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Crossing the Panama Isthmus, March 1868

By Stephanie LeMenager
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Introduction

John Muir’s second notebook, Crossing the Panama Isthmus, treats Muir’s journey of March, 1868, from New York City to California. This would be the journey that brought Muir to his most beloved country, the high Sierras, and to his ultimate home on the United States’ West Coast. Muir, still weak from the malarial fever that had overtaken him in Florida the previous year, traveled from New York to Aspinwall, now Colón, in what he indicated were “savage” conditions in steerage on the ship Nebraska. In Panama, he purchased a second-class railroad ticket across the isthmus and gaped from the car-platform at “great forest trees, glowing in purple, red, and yellow flowers.” The notes that Muir made of these travels suggest both the associative, elliptical thinking of a fevered dream and the inconvenience of his traveling conditions. The Panama notebook is fragmentary and almost illegible; it has been largely ignored by scholars. This represents the first publication of its transcription. Yet the notebook is well worth reading. It contains some of Muir’s most lyrical writing, extending the ecstatic prose with which he described “the unsullied country” of the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Ocean in his first notebook, now published as A Thousand-Mile Walk to the Gulf. Readers of that volume will recall that it concludes with Muir’s sea voyage from Cuba to New York, where he would purchase his passage, through Panama, to California.

In the Panama notebook, Muir makes allusion to the devastated post-Civil War landscapes of the U.S. South, revisiting some of the concerns that dogged the Thousand-Mile Walk. Here he elaborates a tension between what he recognizes as the eternal changefulness of Nature, where death indicates regeneration, and the cumulative “dirt” of history. He considers whether the soiling through poverty and disease of the “human face divine” can be incorporated into a concept of Nature as the infinite iteration of God’s love. Curiously, the Panamanian isthmus, which appeared to many North American travelers as a sink of poverty and disease, strikes Muir as cleaner, both literally and historically, than the U.S. South. Muir’s brief comments upon the “brown” population of Panama evince a belief in the Edenic abundance of this tropical America that betrays his innocence of dire living and working conditions on the isthmus. The very railroad from which Muir enjoyed glimpses of Panamanian flora had brought thousands of migrant laborers to Panama, many of whom died while building the road and many others who would form a permanent, largely “colored,” underclass. What we see in Crossing the Panama Isthmus is a brilliant, poetic mind searching the seas and the luxuriant growth of the Central American forest for an alternative to imperfect, irreversible human endeavors. That Muir could so beauti-

(continued on page 4)
Exploring John Muir’s Legacy Through Photography and Film

On April 13, around 150 gathered in Pacific’s Janet Leigh Theatre for a special program celebrating Muir and his legacy. Photographer Scot Miller of Fort Worth discussed the many backcountry trips he took retracing Muir’s route that led to his book, My First Summer in the Sierra, published in 1911. The centennial edition, published by Houghton-Mifflin, Muir’s original press, features Miller’s photographs in the Sierra. Miller also shared a video of his trips in the Sierra with fellow professional photographers and videographers.

Emmy-award-winning film maker Catherine Tatge of New York explained the evolution of grant-writing and production of “John Muir in the New World,” a ninety-minute documentary and the most extensive film to date on Muir in North America. Funded primarily by the National Endowment for the Humanities, with many other partners, the script was written by Leslie Clark, who visited Pacific several times in the past three years. Interviews with Muir scholars of note included Donald Worster, Roderick Nash, and Bonnie J. Gisel, as well as other interpreters of the American environmental experience including Aaron Sachs, Char Miller, Patricia Limerick, Catherine Albanese, Kevin Starr, Gary Snyder, Paul Sutter, and Muir Center’s own Bill Swagerty.

Shown nationally on PBS’s “American Masters” on April 18, “John Muir in the New World” is now available for purchase as a DVD through PBS. Those who missed the original airing are encouraged to acquire for libraries and home use.

The Oakland Museum of California Presents
A Walk in the Wild: Continuing John Muir’s Journey
August 6, 2011—January 22, 2012

Explore the legacy of John Muir’s life and how he continues to influence our relationship with the natural world in this special exhibition presenting both a historical and a contemporary lens on the natural environment of California. Spotlighting the life of the radical environmentalist as well as eight Modern Day Muirs, A Walk in the Wild: Continuing John Muir’s Journey highlights Californians currently involved in environmental research and activism — including a Yosemite National Park geologist, a big-horn-sheep biologist, and an Oakland tree-planter/activist. Through interactive, multisensory displays and digital mash-ups, visitors will experience a simulation of Muir’s exploration behind Yosemite Falls, his trek from Yosemite to Mount Whitney, and even his night spent in a hollow giant sequoia observing the forest burning around him. Told through OMCA’s collections of art, history, and natural science, interactive digital technology, and select loans — journals, manuscripts, and original drawings — the exhibition is a tribute to Muir’s legacy and to the importance of continued environmental stewardship.

