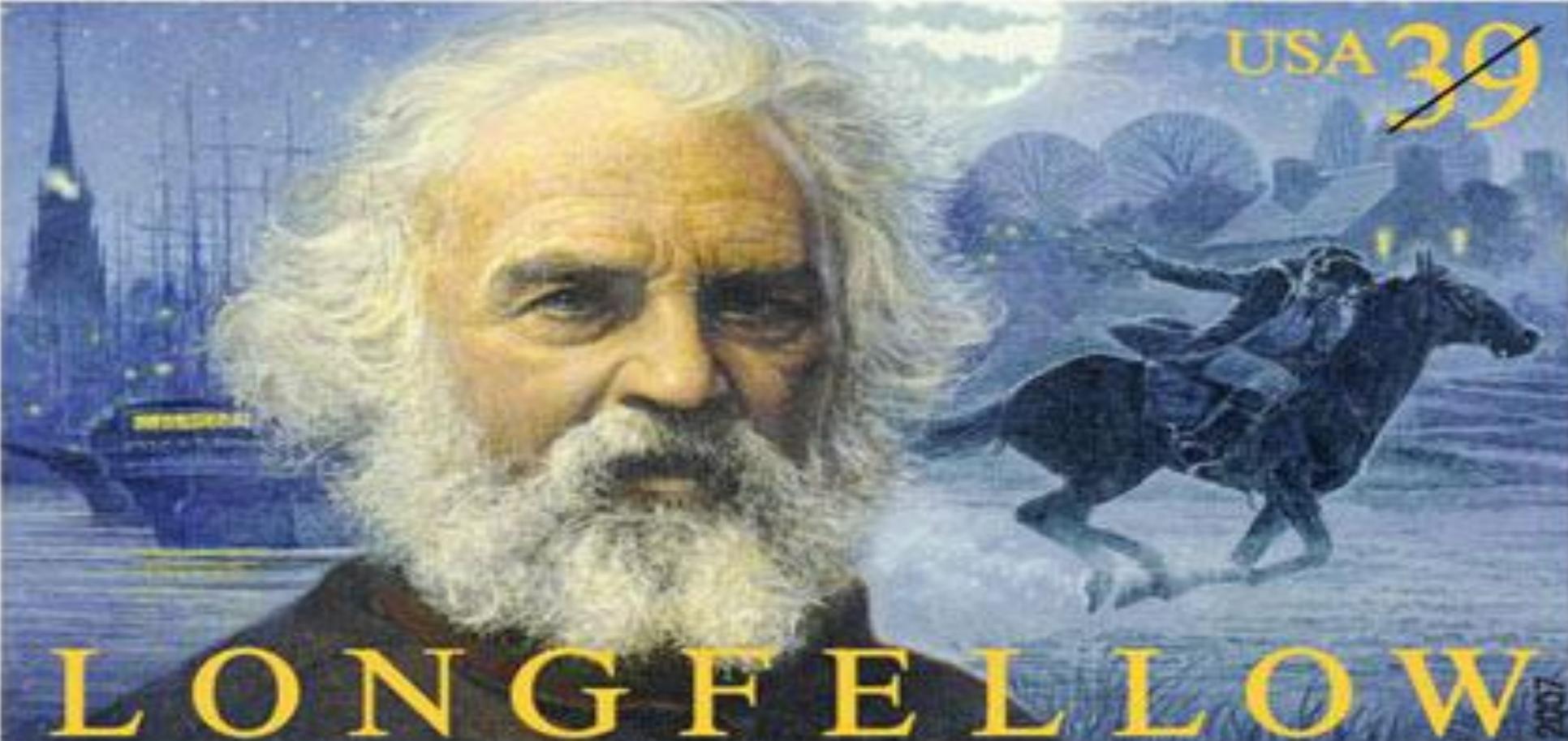


*Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
is my favourite writer!*





Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (February 27, 1807 – March 24, 1882) was an American poet and educator whose works include "Paul Revere's Ride", *The Song of Hiawatha*, and *Evangeline*. He was also the first American to translate Dante Alighieri's *The Divine Comedy* and was one of the five Fireside Poets.

Longfellow was born in Portland, Maine, which was then a part of Massachusetts. He studied at Bowdoin College. After spending time in Europe he became a professor at Bowdoin and, later, at Harvard College.



Harvard College



Portland, Maine



Bowdoin College

His first major poetry collections were *Voices of the Night* (1839) and *Ballads and Other Poems* (1841). Longfellow retired from teaching in 1854 to focus on his writing, living the remainder of his life in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in a former headquarters of George Washington.

