

# The Life and Times of the Woman Who Brought Abortion from the Back Alley to the Operating Room



## Intimate Wars: The Life and Times of the Woman Who Brought Abortion from the Back Alley to the Boardroom

by Merle Hoffman

★★★★☆ 4.2 out of 5

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Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
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Dr. Helen Brooke Taussig was a pioneering cardiologist who revolutionized the treatment of congenital heart defects, saving the lives of countless children and setting the stage for modern heart surgery. She was also a passionate advocate for women's health, and her work on abortion rights helped to make safe and legal abortion a reality for women in the United States.

### Early Life and Education

Helen Brooke Taussig was born in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1898. Her father was a physician, and her mother was a social worker. Taussig was a bright

and inquisitive child, and she developed a passion for science at a young age.

Taussig attended the Bryn Mawr School for Girls, where she excelled in her studies. She went on to attend Johns Hopkins University, where she earned a degree in medicine in 1924. After graduating from medical school, Taussig completed a residency in pediatrics at the Harriet Lane Home for Invalid Children.

## **Medical Career**

In 1930, Taussig joined the faculty of the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. She quickly became a leading expert in the field of congenital heart defects. At the time, there was little that could be done to treat these defects, and most children with congenital heart disease died in infancy.

Taussig was determined to find a way to save these children. She spent countless hours studying the anatomy of the heart and developing new surgical techniques. In 1944, she published a groundbreaking paper that described a new surgical procedure for treating a common type of congenital heart defect known as tetralogy of Fallot. This procedure, known as the Blalock-Taussig shunt, revolutionized the treatment of congenital heart disease and saved the lives of countless children.

Taussig continued to work on improving the treatment of congenital heart defects throughout her career. She developed new diagnostic techniques and surgical procedures, and she helped to train a generation of cardiologists. She also became a strong advocate for the use of open-heart surgery to treat congenital heart defects.

## **Advocacy for Women's Health**

In addition to her work on congenital heart defects, Taussig was also a passionate advocate for women's health. She was a member of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America, and she worked to make safe and legal abortion a reality for women in the United States.

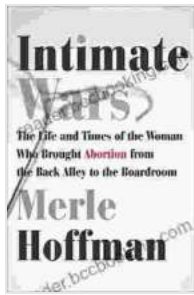
Taussig believed that women should have the right to control their own bodies and make decisions about their own reproductive health. She argued that abortion should be safe, legal, and accessible to all women, regardless of their income or background.

Taussig's work on abortion rights helped to make a significant difference in the lives of women in the United States. In 1973, the Supreme Court ruled that abortion was a constitutional right in the case of *Roe v. Wade*. This ruling was based on the arguments that Taussig and other advocates had made for decades.

## **Legacy**

Dr. Helen Taussig was a pioneering cardiologist and a passionate advocate for women's health. Her work saved the lives of countless children and helped to make safe and legal abortion a reality for women in the United States.

Taussig's legacy lives on today through the many children whose lives she saved and through the work of the organizations she supported. She is an inspiration to all who believe in the power of science and the importance of women's health.



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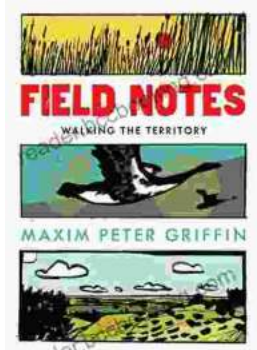
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