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The John Muir Newsletter, Winter 2010/2011

The John Muir Center

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By Dan Styer
Oberlin College,
Oberlin, Ohio

John Muir – who would later acquire the nickname John

O’Mountains – encountered mountains for the first time in his life at the age of twenty-nine years, on September 10, 11, and 12, 1867, when he crossed the Cumberland Plateau of Tennessee as part of his thousand-mile walk from Louisville, Kentucky, to Cedar Key, Florida.

Muir recorded the story of this crossing in a notebook, which was edited and published posthumously as A Thousand-Mile Walk to the Gulf. The Crossing of the Cumberland provided some of the best human stories of the book: The “young man on horseback ... who... intended to rob me if he should find the job worth while.”3 The blacksmith and his wife, a “bright, good-natured, good looking little woman,”4 with whom Muir discussed Solomon’s love of botany. And a harrowing encounter with “the most irreclaimable of the guerrilla bands who, long accustomed to plunder [during the Civil War], deplored the coming of peace.”5

Also interesting is Muir’s September 9, 1867 letter to Jeanne Carr. This letter eloquently records the intertwined feelings of ecstasy (“miles and miles of beauty”) and of despair (“I hardly dare to think of home and friends”) familiar to many long-distance solitary wilderness travelers.6

These three days also held superlative encounters with nature: On September 10, Muir “began the ascent of the Cumberland Mountains, the first real mountains that my foot ever touched or eyes beheld...the glorious forest road of Kentucky was grandly seen, stretching over hill and valley, adjusted to every slope and curve by the hands of Nature – the most sublime and comprehensive picture that ever entered my eyes.”7 Two days later, descending from the Cumberland Plateau, Muir “Crossed a wide cool stream.... There is nothing more eloquent in Nature than a mountain stream, and this is the first I ever saw...Near this stream I spent some joyous time in a grand rock-dwelling full of mosses, birds, and flowers. Most heavenly place I ever entered.”8

Through study of Muir’s writings and of Civil War-era and other historical maps, and through a visit to the area, the author has been able to retrace Muir’s overmountain route with relative certainty, and to speculate on the location and fate of the “most heavenly place.”

**Historical maps**

Muir’s journal provides only a sketchy outline of his geographical route. To recover that route, one must combine hints from the journal with hints from contemporary maps. This brings up the problem that the maps available in 1867 had but a fraction of the accuracy and detail that we take for granted today.

Hundreds of nineteenth-century maps were examined, and their quality was judged by examining their fidelity among themselves, by questioning their reasonableness in light of...
John Muir Newsletter is Back and Going Digital

After a year, we are back! Last year we announced that we would become an "occasional" newsletter, projecting two issues per year. We only released one issue this past year. In an age of high cost of reproduction and mailing we decided to follow the trail of other newsletters by going digital. Those with ezine can continue to receive at no charge the newsletters by going digital. Those with e-mail can continue to receive at no charge the newsletter as part of a web serve list. Simply e-mail us at johnmuir@pacific.edu and we will include you in our future announcements and you will receive a PDF version of the Newsletter. Those who do not have web access, please send us a short note requesting a hard copy of the Newsletter. We suggest a donation of $10 per year for those who would like the older format as a hard copy. We are no longer reminding subscribers of a pending expiration. We appreciate any and all support of the Center. Your donation helps with many Center agendas.

We continue to welcome submissions of articles focusing on John Muir and his legacy, as well as poetry and photos of the Sierra and other places dear to John Muir's heart. Articles should be no longer than 2,000 words; but we also seek short pieces and announcements.

Please submit to:
W. R. Swagerty
Director, John Muir Center,
WPC 99
University of the Pacific,
Stockton CA 95211
or by e-mail to
wswagerty@pacific.edu

“26th July 1869: Ramble to the summit of Mount Hoffman, eleven thousand feet high, the highest point in life’s journey my feet have yet touched.”