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OF THE NIGHT

BY
H. W. LONGFELLOW.

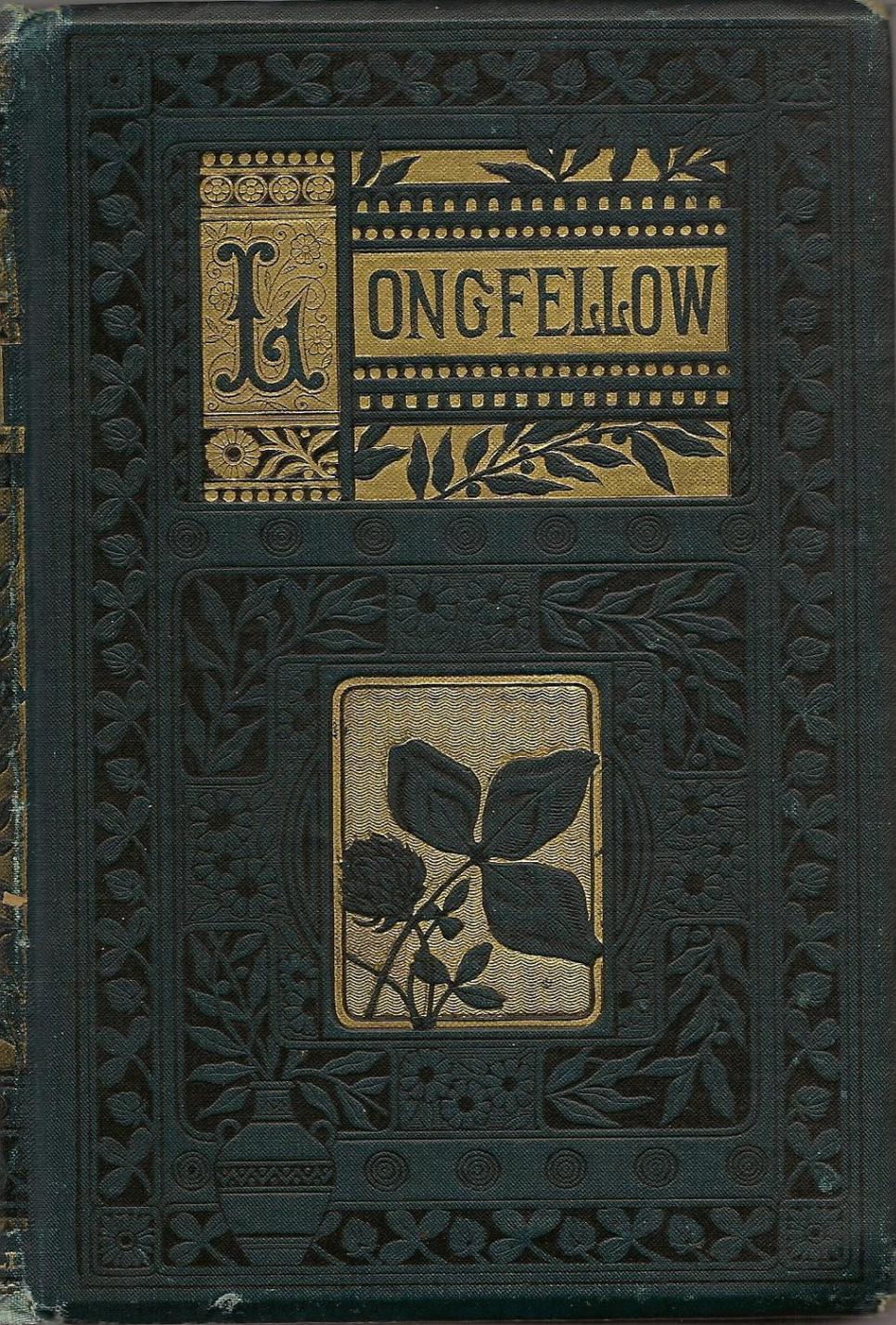
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The Poetry of
Henry Wadsworth
Longfellow

His first wife Mary Potter died in 1835 after a miscarriage. His second wife Frances Appleton died in 1861 after sustaining burns when her dress caught fire. After her death, Longfellow had difficulty writing poetry for a time and focused on his translation. He died in 1882.





Longfellow wrote predominantly lyric poems, known for their musicality and often presenting stories of mythology and legend. He became the most popular American poet of his day and also had success overseas. He has been criticized, however, for imitating European styles and writing specifically for the masses.

