So as usual they decided to buy two and they went to the office of the secretary of the salon to find out about prices.

They had never been in the little room of a secretary of a salon and it was very exciting. The secretary looked up the prices in his catalogue. Gertrude Stein has forgotten how much and even whose it was, the white dress and dog on the green grass, but the Matisse was five hundred francs.

The secretary explained that of course one never paid what the artist asked, one suggested a price. They asked what price they should suggest. He asked them what they were willing to pay. They said they did not know. He suggested that they offer four hundred and he would let them know. They agreed and left.

The next day they received word from the secretary that Monsieur Matisse had refused to accept the offer and what did they want to do. They decided to go over to the salon and look at the picture again. They did.

People were roaring with laughter at the picture and scratching at it. Gertrude Stein could not understand why, the picture seemed to her perfectly natural. The Cézanne portrait had not seemed natural, it had taken her some time to feel that it was natural but this picture by Matisse seemed perfectly natural and she could not understand why it infuriated everybody. Her brother was less attracted but all the same he agreed and they bought it. She then went back to look at it and it upset her to see them all mocking at it. It bothered her and angered her because she did not understand why because to her it was so alright, just as later she did not understand why since the writing was all so clear and natural they mocked at and were enraged by her work.

And so this was the story of the buying of La Femme au Chapeau by the buyers and now for the story from the seller's point of view as told some months after by Monsieur and Madame
Matisse. Shortly after the purchase of the picture they all asked to meet each other. Whether Matisse wrote and asked or whether they wrote and asked Gertrude Stein does not remember. Anyway in no time they were knowing each other and knowing each other very well.

The Matisses lived on the quay just off the boulevard Saint-Michel. They were on the top floor in a small three-roomed apartment with a lovely view over Notre Dame and the river. Matisse painted it in winter. You went up and up the steps.

In those days you were always going up stairs and down stairs. Mildred Aldrich\textsuperscript{23} had a distressing way of dropping her key down the middle of the stairs where an elevator might have been, in calling out goodbye to some one below, from her sixth story, and then you or she had to go all the way up or all the way down again. To be sure she would often call out, never mind, I am bursting open my door. Only Americans did that. The keys were heavy and you either forgot them or dropped them. Sayen at the end of a Paris summer when he was congratulated on looking so well and sun-burned, said, yes it comes from going up and down stairs.

\textsuperscript{23}\textbf{Mildred Aldrich} (1853 – 1928) American journalist and writer.
Madame Matisse was an admirable housekeeper. Her place was small but immaculate. She kept the house in order, she was an excellent cook and provider, she posed for all of Matisse's pictures. It was she who was La Femme au Chapeau, lady with a hat.

She had kept a little millinery shop to keep them going in their poorest days.

She was a very straight dark woman with a long face and a firm large loosely hung mouth like a horse. She had an abundance of dark hair. Gertrude Stein always liked the way she pinned her hat to her head and Matisse once made a drawing of his wife making this characteristic gesture and gave it to Miss Stein. She always wore black. She always placed a large black hat-pin well in the middle of the hat and the middle of the top of her head and then with a large firm gesture, down it came.
They had with them a daughter of Matisse, a daughter he had had before his marriage and who had had diphtheria and had had to have an operation and for many years had to wear a black ribbon around her throat with a silver button. This Matisse put into many of his pictures.

*Matisse in his studio at Collioure in 1907, with his wife Amélie and his daughter Marguite. With a back ribbon around her neck.*
The girl was exactly like her father and Madame Matisse, as she once explained in her melodramatic simple way, did more than her duty by this child because having read in her youth a novel in which the heroine had done so and been consequently much loved all her life, had decided to do the same. She herself had had two boys but they were neither of them at that time living with them.

Pierre with a wooden horse 1904 – Henri Matisse

The younger Pierre was in the south of France on the borders of Spain with Madame Matisse's father and mother, and the elder Jean with Monsieur Matisse's father and mother in the north of France on the borders of Belgium.

Pierre Matisse 1910
Matisse had an astonishing virility that always gave one an extraordinary pleasure when one had not seen him for some time. Less the first time of seeing him than later. And one did not lose the pleasure of this virility all the time he was with one. But there was not much feeling of life in this virility. Madame Matisse was very different, there was a very profound feeling of life in her for any one who knew her.

Matisse had at this time a small Cézanne and a small Gauguin and he said he needed them both. The Cézanne had been bought with his wife's marriage portion, the Gauguin with the ring which was the only jewel she had ever owned. And they were happy because he needed these two pictures. The Cézanne was a picture of bathers and a tent, the Gauguin the head of a boy.

Gauguin (right in 1891) painted this 'Young Man with a Flower' in Tahiti (where he lived) the same year. Matisse bought the painting from art dealer Ambroise Vollard in 1900 and it later inspired one of Matisse's sculptures. In 1915, feeling the pressures of the First World War in France, he sold it to the wealthy American lawyer and collector John Quinn.
Later on in life when Matisse became a very rich man, he kept on buying pictures. He said he knew about pictures and had confidence in them and he did not know about other things. And so for his own pleasure and as the best legacy to leave his children he bought Cézannes. Picasso also later when he became rich bought pictures but they were his own. He too believed in pictures and wants to leave the best legacy he can to his son and so keeps and buys his own.

The Matisses had had a hard time. Matisse had come to Paris as a young man to study pharmacy. His people were small grain merchants in the north of France. He had become interested in painting, had begun copying the Poussins at the Louvre and become a painter fairly without the consent of his people who however continued to allow him the very small monthly sum he had had as a student. His daughter was born at this time and this further complicated his life. He had at first a certain amount of success. He married. Under the influence of the paintings of Poussin and Chardin he had painted still life pictures that had considerable success at the Champ-de-Mars salon, one of the two big spring salons.

And then he fell under the influence of Cézanne, and then under the influence of negro sculpture. All this developed the Matisse of the period of La Femme au Chapeau.

The year after his very considerable success at the salon he spent the winter painting a very large picture of a woman setting a table and on the table was a magnificent dish of fruit.

It had strained the resources of the Matisse family to buy this fruit, fruit was horribly dear in Paris in those days, even ordinary fruit, imagine how much dearer was this very extraordinary fruit and it had to keep until the picture was completed and the picture was going to take a long time.

In order to keep it as long as possible they kept the room as cold as possible, and that under the roof and in a Paris winter was not difficult, and Matisse painted in an overcoat and gloves and he painted at it all winter. It was finished at last and sent to the salon where the year before Matisse had had considerable success, and there it was refused.

---

25 View Poussin’s paintings [here](https://www.wikiart.org/en/jean-antoine-poussin) on WikiArt
26 View Chardin’s paintings [here](https://www.wikiart.org/en/jean-baptiste-chardin) on WikiArt
And now Matisse's serious troubles began, his daughter was very ill, he was in an agonising mental struggle concerning his work, and he had lost all possibility of showing his pictures. He no longer painted at home but in an atelier.

It was cheaper so. Every morning he painted, every afternoon he worked at his sculpture, late every afternoon he drew in the sketch classes from the nude, and every evening he played his violin. These were very dark days and he was very despairful.

His wife opened a small millinery shop and they managed to live. The two boys were sent away to the country to his and her people and they continued to live. The only encouragement came in the atelier where he worked and where a crowd of young men began to gather around him and be influenced by him. Among these the best known at that time was, the best known now Derain.27

Derain was a very young man at that time, he enormously admired Matisse, he went away to the country with them to Collioure near Perpignan, and he was a great comfort to them all.

He began to paint landscapes outlining his trees with red and he had a sense of space that was quite his own and which first showed itself in a landscape of a cart going up a road bordered with trees lined in red. His paintings were coming to be known at the independent.

27 View Andre Derain's paintings here on WikiArt
Paintings by Andre Derain and Matisse during their time together at Collioure in 1905

Andre (in Collioure 1905)

Selfportret with cap (Andre Derain) 1905

Matisse 1905 by Andre Derain
Matisse worked every day and every day and every day and he worked terribly hard. Once Vollard came to see him. Matisse used to love to tell the story. I have often heard him tell it. Vollard came and said he wanted to see the big picture which had been refused. Matisse showed it to him. He did not look at it. He talked to Madame Matisse and mostly about cooking, he liked cooking and eating as a Frenchman should, and so did she. Matisse and Madame Matisse were both getting very nervous although she did not show it.

And this door, said Vollard interestingly to Matisse, where does that lead to, does that lead into a court or does that lead on to a stairway. Into a court, said Matisse. Ah yes, said Vollard. And then he left. The Matisses spent days discussing whether there was anything symbolic in Vollard's question or was it idle curiosity. Vollard never had any idle curiosity, he always wanted to know what everybody thought of everything because in that way he found out what he himself thought. This was very well known and therefore the Matisses asked each other and all their friends, why did he ask that question about that door. Well at any rate within the year he had bought the picture at a very low price but he bought it, and he put it away and nobody saw it, and that was the end of that.

From this time on things went neither better nor worse for Matisse and he was discouraged and aggressive. Then came the first autumn salon and he was asked to exhibit and he sent La Femme au Chapeau and it was hung. It was derided and attacked and it was sold. Matisse was at this time about thirty-five years old, he was depressed. Having gone to the opening day of the salon and heard what was said of his picture and seen what they were trying to do to it he never went again. His wife went alone. He stayed at home and was unhappy. This is the way Madame Matisse used to tell the story.

Then a note came from the secretary of the salon saying that there had been an offer made for the picture, an offer of four hundred francs. Matisse was painting Madame Matisse as a gypsy
holding a guitar. This guitar had already had a history. Madame Matisse was very fond of telling
the story. She had a great deal to do and she posed beside and she was very healthy and sleepy.
One day she was posing, he was painting, she began to nod and as she nodded the guitar made
noises. Stop it, said Matisse, wake up. She woke up, he painted, she nodded and the guitar made
noises. Stop it, said Matisse, wake up. She woke up and then in a little while she nodded again
the guitar made even more noises. Matisse furious seized the guitar and broke it. And added
Madame Matisse ruefully, we were very hard up then and we had to have it mended so he could
go on with the picture. She was holding this same mended guitar and posing when the note from
the secretary of the autumn salon came. Matisse was joyful, of course I will accept, said Matisse.
Oh no, said Madame Matisse, if those people (ces gens) are interested enough to make an offer
they are interested enough to pay the price you asked, and she added, the difference would make
winter clothes for Margot. Matisse hesitated but was finally convinced and they sent a note
saying he wanted his price. Nothing happened and Matisse was in a terrible state and very
reproachful and then in a day or two when Madame Matisse was once more posing with the
guitar and Matisse was painting, Margot brought them a little blue telegram. Matisse opened it
and he made a grimace. Madame Matisse was terrified, she thought the worst had happened.
The guitar fell. What is it, she salt They have bought it, he said. Why do you make such a face of
agony and frighten me so and perhaps break the guitar, she said. I was winking at you, he said,
to tell you, because I was so moved I could not speak.

And so, Madame Matisse used to end up the story triumphantly, you see it was I, and I was right
to insist upon the original price, and Mademoiselle Gertrude, who insisted upon buying it, who
arranged the whole matter.