John Muir
My First Summer in the Sierra

From Mount Hoffman

By Terry Gifford
Your ‘ramble’ up from the Valley
To spend a night on this bare mountain,
A steep ascent of five thousand feet,
Left me breathless before I turned the page.
And even starting from Snow Flat
I was pleased to pause on a real chair

(My first in weeks of boulder-seats)
Left outside by the tree-stump table
Amongst the cabins of May Lake Camp.
Breathless from the final scramble
And the view, looking down on Half Dome,
Cloud’s Rest, far glaciers and Tenaya Lake,
I sit quite still and meet the marmots

Smiling eerily like cats as they creep
Out from their crevices, expecting to be fed.
I turn around and scree-slade down the dusty trail
To bathe my legs in the clear May Lake.


John Muir Event at Pacific, April 13

On April 13, 2011, a special John Muir event will be held in the Janet Leigh Theater at University of the Pacific. From 7:00 to 7:30 p.m. photographer Scot Miller will give a presentation on his work in the illustration of the 100th anniversary edition of My First Summer in the Sierra.

From 7:30 until 9:15 p.m., film maker Catherine Tatge of Global Village Media will give a brief introduction to her film “John Muir in the New World”. This is a biographical documentary of the extraordinary life of John Muir and his influence on American history. The 90 minute film, which is scheduled to be broadcast on the PBS American Masters series on April 18, will be shown after Ms. Tatge’s introduction.

From 9:15 until 10:00 p.m. there will be a reception and book signing by Scot Miller.
Online Inventory of Muir Papers is Updated

By Michael Wurtz
Holt-Atherton Special Collections
University of the Pacific Library

Recently, the staff of the Holt-Atherton Special Collections had announced the addition of thousands of John Muir correspondence to the web-library, pacific.edu/ha/muir and click on digitized material. This was added to images of Muir’s drawings, photographs, and journals. These digital assets have been a tremendous help to researchers around the world. However, there is still much of the collection that is not available online. Digitally scanning and loading the entirety of John Muir Papers and other collections would be a daunting task, so only the most useful and significant items are made available via the web at this time.

In addition to all the new online material, we have updated the John Muir Papers finding aid. A finding aid, sometimes referred to as a finding guide, could be considered an inventory, table of contents, index, and annotated bibliography all in one. Collections that are the size and scope of the Muir Papers cannot be easily itemized. A typical six inch box can hold over a thousand individual documents. To list and describe each of those items would take a great deal of time. Archivists have chosen to organize collections along the lines of what the creator (in this case, John Muir) intended. Once we have created the categories (such as letters, drawings, published materials, etc.) we describe them in slightly more specific terms, such as by date or location or subject. Then the researcher must request the items by folder or box.

The online material represents the richest portion of the John Muir Papers. However, it is a minority of all the Muir material. The microform project that was completed in the 1980s includes much more of the collection, but still not every item. The entire collection resides at Holt-Atherton Special Collections in the University of the Pacific Library. How can the researcher find out about what is in the materials that are not accessible via the web or microform?

The online finding aid is the answer. It lists the contents to every folder in the collection. For example, researchers will find that the Papers contain most of the collected bibliography of Muir as listed in Kimes’ John Muir: A Reading Bibliography. They will also find photographs that have been donated to the collection since the microform project was completed. In addition, the collection includes Muir biographer William F. Badé’s transcriptions of many of Muir’s Journals, as well as Badé’s collected reminiscences, and personal letters. One can also find Linnie Marsh Wolfe’s correspondence and papers as she wrote her biography of Muir, and her transcriptions of some of Muir journals. Papers from the Strenzel and Muir family including legal and business papers for the Muir ranch in Martinez are also available. There is also poetry to and about Muir; John Muir’s clipping files that he kept on many different topics and memorabilia that includes Muir’s odds and ends such as passenger lists, maps and botanical information from trips he took around the world.

Researchers can also find a few real jewels within the John Muir Papers that have never made it to microform or online including photographs of construction of the Half Dome Cables Trail in 1919 and clippings on early California agriculture that were probably collected by Muir and his father-in-law, John Strentzel.