Though much of his work is categorized as lyric poetry, Longfellow experimented with many forms, including hexameter and free verse. His published poetry shows great versatility, using anapestic and trochaic forms, blank verse, heroic couplets, ballads and sonnets. Typically, Longfellow would carefully consider the subject of his poetic ideas for a long time before deciding on the right metrical form for it. Much of his work is recognized for its melody-like musicality. As he says, "what a writer asks of his reader is not so much to like as to listen".





Longfellow often used didacticism in his poetry, though he focused on it less in his later years. Much of his poetry imparts cultural and moral values, particularly focused on promoting life as being more than material pursuits. Longfellow also often used allegory in his work. In "Nature", for example, death is depicted as bedtime for a cranky child. Many of the metaphors he used in his poetry as well as subject matter came from legends, mythology, and literature. He was inspired, for example, by Norse mythology for "The Skeleton in Armor" and by Finnish legends for *The Song of Hiawatha*.

In fact, Longfellow rarely wrote on current subjects and seemed detached from contemporary American concerns. Even so, Longfellow, like many during this period, called for the development of high quality American literature. In *Kavanaugh*, a character says:

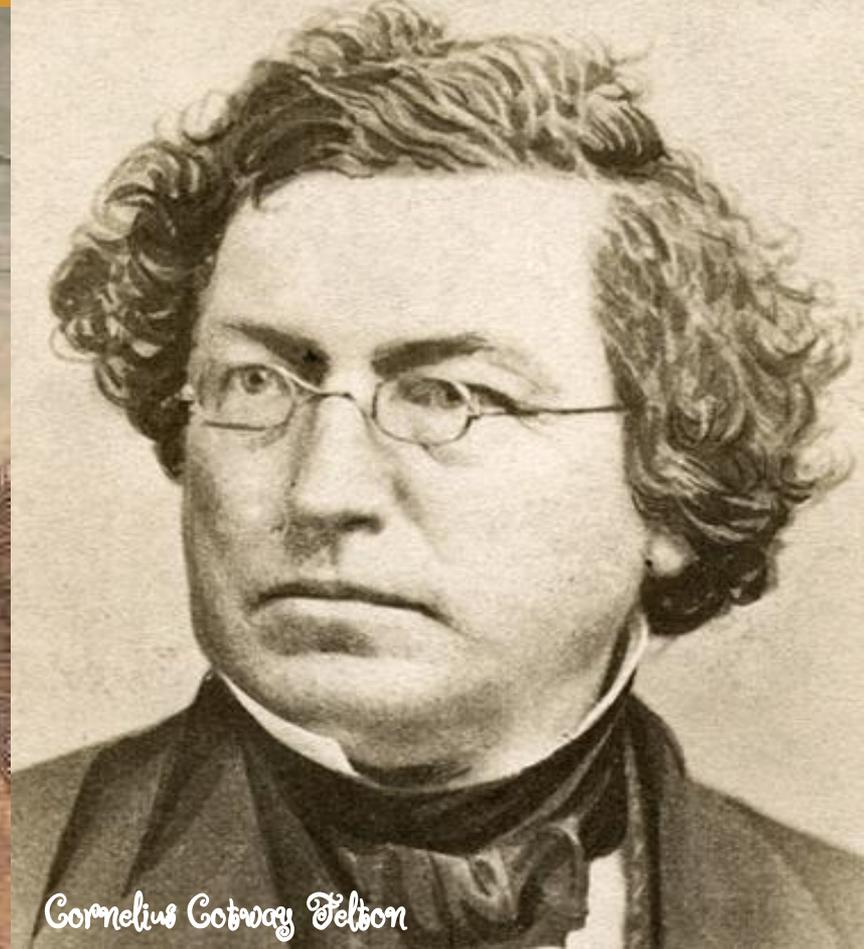
“We want a national literature commensurate with our mountains and rivers... We want a national epic that shall correspond to the size of the country... We want a national drama in which scope shall be given to our gigantic ideas and to the unparalleled activity of our people... In a word, we want a national literature altogether shaggy and unshorn, that shall shake the earth, like a herd of buffaloes thundering over the prairies.”



He was also important as a translator; his translation of Dante became a required possession for those who wanted to be a part of high culture. He also encouraged and supported other translators. In 1845, he published *The Poets and Poetry of Europe*, an 800-page compilation of translations made by other writers, including many by his friend and colleague Cornelius Conway Felton. Longfellow intended the anthology "to bring together, into a compact and convenient form, as large an amount as possible of those English translations which are scattered through many volumes, and are not accessible to the general reader". In honor of Longfellow's role with translations, Harvard established the Longfellow Institute in 1994, dedicated to literature written in the United States in languages other than English.