The friendship with the Matisse grew apace. Matisse at that time was at work at his first big
decoration, Le Bonheur de Vivre. He was making small and larger and very large studies for it. It was in this
picture that Matisse first clearly realised his intention of deforming the drawing of
the human body in order to harmonise and intensify the color values of all the simple colors mixed only
with white.
He used his distorted drawing as a dissonance is used in music or as vinegar or lemons are used in cooking or egg shells in coffee to clarify. I do inevitably take my comparisons from the kitchen because I like food and cooking and know something about it. However this was the idea. Cézanne had come to his unfinishedness and distortion of necessity, Matisse did it by intention.

Little by little people began to come to the rue de Fleurus to see the Matisses and the Cézannes, Matisse brought people, everybody brought somebody, and they came at any time and it began to be a nuisance, and it was in this way that Saturday evenings began. It was also at this time that Gertrude Stein got into the habit of writing at night. It was only after eleven o'clock that she could be sure that no one would knock at the studio door. She was at that time planning her long book, The Making of Americans, she was struggling with her sentences, those long sentences that had to be so exactly carried out. Sentences not only words but sentences and always sentences have been Gertrude Stein's life long passion. And so she had then and indeed it lasted pretty well to the war, which broke down so many habits, she had then the habit of beginning her work at eleven o'clock at night and working until the dawn. She said she always tried to stop before the dawn was too clear and the birds were too lively because it is a disagreeable sensation to go to bed then. There were birds in many trees behind high walls in those days, now there are fewer. But often the birds and the dawn caught her and she stood in the court waiting to get used to it before she went to bed. She had the habit then of sleeping until noon and the beating of the rugs into the court, because everybody did that in those days, even her household did, was one of her most poignant irritations.

So the Saturday evenings began.

Gertrude Stein and her brother were often at the Matisses and the Matisse were constantly with them. Madame Matisse occasionally gave them a lunch, this happened most often when some relation sent the Matisse a hare. Jugged hare prepared by Madame Matisse in the fashion of Perpignan was something quite apart. They also had extremely good wine, a little heavy, but excellent. They also had a sort of Madeira called Roncio which was very good indeed.

---

28 Read Gertrude Stein's 'The Making of Americans' online [here](#).
29 jugged: stewed or boiled in a covered container.
Maillol the sculptor\textsuperscript{30} came from the same part of France as Madame Matisse and once when I met him at Jo Davidson's,\textsuperscript{31} many years later, he told me about all these wines.

He then told me how he had lived well in his student days in Paris for fifty francs a month. To be sure, he said, the family sent me homemade bread every week and when I came I brought enough wine with me to last a year and I sent my washing home every month.

\textsuperscript{30} View Aristide Maillol's sculptures \url{here} on WikiArt

\textsuperscript{31} \textit{Jo Davidson} (1883 – 1952) American sculptor. Although he specialized in realistic, intense portrait busts, Davidson did not require his subjects to formally pose for him; rather, he observed and spoke with them. He worked primarily with clay, while the final products were typically cast in terra-cotta, marble and bronze.
Derain was present at one of these lunches in those early days. He and Gertrude Stein disagreed violently. They discussed philosophy, he basing his ideas on having read the second part of *Faust* in a French translation while he was doing his military service. They never became friends.

Gertrude Stein was never interested in his work. He had a sense of space but for her his pictures had neither life nor depth nor solidity. They rarely saw each other after.

Derain at that time was constantly with the Matisses and was of all Matisse's friends the one Madame Matisse liked the best.
It was about this time that Gertrude Stein's brother happened one day to find the picture gallery of Sagot, an ex-circus clown who had a picture shop further up the rue Laffitte. Here he, Gertrude Stein's brother, found the paintings of two young Spaniards, one, whose name everybody has forgotten, the other one, Picasso. The work of both of them interested him and he bought a water color by the forgotten one, a cafe scene. Sagot also sent him to a little furniture store where there were some paintings being shown by Picasso. Gertrude Stein's brother was interested and wanted to buy one and asked the price but the price asked was almost as expensive as Cézanne. He went back to Sagot and told him. Sagot laughed. He said, that is alright, come back in a few days and I will have a big one.  

32 Picasso painted Sagot's portrait in 1909, but he found him exploitative and dishonest and considered him little more than a usurer. Sagot was the reason for Picasso's lifelong distrust of art dealers.
In a few days he did have a big one and it was very cheap. When Gertrude Stein and Picasso tell about those days they are not always in agreement as to what happened but I think in this case they agree that the price asked was a hundred and fifty francs. The picture was the now well known painting of a nude girl with a basket of red flowers.

Gertrude Stein did not like the picture, she found something rather appalling in the drawing of the legs and feet, something that repelled and shocked her. She and her brother almost quarrelled about this picture. He wanted it and she did not want it in the house. Sagot gathering a little of the discussion said, but that is alright if you do not like the legs and feet it is very easy to guillotine her and only take the head. No that would not do, everybody agreed, and nothing was decided.

Gertrude Stein and her brother continued to be very divided in this matter and they were very angry with each other. Finally it was agreed that since he, the brother, wanted it so badly they would buy it, and in this way the first Picasso was brought into the rue de Fleurus.

---

33 Gertrude and Leo Stein's accounts of that purchase are at odds. Leo mentions in his memoir that they bought Picasso's 'Family with a monkey'.
It was just about this time that Raymond Duncan, the brother of Isadora, rented an atelier in the rue de Fleurus. Raymond had just come back from his first trip to Greece and had brought back with him a Greek girl and Greek clothes.

Raymond had known Gertrude Stein's elder brother and his wife in San Francisco.

Raymond Duncan

Isadora Duncan

Raymond Duncan, his wife Pénélope Sikelianos and son Menalkas in 1912

Michael Stein, and his wife Sarah, 1905

Raymond Duncan (1874–1966), American dancer, artist, poet, craftsman, and philosopher, and brother of dancer Isadora.

Isadora Duncan (1877 or 1878 – 1927) American dancer who performed to acclaim throughout Europe.
At that time Raymond was acting as advance agent for Emma Nevada\textsuperscript{36} who had also with her Pablo Casals the violin cellist, at that time quite unknown.

The Duncan family had been then at the Omar Khayyam stage, they had not yet gone Greek. They had after that gone Italian renaissance, but now Raymond had gone completely Greek and this included a Greek girl.

Isadora lost interest in him, she found the girl too modern a Greek. At any rate Raymond was at this time without any money at all and his wife was enceinte.\textsuperscript{37} Gertrude Stein gave him coal and a chair for Penelope to sit in, the rest sat on packing cases. They had another friend who helped them, Kathleen Bruce, a very beautiful, very athletic English girl, a kind of sculptress, she later married and became the widow of the discoverer of the South Pole, Scott.

\textsuperscript{36} Emma Nevada: opera singer

\textsuperscript{37} Enceinte is the adjective 'pregnant' in the French language.
She had at that time no money to speak of either and she used to bring a half portion of her dinner every evening for Penelope. Finally Penelope had her baby, it was named Raymond because when Gertrude Stein's brother and Raymond Duncan went to register it they had not thought of a name. Now he is against his will called Menalkas but he might be gratified if he knew that legally he is Raymond. However that is another matter.

Kathleen Bruce was a sculptress and she was learning to model figures of children and she asked to do a figure of Gertrude Stein's nephew.

Gertrude Stein and her nephew went to Kathleen Bruce's studio. There they, one afternoon, met H.P. Roché.38

Roché was one of those characters that are always to be found in Paris. He was a very earnest, very noble, devoted, very faithful and very enthusiastic man who was a general introducer. He knew everybody, he really knew them and he could introduce anybody to anybody. He was going to be a writer. He was tall and red-headed and he never said anything but good good excellent and he lived with his mother and his grandmother. He had done a great many things, he had gone to the Austrian mountains with the Austrians, he had gone to Germany with the Germans and he had gone to Hungary with Hungarians and he had gone to England with the English. He had not gone to Russia although he had been in Paris with Russians. As Picasso always said of him, Roché is very nice but he is only a translation.

Later he was often at 27 rue de Fleurus with various nationalities and Gertrude Stein rather liked him. She always said of him he is so faithful, perhaps one need never see him again but one knows that somewhere Roche is faithful. He did give her one delightful sensation in the very early days of their acquaintance. *Three Lives*, Gertrude Stein's first book was just then being written and Roché who could read English was very impressed by it. One day Gertrude Stein was saying something about herself and Roche said good good excellent that is very important for your biography. She was terribly touched, it was the first time that she really realised that some time she would have a biography. It is quite true that although she has not seen him for years somewhere Roché is probably perfectly faithful.

---

38 Henri-Pierre Roché (1879 – 1959) was a French author who was deeply involved with the artistic avant-garde in Paris and the Dada movement.
But to come back to Roché at Kathleen Bruce's studio. They all talked about one thing and another and Gertrude Stein happened to mention that they had just bought a picture from Sagot by a young Spaniard named Picasso. Good good excellent, said Roché, he is a very interesting young fellow, I know him. Oh do you, said Gertrude Stein, well enough to take somebody to see him. Why certainly, said Roché. Very well, said Gertrude Stein, my brother I know is very anxious to make his acquaintance. And there and then the appointment was made and shortly after Roche and Gertrude Stein's brother went to see Picasso.

It was only a very short time after this that Picasso began the portrait of Gertrude Stein, now so widely known, but just how that came about is a little vague in everybody's mind. I have heard Picasso and Gertrude Stein talk about it often and they neither of them can remember. They can remember the first time that Picasso dined at the rue de Fleurus and they can remember the first time Gertrude Stein posed for her portrait at rue Ravignan but in between there is a blank. How it came about they do not know. Picasso had never had anybody pose for him since he was sixteen years old, he was then twenty-four and Gertrude Stein had never thought of having her portrait painted, and they do not either of them know how it came about. Anyway it did and she posed to him for this portrait ninety times and a great deal happened during that time. To go back to all the first times.

Picasso and Fernande came to dinner, Picasso in those days was, what a dear friend and schoolmate of mine, Nellie Jacot, called, a good-looking bootblack. He was thin dark, alive with big pools of eyes and a violent but not rough way. He was sitting next to Gertrude Stein at dinner and she took up a piece of bread. This, said Picasso, snatching it back with violence, this piece of bread is mine. She laughed and he looked sheepish. That was the beginning of their intimacy.

That evening Gertrude Stein's brother took out portfolio after portfolio of Japanese prints to show Picasso, Gertrude Stein's brother was fond of Japanese prints. Picasso solemnly and obediently looked at print after print and listened to the descriptions.

He said under his breath to Gertrude Stein, he is very nice, your brother, but like all Americans, like

---

39 Edmond-Honoré Sagot (1857 – 1917) Former clown turned bookseller, art dealer, publisher of original prints and posters. In 1881 he founded the "Ed. Sagot" house in Paris. He had a bad reputation for buying the artists' work cheap and selling it over-priced. This establishment still exists under the name "Sagot - Le Garrec" and is one of the oldest art galleries still active. See directions on Google maps.

40 Read this blog entry on Leo Stein's adventures in Kyoto, Japan
Haviland,\textsuperscript{41} he shows you Japanese prints. Moi j'aime pas ca, no I don't care for it. As I say Gertrude Stein and Pablo Picasso immediately understood each other. Then there was the first time of posing. The atelier of Picasso I have already described. In those days there was even more disorder, more coming and going, more red-hot fire in the stove, more cooking and more interruptions. There was a large broken armchair where Gertrude Stein posed. There was a couch where everybody sat and slept. There was a little kitchen chair upon which Picasso sat to paint, there was a large easel and there were many very large canvases. It was at the height of the end of the Harlequin period when the canvases were enormous, the figures also, and the groups.