To get to the finding aid for the John Muir Papers, visit library.pacific.edu/ha/muir/find and click on “Finding Aid of the John Muir Papers.” From the above website, researchers are invited to click on “Related Collections.” Here, researchers can see over a dozen finding aids to other Muir related collections that the University of the Pacific Library holds.
Muir's choices of routes, and through comparison to modern maps. Some of the maps examined were George Woolworth Colton's 1869 "Map of Kentucky and Tennessee," A.J. Johnson's 1866 "Map of Kentucky and Tennessee," as well as all the relevant, internet-available maps from the collections of the Library of Congress, the David Rumsey collection of historical maps, and the historical map archive of the University of Alabama.

These comparisons show that the best available map from the era of Muir's walk is Charles E. Swann's 1863 "Military Map of Kentucky and Tennessee." Also valuable because it gives the names and characteristics of roads, is N. Michler's 1862 "Map of Middle and East Tennessee." The 1863 map "Mountain Region of North Carolina and Tennessee" by W.L. Nicholson and A. Lindenkohl has almost twice the scale and was useful for confirming the previous two maps.

Finally, the "General Topographical Map" by Julius Bien & Co. was issued by the United States War Department in 1895, but it was part of an "Atlas to Accompany the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, 1861-1865" and seems to show features as they existed in 1865, not 1895. Sheet XV is the relevant map.

None of these maps show features with the accuracy and scale with which we are familiar today. None of them show elevation contours; however the "General Topographical Map" of Julius Bien mentioned above depicts mountainous terrain through the use of hachures. The earliest maps that would today be considered topographic maps are the 30 minute quadrangles issued by the US Geological Survey in the 1890s. These were surveyed two or three decades after Muir's walk, so they need to be used judiciously and in connection with the Civil War-era maps.

Reconstructing the route

In order to reconstruct Muir's probable route, A Thousand Mile Walk to the Gulf and Muir's journal for the trip were searched for geographical clues, then a reasonable route was traced out on Civil War-era maps. That information was then transferred to topographical maps from the 1890s, and then transferred to modern maps. The result of this process has been recorded on Google maps. To see this map, go to http://maps.google.com/ Click on "search options." On the drop-down menu, select "User-created maps." Type in "John Muir Cumberland." Click on "search maps." Then click on "John Muir's Crossing of the Cumberland" to see Muir's route and places visited along the way.

This process is for the most part easier than it sounds, and while it cannot be and does not pretend to be exact, most individuals performing the process would come up with a very similar route; however a researcher possessing detailed local historical and geographical knowledge could probably improve the end result.

According to Muir's journal and A Thousand Mile Walk to the Gulf, Muir passed through Burkesville, Kentucky on September 8. He
crossed the state line into Tennessee “towards evening” on September 9. The next day, “after a few miles of level ground” Muir walked upgrade with occasional views in which “Kentucky was grandly seen” for “six or seven hours” to reach the top of the Cumberland Plateau. He passed through Jamestown and as previously mentioned, spent the night with a blacksmith and his wife. On September 11 he walked a “long stretch of level sandstone plateau” and was “compelled to sleep with the trees in the one great bedroom of the open night.” Finally, on September 12 Muir breakfasted in Montgomery and descended the east slope of the Cumberland Mountains. He “forded the Clinch” and “reached Kingston before dark.”

The Civil War-era maps show several routes from Burkesville to Jamestown, but the most direct route, the route that would be more in Kentucky than in Tennessee, the only route that would give a view north to Kentucky while climbing the plateau, and the only route that is level until one long steady climb to the top of the plateau, is the route through Albany, Kentucky and Pall Mall, Tennessee.

In the author’s opinion, the only plausible route from Jamestown to Montgomery is the Pile Turnpike. Montgomery, now a ghost town but then the Morgan County Seat, was then located on the upper reaches of Emory River, just west of Wartburg.

