

DAILY @ NEWS

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They Did More Than A-Muse

By **ROBERT DOMINGUEZ**

Daily News Staff Writer

★★½

PARIS WAS A WOMAN. Documentary directed by Greta Schiller. At the Quad Theater. Running time: 75 mins. Unrated.

AT THE OPENING OF "Paris Was a Woman," the narrator avers, "Paris in the '20s was . . . both mistress and muse to a generation of male poets and artists."

But according to this 1995 documentary, the creative energy illuminating the City of Lights then was supplied by women — the mostly expatriate artists and writers who flocked there to pursue artistic and sexual freedom.

Through photographs, audio recordings and rare home movies, director Greta Schiller zeroes in on the women's Modernist movement that emerged from Paris' Left Bank.

Writers Gertrude Stein, Djuna Barnes and Janet Flanner, and publishers Sylvia Beach and Adrienne Monnier, are among the formidable females whose lives — and in some cases, lesbianism — are touched on in occasion-



ROSE TO THE OCCASION: Gertrude Stein is featured in "Paris Was a Woman," a documentary about women in '20s Paris.

ally plodding detail.

Some of the interviews seem lifted from other documentaries. In some instances, Schiller seems to be filling time, as when she lets a performance clip of Josephine

Baker run on.

Yet, "Paris Was a Woman" paints a picture of the city as an all-girl party, one that effectively ended when the Nazis goose-stepped into Paris in World War II.