There was a little fox terrier there that had something the matter with it and had been and was again about to be taken to the veterinary. No Frenchman or Frenchwoman is so poor or so careless or so avaricious but that they can and do constantly take their pet to the vet. Fernande was as always, very large, very beautiful and very gracious. She offered to read La Fontaine's stories\textsuperscript{42} aloud to amuse Gertrude Stein while Gertrude Stein posed. She took her pose, Picasso sat very tight on his chair and very close to his canvas and on a very small palette which was of a uniform brown grey color, mixed some more brown grey and the painting began. This was the first of some eighty or ninety sittings.

Toward the end of the afternoon Gertrude Stein's two brothers and her sister-in-law and Andrew Green came to see.

They were all excited at the beauty of the sketch and Andrew Green begged and begged that it should be left as it was. But Picasso shook his head and said, non.

It is too bad but in those days no one thought of taking a photograph of the picture as it was then and of course no one of the group that saw it then remembers at all what it looked like any more than do Picasso or Gertrude Stein.

\textsuperscript{41} Picasso is likely referring to Philippe Burty, who coined the term 'japonisme. He was the grandfather of photographer Paul Haviland and the painter Frank Burty Haviland, both friends of Picasso.

\textsuperscript{42} Read de La Fontaine's children's stories online here (illustrated)
Andrew Green, none of them knew how they had met Andrew Green, he was the great-nephew of Andrew Green known as the father of Greater New York.\textsuperscript{43} He had been born and reared in Chicago but he was a typical tall gaunt new Englander, blond and gentle. He had a prodigious memory and could recite all of Milton's Paradise Lost\textsuperscript{44} by heart and also all the translations of Chinese poems of which Gertrude Stein was very fond. He had been in China and he was later to live permanently in the South Sea islands after he finally inherited quite a fortune from his great-uncle who was fond of Milton's Paradise Lost. He had a passion for oriental stuffs. He adored as he said a simple centre and a continuous design. He loved pictures in museums and he hated everything modern. Once when during the family's absence he had stayed at the rue de Fleurus for a month, he had outraged Hélène's feelings by having his bed-sheets changed every day and covering all the pictures with cashmere shawls. He said the pictures were very restful, he could not deny that, but he could not bear it. He said that after the month was over that he had of course never come to like the new pictures but the worst of it was that not liking them he had lost his taste for the old and he never again in his life could go to any museum or look at any picture. He was tremendously impressed by Fernande's beauty. He was indeed quite overcome. I would, he said to Gertrude Stein, if I could talk French, I would make love to her and take her away from that little Picasso. Do you make love with words, laughed Gertrude Stein. He went away before I came to Paris and he came back eighteen years later and he was very dull.

This year was comparatively a quiet one. The Matisses were in the South of France all winter, at Collioure on the Mediterranean coast not far from Perpignan, where Madame Matisse's people lived.

Duncan and family in Berlin after visiting Gertrude in Paris (1905)

The Raymond Duncan's had disappeared after having been joined first by a sister of Penelope who was a little actress and was very far from being dressed Greek, she was as nearly as she possibly could be a little Parisian. She had accompanying her a very large dark Greek cousin. He came in to see Gertrude Stein and he looked around and he announced, I am Greek, that is the same as saying that I have perfect taste and I do not care for any of these pictures. Very shortly Raymond, his wife and baby, the sister-in-law and the Greek cousin disappeared out of the court at 27 rue de Fleurus and were succeeded by a German lady.

This German lady was the niece and god-daughter of German field-marshal and her brother was a captain in the German navy. Her mother was English and she herself had played the harp at the Bavarian court. She was very amusing and had some strange friends, both English and French.

\textsuperscript{43} Andrew Haswell Green, "the Father of Greater New York"

\textsuperscript{44} Read Milton's 'Paradise Lost' online here
She was a sculptress and she made a typical German sculpture of little Roger, the concierge's boy. She made three heads of him, one laughing, one crying and one sticking out his tongue, all three together on one pedestal. She sold this piece to the royal museum at Potsdam. The concierge during the war often wept at the thought of her Roger being there, sculptured, in the museum at Potsdam. She invented clothes that could be worn inside out and taken to pieces and be made long or short and she showed these to everybody with great pride.

She had as an instructor in painting a weird looking Frenchman one who looked exactly like the pictures of Huckleberry Finn's father. She explained that she employed him out of charity, he had won a gold medal at the salon in his youth and after that had had no success. She also said that she never employed a servant of the servant class. She said that decayed gentlewomen were more appetizing and more efficient and she always had some widow of some army officer or functionary sewing or posing for her. She had an Austrian maid for a while who cooked perfectly delicious Austrian pastry but she did not keep her long. She was in short very amusing and she and Gertrude Stein used to talk to each other in the court. She always wanted to know what Gertrude Stein thought of everybody who came in and out. She wanted to know if she came to her conclusions by deduction, observation, imagination or analysis. She was amusing and then she disappeared and nobody thought anything about her until the war came and then everybody wondered if after all there had not been something sinister about this German woman's life in Paris.

Practically every afternoon Gertrude Stein went to Montmartre, posed and then later wandered down the hill usually walking across Paris to the rue de Fleurus. She then formed the habit which has never left her of walking around Paris, now accompanied by the dog, in those days alone. And Saturday evenings the Picassos walked home with her and dined and then there was Saturday evening. During these long poses and these long walks Gertrude Stein meditated and made sentences. She was then in the middle of her negro story Melanctha Herbert, the second story of Three Lives and the poignant incidents that

---

45 Read 'The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn' by Mark Twain online here
46 Read 'Three Lives' online here
she wove into the life of Melanctha were often these she noticed in walking down the hill from the rue Ravignan.

It was at that time that the Hungarians began their pilgrimages to the rue de Fleurus. There were strange groups of Americans then, Picasso unaccustomed to the virginal quality of these young men and women used to say of them, ils sont pas des hommes, ils sont pas des femmes, ils sont des américains. They are not men, they are not women, they are Americans. Once there was a Bryn Mawr woman there, wife of a well-known portrait painter, who was very tall and beautiful and having once fallen on her head had a strange vacant expression. Her, he approved of, and used to call the Empress. There was a type of American art student, male, that used very much to afflict him, he used to say no it is not he who will make the future glory of America. He had a characteristic reaction when he saw the first photograph of a skyscraper. Good God, he said, imagine the pangs of jealousy a lover would have while his beloved came up all those flights of stairs to his top story studio.

It was at this time that a Maurice Denis, a Toulouse-Lautrec and many enormous Picassos were added to the collection. It was at this time also that the acquaintance and friendship with the Vallotons began.

Vollard once said when he was asked about a certain painter's picture, oh ça c'est un Cézanne pour les pauvres, that is a Cézanne for the poor collector. Well Valloton was a Manet for the impecunious. His big nude had all the hardness, the stillness and

(Felix Valloton- Nude Reclining on a Yellow Cushion 1904)

---

47 Link to the Steins and the Hungarians
48 Bryn Mawr College is a private women's liberal arts college founded in 1885. It was the first higher education institution to offer graduate degrees, including doctorates, to women.
49 Impecunious: poor
50 Nude Reclining on a yellow cushion and pictures like it were almost certainly done from photographs. Though there is no documentary evidence, the paintings look like they're copied from photographs. Vallotton is known to have owned a camera.
none of the quality of the Olympe of Manet and his portraits had the aridity but none of the elegance of David.

And further he had the misfortune of having married the sister of an important picture-dealer. He was very happy with his wife and she was a very charming woman but then there were the weekly family reunions, and there was also the wealth of his wife and the violence of his stepsons.

He was a gentle soul, Valloton, with a keen wit and a great deal of ambition but a feeling of impotence, the result of being the brother-in-law of picture dealers. However for a time his pictures were very interesting.
He asked Gertrude Stein to pose for him. She did the following year in 1907. She had come to like posing, the long still hours followed by a long dark walk intensified the concentration with which she was creating her sentences. The sentences of which Marcel Brion, the French critic has written, by exactitude, austerity, absence of variety in light and shade, by refusal of the use of the subconscious Gertrude Stein achieves a symmetry which has a close analogy to the symmetry of the musical fugue of Bach.

She often described the strange sensation she had as a result of the way in which Valloton painted. He was not at that time a young man as painters go, he had already had considerable recognition as a painter in the Paris exposition of 1900. When he painted a portrait he made a crayon sketch and then began painting at the top of the canvas straight across. Gertrude Stein said it was like pulling down a curtain as slowly moving as one of his Swiss glaciers. Slowly he pulled the curtain down and by the time he was at the bottom of the canvas, there you were. The whole operation took about two weeks and then he gave the canvas to you. First however he exhibited it in the autumn salon and it had considerable notice and everybody was pleased.

Everybody went to the Cirque Médrano once a week, at least, and usually everybody went on the same evening.

---

52 Marcel Brion (1895-1984) French essayist, literary critic, novelist, and historian.
53 austerity: sternness or severity of manner or attitude.
54 The Médrano circus was an important source of inspiration for many of the artists in the neighborhood. Picasso, accompanied by Fernande Olivier and Max Jacob, who attended Médrano 3 or 4 times a week, was celebrated by the impressionist painters, Renoir and Degas, Georges Seurat and Toulouse-Lautrec.
There the clowns had commenced dressing up in misfit clothes instead of the old classic costume and these clothes later so well known on Charlie Chaplin were the delight of Picasso and all his friends in Montmartre. There also were the English jockeys and their costumes made the mode that all Montmartre followed.

Not very long ago somebody was talking about how well the young painters of to-day dressed and what a pity it was that they spent money in that way. Picasso laughed. I am quite certain, he said, they pay less for the fashionable complet, their suits of clothes, than we did for our rough and common ones. You have no idea how hard it was and expensive it was in those days to find English tweed or a French imitation that would look rough and dirty enough. And it was quite true one way and another the painters in those days did spend a lot of money and they spent all they got hold of because in those happy days you could owe money for years for your paints and canvases and rent and restaurant and practically everything except coal and luxuries.

The winter went on. *Three Lives* was written. Gertrude Stein asked her sister-in-law to come and read it. She did and was deeply moved. This pleased Gertrude Stein immensely, she did not believe that any one could read anything she wrote and be interested. In those days she never asked anyone what they thought of her work, but were they interested enough to read it. Now she says if they can bring themselves to read it they will be interested.

Her elder brother's wife has always meant a great deal in her life but never more than on that afternoon. And then it had to be typewritten. Gertrude Stein had at that time a wretched little portable typewriter which she never used. She always then and for many years later wrote on scraps of paper in pencil, copied it into French school note-books in ink and then often copied it over again in ink. It was in connection with these various series of scraps of paper that her elder brother once remarked, I do not know whether Gertrude has more genius than the rest of you.

---

55 Sarah Stein
all, that I know nothing about, but one thing I have always noticed, the rest of you paint and write and are not satisfied and throw it away or tear it up, she does not say whether she is satisfied or not, she copies it very often but she never throws away any piece of paper upon which she has written.

Gertrude Stein tried to copy *Three Lives* on the typewriter but it was no use, it made her nervous, so Etta Cone came to the rescue. The Miss Etta Cones as Pablo Picasso used to call her and her sister. Etta Cone was a Baltimore connection of Gertrude Stein's and she was spending a winter in Paris. She was rather lonesome and she was rather interested.