From Montgomery to Kingston, the only practicable route is east through Wartburg, then branching southeast at Crooked Fork and proceeding northeast of Bitter Creek. This road reaches Emory Iron Works on the watercourse variously known as Emory Creek, or Little Emory Creek, or Little Emory River (its modern name). This route then descends through a gap in Walden Ridge on the left bank of the Little Emory, and finally fords the Emory and Clinch Rivers in the lowlands east of the plateau.

In the text of A Thousand-Mile Walk to the Gulf, the “eloquent ... mountain stream” crossed by Muir on September 12 is identified parenthetically as the Emory River. However the mountain stream is unnamed in his journal. The gorge of the Emory River, as it descends from the plateau, is so rugged that no road followed it in 1867 and no road follows it even today. The author asserts that the name was inserted incorrectly either by Muir or by editor William Frederic Bade long after the trip, and that the eloquent mountain stream is actually the Little Emory River.

“The stream I spent some joyous time in a grand rock-dwelling full of masses, birds, and flowers. Most heavenly place I ever entered.”
The question of the “most heavenly place”

On September 12, 1867, while descending the east slope of the Cumberland Plateau, Muir “spent some joyous time in a grand rock-dwelling full of mosses, birds, and flowers. Most heavenly place I ever entered.”31 By this stage of his life, Muir had already experienced living in Scotland, Wisconsin, and Indiana, botanizing in Iowa, Ontario, and Illinois, and journeying by foot along the Wisconsin River from Madison to the Mississippi. If, after all these encounters with nature, Muir considered a place to be the “most heavenly [he had] ever entered,” then this was deemed by the author to be a place worth visiting; so on January 2, 2010, the author spent much of the day driving and hiking in the mountainous area between Montgomery and Kingston, looking for an overhanging cliff that would match Muir’s description. With no leaves on the trees, it was easy to get a good view of the rocks. Disappointingly no “grand rock-dwelling” was found. What was found, however, was a large rock-face that had been blasted away to allow US Route 27 to pass through the gorge where the Little Emory River cuts through Walden Ridge. This is located on the east side of the road, south of Coal Hill Road and north of the Morgan County – Roane County boundary. Again, someone with detailed local knowledge may be able to better locate Muir’s “grand rock-dwelling.”

The blacksmith question

Who was the blacksmith who shared his home with Muir on the night of September 10? Muir provides no name. On the 1870 US census sheets32 for Fentress County, Tennessee, only seven of the 1117 county residents have their occupation listed as “blacksmith”:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blacksmith</th>
<th>his age</th>
<th>wife</th>
<th>her age</th>
<th>census district</th>
<th>census dwelling number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Livingston</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleasant Imag</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>Martha</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry Livingston</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Lucinda</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wm. Davidson</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Marget</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sherwood Daily</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Melissa</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Crabtree</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Ursie</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Draughn</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Hannah</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of course, it is always possible that things changed in the three years between Muir’s walk and this census; people can change occupations, remarry, move away, or die over the course of three years. At the same time it is certainly plausible that one of these seven individuals may be the one Muir met.

To be even more speculative, we can ask which wife Muir would have considered a “bright, good-natured, good looking little woman”33 when he passed through. Without knowing Muir’s taste in women, it is doubtful that the 29-year-old Muir would have described the 47-year-old Hannah Draughn in this way. He was more likely that he was referring to the 20-year-old Sarah Livingston, the 29-year-old Lucinda Livingston, or the 23-year-old Crissey Crabtree.

One might object that such identification does not teach us anything about the Muir’s route, because we don’t know how the 1870 census districts correspond to the 2010 map. This is not entirely correct. At the time Fentress County had but one post office, and all twelve census districts have locations listed simply as “Jamestown Post Office”. All the residents with occupation “lawyer” lived in census district 3, so that district must have represented the county...

Acknowledgement

A visit today

In his thousand-mile walk, Muir sought out “the wildest, leafiest, and least trodden way I could find.” The geographical route Muir took is no longer particularly wild, leafy, or untrodden. Anyone wishing to recreate Muir’s journey will need to take side trips away from Muir’s geographical route to glimpse his spiritual route through the wild, the leafy, and the least trodden. “John Muir’s Crossing of the Cumberland” suggests more than two dozen sites to visit, from waterfalls to overlooks to springs to virgin forests.

