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**Title**

Falcon River Oral History Interview and Transcript

**Date**

November 28, 2004

**Extant**

46 minutes interview and 1 transcript

**Abstract**

In this oral history, Falcon River, a Dianic priestess and core faculty at The Temple of Diana's Spiral Door Women's Mystery School of Magick and Ritual Arts, discusses co-founding the Lesbian Feminist Union in Louisville, Kentucky, before moving in order to protect her then-partner's parental rights. With her partner Ruth Barrett, she founded the Temple of Diana, and was responsible for articulating the role of guardian priestess as a butch lesbian.

**Biographical**

Falcon River was born in 1952, and lived in Columbus, Ohio, until the early 1960s, when her family moved back to the rural mountain country of West Virginia. During this interview, she described her family as a "proud line of moonshiners and thieves." From these relatives, she learned woodcraft and folk magic. Being "wild" herself, she left home in 1968, and came out as a butch woman soon after leaving. She lived in California and Virginia, winning the title of "Mr. Roanoke" in 1973 and 1974. The following year, she went to Louisville to look up Samantha Jade River, an old flame from Girl Scout camp. They partnered and parented Jade's child. Together, they helped found the Lesbian Feminist Union in Louisville, and operated the lesbian bar, Mother's Brew.

Falcon attended the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival in 1975 and was introduced to Goddess religion there. Living in Louisville, she and Jade attended a circle in the Cincinnati area. In 1983, they moved to Madison, Wisconsin to protect Jade's parental rights. In Madison, they founded the Reformed Congregation of the Goddess (RCG). Within a year of relocating, Falcon and Jade dissolved their partnership and Falcon engaged only peripherally with Goddess rituals. She became a healer, massage therapist, and woodworker for the next decade and a half. In the mid-1990s, she began teaching a tree-lore workshop at RCG and attended some of the RCG conferences. At a 1999 conference, she met Ruth Barrett, and they became partners.

Ruth moved to Wisconsin and they found the Temple of Diana. Falcon has studied and apprenticed intensively with Dr. Dawna Markova, author of *The Open Mind*. Falcon is among the core faculty of The Temple of Diana's Spiral Door Women's Mystery School of Magick and Ritual Arts.

In the late 1990s, Falcon began talking with other butch identified lesbians about how they felt drawn to serve the goddess during rituals. They evolved the guardian role in Dianic priestess practice. Guardian priestesses offer their service as supporting cast, often from the perimeter of the circle. Although a guardian role is grounded in Dianic tradition, Falcon has been a central figure in its articulation. She continues to teach, do healing work, and woodworking from their home in Wisconsin.

### **Scope and Content**

In this oral history, Falcon River, a Dianic priestess and core faculty at The Temple of Diana's Spiral Door Women's Mystery School of Magick and Ritual Arts, discusses co-founding the Lesbian Feminist Union in Louisville, before moving in order to protect her then-partner's parental rights. With her partner Ruth Barrett, she founded the Temple of Diana, and was responsible for articulating the role of guardian priestess as a butch lesbian.

This interview was conducted by Doris Malkmus, who served as LGBTQ-RAN catalog collection archivist and oral historian from 2002 until 2005. She earned a Ph.D. in history at the University of Iowa and an M.S. in Archival Science from the University of Michigan.

### **Access**

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<https://lgbtqreligiousarchives.org/oral-histories/falcon-river>.

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### **Languages**

Collection material is in English.

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## Tags

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River, Falcon

Barrett, Ruth

River, Jade