Etta Cone found the Picassos appalling but romantic. She was taken there by Gertrude Stein whenever the Picasso finances got beyond everybody and was made to buy a hundred francs' worth of drawings. After all a hundred francs in those days was twenty dollars. She was quite willing to indulge in this romantic charity. Needless to say these drawings became in very much later years the nucleus of her collection.

Etta Cone offered to typewrite *Three Lives* and she began. Baltimore is famous for the delicate sensibilities and conscientiousness of its inhabitants. It suddenly occurred to Gertrude Stein that she had not told Etta Cone to read the manuscript before beginning to typewrite it. She went to see her and there indeed was Etta Cone faithfully copying the manuscript letter by letter so that she might not by any indiscretion become conscious of the meaning. Permission to read the text having been given, the typewriting went on.

---

66 The Cone sisters were Claribel Cone (1864–1929) and Etta Cone (1870–1949) of Baltimore, Maryland. Together they gathered one of the finest collections of modern French art in the United States. They were active as collectors, travelers, and bons vivants during the first decades of the 20th Century.
Spring was coming and the sittings were coming to an end. All of a sudden one day Picasso painted out the whole head. I can't see you any longer when I look, he said irritably. And so the picture was left like that. Nobody remembers being particularly disappointed or particularly annoyed at this ending to the long series of posings.

There was the spring Indépendants\(^57\) and then Gertrude Stein and her brother were going to Italy as was at that time their habit Pablo and Fernande were going to Spain, she for the first time, and she had to buy a dress and a hat and perfumes and a cooking stove. All French women in those days when they went from one country to another took along a French oil stove to cook on. Perhaps they still do. No matter where they were going this had to be taken with them. They always paid a great deal of excess baggage, all French women who went travelling.

And the Matisses were back and they had to meet the Picassos and to be enthusiastic about each other, but not to like each other very well.

And in their wake, Derain met Picasso and with him came Braque.

---

\(^{57}\) *Société des Artistes Indépendants*: Since 1884, the association organized massive annual exhibitions in Paris. This is where artworks were often first displayed and widely discussed.

\(^{58}\) Georges Braque: French painter, collagist, draughtsman, printmaker and sculptor.

\(^{59}\) André Derain (1880 – 1954) French artist, painter, sculptor and co-founder of Fauvism with Henri Matisse.
It may seem very strange to everyone nowadays that before this time Matisse had never heard of Picasso and Picasso had never met Matisse. But at that time every little crowd lived its own life and knew practically nothing of any other crowd. Matisse on the Quai Saint-Michel and in the Indépendant did not know anything of Picasso and Montmartre and Sagot.

They all, it is true, had been in the very early stages bought one after the other by Mademoiselle Weill, the bric-a-brac shop in Montmartre, but as she bought everybody's pictures, pictures brought by any one, not necessarily by the painter, it was not very likely that any painter would, except by some rare chance, see there the paintings of any other painter. They were however all very grateful to her in later years because after all, practically everybody who later became famous had sold their first little picture to her.

As I was saying the sittings were over, the vernissage of the Indépendants was over and everybody went away.

It had been a fruitful winter. In the long struggle with the portrait of Gertrude Stein, Picasso passed from the Harlequin, the charming early Italian period to the intensive struggle which was to end in cubism.

---

60 Based largely on intuition rather than direct observation, Picasso’s Rose Period represented an important epoch in his life and work and had a great impact on the developments of modern art. It began in 1904 at a time when Picasso settled in Montmartre at the Bateau-Lavoir among bohemian poets and writers. Following his Blue Period, depicting themes of poverty, loneliness, and despair in somber tones of daunting blues, Picasso’s Rose Period represented more pleasant themes of clowns, harlequins, carnival performers, depicted in cheerful vivid hues of red, orange, pink and earth tones.
Gertrude Stein had written the story of Melanctha the negress, the second story of *Three Lives* which was the first definite step away from the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century in literature. Matisse had painted the Bonheur de Vivre and had created the new school of color which was soon to leave its mark on everything. And everybody went away. That summer the Matisse came to Italy. Matisse did not care about it very much, he preferred France and Morocco but Madame Matisse was deeply touched. It was a girlish dream fulfilled. She said, I say to myself all the time, I am in Italy. And I say it to Henri all the time and he is very sweet about it, but he says, what of it.

The Picassos were in Spain and Fernande wrote long letters describing Spain and the Spaniards and earthquakes.

In Florence except for the short visit of the Matisse and a short visit from Alfý Maurer the summer life was in no way related to the Paris life.

Gertrude Stein and her brother rented for the summer a villa on top of the hill at Fiesole near Florence, and there they spent their summers for several years.

The year I came to Paris a friend and myself took this villa, Gertrude Stein and her brother having taken a larger one on the other side of Fiesole, having been joined that year by their elder brother, his wife and child. The small one, the Casa Ricci, was very delightful. It had been made livable by a Scotch woman who born Presbyterian became an ardent Catholic and took her old Presbyterian mother from one convent to another. Finally they came to rest in Casa Ricci and there she made for herself a chapel and there her mother died.

---

61 Alfred Henri Maurer: 1868 – 1932 was an American modernist painter who exhibited his work in avant-garde circles internationally during the early twentieth century. Highly respected today, his work met with little critical or commercial success in his lifetime, and he died, a suicide, at the age of sixty-four. View Alfred Maurer’s paintings [here](https://www.artstack.com/artists/alfred-henri-maurer) on ArtStack.

62 Alice B. Toklas left California after the devastating [1906 San Francisco earthquake](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1906_San_Francisco_earthquake) and came to Paris in 1907 with her friend Harriet Lane Levy.
She then abandoned this for a larger villa which she turned into a retreat for retired priests and Gertrude Stein and her brother rented the Casa Ricci from her. Gertrude Stein delighted in her landlady who looked exactly like a lady-in-waiting to Mary Stuart and with all her trailing black robes genuflected before every Catholic symbol and would then climb up a precipitous ladder and open a little window in the roof to look at the stars. A strange mingling of Catholic and Protestant exaltation.

Hélène the French servant never came down to Fiesole. She had by that time married. She cooked for her husband during the summer and mended the stockings of Gertrude Stein and her brother by putting new feet into them. She also made jam. In Italy there was Maddalena quite as important in Italy as Hélène in Paris, but I doubt if with as much appreciation for notabilities. Italy is too accustomed to the famous and the children of the famous. It was Edwin Dodge who apropos of these said, the lives of great men oft remind us we should leave no sons behind us.

Gertrude Stein adored heat and sunshine although she always says that Paris winter is an ideal climate. In those days it was always at noon that she preferred to walk. I, who have and had no fondness for a summer sun, often accompanied her. Sometimes later in Spain I sat under a tree and wept but she in the sun was indefatigable. She could even lie in the sun and look straight up into a summer noon sun, she said it rested her eyes and head.

There were amusing people in Florence. There were the Berensons and at that time with them Gladys Deacon, a well known international beauty, but after a winter of Montmarte Gertrude Stein found her too easily shocked to be interesting.

---

63 Edwin Dodge, architect, married art patron and writer Mabel Dodge Luhan
64 Bernard Berenson (1865 – 1959) American art historian specializing in the Renaissance.
65 Gladys Marie Spencer-Churchill, Duchess of Marlborough (née Deacon; 1881–1977), American socialite. She was the mistress and later the second wife of Charles Spencer-Churchill, 9th Duke of Marlborough.
Then there were the first Russians, von Heiroth and his wife, she who afterwards had four husbands and once pleasantly remarked that she had always been good friends with all her husbands. He was foolish but attractive and told the usual Russian stories.

Then there were the Thorolds and a great many others. And most important there was a most excellent English lending library with all sorts of strange biographies which were to Gertrude Stein a source of endless pleasure.

She once told me that when she was young she had read so much, read from the Elizabethans to the moderns, that she was terribly uneasy lest some day she would be without anything to read. For years this fear haunted her but in one way and another although she always reads and reads she seems always to find more to read. Her eldest brother used to complain that although he brought up from Florence every day as many books as he could carry, there always were just as many to take back.

It was during this summer that Gertrude Stein began her great book, The Making of Americans.66

It began with an old daily theme that she had written when at Radcliffe, "Once an angry man dragged his father along the ground through his own orchard. "Stop!' cried the groaning old man at last. 'Stop! I did not drag my father beyond this tree.'

---

66 Read 'The Making of Americans' online [here](#)
"It is hard living down the tempers we are born with. We all begin well.

For in our youth there is nothing we are more intolerant of than our own sins writ large in others and we fight them fiercely in ourselves; but we grow old and we see that these our sins are of all sins the really harmless ones to own, nay that they give a charm to any character, and so our struggle with them dies away." And it was to be the history of a family. It was a history of a family but by the time I came to Paris it was getting to be a history of all human beings, all who ever were or are or could be living.

Gertrude Stein in all her life has never been as pleased with anything as she is with the translation that Bernard Fay\textsuperscript{67} and Madame Seilliére\textsuperscript{68} are making of this book now. She has just been going over it with Bernard Faï and as she says, it is wonderful in English and it is even as wonderful in French. Elliot Paul, when editor of transition once said that he was certain that Gertrude Stein could be a best-seller in France. It seems very likely that his prediction is to be fulfilled.

But to return to those old days in the Casa Ricci and the first beginnings of those long sentences which were to change the literary ideas of a great many people.

Gertrude Stein was working tremendously over the beginning of The Making of Americans and came back to Paris under the spell of the thing she was doing. It was at this time that working every night she often was caught by the dawn coming while she was working. She came back to a Paris fairly full of excitement. In the first place she came back to her finished portrait. The day he returned from Spain Picasso sat down and out of his head painted the head in without having seen Gertrude Stein again. And when she saw it he and she were content. It is very strange but neither can remember at all what the head looked like when he painted it out.

There is another charming story of the portrait.

Only a few years ago when Gertrude Stein had had her hair cut short, she had always up to that time worn it as a crown on top of her head as Picasso has painted it, when she had had her hair cut, a day or so later she happened to come into a room and Picasso was several rooms away.

She had a hat on but he caught sight of her through two doorways and approaching her quickly called out, Gertrude, what is it, what is it. What is what, Pablo, she said. Let me see, he said. She let him see. And my portrait, said he sternly. Then his face softening he added, mais, quand même tout 'y est, all the same it is all there.

\textsuperscript{68} Renée Seilliére
In January 1926, when Stein was fifty-two years old, she cut off the long hair she had worn for decades and adopted a distinctive “Julius Caesar” bob, along with a more masculine style of dress that publicly expressed her lesbian sexuality. Soon after, Man Ray asked Stein if he could update his publicity images of her. For the photo shoot, Stein slicked her short hair back over her ears and wore makeup and a dark dress with a scarf and pin; Man Ray played up her gender-bending, showing her as a man in a woman’s body—or conversely, a female in male drag. He minimized her body and hands and lit her head and profile so that they read as solid and stony, in effect simulating the busts of ancient Roman rulers. When Man Ray asked Stein in 1930 to pay him for a recent sitting, they parted company. Money had never been part of their exchange.

Matisse was back and there was excitement in the air. Derain, and Braque with him, had gone to Montmartre. Braque was a young painter who had known Marie Laurencin when they were both art students, and they had then painted each other’s portraits. After that Braque had done rather geographical pictures, rounded hills and very much under the color influence of Matisse’s Indépendant painting.

