



Grace Flandrau Archives preserve and document the life, work, and many adventures of the well-educated, heiress, philanthropist, plantation owner, author, adventuress, movie playwright, 1920s flapper, stargazer, mystic, historian, socialite, public speaker, world traveler, story teller.

Maiden Birth Name: Grace Corrin Hodgson

Married Name: Grace Corrin Flandrau

[Born: April 23, 1886 - Died: December 27, 1971)

Grace Corrin Hodgson-Flandrau

(April 23, 1886 – December 27, 1971)

An American author of novels, short stories and journalistic articles. She achieved a certain degree of critical acclaim for several of her novels, short stories and some of her journalism works during the 1920s, and her literary heyday during the 1930s. The efforts slowed into the latter 1940s, with her faded from public literary view by the 1950s and 1960s in the later part of her life.

Flandrau's reputation re-emerged as a prominent writer after a biography done of her life in 2007 was published.

Grace Corrin Hodgson was born in St. Paul, Minnesota, as an illegitimate daughter of a wealthy local businessman Edward John Hodgson and his girlfriend Anna Redding Hodson.

After birth the baby Grace was taken to her biological father's home by horse drawn carriage and was raised by him [Edward John Hodgson] and his wife Mary Staples Hodgson.

After the death of her father Grace traveled the world well before the days of air travel living out of the United States for 6 years.

Once back at the family home in St. Paul, Minnesota Grace married the handsome playboy heir to the Flandrau fortune, William Blair Flandrau in a local ceremony in 1909. Blair a wealthy young socialite world traveler quickly took Grace out of the United States. While on one of Blair's foreign adventures living out on a coffee plantation hundreds of miles from the nearest city by horse or mule ride, Grace began writing about what she was seeing and experiencing. Later in the 1920s with her husband Blair's wide circle of friends the couple spent time in Mexico City with well-educated Mexican Revolution mural artist Diego Rivera and his wife portrait painter and artist Frida Kahlo the daughter of an artist. Both were members of the Communist Party in Mexico.

She later went on to write six known books, the first '*Cousin Julia*' published in 1917, three of which were turned into motion pictures, along with more than five dozen short stories and news articles along with magazine articles.

During her lifetime, Grace was considered one of Minnesota's better known authors. For a time she hosted her own local radio show and a weekly column that appeared in the [St. Paul Dispatch](#) newspaper.

Flandrau was well respected throughout her writing years in the 1920s to 1940s. [F. Scott Fitzgerald](#), a fellow Saint Paul writer and one of Grace's neighborhood childhood friends, said that her novel *Being Respectable* was "better than [Babbitt](#)" and confided in a personal letter that [Edith Wharton](#) liked that book "better than any American

novel in years." Flandrau's work was included in *The Best Short Story* review collections published in 1932, 1933 and in 1943.

Her next novel, *Entranced*, was not as well received by the public as *Being Respectable*, had been and thereafter Flandrau shifted her focus towards writing articles of journalism. She turned out several pamphlets on early Minnesota history when working on projects for the [Great Northern Railway](#), a then large powerful very profitable corporation then based in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Her trip to Africa in 1927 provided lots of fruitful material for a travel book she wrote titled *Then I Saw the Congo*, along with a collection of stories in another of her books, *Under the Sun*. As a travel writer, Flandrau was considered far ahead of her time even satirical, at times challenging society's norms, exploring the exotic locales from objective, humanistic standpoints, and challenging the notion that Europeans were the superior race.

Her writings did not escape the notice of a rising Nazi Regime growing in 1933 Germany along with its "[Book Burning Rituals](#)" after massive torch light parades out in the dark in front of thousands of its cheering citizens.



1933 Nazi Book Burning in the Public Square Berlin, Germany included the Grace Flandrau Book '*Then I Saw The Congo*'

Flandrau continued on writing articles, journals, memoirs, and notes into and past the mid-1940s, but her increasing sense of despair and depression from events in her life overcame her with little being published after 1949 but at times still being written.

Many of her short stories were published in popular magazines of the time periods like [Scribner's Magazine](#), [The New Yorker](#), [The Saturday Evening Post](#) and [Harper's Magazine](#), among others including newspapers.

Flandrau remained a close friend of her sister-in-law and wealthy well educated early female architect philanthropist heiress of the Pope family fortune [Theodate Pope Riddle](#). Theodate provided Grace with a [life tenancy](#) to stay in one of the many houses on her sister-in-law's sprawling 250 acre [Hill-Stead Country Estate](#) the architect had originally designed in 1901 for her wealthy mother in [Farmington, Connecticut](#).

Flandrau died in the house she had lived in at [Hill-Stead Country Estate](#) just after celebrating Christmas on December 27, 1971. Since her very first weeks visiting the tree filled estate Grace had noted to friends she felt happy being there.

At the time Grace Flandrau's will was legally probated by the court in 1973, the estates assets were then valued at \$10,000,000 ten million dollars. In the will, major bequests were made including one to establish, in honor of her Gay brother-in-law, collaborator, and fellow noted author, the [Charles Macomb Flandrau Fund](#) at [Harvard University](#), for encouraging good writing. That fund no longer survives.

The Grace Flandrau will bequeaths in Tucson, Arizona included \$3,800,000.00 three million eight hundred thousand dollars to fund a Delinquent Youth Center and Program, and another for \$800,000.00 eight hundred thousand dollars to the [University of Arizona](#) that from her weekly hosting of university students up on the roof of her Tucson home to watch the stars and planets through telescopes she had bought led along with additional funds from the university to the

construction of the [Flandrau Science Center and Planetarium](#) in [Tucson, Arizona](#), opening in 1975.^[1]

In the late-2000s the center closed on June 1, 2009 due to lack of university funding, but was re-opened later. Of the two Tucson bequests only the planetarium survives.