It is interesting to note that the “thousand-mile” route taken by Muir is not the route taken by the present-day John Muir Trail, which runs for 42 miles in the Cumberland Plateau through Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area and adjoining Pickett State Forest. Nor is it the route taken by the John Muir National Recreation Trail, which runs for 21 miles along the north bank of Hiwassee River within Cherokee National Forest in eastern Tennessee. These two trails were named to acknowledge Muir as an early naturalist walker in the area, not to recreate his precise route.

Acknowledgement

The author is grateful for the help of Willie R. Beaty, President of the Fentress County Historical Society in Jamestown, Tennessee, who suggested some profitable avenues of investigation. Also to Wil Reding of Kalamazoo, Michigan who with his wife Sarah Reding retraced the thousand-mile walk route on 5 May to 25 June 2006, suggested improvements to a late draft of this article.

ENDNOTES

1. Digitized images of Muir’s notebooks are available through http://library.pacific.edu/ha/digital/muirjournals/muirjournals.asp See journal number 1, images 9 through 13.
10. George Woolworth Colton’s 1869 Map of Kentucky and Tennessee (scale 1:1,584,000) is available through http://alabamamaps.ua.edu/historicalmaps/us_states/kentucky/index.html It shows a road running from Montgomery, Tennessee to Kingston, Tennessee, along the west bank of the Emory River. The road shown on this map supposedly crossed Obed’s River just before that river joins with Emery’s River. Modern names for these rivers are Obed River and Emory River. Modern maps show that this supposed road would have to descend a 400-foot cliff to reach the Obed and then immediately ascend a 400-foot cliff on the other side.
11. Colton’s map also shows Clear Creek emptying into the Obed upstream of Daddy’s Creek, whereas modern maps show that the reverse is correct. No other map of that era shows this road.
12. A.J. Johnson’s 1866 Map of Kentucky and Tennessee (scale 1:1,521,000) is available at the same web site listed in note #9. It shows a road direct from Kingston, Tennessee to Madisonville, Tennessee.
http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g4351s.cs0216800

“"The geographical route Muir took is no longer particularly wild, leafy, or untrodden."
Schrankia,  
(sensitive briar)  
One of the plants mentioned by Muir  
kansasnativeplantsociety.org

15. N. Michler, “Map of Middle and East Tennessee,” 1862, scale 1:235,000. Available through http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3962t.cws00162
28. About 25 miles in Kentucky and 10 miles in Tennessee, to the base of the plateau at Pall Mall.
30. Although most of A Thousand-Mile Walk to The Gulf is a journal, written as the walk proceeds, some parts are clearly anachronisms added long after the walk terminated. The entry for September 13, 1867 describes “seeking the way to Philadelphia (in Loudon County, Tennessee).” But in fact Loudon County was not established until 1870. The entry for October 3, 1867 describes Mr. Cameron’s Vision for a future in which “electricity will do the work of the world,” and then remarks that “nearly all that he foresaw has been accomplished.” These anachronisms are pre-sent in the 1916 published book but not in the source journal (described in note #1). It is not clear whether they were added by Muir or by editor William Frederic Badé, but in either case they were added long after the fact, when memory had undoubtedly faded.
32. The microfilm for this census has been electronically scanned by HeritageQuest Online and is available through http://www.HeritageQuestOnline.com
35.”John Muir’s Crossing of the Cumberland” op. cit.  

“began the ascent of the Cumberland Mountains, the first real mountains that my foot ever touched or eyes beheld . . . The glorious forest road of Kentucky was grandly seen, stretching over hill and valley, adjusted to every slope and curve by the hands of Nature — the most sublime and comprehensive picture that ever entered my eyes.”
John Muir: Naturalist & Scientist Symposium held at Pacific, April 23-24, 2010

This past spring, Muir Center hosted the fifty-eighth California History Institute from April 23 through 24. Co-sponsored by the University Library and others, this gathering was special in that it was one of several “Inaugural Series Events” in honor of Pacific’s twenty-fourth president, Pamela A. Eibeck, who became leader of the institution in 2009.