---

69 Georges Braque 1882 – 1963 Major 20th-century French painter, collagist, draughtsman, printmaker and sculptor. His most important contributions to the history of art were in his alliance with Fauvism from 1906, and the role he played in the development of Cubism.
He had come to know Derain, I am not sure but that they had known each other while doing their military service, and now they knew Picasso. It was an exciting moment.

They began to spend their days up there and they all always ate together at a little restaurant opposite, and Picasso was more than ever, as Gertrude Stein said, the little bullfighter followed by his squadron of four, or as later in her portrait of him, she called him Napoleon followed by his four enormous grenadiers. Derain and Braque were great big men, so was Guillaume a heavy set man and Salmon\(^{70}\) was not small. Picasso was every inch a chief.

This brings the story to Salmon and Guillaume Apollinaire\(^{71}\), although Gertrude Stein had known these two and Marie Laurencin\(^{72}\) a considerable time before all this was happening.

Salmon and Guillaume Apollinaire both lived in Montmarte in these days.

Salmon was very lithe and alive but Gertrude Stein never found him particularly interesting. She liked him. Guillaume Apollinaire on the contrary was very wonderful. There was just about that time, that is about the time when Gertrude Stein first knew Apollinaire, the excitement of a duel that he was to fight with another writer.

---

\(^{70}\) André Salmon (1881 – 1969) French poet, art critic and writer. He was one of the early defenders of Cubism.

\(^{71}\) Guillaume Apollinaire (1880 – 1918) French poet, playwright, short story writer, novelist, and art critic of Polish descent. He is considered one of the foremost poets of the early 20th century, as well as one of the most impassioned defenders of Cubism and a forefather of Surrealism.

\(^{72}\) Marie Laurencin (1883 –1956) French painter and printmaker. She became an important figure in the Parisian avant-garde as a member of the Cubists. She has been romantically involved with Apollinaire and was considered his muse.
Fernande and Pablo told about it with so much excitement and so much laughter and so much Montmartre slang, this was in the early days of their acquaintance, that she was always a little vague about just what did happen. But the gist of the matter was that Guillaume challenged the other man and Max Jacob\textsuperscript{73} was to be the second and witness for Guillaume. Guillaume and his antagonist each sat in their favorite café all day and waited while their seconds went to and fro. How it all ended Gertrude Stein does not know except that nobody fought, but the great excitement was the bill each second\textsuperscript{74} and witness brought to his principal. In these was itemised each time they had a cup of coffee and of course they had to have a cup of coffee every time they sat down at one or other café with one or other principal, and again when the two seconds sat with each other. There was also the question under what circumstances were they under the absolute necessity of having a glass of brandy with the cup of coffee. And how often would they have had coffee if they had not been seconds. All this led to endless meetings and endless discussion and endless additional items. It lasted for days, perhaps weeks and months and whether anybody finally was paid, even the café keeper, nobody knows. It was notorious that Apollinaire was parted with the very greatest difficulty from even the smallest piece of money. It was all very absorbing.

Apollinaire was very attractive and very interesting.

\textsuperscript{73} Max Jacob (1876 – 1944) French poet, painter, writer, and critic. He was one of the first friends Pablo Picasso made in Paris. They met in the summer of 1901, and it was Jacob who helped the young artist learn French.

\textsuperscript{74} Second: right-hand man
He had a head like one of the late Roman emperors. He had a brother whom one heard about but never saw. He worked in a bank and therefore he was reasonably well dressed. When anybody in Montmartre had to go anywhere where they had to be conventionally clothed, either to see a relation or attend to a business matter, they always wore a piece of a suit that belonged to the brother of Guillaume.

Guillaume was extraordinarily brilliant and no matter what subject was started, if he knew anything about it or not, he quickly saw the whole meaning of the thing and elaborated it by his wit and fancy carrying it further than anybody knowing anything about it could have done, and oddly enough generally correctly.

Once, several years later, we were dining with the Picassos, and in a conversation, I got the best of Guillaume. I was very proud, but, said Eve (Picasso was no longer with Fernande), Guillaume was frightfully drunk or it would not have happened. It was only under such circumstances that anybody could successfully turn a phrase against Guillaume. Poor Guillaume. The last time we saw him was after he had come back to Paris from the war. He had been badly wounded in the head and had had a piece of his skull removed.
Guillaume 1916  Struck in the head by shrapnel while reading in a trench and discharged and returned to Paris

He looked very wonderful with his bleu horizon\textsuperscript{75} and his bandaged head. He lunched with us and we all talked a long time together. He was tired and his heavy head nodded. He was very serious almost solemn. We went away shortly after, we were working with the American Fund for French Wounded, and never saw him again.

\textsuperscript{75} The horizon blue is the name of a color used for the blue-gray uniforms of the French metropolitan troops in 1915 to 1921.
Later, Olga Picasso,\textsuperscript{76} the wife of Picasso, told us that the night of the armistice\textsuperscript{77} Guillaume Apollinaire died, that they were with him that whole evening and it was warm and the windows were open and the crowd passing were shouting, á bas Guillaume, down with William and as everyone always called Guillaume Apollinaire Guillaume, even in his death agony it troubled him.

He had really been heroic. As a foreigner, his mother was a Pole, his father possibly an Italian, it was not at all necessary that he should volunteer to fight. He was a man of full habit, accustomed to a literary life and the delights of the table, and in spite of everything he volunteered. He went into the artillery first. Every one advised this as it was less dangerous and easier than the infantry, but after a while he could not bear this half protection and he changed into the infantry and was wounded in a charge. He was a long time in hospital, recovered a little, it was at this time that we saw him, and finally died on the day of the armistice.

The death of Guillaume Apollinaire at this time made a very serious difference to all his friends apart from their sorrow at his death. It was the moment just after the war when many things had changed and people naturally fell apart. Guillaume would have been a bond of union, he always had a quality of keeping people together, and now that he was gone everybody ceased to be friends.

\textsuperscript{76}Olga Picasso, (1891 1955) Ukrainian ballet dancer, better known as the first wife of Pablo Picasso and the mother of his son, Paulo.

\textsuperscript{77}An armistice is a formal agreement of warring parties to stop fighting. Gertrude refers to 11 November 1918.
But all that was very much later and now to go back again to
the beginning when Gertrude Stein first met Guillaume and
Marie Laurencin. Everybody called Gertrude Stein Gertrude,
or at most Mademoiselle Gertrude, everybody called Picasso
Pablo and Fernande Fernande and everybody called
Guillaume Apollinaire Guillaume and Max Jacob Max but
everybody called Marie Laurencin Marie Laurencin. The first
time Gertrude Stein ever saw Marie Laurencin, Guillaume
Apollinaire brought her to the rue de Fleurus, not on a
Saturday evening, but another evening. She was very
interesting. They were an extraordinary pair. Marie Laurencin
was terribly near-sighted and of course she never wore eye-glasses,
no French woman and few Frenchmen did in those days. She
used a lorgnette.
She looked at each picture carefully that is, every picture on the line, bringing her eye close and moving over the whole of it with her lorgnette, an inch at a time. The pictures out of reach she ignored.

Finally she remarked, as for myself, I prefer portraits and that is of course quite natural, as I myself am a Clouet. And it was perfectly true, she was a Clouet. She had the square thin build of the mediaeval French women in the French primitives. She spoke in a high pitched beautifully modulated voice. She sat down beside Gertrude Stein on the couch and she recounted the story of her life, told that her mother who had always had it in her nature to dislike men had been for many years the mistress of an important personage, had borne her, Marie Laurencin. I have never, she added, dared let her know Guillaume, although of course he is so sweet that she could not refuse to like him, but better not. Some day you will see her.

And later on Gertrude Stein saw the mother and by that time I was in Paris and I was taken along. Marie Laurencin, leading her strange life and making her strange art, lived with her mother, who was a very quiet, very pleasant, very dignified woman, as if the two were living in a convent. The small apartment was filled with needlework which the mother had executed after the designs of Marie Laurencin.

Marie and her mother acted toward each other exactly as a young nun with an older one. It was all very strange.

Later just before the war the mother fell ill and died. Then the mother did see Guillaume Apollinaire and liked him.

After her mother's death Marie Laurencin lost all sense of stability. She and Guillaume no longer saw each other. A relation that had existed as long as the mother lived without the mother's knowledge, now that the mother was dead and had seen and liked Guillaume could no longer endure.
Marie against the advice of all her friends married a German. When her friends remonstrated with her she said, but he is the only one who can give me a feeling of my mother.

Six weeks after the marriage the war came and Marie had to leave the country, having been married to a German. As she told me later when once during the war we met in Spain, naturally the officials could make no trouble for her, her passport made it clear that no one knew who her father was and they naturally were afraid because perhaps her father might be the president of the French republic.

During these war years Marie was very unhappy. She was intensely French and she was technically German. When you met her she would say, let me present to you my husband a boche, I do not remember his name.\textsuperscript{78} The official French world in Spain with whom she and her husband occasionally came in contact made things very unpleasant for her, constantly referring to Germany as her country. In the meanwhile Guillaume with whom she was in correspondence wrote her passionately patriotic letters. It was a miserable time for Marie Laurencin.

Finally Madame Groult,\textsuperscript{79} the sister of Poiret,\textsuperscript{80} coming to Spain, managed to help Marie out of her troubles. She finally divorced her husband and after the armistice returned to Paris, at home once more in the world.

\textsuperscript{78} Laurencin’s husband was Baron Otto von Waëtjen / Boche: a German, especially a soldier.
\textsuperscript{79} Nicole Groult, 1887 – 1967 Stylist, costume designer, couturier. She fought for the liberation of women in 1906, starting with the abolition of the corset, financial independence, and a certain demand of free love. After WWI, she left Spain and returned to Paris with Marie Laurencin (her occasional lover) where she started a couture house.
\textsuperscript{80} Paul Poiret (1879-1944) French fashion designer, master couturier during the first two decades of the 20th century. His contributions to his field have been likened to Picasso’s legacy in 20th-century art.
It was then that she came to the rue de Fleurus again, this time with Erik Satie. They were both Normans and so proud and happy about it.

In the early days Marie Laurencin painted a strange picture, portraits of Guillaume, Picasso, Fernande and herself. Fernande told Gertrude Stein about it. Gertrude Stein bought it and Marie Laurencin was so pleased. It was the first picture of hers any one had ever bought.

It was before Gertrude Stein knew the rue Ravignan that Guillaume Apollinaire had his first paid job, he edited a little pamphlet about physical culture. And it was for this that Picasso made his wonderful caricatures, including one of Guillaume as an exemplar of what physical culture could do.

Éric Satie (1866–1925), French composer and pianist. Satie was a colorful and eccentric figure in the early 20th century Parisian avant-garde. His work was a precursor to later artistic movements such as minimalism, Surrealism, repetitive music, and the Theatre of the Absurd.
And now once more to return to the return from all their travels and to Picasso becoming the head of a movement that was later to be known as the cubists. Who called it cubist first I do not know but very likely it was Apollinaire. At any rate he wrote the first little pamphlet about them all and illustrated it with their paintings.

I can so well remember the first time Gertrude Stein took me to see Guillaume Apollinaire. It was a tiny bachelor's apartment on the rue des Martyrs. The room was crowded with a great many small young gentlemen.

Who, I asked Fernande, are all these little men. They are poets, answered Fernande. I was overcome. I had never seen poets before, one poet yes but not poets. It was on that night too that Picasso, just a little drunk and to Fernande's great indignation persisted in sitting beside me and finding for me in a Spanish album of photographs the exact spot where he was born. I came away with rather a vague idea of its situation.

