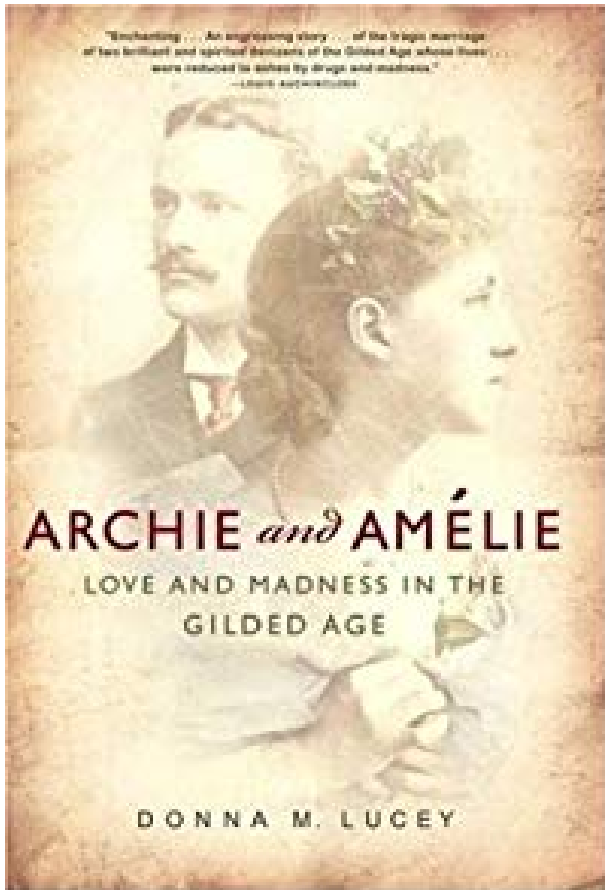


# Archie and Amelie: Love and Madness in the Gilded Age



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John Armstrong Chanler —Archie to his family— was an heir to the Astor fortune, an eccentric, dashing, and handsome millionaire. Amélie Rives, from a Southern family and the goddaughter of Robert E. Lee, was a daring author, a stunning temptress, and a woman ahead of her time. Filled with glamour, mystery, and madness, their love affair and marriage made them the talk of society in the Gilded Age. Archie and Amélie seemed made for each other: both were passionate, intense, and driven by emotion; but the very things that brought them together would soon draw them apart. Their marriage began with a "secret" wedding that found its way onto the front page of the New York Times, to the dismay of Archie's relatives and Amélie's many gentleman friends. To the world, the couple appeared charmed, rich, and famous; they moved in social circles that included Oscar Wilde, Teddy Roosevelt, and Stanford White. But although their love was undeniable, they tormented each other, and their private life was troubled from the start. They were the F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald of their day —a celebrated couple too dramatic and unconventional to last— but their tumultuous story has largely been forgotten. Now, Donna M Lucey vividly brings to life these extraordinary lovers and their sweeping, tragic romance: "In the Virginia hunt country, just outside of Charlottesville, where I live, the older people still tell stories of a strange couple who died some two generations ago. The stories involve ghosts, the mysterious burning of a church, a murder at a millionaire's house, a sensational lunacy trial, and a beautiful, scantily clad young woman prowling her gardens at night as if she were searching for something or someone —or trying to walk off the effects of the morphine that was deranging her. I was inclined to dismiss

all of this as tall tales Virginians love to spin out; but when I looked into these yarns I found proof that they were true... —Donna M Lucey on Archie and Amélie.