Attended by over three hundred, including Muir-Hanna family members and many Muir specialists, Dr. Bonnie J. Gisel opened the symposium with her “Essay on John Muir’s Phenomenal Science,” an overview of what was available to Muir and the people in science who were his greatest influences and mentors. A botanical session followed with presentations by Dean Taylor, botanist of Yosemite and the Jepson Herbaria on “The Flora of Yosemite: What Muir Didn’t Know; What We Don’t Know.” Pacific Archivist Michael Wurtz shared “Muir and the Big Trees of Calaveras” prior to a luncheon keynote by Dr. Richard Beidleman, Professor Emeritus, Colorado College, on “Icons in the Life of John Muir.”

The afternoon session informed all of Muir’s glacier research in Yosemite by NPS geologist Greg Stock and summaries of student research at Pacific by undergraduates in “John Muir’s World.” Prior to a book signing and reception featuring Muir-Hanna Winery of Napa, Kentuckian Dick Shore (a Pacific alumnus and retired zoologist) shared “Muir through the eyes of a sometimes scientist” with a dramatic first-person interpretation of Muir-the-scientist.


Officers in Pacific’s division of Student Life shared what is going on at Pacific to promote environmental stewardship in the unique freshman program, M.O.V.E. (Mountain, Ocean, Valley Experience) and in a new effort across campus to promote environmental sustainability.

Royal Robbins, a pioneer in mountain climbing and well known for his outdoor clothing brand, reminisced about climbing in Yosemite and credited John Muir with many “firsts” as well as many philosophies held dear by mountaineers since Muir’s time. Barbara Mossberg, President Emerita of Goddard College and Director of Integrated Studies at California State University, Monterey Bay, wrapped up the symposium with reflections on Muir and his “Spirit of Joy.”

All gathered after in the University Library for the unveiling of photographer Stephen Joseph’s panoramic view of Muir Woods, which graces the wall on the second floor, a spectacular vista as if flying through the woods as a bird might see the trees.

The symposium concluded with a commitment to return to John Muir’s life and legacy in 2014, the 100th anniversary of his death.
John Muir Highway Dedication

On June 5, 2010, around three hundred dedicated John Muir enthusiasts gathered in Coulterville to launch California’s newest historic highway. Named for John Muir, twenty-eight miles of Highway 132 from Coulterville east to where it merges with Highway 120 now comprise Mariposa County’s John Muir Highway. Only miles from the north entrance to Yosemite National Park, Muir followed what is now Highway 132 on his second journey to Yosemite in 1869. Coulterville has not changed a great deal since Muir’s time and remains a small village where tourists join local residents at historic buildings still standing since the nineteenth century. Species of pine, especially yellow and sugar, permeate the air today as in Muir’s time when he stopped at Greeley Mill, noting “the fragrance of the sugary sap is delicious and scents the mill.”

The result of combined efforts of local conservationists and promoters of sustainable agriculture and geotourism, John Muir Highway was the idea of Ken and Teri Pulvino, who caretake land along Greeley Hill Road (132) and operate Birders Homestead, a bed and breakfast in the midst of habitat once celebrated by Muir and home to many species of trees, birds, vernal pools and native grasses. A parade and pageant were part of the gathering, which brought together several of Muir’s Hanna family descendants, actor Lee Stetson, and Santa Cruz-based bookbinders and artists, Peter and Donna Thomas, who followed Muir’s route to Yosemite from San Francisco in 2007. A picnic lunch was sponsored by the Pulvinos on their property, believed to be one of Muir’s stops for observations of nature, known to all who have read My First Summer in the Sierra.

