

Tattoos date back to ancient Egypt



An unofficial history
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Temporary tattoos, permanent tattoos, henna tattoos, whatever kind, these days it seems that tattoos are more popular than ever. Millions of people, from celebrities to Joe Schmo are sporting body murals that come in all sizes, colors, and designs. Whether you want a tattoo of a flower, angel, significant other's name, snake, or the ever-popular Chinese or Celtic symbols, you can be sure that your tattoo artist can create your perfect personal body insignia.

With all of the popularity that tattoos have been receiving lately, a couple questions remain: where did this trend begin and was it always seen in a positive light of acceptance like today? To answer these questions, we must travel back in time to Ancient Egypt, where the art of tattooing originated.

At least three mummies dating back to 2,000 B.C., which display similar tattoos, have been recovered. The most famous of these mummies is Amunet, a priestess to Hathor, an Egyptian goddess. Located on Amunet's lower body were various dot and line patterns (tattoos). Mummies bearing these symbols are called, "Brides of Death," because it was believed that these tattoos were the result of ritualistic practices, which served as a sacrifice to Hathor and only women associated with this goddess had tattoos.

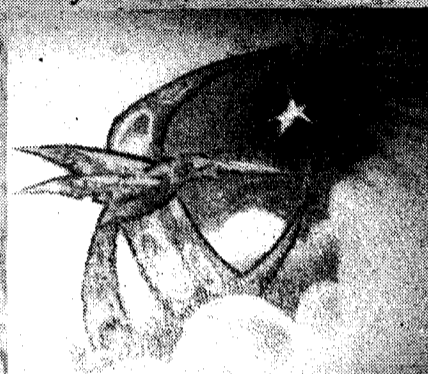
Moving away from Africa to the continent of Asia, we can see

that the meaning of tattoos changed constantly from 10,000 B.C. to 1600 A.D. In Asia, the first instances of male tattoos can be discovered. Several figures have been found throughout Asia that bear tattoo markings around their mouths. These were signs that depicted female symbols of fertility. Oddly enough, it was men and not women who wore these tattoos. Later on around 300 B.C., these symbols around the mouth were believed to be a shield against serpents

the well to do of society. This all changed with the innovative electrical tattoo procedure, which caused prices to drop and made tattoos available to the common men and women of society. This caused the meaning of tattoos to change once more, this time relating it back to the lower class.

Of course, this did not remain the fact for very long. In the late 1600s, famous explorers and sea captains, after long voyages to the

nity. These tattoos were meant to be memorabilia from the war, one that soldiers could tell their children and grandchildren about. The most popular tattoos during WWII were ones of "Lady Luck," the American



eagle, or the soldier's unit.

After the war, common people started getting tattoos, especially during the hippie movement when signs of protest to the Vietnam War were virtually everywhere, including the body of the American citizen. Soon this "baby boom," generation, who would go on to be some of the most significant members of society, influenced the biggest tattoo revolution in history. Anyone and everyone was getting a tattoo. Within the past decade, the tattoo has steadily become more popular each year. Looking back at the history of this cultural phenomena, one can only ask, "What will the reputation of the tattoo be in years to come?" Judging from history, it seems that only time will tell.

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and dragons. Soon, the meaning of these symbols changed once more, and were considered a form of punishment for criminals. Even today in areas like Japan, tattoos are still associated with criminals and people of lower society.

On the other hand, in Europe during the time of many monarchs, tattooing was seen as a privilege for the elite. As a matter of fact, tattoos were at one time very expensive and only available to

South Pacific, brought the trend of tattooing back to Europe. This caused the upper class to once again find tattoos appealing and want to get body designs themselves. Across the ocean in America, tattoos were still only being worn by the elite and Native Americans.

In the mid 1900s, tattoos became a trademark for the military during WWII. This was known as a "pledge" to one's country, much like college students today pledge to a frater-