Derain and Braque became followers of Picasso about six months after Picasso had, through Gertrude Stein and her brother, met Matisse. Matisse had in the meantime introduced Picasso to negro sculpture.

At that time negro sculpture had been well known to curio hunters but not to artists. Who first recognised its potential value for the modern artist I am sure I do not know. Perhaps it was Maillol who came from the Perpignan region and knew Matisse in the south and called his attention to it. There is a tradition that it was Derain. It is also very possible that it was Matisse himself because for many years there was a curio-dealer in the rue de Rennes who always had a great many things of this kind in his window and Matisse often went up the rue de Rennes to go to one of the sketch classes.

In any case it was Matisse who first was influenced, not so much in his painting but in his sculpture, by the African statues and it was Matisse who drew Picasso's attention to it just after Picasso had finished painting Gertrude Stein's portrait.

The effect of this African art upon Matisse and Picasso was entirely different. Matisse through it was affected more in his imagination than in his vision. Picasso more in his vision than in his imagination.

Strangely enough it is only very much later in his life that this influence has affected his imagination and that may be through its having been re-enforced by the Orientalism of the Russians when he came in contact with that through Diaghilev and the Russian ballet.

82 Sergei Pavlovich Diaghilev; 1872–1929, Russian art critic, patron, ballet impresario and founder of the Ballets Russes, from which many famous dancers and choreographers would arise. (above picture shows Diaghilev with dancer Olga; soon to become Mrs. Picasso)
In these early days when he created cubism the effect of the African art was purely upon his vision and his forms, his imagination remained purely Spanish. The Spanish quality of ritual and abstraction had been indeed stimulated by his painting the portrait of Gertrude Stein. She had a definite impulse then and always toward elemental abstraction. She was not at any time interested in African sculpture. She always says that she liked it well enough but that it has nothing to do with Europeans, that it lacks naïveté, that it is very ancient, very narrow, very sophisticated but lacks the elegance of the Egyptian sculpture from which it is derived. She says that as an American she likes primitive things to be more savage.

Matisse and Picasso then being introduced to each other by Gertrude Stein and her brother became friends but they were enemies. Now they are neither friends nor enemies. At that time they were both.

They exchanged pictures as was the habit in those days. Each painter chose the one of the other one that presumably interested him the most. Matisse and Picasso chose each one of the other one the picture that was undoubtedly the least interesting either of them had done. Later each one used it as an example, the picture he had chosen, of the weaknesses of the other one. Very evidently in the two pictures chosen the strong qualities of each painter were not much in evidence.

The feeling between the Picassoites and the Matisseites became bitter.

And this, you see, brings me to the independent where my friend and I sat without being aware of it under the two pictures which first publicly showed that Derain and Braque had become Picassoites and were definitely not Matisseites.

In the meantime naturally a great many things had happened.

Matisse showed in every autumn salon and every independent. He was beginning to have a considerable following. Picasso, on the contrary, never in all his life has shown in any salon. His pictures at that time could really only be seen at 27 rue de Fleurus. The first time as one might say that he had ever shown at a public show was when Derain and Braque, completely influenced by his recent work, showed theirs. After that he too had many followers.

Matisse was irritated by the growing friendship between Picasso and Gertrude Stein. Mademoiselle Gertrude, he explained, likes local color and theatrical values. It would be impossible for any one of her quality to have a serious friendship with any one like Picasso. Matisse still came frequently to the rue de Fleurus but there was no longer any frankness of intercourse between them all. It was about this time that Gertrude Stein and her brother gave a lunch for all the painters whose pictures were on the wall. Of course it did not include the dead or the old. It was at this lunch that as I have already said Gertrude Stein made them all happy and made the lunch a success by seating each painter facing his own picture. No one of them noticed
it, they were just naturally pleased, until just as they were all leaving Matisse, standing up with his back to the door and looking into the room suddenly realised what had been done.

Matisse intimated that Gertrude Stein had lost interest in his work. She answered him, there is nothing within you that fights itself and hitherto you have had the instinct to produce antagonism in others which stimulated you to attack. But now they follow.

That was the end of the conversation but a beginning of an important part of The Making of Americans. Upon this idea Gertrude Stein based some of her most permanent distinctions in types of people.

It was about this time that Matisse began his teaching. He now moved from the Quai Saint-Michel, where he had lived ever since his marriage, to the boulevard des Invalides. In consequence of the separation of church and state which had just taken place in France the French government had become possessed of a great many convent schools and other church property. As many of these convents ceased to exist, there were at that time a great many of their buildings empty. Among others a very splendid one on the boulevard des Invalides.

These buildings were being rented at very low prices because no lease was given, as the government when it decided how to use them permanently would put the tenants out without warning. It was therefore an ideal place for artists as there were gardens and big rooms and they could put up with the inconveniences of housekeeping under the circumstances. So the Matisses moved in and Matisse instead of a small room to work in had an immense one and the two boys came home and they were all very happy.

Then a number of those who had become his followers asked him if he would teach them if they organised a class for him in the same building in which he was then living. He consented and the Matisse atelier began.

The applicants were of all nationalities and Matisse was at first appalled at the number and variety of them. He told with much amusement as well as surprise that when he asked a very little woman in the front row, what in particular she had in mind in her painting, what she was seeking, she replied, Monsieur je cherche le neuf. He used to wonder how they all managed to learn French when he knew none of their languages.

Some one got hold of some of these facts and made fun of the school in one of the French weeklies. This hurt Matisse's feelings frightfully. The article said, and where did these people come from, and it was answered, from Massachusetts. Matisse was very unhappy.

But in spite of all this and also in spite of many dissensions the school flourished. There were difficulties. One of the Hungarians wanted to earn his living posing for the class and in the intervals when someone else posed go on with his painting.
There were a number of young women who protested, a nude model on a model stand was one thing but to have it turn into a fellow student was another. A Hungarian was found eating the bread for rubbing out crayon drawings that the various students left on their painting boards and this evidence of extreme poverty and lack of hygiene had an awful effect upon the sensibilities of the Americans.

There were quite a number of Americans. One of these Americans under the plea of poverty was receiving his tuition for nothing and then was found to have purchased for himself a tiny Matisse and a tiny Picasso and a tiny Seurat. This was not only unfair, because many of the others wanted and could not afford to own a picture by the master and they were paying their tuition, but, since he also bought a Picasso, it was treason. And then every once in a while some one said something to Matisse in such bad French that it sounded like something very different from what it was and Matisse grew very angry and the unfortunate had to be taught how to apologise properly. All the students were working under such a state of tension that explosions were frequent. One would accuse another of undue influence with the master and then there were long and complicated scenes in which usually some one had to apologise. It was all very difficult since they themselves organised themselves.

Gertrude Stein enjoyed all these complications immensely. Matisse was a good gossip and so was she and at this time they delighted in telling tales to each other.

She began at that time always calling Matisse the C.M. or cher maitre. She told him the favorite Western story, pray gentlemen, let there be no bloodshed. Matisse came not unfrequently to the rue de Fleurus. It was indeed at this time that Hélène prepared him the fried eggs instead of an omelet.
Three Lives had been typewritten and now the next thing was to show it to a publisher. Some one gave Gertrude Stein the name of an agent in New York and she tried that. Nothing came of it. Then she tried publishers directly. The only one at all interested was Bobbs-Merrill and they said they could not undertake it. This attempt to find a publisher lasted some time and then without being really discouraged she decided to have it printed. It was not an unnatural thought as people in Paris often did this. Some one told her about the Grafton Press in New York, a respectable firm that printed special historical things that people wanted to have printed. The arrangements were concluded, Three Lives was to be printed and the proofs to be sent.

One day some one knocked at the door and a very nice very American young man asked if he might speak to Miss Stein. She said, yes come in. He said, I have come at the request of the Grafton Press. Yes, she said. You see, he said slightly hesitant, the director of the Grafton Press is under the impression that perhaps your knowledge of English. But I am an American, said Gertrude Stein indignantly. Yes yes I understand that perfectly now, he said, but perhaps you have not had much experience in writing. I suppose, said she laughing, you were under the impression that I was imperfectly educated. He blushed, why no, he said, but you might not have had much experience in writing. Oh yes, she said, oh yes. Well it's alright. I will write to the director and you might as well tell him also that everything that is written in the manuscript is written with the intention of its being so written and all he has to do is to print it and I will take the responsibility. The young man bowed himself out.

Later when the book was noticed by interested writers and newspaper men, the director of the Grafton Press wrote Gertrude Stein a very simple letter in which he admitted he had been surprised at the notice the book had received but wished to add that now that he had seen the result he wished to say that he was very pleased that his firm had printed the book. But this last was after I came to Paris.

83 The Bobbs-Merrill Company was a book publisher located in Indianapolis, Indiana.
Once more I have come to Paris and now I am one of the habitués of the rue de Fleurus. Gertrude Stein was writing The Making of Americans and she had just commenced correcting the proofs of *Three Lives*. I helped her correct them. Gertrude Stein was born in Allegheny, Pennsylvania.

As I am an ardent Californian and as she spent her youth there I have often begged her to be born in California but she has always remained firmly born in Allegheny, Pennsylvania. She left it when she was six months old and has never seen it again and now it no longer exists being all of it Pittsburgh. She used however to delight in being born in Allegheny, Pennsylvania when during the war, in connection with war work, we used to have papers made out and they always immediately wanted to know one's birth-place. She used to say if she had been really born in California as I wanted her to have been she would never have had the pleasure of seeing her various French officials try to write, Allegheny, Pennsylvania,

When I first knew Gertrude Stein in Paris I was surprised never to see a French book on her table, although there were always plenty of English ones, there were even no French newspapers. But do you never read French, I as well as many other people asked her. No, she replied, you see I feel with my eyes and it does not make any difference to me what language I hear, I don't hear a language, I hear tones of voice and rhythms, but with my eyes I see words and sentences and there is for me only one language and that is English. One of the things that I have liked all these years is to be surrounded by people who know no English. It has left me more intensely alone with my eyes and my English. I do not know if it would have been possible to have English be so all in all to me otherwise. And they none of them could read a word I wrote, most of them did not even know that I did write. No, I like living with so very many people and being all alone with English and myself.

One of her chapters in The Making of Americans begins: I write for myself and strangers.

She was born in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, of a very respectable middle class family. She always says that she is very grateful not to have been born of an intellectual family, she has a horror of what she calls intellectual people. It has always been rather ridiculous that she who is good friends with all the world and can know them and they can know her, has always been the admired of the precious. But she always says some day they, anybody, will find out that she is of interest to them, she and her writing. And she always consoles herself that the newspapers are always interested. They always say, she says, that my writing is appalling but they always quote it and what is more, they quote it correctly, and those they say they admire they do not quote.
This at some of her most bitter moments has been a consolation. My sentences do get under their skin, only they do not know that they do, she has often said.

She was born in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, in a house, a twin house. Her family lived in one and her father's brother's family lived in the other one. These two families are the families described in The Making of Americans. They had lived in these houses for about eight years when Gertrude Stein was born. A year before her birth, the two sisters-in-law who had never gotten along any too well were no longer on speaking terms.

