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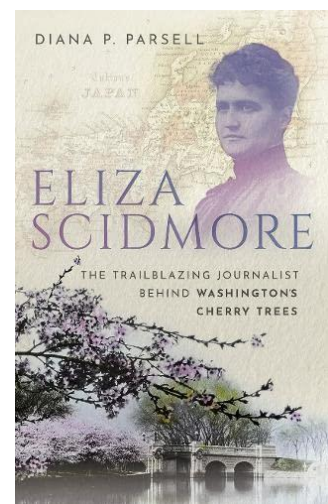
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Female “Forrest Gump” of 19th-c. Journalism Blazed Trails to Modern Tourism and Pushed for D.C.’s Cherry Trees

WASHINGTON, D.C. (March 2023) — At a time when few Americans traveled much beyond their own backyards, the intrepid journalist Eliza Ruhamah Scidmore took to the road writing about the world for readers back home.

While still in her 20s, she visited more places than most people would see in a lifetime. By the turn of the century her travels were so legendary she was introduced at a meeting in London as “Miss Scidmore, of everywhere.”

Author Diana Parsell reveals Scidmore’s remarkable—yet long overlooked—life story for the first time in *Eliza Scidmore: The Trailblazing Journalist Behind Washington’s Cherry Trees* (Oxford U. Press, March 2023).



Born on the American frontier just before the Civil War, Scidmore (1856–1928) was a “Forrest Gump” of her day who bore witness to important events and hobnobbed with famous people like John Muir, Alexander Graham Bell, First Lady Helen Taft and the Viceroy of India. In four decades as a journalist and travel writer, Scidmore:

- popularized Alaska in two groundbreaking travel books
- advocated for wilderness preservation in the early U.S. conservation movement
- became *National Geographic*’s first female board member and photographer
- roamed the Far East for three decades, producing popular books on Japan, Java, China and India.

In her best-known legacy, Scidmore helped shape the landscape of modern Washington, D.C., in her obsessive quest to have Japanese cherry trees planted along the Potomac.

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); by email (above); or through OUP senior publicist Amy Packard Ferro (Amy.PackardFerro@oup.com).

About the author:



Diana Parsell has worked as a writer, editor and journalist for many print and online publications, including *National Geographic* and *The Washington Post*, and for major science organizations in Washington and Southeast Asia. A graduate of Marietta College in her native Ohio, she has master's degrees from the University of Missouri and Johns Hopkins University. In support of her book, she received a Mayborn Fellowship in Biography and the Hazel Rowley Prize from the 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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