



Dearest of Geniuses: A Life of Theodate Pope Riddle

Sandra L. Katz

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Dearest of Geniuses is the first definitive biography of one of America's first successful female architects, Theodate Pope Riddle (1867-1946). In addition to designing schools and private homes in Connecticut and New York, Theodate designed and supervised the reconstruction of President Theodore Roosevelt's Birthplace in New York City. Theodate's masterpiece is the unusual medieval campus of Avon Old Farms School, where she served as founder and pioneered a progressive curriculum far ahead of its time. The school continues to flourish today and receives ongoing acclaim as an architectural tour de force and as an innovative educational institution.

According to writer and critic Brendan Gill, Theodate Pope Riddle was one of the ten most distinguished American women of the 20th century. Her friend, the famed psychologist Carl Jung, saw her as an "intuitive" woman who trusted her instincts, ignored raised eyebrows, and courageously forged ahead despite the restrictions of her day.

Using Theodate's extensive correspondence, girlhood diaries, journals, memoirs, transcripts of séances, and sittings with mediums, as well as interviews, family letters, and other sources, author Sandra L. Katz re-creates the life of this extraordinary woman.



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