Gertrude Stein's mother as she describes her in The Making of Americans, a gentle pleasant little woman with a quick temper, flatly refused to see her sister-in-law again. I don't know quite what had happened but something. At any rate the two brothers who had been very successful business partners broke up their partnership, the one brother went to New York where he and all his family after him became very rich and the other brother, Gertrude Stein's family, went to Europe. They first went to Vienna and stayed there until Gertrude Stein was about three years old.

All she remembers of this is that her brother's tutor once, when she was allowed to sit with her brothers at their lessons, described a tiger's snarl and that that pleased and terrified her. Also that in a picture-book that one of her brothers used to show her there was a story of the wanderings of Ulysses who when sitting sat on bent-wood dining room chairs. Also she remembers that they used to play in the public gardens and that often the old Kaiser Francis Joseph used to stroll through the gardens and sometimes a band played the Austrian national hymn which she liked.
She believed for many years that Kaiser was the real name of Francis Joseph and she never could come to accept the name as belonging to anybody else.

They lived in Vienna for three years, the father having in the meanwhile gone back to America on business and then they moved to Paris. Here Gertrude Stein has more lively memories. She remembers a little school where she and her elder sister stayed and where there was a little girl in the corner of the school yard and the other little girls told her not to go near her, she scratched. She also remembers the bowl of soup with French bread for breakfast and she also remembers that they had mutton and spinach for lunch and as she was very fond of spinach and not fond of mutton she used to trade mutton for spinach with the little girl opposite. She also remembers all of her three older brothers coming to see them at the school and coming on horse-back. She also remembers a black cat jumping from the ceiling of their house at Passy and scaring her mother and some unknown person rescuing her.

The family remained in Paris a year and then they came back to America. Gertrude Stein's elder brother charmingly describes the last days when he and his mother went shopping and bought everything that pleased their fancy, seal skin coats and caps and muffs for the whole family from the mother to the small sister Gertrude Stein, gloves dozens of gloves, wonderful hats, riding costumes, and finally ending up with a microscope and a whole set of the famous French history of zoology. Then they sailed for America.

This visit to Paris made a very great impression upon Gertrude Stein. When in the beginning of the war, she and I having been in England and there having been caught by the outbreak of the war and so not returning until October, were back in Paris, the first day we went out Gertrude Stein said, it is strange, Paris is so different but so familiar. And then reflectively, I see what it is, there is nobody here but the French (there were no soldiers or allies there yet), you can see the little children in their black aprons, you can see the streets because there is nobody on them, it is just like my memory of Paris when I was three years old. The pavements smell like they used to (horses had come back into use), the smell of French streets and French public gardens that I remember so well.

They went back to America and in New York, the New York family tried to reconcile Gertrude Stein's mother to her sister-in-law but she was obdurate.

This story reminds me of Miss Etta Cone, a distant connection of Gertrude Stein, who typed Three Lives. When I first met her in Florence she confided to me that she could forgive but never forget. I added that as for myself I could forget but not forgive. Gertrude Stein's mother in this ease was evidently unable to do either.
The family went west to California after a short stay in Baltimore at the home of her grandfather, the religious old man she describes in The Making of Americans, who lived in an old house in Baltimore with a large number of those cheerful pleasant little people, her uncles and her aunts.

Gertrude Stein has never ceased to be thankful to her mother for neither forgetting or forgiving. Imagine, she has said to me, if my mother had forgiven her sister-in-law and my father had gone into business with my uncle and we had lived and been brought up in New York, imagine, she says, how horrible. We would have been rich instead of being reasonably poor but imagine how horrible to have been brought up in New York.

I as a Californian I can very thoroughly sympathise.

And so they took the train to California. The only thing Gertrude Stein remembers of this trip was that she and her sister had beautiful big Austrian red felt hats trimmed each with a beautiful ostrich feather and at some stage of the trip her sister leaning out of the window had her hat blown off. Her father rang the emergency bell, stopped the train, got the hat to the awe and astonishment of the passengers and the conductor. The only other thing she remembers is that they had a wonderful hamper of food given them by the aunts in Baltimore and that in it was a marvellous turkey. And that later as the food in it diminished it was renewed all along the road whenever they stopped and that that was always exciting. And also that somewhere in the desert they saw some red Indians and that somewhere else in the desert they were given some very funny tasting peaches to eat.

When they arrived in California they went to an orange grove but she does not remember any oranges but remembers filling up her father's cigar boxes with little limes which were very wonderful.

They came by slow stages to San Francisco and settled down in Oakland. She remembers there the eucalyptus trees seeming to her so tall and thin and savage and the animal life very wild. But all this and much more, all the physical life of these days, she has described in the life of the Hersland family in her Making of Americans. The important thing to tell about now is her education.

Stein's family moved to Oakland in 1880, when she was six, and lived at the Tubbs Hotel their first year.
Her father having taken his children to Europe so that they might have the benefit of a European education now insisted that they should forget their French and German so that their American English would be pure. Gertrude Stein had prattled in German and then in French but she had never read until she read English. As she says eyes to her were more important than ears and it happened then as always that English was her only language.

Her bookish life commenced at this time. She read anything that was printed that came her way and a great deal came her way. In the house were a few stray novels, a few travel books, her mother's well bound gift books *Wordsworth*, *Scott* and other poets, Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* a set of *Shakespeare* with notes, *Burns*, Congressional Records encyclopedias etcetera. She read them all and many times. She and her brothers began to acquire other books. There was also the local free library and later in San Francisco there were the mercantile and mechanics libraries with their excellent sets of eighteenth century and nineteenth century authors. From

84 Read the works of William Wordsworth
85 Read the works of John Bunyan
her eighth year when she absorbed Shakespeare to her fifteenth year when she read Clarissa Harlowe, Fielding, Smollett etcetera and used to worry lest in a few years more she would have read everything and there would be nothing unread to read, she lived continuously with the English language. She read a tremendous amount of history, she often laughs and says she is one of the few people of her generation that has read every line of Carlyle's Frederick the Great and Lecky's Constitutional History of England besides Charles Grandison and Wordsworth's longer poems. In fact she was as she still is always reading. She reads anything and everything and even now hates to be disturbed and above all however often she has read a book and however foolish the book may be no one must make fun of it or tell her how it goes on. It is still as it always was real to her.

The theatre she has always cared for less. She says it goes too fast, the mixture of eye and ear bothers her and her emotion never keeps pace. Music she only cared for during her adolescence. She finds it difficult to listen to it, it does not hold her attention. All of which of course may seem strange because it has been so often said that the appeal of her work is to the ear and to the subconscious. Actually it is her eyes and mind that are active and important and concerned in choosing.

Life in California came to its end when Gertrude Stein was about seventeen years old. The last few years had been lonesome ones and had been passed in an agony of adolescence. After the death of first her mother and then her father she and her sister and one brother left California for the East. They came to Baltimore and stayed with her mother's people. There she began to lose her lonesomeness. She has often described to me how strange it was to her coming from the rather desperate inner life that she had been living for the last few years to the cheerful life of all her aunts and uncles. When later she went to Radcliffe she described this experience in the first thing she ever wrote. Not quite the first thing she ever wrote. She remembers having written twice before. Once when she was about eight and she tried to write a Shakespearean drama in which she got as far as a stage direction, the courtiers making witty remarks. And then as she could not think of any witty remarks gave it up.

The only other effort she can remember must have been at about the same age. They asked the children in the public schools to write a description. Her recollection is that she described a sunset with the sun going into a cave of clouds. Anyway it was one of the half dozen in the school chosen to be copied out on beautiful parchment paper. After she had tried to copy it twice and the

86 Read Clarissa, or, The History of a Young Lady, by Samuel Richardson.
87 Henry Fielding (1707 1754) English novelist and dramatist. Read his best known novel 'Tom Jones' online here.
88 Read the works of T. Smollett online.
89 Read Thomas Carlyle online
90 Read Historical and Political Essays, by William Edward Hartpole Lecky
writing became worse and worse she was reduced to letting some one else copy it for her. This, her teacher considered a disgrace. She does not remember that she herself did.

As a matter of fact her handwriting has always been illegible and I am very often able to read it when she is not.

She has never been able or had any desire to indulge in any of the arts. She never knows how a thing is going to look until it is done, in arranging a room, a garden, clothes or anything else. She cannot draw anything. She feels no relation between the object and the piece of paper. When at the medical school, she was supposed to draw anatomical things she never found out in sketching how a thing was made concave or convex. She remembers when she was very small she was to learn to draw and was sent to a class. The children were told to take a cup and saucer at home and draw them and the best drawing would have as its reward a stamped leather medal and the next week the same medal would again be given for the best drawing. Gertrude Stein went home, told her brothers and they put a pretty cup and saucer before her and each one explained to her how to draw it. Nothing happened. Finally one of them drew it for her. She took it to the class and won the leather medal. And on the way home in playing some game she lost the leather medal. That was the end of the drawing class.

She says it is a good thing to have no sense of how it is done in the things that amuse you. You should have one absorbing occupation and as for the other things in life for full enjoyment you
should only contemplate results. In this way you are bound to feel more about it than those who know a little of how it is done.

She is passionately addicted to what the French call métier and she contends that one can only have one métier as one can only have one language. Her métier is writing and her language is English.

Observation and construction make imagination, that is granting the possession of imagination, is what she has taught many young writers. Once when Hemingway wrote in one of his stories that Gertrude Stein always knew what was good in a Cézanne, she looked at him and said, Hemingway, remarks are not literature.
The young often when they have learnt all they can learn accuse her of an inordinate pride. She says yes of course. She realizes that in English literature in her time she is the only one. She has always known it and now she says it.

She understands very well the basis of creation and therefore her advice and criticism is invaluable to all her friends. How often have I heard Picasso say to her when she has said something about a picture of his and then illustrated by something she was trying to do, racontez-moi cela. In other words tell me about it. These two even to-day have long solitary conversations. They sit in two little low chairs up in his apartment studio, knee to knee and Picasso says, expliquez-moi cela. And they explain to each other. They talk about everything, about pictures, about dogs, about death, about unhappiness. Because Picasso is a Spaniard and life is tragic and bitter and unhappy. Gertrude Stein often comes down to me and says, Pablo has been persuading me I that I am as unhappy as he is. He insists that I am and with as much cause. But are you, I ask. Well I don't think I look it, do I, and she laughs. He says, she says, that I don't look it because I have more courage, but I don't think I am, she says, no I don't think I am.

And so Gertrude Stein having been in Baltimore for a winter and having become more humanised and less adolescent and less lonesome went to Radcliffe. There she had a very good time.

She was one of a group of Harvard men and Radcliffe women and they all lived very closely and very interestingly together.

1893-1897 – Stein attends Radcliffe College to study psychology under William James.

1894
One of them, a young philosopher and mathematician who was doing research work in psychology left a definite mark on her life. She and he together worked out a series of experiments in automatic writing under the direction of Münsterberg. 91

The result of her own experiments, which Gertrude Stein wrote down and which was printed in the Harvard Psychological Review was the first writing of hers ever to be printed. It is very interesting to read because the method of writing to be afterwards developed in Three Lives and Making of Americans already shows itself.

The important person in Gertrude Stein’s Radcliffe life was William James. She enjoyed her life and herself. She was the secretary of the philosophical club and amused herself with all sorts of people. She liked making sport of question asking and she liked equally answering them. She liked it all. But the really lasting impression of her Radcliffe life came through William James. 92

91 Hugo Münsterberg (1863 - 1916) German-American psychologist and one of the pioneers in applied psychology.
92 William James (1842 – 1910) American philosopher and psychologist and trained physician. He was Henry James’ older brother.
It is rather strange that she was not then at all interested in the work of Henry James\(^93\) for whom she now has a very great admiration and whom she considers quite definitely as her forerunner, he being the only nineteenth century writer who being an American felt the method of the twentieth century.