Dante

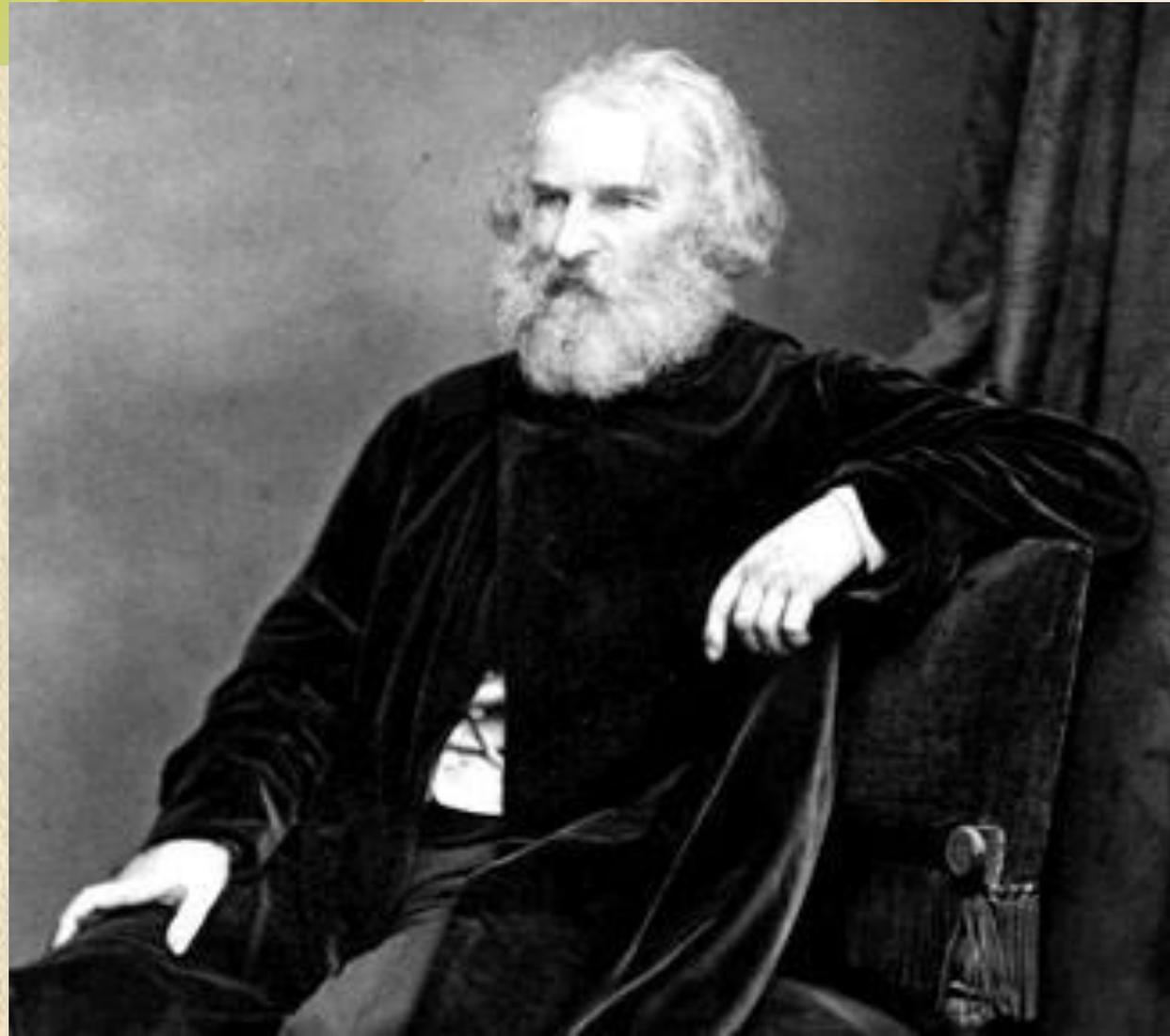


Cornelius Conway Felton

In 1874, Longfellow oversaw a 31-volume anthology called *Poems of Places*, which collected poems representing several geographical locations, including European, Asian, and Arabian countries. Emerson was disappointed and reportedly told Longfellow: "The world is expecting better things of you than this... You are wasting time that should be bestowed upon original production". In preparing the volume, Longfellow hired Katherine Sherwood Bonner as an amanuensis.

Dialect Tales

**Katherine
Sherwood
Bonner McDowell**



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