Now that it is spring and the daffodils are still blooming, did you know that there is a daffodil named for Huguenot, Louise de Coligny?

![Daffodil Image](image1)

This pink cupped daffodil or more properly narcissus was hybridized in the Netherlands by L. van Leeuwen & Son before 1940 and first sold that year. It is now considered a classic daffodil. It is an early example along with Mrs. Backhouse (1921) of the now numerous pink and apricot cupped varieties of daffodil. The bulb was named for the Huguenot daughter of Col. Gaspard de Coligny and his wife Charlotte de Laval. The bulb is still grown in the Netherlands but is somewhat difficult to obtain, if you want to include it in your spring garden next year.

Born on 23 September 1555 at Châtillon-sur-Loing, Louise de Coligny married at age 16 Charles de Téligny (1571) who was nearly 20 years her senior. He was an experienced warrior and diplomat when he returned to LaRochelle to marry his very young bride. Both her newly-wed husband and her father were killed in the infamous St. Bartholomew Day’s Massacre (23-24 August 1572). Her husband was one of the first to die, still in the Louvre, because he refused to recant his faith. She was still in the castle at his death, but it is not known if she witnessed his murder or not.
She fled at first south of Paris to Montargis, but soon left France for the Swiss Confederacy. She returned to France in 1576, after King Henry III, who had succeeded his brother Charles IX, proclaimed an edict of temporary amnesty for Huguenots, the Edict of Beaulieu. Louise spent the next seven years at Lierville, a property she had inherited from her husband.

More than ten years passed before she married William I, Prince of Orange (24 April 1533–10 July 1584), also referred to as William the Silent or Taciturn. He was Stadtholder of the Seven United Provinces. William was from the House of Nassau and so was born and raised as a Lutheran, educated as a Roman Catholic so he could inherit his first cousin’s estates and titles, he joined the Reformed Calvinist church in 1573, and declared an outlaw by Philip II, King of Spain in 1580. William was also considerably older than Louise. She was his fourth wife and they married on 12 April 1583 in Antwerp. Nine months later she gave birth to Frederick Henry, Prince of Orange and Nassau (grandfather of William III, King of Great Britain). This marriage was not to be long-lived either as William the Silent was assassinated by Balthasar Gerard or Gerards, a Roman Catholic, in July 1584 in Delft. It is said that she knew Gerhardt and warned her husband about him. After her second husband’s death, she raised her son and four daughters of William’s third marriage. Though William the Silent is a national hero in the Netherlands, he never spoke Dutch, speaking French most of his life.

After the death of her second husband, Louise spent much of her life going between the French and Dutch courts trying to mediate disputes acting as both politician and diplomat in support of the Protestant cause. Two of her step-daughters married prominent Huguenot noblemen. In the last few months of her life, Louise returned to Fontainebleau Palace to live with the elderly Marie de’ Medici, the Queen mother. She died there on 13 November 1620. She is interred in the Netherlands next to her husband William the Silent in Nieuwe Kerk, Delft, Netherlands.

This was written from various encyclopedia references include Wikipedia. I cannot locate any recent scholarship on Louise de Coligny despite the recent interest in women’s history. Given that at least some of her voluminous correspondence survives, the life and influence of Louise de Coligny (1555-1620) is ripe for scholarly research.

*La Correspondance de Louise de Coligny, Princesse d’Orange <1555-1620>*