Gertrude Stein always speaks of America as being now the oldest country in the world because by the methods of the civil war and the commercial conceptions that followed it America created the twentieth century, and since all the other countries are now either living, or commencing to be living a twentieth century of life, America having begun the creation of the twentieth century in the sixties of the nineteenth century is now the oldest country in the world.

In the same way she contends that Henry James was the first person in literature to find the way to the literary methods of the twentieth century. But oddly enough in all of her formative period she did not read him and was not interested in him. But as she often says one is always naturally antagonistic to one's parents and sympathetic to one's grandparents. The parents are too close, they hamper you, one must be alone. So perhaps that is the reason why only very lately Gertrude Stein reads Henry James.

William James delighted her. His personality and his teaching and his way of amusing himself with himself and his students all pleased her. Keep your mind open, he used to say, and when some one objected, but Professor James, this that I say, is true. Yes, said James, it is abjectly true. Gertrude Stein never had subconscious reactions, nor was she a successful subject for automatic writing. One of the students in the psychological seminar of which Gertrude Stein, although an undergraduate was at William James' particular request a member, was carrying on a series of experiments on suggestions to the subconscious. When he read his paper upon the result of his experiments, he began by explaining that one of the subjects gave absolutely no results and as this much lowered the average and made the conclusion of his experiments false he wished to be allowed to cut this record out. Whose record is it, said James. Miss Stein's, said the student. Ah, said James, if Miss Stein gave no response I should say that it was as normal not to give a response as to give one and decidedly the result must not be cut out.

It was a very lovely spring day, Gertrude Stein had been going to the opera every night and going also to the opera in the afternoon and had been otherwise engrossed and it was the period of

---

\(^93\) Henry James (1843–1916) American-born British writer, regarded as one of the key figures of 19th-century literary realism. He was the son of Henry James, Sr. and the brother of philosopher and psychologist William James and diarist Alice James.
the final examinations, and there was the examination in William James' course. She sat down with the examination paper before her and she just could not. Dear Professor James, she wrote at the top of her paper. I am so sorry but really I do not feel a bit like an examination paper in philosophy to-day, and left.

The next day she had a postal card from William James saying, Dear Miss Stein, I understand perfectly how you feel I often feel like that myself. And underneath it he gave her work the highest mark in his course.

When Gertrude Stein was finishing her last year at Radcliffe, William James one day asked her what she was going to do. She said she had no idea. Well, he said, it should be either philosophy or psychology. Now for philosophy you have to have higher mathematics and I don't gather that that has ever interested you. Now for psychology you must have a medical education, a medical education opens all doors, as Oliver Wendell Holmes told me and as I tell you. Gertrude Stein had been interested in both biology and chemistry and so medical school presented no difficulties.

There were no difficulties except that Gertrude Stein had never passed more than half of her entrance examinations, for Radcliffe, having never intended to take a degree. However with considerable struggle and enough tutoring that was accomplished and Gertrude Stein entered Johns Hopkins Medical School.

![1900-1902, Johns Hopkins Medical School, Baltimore, MD – Stein enrolled at the Medical School, but left after two years without a degree.](image-url)
Some years after when Gertrude Stein and her brother were just beginning knowing Matisse and Picasso, William James came to Paris and they met.

She went to see him at his hotel. He was enormously interested in what she was doing, interested in her writing and in the pictures she told him about. He went with her to her house to see them. He looked and gasped, I told you, he said, I always told you that you should keep your mind open.

Only about two years ago a very strange thing happened. Gertrude Stein received a letter from a man in Boston. It was evident from the letter head that he was one of a firm of lawyers. He said in his letter that he had not long ago in reading in the Harvard library found that the library of William James had been given as a gift to the Harvard library. Among these books was the copy of Three Lives that Gertrude Stein had dedicated and sent to James. Also on the margins of the book were notes that William James had evidently made when reading the book. The man then went on to say that very likely Gertrude Stein would be very interested in these notes and he proposed, if she wished, to copy them out for her as he had appropriated the book, in other words taken it and considered it as his. We were very puzzled what to do about it. Finally a note was written saying that Gertrude Stein would like to have a copy of William James' notes. In answer came a manuscript the man himself had written and of which he wished Gertrude Stein to give him an opinion. Not knowing what to do about it all, Gertrude Stein did nothing.

After having passed her entrance examinations she settled down in Baltimore and went to the medical school. She had, a servant named Lena and it is her story that Gertrude Stein afterwards wrote as the first story of the Three Lives.

The first two years of the medical school were alright. They were purely laboratory work and Gertrude Stein under Llewelys Barker immediately betook herself to research work.
She began a study of all the brain tracts, the beginning of a comparative study. All this was later embodied in Llewelys Barker's book. She delighted in Doctor Mall, professor of anatomy, who directed her work. She always quotes his answer to any student excusing him or herself for anything. He would look reflective and say, yes that is just like our cook. There is always a reason. She never brings the food to the table hot. In summer of course she can't because it is too hot, in winter of course she can't because it is too cold, yes there is always a reason. Doctor Mall believed in everybody developing their own technique. He also remarked, nobody teaches anybody anything, at first every student's scalpel is dull and then later every student's scalpel is sharp, and nobody has taught anybody anything.

These first two years at the medical school Gertrude Stein liked well enough. She always liked knowing a lot of people and being mixed up in a lot of stories and she was not awfully interested but she was not too bored with what she was doing and besides she had quantities of pleasant relatives in Baltimore and she liked it. The last two years at the medical school she was bored, frankly openly bored. There was a good deal of intrigue and struggle among the students, that she liked, but the practice and theory of medicine did not interest her at all. It was fairly well known among all her teachers that she was bored, but as her first two years of scientific work had given her a reputation, everybody gave her the necessary credits and the end of her last year was approaching. It was then that she had to take her turn in the delivering of babies and it was at that time that she noticed the negroes and the places that she afterwards used in the second of the Three Lives stories, Melanctha Herbert, the story that was the beginning of her revolutionary work. As she always says of herself, she has a great deal of inertia\textsuperscript{94} and once started keeps going until she starts somewhere else.

As the graduation examinations drew near some of her professors were getting angry. The big men like Halstead, Osler etcetera knowing her reputation for original scientific work made the medical examinations merely a matter of form and passed her. But there were others who were not so amiable. Gertrude Stein always laughed, and this was difficult.

They would ask her questions although as she said to her friends, it was foolish of them to ask her, when there were so many eager and anxious to answer. However they did question her from time to time and as she said, what could she do, she did not know the answers and they did not believe that she did not know them, they thought that she did not answer because she did not consider the professors worth answering. It was a difficult situation, as she said, it was impossible to apologise and explain to them that she was so bored she could not remember the things that of course the dullest medical student could not forget. One of the professors said that although all the big men were ready to pass her he intended that she should be given a lesson and he refused to give her a pass mark and so she was not able to take her degree. There was great excitement in the medical school. Her very close friend Marion Walker pleaded with her, she said, 

\textsuperscript{94} inertia: tendency to do nothing
but Gertrude remember the cause of women, and Gertrude Stein said, you don't know what it is to be bored.

The professor who had flunked her asked her to come to see him. She did. He said, of course Miss Stein all you have to do is to take a summer course here and in the fall naturally you will take your degree. But not at all, said Gertrude Stein, you have no idea how grateful I am to you. I have so much inertia and so little initiative that very possibly if you had not kept me from taking my degree I would have, well, not taken to the practice of medicine, but at any rate to pathological psychology and you don't know how little I like pathological psychology, and how all medicine bores me. The professor was completely taken aback and that was the end of the medical education of Gertrude Stein.

She always says she dislikes the abnormal, it is so obvious. She says the normal is so much more simply complicated and interesting.

It was only a few years ago that Marion Walker, Gertrude Stein's old friend, came to see her at Bilignin where we spend the summer. She and Gertrude Stein had not met since those old days nor had they corresponded but they were as fond of each other and disagreed as violently about the cause of women as they did then. Not, as Gertrude Stein explained to Marion Walker, that she at all minds the cause of women or any other cause but it does not happen to be her business.

During these years at Radcliffe and Johns Hopkins she often spent the summers in Europe. The last couple of years her brother had been settled in Florence and now that everything medical was over she joined him there and later they settled down in London for the winter.

They settled in lodgings in London and were not uncomfortable. They knew a number of people through the Berensons, Bertrand Russell, the Zangwills, then there was Willard (Josiah Flynt) who wrote Tramping With Tramps, and who knew all about London pubs, but Gertrude Stein was not very much amused. She began spending all her days in the British Museum reading the

Left: Bernard and Mary Berenson, American art historians and collectors. Bernard hosted Gertrude and Leo in his English country house in 1902, facilitating their introduction to numerous artists and intellectuals.

Elizabethans. She returned to her early love of Shakespeare and the Elizabethans, and became absorbed in Elizabethan prose and particularly in the prose of Greene.

She had little note-books full of phrases that pleased her as they had pleased her when she was a child.

The rest of the time she wandered about the London streets and found them infinitely depressing and dismal. She never really got over this memory of London and never wanted to go back there, but in nineteen hundred and twelve she went over to see John Lane, the publisher and then living very gay and pleasant people she forgot the old memory and became very fond of London.

She always said that that first visit had made London just like Dickens and Dickens had always frightened her. As she says anything can frighten her and London when it was like Dickens certainly did.
There were some compensations, there was the prose of Greene and it was at this time that she discovered the novels of Anthony Trollope, for her the greatest of the Victorians. She then got together the complete collection of his work some of it difficult to get and only obtainable in Tauchnitz95 and it is of this collection that Robert Coates speaks when he tells about Gertrude Stein lending books to young writers. She also bought a quantity of eighteenth century memoirs among them the Creevy papers96 and Walpole and it is these that she loaned to Bravig Imbs97 when he wrote what she believes to be an admirable life of Chatterton. She reads books but she is not fussy about them, she cares about neither editions nor make-up as long as the print is not too bad and she is not even very much bothered about that. It was at this time too that, as she says, she ceased to be worried about there being in the future nothing to read, she said she felt that she would always somehow be able to find something.

But the dismalness98 of London and the drunken women and children and the gloom and the lonesomeness brought back all the melancholy of her adolescence and one day she said she was leaving for America and she left. She stayed in America the rest of the winter. In the meantime her brother also had left London and gone to Paris and there later she joined him. She immediately began to write. She wrote a short novel.

The funny thing about this short novel is that she completely forgot about it for many years. She remembered herself beginning a little later writing the Three Lives but this first piece of writing was completely forgotten, she had never mentioned it to me, even when I first knew her.

She must have forgotten about it almost immediately. This spring just two days before our leaving for the country she was looking for some manuscript of The Making of Americans that she wanted to show Bernard Fay99 and she came across these two carefully written volumes of this completely forgotten first novel. She was very bashful and hesitant about it, did not really want to read it. Louis Bromfield was at the house that evening and she handed him the manuscript and said to him, you read it.

---

95 Tauchnitz was the name of German family of printers and publishers who published English language literature for distribution on the European continent outside Great Britain.
96 Read the Creevy Papers online here
97 Bravig Imbs was an American novelist and poet and translator.
98 Dismal: depressive, gloomy