“Relive Muir’s experiences chronicled in his journal ‘My First Summer in the Sierra,’ by following his 1868 and 1869 route as he saw it.”

www.johnmuirhighway.net/index.html
You are invited to celebrate the opening of

Nature’s Beloved Son
Rediscovering John Muir’s Botanical Legacy
Curated by Bonnie J. Gisel
Photographs by Stephen J. Joseph

Thursday, January 13, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.
Bedford Gallery at the Lesher Center for the Arts, 1601 Civic Dr., Walnut Creek

Enjoy wine and hors d’oeuvres provided by the Bedford Gallery Guild.
$5 general admission, free for Friends of the Bedford.

John Muir was a botanist throughout his life and his fondness for the nature and beauty of plants contributed significantly to his understanding of the need to preserve wilderness. Yet this aspect of the well-known conservationist’s passions is little known. In the spirit which John Muir embraced the botanical world, the traveling exhibition, which is based on the Heyday book with the same title, Nature’s Beloved Son: Rediscovering John Muir’s Botanical Legacy traces Muir’s travels to Canada, Indiana, the American southeast, California, and Alaska, and presents vivid images and specimens of the actual plants that Muir held in his hands, carried in his pockets, and preserved for all time.

The exhibit will run from January 9 through March 27, 2011. For more information, please visit The Bedford Gallery at
http://www.bedfordgallery.org/current.htm

New Juan Bautista/ De Anza NHT Exhibit at John Muir National Historic Site
September 25 marked the unveiling of the first full-scale Anza Trail Exhibit in Martinez, California! This multi-sensory experience engages visitors through evocative images and interactive displays. Grand opening festivities included fun family activities, live music and dance, and a celebration of the diversity of people whose lives were changed by the Anza Expedition. For more information call (925) 228-8860.

Michael Branch writes High Country News blog essays
Muir scholar Michael Branch recently began writing a monthly blog essay called Rants from the Hill for High Country News. These short essays are posted mid-month and concern life in the high country of Nevada’s western Great Basin desert. The first of these essays “Greetings from Nevada” can be found at http://www.hcn.org/blogs/range/greetings-from-nevada-1-july-2010?src=mc

Yosemite Conservancy and the 35th Annual Fall Gathering
Yosemite Conservancy is the new nonprofit formed by a merger of the Yosemite Association and the Yosemite Fund. The Conservancy has a long history in Yosemite with over 100 years of combined experience supporting the park. Yosemite Conservancy can make a difference in what one sees in the park because they are the only philanthropic organization that is dedicated exclusively to Yosemite. The Yosemite Conservancy has funded over 300 projects through $55 million in grants to help preserve and protect the park. The work of the Conservancy can be found in every aspect of the visitor experience from trail restoration, bear-proof lockers and canisters, habitat restoration, outdoor education and so much more. Annually the Yosemite Conservancy recruits over 400 volunteers to work in the park to repair trails, remove invasive species and provide visitor information. At the 35th Annual Fall Gathering on October 2 at Wawona, Yosemite Conservancy donated $5.9 million to Yosemite. Superintendent Neubacher accepted on behalf of Yosemite National Park Service and celebrated with supporters. For more information on the Conservancy, visit park bookstores or check out their new website at www.yosemiteconservancy.org

Superintendent Neubacher accepting $5.9 million check from Yosemite Conservancy at October 2, 2010 Fall Gathering
The John Muir Center promotes the study of John Muir and environmentalism at the University of the Pacific and beyond.

Center Objectives

As one of California's most important historical figures, John Muir (1838-1914) was a regional naturalist with global impact. His papers, housed in the library's Holt-Atherton Special Collections, are among the University's most important resources for scholarly research.

Recognizing the need both to encourage greater utilization of the John Muir Papers by the scholarly community, and the need to promote the study of California and its impact upon the global community, the John Muir Center was established in 1989 with the following objectives:

- To foster a closer academic relationship between Pacific and the larger community of scholars, students and citizens interested in regional and environmental studies.
- To provide greater opportunities for research and publication by Pacific faculty and students.
- To offer opportunities for out-of-classroom learning experiences.
- To promote multi-disciplinary curricular development.