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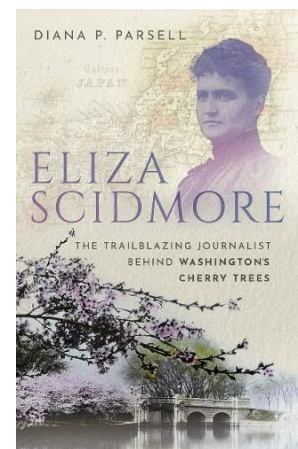
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Book Highlights Trailblazing World Travels of D.C.'s Cherry Blossom Visionary

WASHINGTON, D.C. (March 2023) — A century ago, when most Americans spent their entire lives in their own backyards, the intrepid journalist Eliza Ruhamah Scidmore took to the road writing about the world for readers back home.

A “Forrest Gump” of her day, Scidmore bore witness to important events and hobnobbed with famous people like John Muir, Alexander Graham Bell and First Lady Helen Taft. Author Diana Parsell has uncovered many new findings about Scidmore and her remarkable life in a groundbreaking biography, *Eliza Scidmore: The Trailblazing Journalist Behind Washington's Cherry Trees* (Oxford U. Press, March 2023).



Scidmore was a woman well ahead of her time. Among her notable achievements, she helped popularize Alaska tourism, lent her voice to the burgeoning U.S. conservation movement and educated readers about Japan and other places in the Far East. At the early *National Geographic*, she made a lasting mark as the first woman elected to its board (in 1892) and to have photographs in the magazine. Her story has a strong international angle, as she authored books on Japan, Java, China, and India, and a novel based on the Russo-Japanese War.

In her most tangible legacy, Scidmore introduced the idea of planting Japanese cherry-blossom trees in Washington's Potomac Park. After park officials resisted her idea for years, she found a way around them by enlisting the support of First Lady Helen Taft and mediating a gift of several thousand cherry trees from Japan.

Reviewers have praised the book for its revelations. “At last, the bold and adventurous Eliza Scidmore has the biography she deserves,” notes Amy Stewart, *New York Times* best-selling author of *The Drunken Botanist*. Cathy Newman, author of *Women Photographers at National Geographic*, says the book will elevate Scidmore to “the canon of women explorers like Gertrude Bell and Nellie Bly.”

For further information or interview requests, please contact Diana Parsell via her website (www.dianaparsell.com) or OUP senior publicist Amy Packard Ferro (Amy.PackardFerro@oup.com).

About the author:



Diana Parsell has worked as a writer, editor and journalist for print and online publications, including *National Geographic* and *The Washington Post*, and for science organizations in Washington and Southeast Asia. A graduate of Marietta College, she has master's degrees from the University of Missouri and Johns Hopkins University. Her major awards include a Mayborn Fellowship in Biography and the Hazel Rowley Prize from Biographers International Organization (BIO). Visit her website at www.dianaparsell.com.

About the book:

Eliza Scidmore: The Trailblazing Journalist Behind Washington's Cherry Trees

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