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## Reminiscence of John Muir by Galloway, Cecelia, Letter to Wolfe

Cecelia Galloway

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617 Stock Exchange Bldg,  
Portland 4, Oregon,  
Thursday, March 23, 1944

My Dear Mrs. Wolfe,-

Your letter dated the 20th came this morning as I was eating my little breakfast.

Please note first that my room number is 617 instead of 616.

You might change it in your address book. I was at 616 first, but moved to 617 to get away from the drunks next door who wouldn't let me get any sleep.

This is the paper I use in writing the boys overseas because it doesn't weigh much, so please excuse it.

I am glad to give you a definite answer to your question, because I fail you so many times. I know so little about Fountain Lake Farm, although I was born there, but I do know all about what you call the Mound Hill Farm, because that is where I lived all my little girlhood and my growing-up days until I must have been eighteen or thereabouts,

when my father sold the farm, moved Mother and two girls to Portage, and then died.

I am enclosing for you the carbon copy of my little sketch about John Muir. You may keep it, because I have the original. I think you probably have this already, but it may not be easily accessible, and you are very welcome to this.

I was born on the Fountain Lake farm, but when I was just a baby, a few months old I guess, Father moved to Portage. If you will look at that old yellowed letter I gave you, that John Muir wrote from Canada when I was born, back in 1865, you will see that he says something about my father "going into the wheat business, for which business he was well fitted." Something like that, as I remember.

But evidently Father didn't like the business, or wanted to get back on a farm again, because I was still just a baby, at least a little tot, when

my father bought what you call the "Mound Hill Farm", where I grew up. It was five or six miles out of Portage, in the Township of Fort Winnebago, the county of Columbia. That was also the neighborhood where the Mallheys grew up, and Carrie Spicer who married Elisha Mallhey, and Hiram Eastman who married my sister Anna (Marjorie Shonis mother.) also Eugene Moran of Portage.

It seems that Scotch people had a habit of giving their farms names, and father called our farm, Mound Hill Farm. Our house stood at the foot of a hill. On the hill back of house was the orchard, the berries, and grapes, and all these things, and up on the brow of the hill was a green pasture where the sheep were. On the top of the hill was the Indian mound, shaped distinctly like a heart, and there was a circle of trees around it. I played on that mound many a time. They said if you dug down in it you would

find the bones of an Indian Chief, and things like that. But mother would never let that mound be touched, or those trees be cut. So that is where the farm got its name. But just the same none of the neighbors ever called it that, and they would not know what you meant if you spoke about it.

For none of the neighbors called their farms names. We were the only Scotch family there. The rest were mostly "down-east Yankees." So the name was never used. It was never used when I grew up. I just have a faint remembrance of <sup>the name</sup> it, which your letter brought to mind.

If you will read the first several pages of this carbon copy you will find a lot about that farm, and are welcome to use anything that is of use to you.

On page 4 ~~about~~ you will find about the little spring and the "pool" in the woods which I think is what my uncle may have called

"Fern Lake", although I never heard it called by that name. I have never forgotten it. I can see a distinct picture of it in mind right now that you have mentioned it. It couldn't be called a lake. It was too tiny. It was just a pool no bigger than a good-sized room, with a never-failing cold spring in the bottom of it. It was in an unusual place for such a thing, not near a marsh, or a river. Just all alone in the heart of the deep woods of very great old oak trees. It was deep down, in a depression, and on the sloping sides around it rose these very tall royal oregonian ferns, almost as high as my head when I was a small girl. I think that must have been what my uncle ~~meant~~ ~~at~~ meant. For I remember that he wanted my father not to let the cattle go near it, but to let it remain wild, just as it was. So it was never disturbed, while we were there.

But whether we could find a trace  
 of it there now, I don't know. I  
 have never been back there, but  
 my friends have advised me never  
 to go near it. They said it would,  
 only made me cry to see it. The  
 house burned down. The great  
 maples in our yard were cut  
 down. The hogs ran over the  
 front yard and rooted up my  
 mother's lovely garden. The mound  
 on the hill was leveled down,  
 plowed under, and the "forest  
 primeval" on the further side of  
 the hill was cut down, and nothing  
 but stumps there now. What became  
 of the little pool and the spring  
 in the heart of the woods, I don't  
 know. If you were to drive out  
 from Portage to see that neighborhood  
 and especially that old "Mammoth Hill  
 Farm" you would see nothing at all  
 of the lovely farm I remember,  
 or our big white house among the  
 great maples, or the garden, or  
 anything else. If you asked for

the "Mound Hill Farm" they could not know what you meant. If you asked for the old "Gallows Farm" they still wouldn't know. For they tell me not one of the old neighbors live there now, and it is more than fifty years since we lived there. Sixty would be nearer it, I guess. I have forgotten the dates. The old farm may be a ruin now, but it is still a lovely memory to me. My father kept it like a garden, and his cattle and horses and other stock were always the best. It was the finest place in the neighborhood.

Uncle John used to come there sometimes in the summer to help in the harvest and earn some money. That was when I was small.

I'll be glad to tell you anything I can about "Mound Hill Farm" if you need it. You are welcome to use anything in this carbon copy you want. You may copy, or quote me, or whatever serves your purpose.

I am glad to know the book is coming along so well, and shall look forward to seeing it. I am glad, too, that they want you to do another book. That is fine. That may allow you to use the things you said were left over from the biography.

I have thought about you often lately, because you weren't well when you wrote last.

You can always call on me for any information you want. I cannot always give it to you, but I'll tell you everything I can.

Sincerely yours,

Cecilia Yellowaway.

As for Sam Ennis, I don't know who he is, or anything about him. Sorry!