

2014-15 PROGRAM SEASON

All programs are held on the second Thursday of the months listed below at the Whatcom Museum Rotunda Room at 7:30 p.m. Free and open to all.

March 12, 2015: Ella Higginson, Bellingham Poet Laureate, by Laura Laffrado

April 9, 2015: The fascinating historic research behind the recent painting of Captain Vancouver's vessels the HMS *Discovery* and *Chatham*, by well-known local maritime artist Steve Mayo.

Tour of Pickett House and Territorial County Courthouse, Sunday, March 8, 910 Bancroft St. and 1308 E St.

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HISTORY NEWS



Volume 20 Issue 6

Whatcom County Historical Society

March 2015

“Searching for Ella Higginson”

Presented by Laura Laffrado

Thursday, March 12, 2015, 7:30 p.m.

Whatcom Museum Rotunda Room • 121 Prospect St. • Free

The first prominent literary author from the Pacific Northwest, Ella Rhoads Higginson (1862?-1940) has been largely forgotten as a key American writer. During the turn from the nineteenth century into the twentieth century, readers across the nation were introduced to the remote Pacific Northwest region by Higginson's descriptions of majestic mountains, vast forests, and scenic waters, as well as the often difficult economic circumstances of those dwelling near Puget Sound. Higginson was celebrated for her award-winning fiction, her lyric poetry which was set to music and performed internationally, and her distinguished position as the first Poet Laureate of Washington State. Throughout her literary career, Higginson published hundreds of poems, stories, and essays in leading magazines and newspapers, while also writing books, including the novel *Mariella*, of *Out-West* (1902) and the nonfiction work *Alaska, the Great Country* (1908). Higginson's reputation as a well-known American author faded chiefly due to her singular position as a literary writer in the turn of the century Pacific Northwest, far from other regions and writers at the time. Areas of the United States such as New England and the South were often portrayed by many different authors in earlier American literature. Taken together, such writings created familiar literary regions for readers. However, only in Higginson's writing did the Pacific Northwest of over a century ago spring to life in precise detail. Because of this, her work stands alone. Laffrado will speak about her efforts to reintroduce readers to Higginson's life and work and to reclaim Higginson as a significant voice in American literature.

Laffrado is the author of *Uncommon Women: Gender and Representation in U.S. Women's Writing* (The Ohio State University Press, 2009) and *Hawthorne's Literature for Children* (University of Georgia Press, 1992). She is a professor of English at WWU. At right: Higginson near her High St. home (Whatcom Museum).



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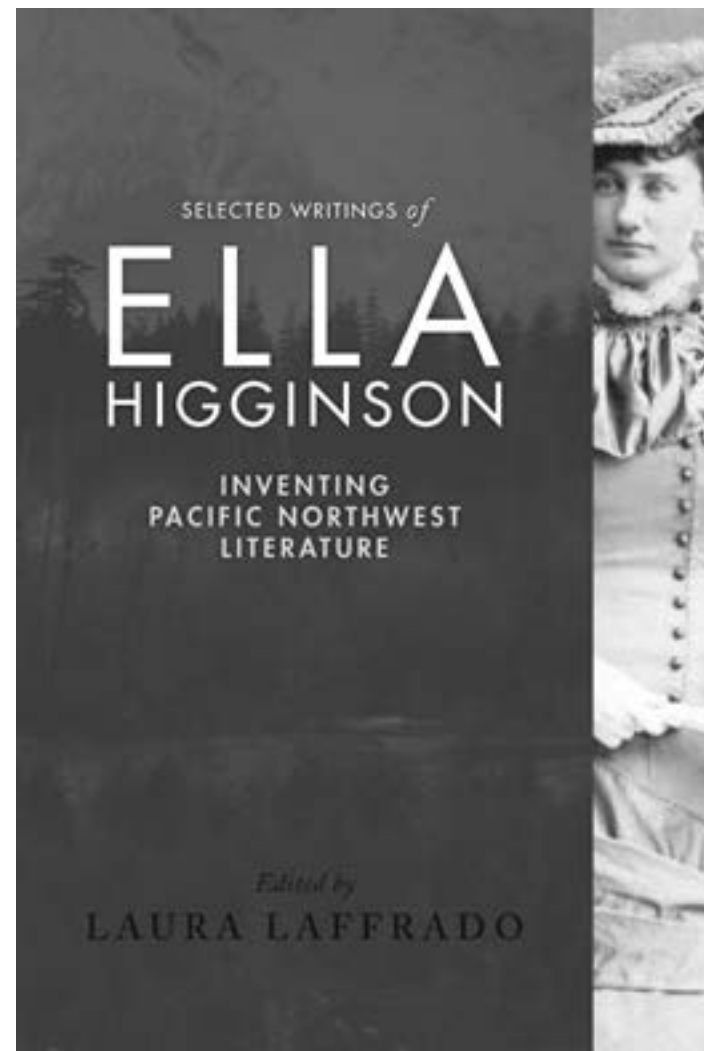
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LOCAL HISTORY NEWS & NOTES

COMING SOON!

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PUT YOUR NAME OR TRIBUTE ON AN ENGRAVED BRICK TO BE INSTALLED AT THE RESTORED HISTORIC 1858 T.G. RICHARDS BUILDING, AKA THE WHATCOM COUNTY TERRITORIAL COURTHOUSE

Just a few bricks remain to be engraved. Your donation of \$50 per brick will help complete the installation of the long-awaited ADA lift at the back of the building. Use this form to spell out your message and mail with a check for \$50 to: WCHS, 1308 E St, Bellingham, WA 98225 Thank you!

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Your name and phone number: _____

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SOCIETY NEWS



Correction from last issue:

Eagle Scout candidate Matt Jensen completed the beautiful fence in the side yard of the 1858 building. He also raised all the funds for the wood to compete that portion and the front gate and side fence, which was completed by Garrett Walker and his dad, Marc (pictured below by new gate). The hardware for both projects was donated by Hardware Sales and Marc Walker. Leftover cash from the wood, which was purchased at Lowe's with a nice discount, was donated to the Society for the building fund. Thanks again to these remarkable young men (and their families)!

Whatcom County Historical Society Membership 2014-2015 Season

Clip or copy and mail with payment to WCHS Membership, 1308 E St, Bellingham, WA 98225

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- \$25 Individual membership or non-profit organization, newsletter + one copy *Journal* + 10% member discount
- \$50 Sustaining member or business member, (same benefits as above)
- \$100 Supporting member (same plus choice of historic photographic print from Whatcom Museum, call 393-6782)
- \$250 Patron member (same as all above, plus special future recognition) Date paid _____

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- Expiration date on newsletter mailing label may not be updated until second issue after payment.

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