The exhibition, which is organized by guest curator Dorris Welch, is possibly the largest museum exhibit on John Muir that has been undertaken, and both original materials and reproductions of documents from the John Muir Papers will be featured in this exhibit. For more information, visit http://museumca.org/exhibit/awalk-wild-continuing-john-muir’s-journey or call the museum at (510)238-2200. The museum is located at 1000 Oak Street, Oakland, CA.
Muir’s Yosemite Earthquake

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

The University of the Pacific had the opportunity to host the premiere of John Muir in the New World on April 13 (The DVD is available for sale, or one can watch it online at http://video.pbs.org/video/1883108297). The film is illustrated with Muir’s journals, drawings, and photographs from the John Muir Papers at Pacific. Toward the end of the film, there is a flash of a newspaper article by John Muir called “King of Outdoors Tells of a Wonderful Earthquake in Yosemite.” A viewer contacted us about this article and I quickly became interested in the story of the quake.

The first stop was William and Maymie Kimes’ John Muir: A Reading Bibliography. There were few earthquake entries in the index and I eventually found the April 1901 San Francisco Sunday Examiner Magazine that was used in the film.

According to the article, Muir had been awakened by the quake at “about 2 o’clock” in the morning on a winter night and jumped at the chance to understand how earthquakes helped to create Yosemite’s landscape. He stepped outside and briefly took refuge behind a tree hoping to avoid rocks that were tumbling off the cliffs. He eventually “sauntered about” exploring the damage and talking to the people who lived in the valley. The Native-Americans feared the “angry spirits of the rocks were trying to kill them” and the guests at the Hutchings Hotel were also quite frightened. Muir joked with one guest, who believed that the valley had been created by a cataclysmic downward thrust, that the “tumble-down-and-engulfment hypothesis” might soon be proven. The earth continued to shake from time to time over the next couple of months and Muir studied each aftershock carefully.

There was no indication in the Examiner article as to when the earthquake occurred so back to Kimes I went to understand the provenance of this story. Kimes notes that the Examiner article (#233 in the bibliography) is a reprint of an April 1901 Atlantic Magazine article (#232) and that particular account was taken from the first time the story was published in 1872 by Samuel Kneeland in The Wonders of the Yosemite Valley and of California 2nd or 3rd edition (#4). This entry indicates that Kneeland quoted Muir extensively, but without credit. Kneeland writes, “the following information has been communicated to a friend by a gentleman who has passed the winter there.” Eventually, Muir published his own account in the New York Daily Tribune on July 11, 1872 (Kimes #13A).

I wondered about unpublished accounts of the quake. Although there appears to be no journal from 1872, I

found a Muir notebook dated from the mid 1880s called “Vol 1 Yosemite, etc” (Reel 31 Frame 00643) that includes a story called “Earthquake Yo.” The description of the 1872 earthquake under a full moon goes on for over 10 pages and probably became the template for other published accounts including his published 1901 Our National Parks (page 262).

Lastly, I searched the online collection of correspondence to see when Muir first mentioned this quake by letter. There are over 60 correspondences that mention the word “earthquake.” Too many to search individually, I ended my hunt there until Special Collections assistant Trish Richards told me of a letter that Muir had written to Ralph Waldo Emerson the same day of the Yosemite quake on March 26, 1872. Sure enough, this is Muir’s earliest account of what was to become known as the 1872 Lone Pine Earthquake. He concludes the letter with, “I wish you were here this night to be trotted & dumped on this mountain knee.”

As with most of Muir’s writings his earthquake story starts in a letter (or journal entry), eventually appears in a notebook, and finally gets repackaged over and over in many articles and books.

This 1901 article about Muir’s first earthquake in Yosemite appeared briefly in the recent documentary about John Muir. The story is typical in that it has been republished in many places. The first account of Muir’s experiencing the quake appeared in a letter in the spring of 1872.
fully articulate the Nature idea while sick and traveling within the very vessels of nineteenth-century social inequities, in steerage and aboard the infamous Panamanian road, testifies to the potency of Nature as a foil to the discontents of historical imagination.

Editor’s Note: This version of Muir’s second notebook, Crossing the Panama Isthmus, March 1868, is based on a transcription I made from the original in the John Muir Papers, in the Holt-Atherton Special Collections Department at the University of the Pacific Library. The copyright (1984) is held by the Muir-Hanna Trust. I include here all words which Muir did not cross out or write over in the original notebook. Wherever Muir indicated alternatives among words or phrases in a given line, I interpret the words written over the line in question as Muir’s final intention. Wherever possible, abbreviated words or partial words at the ends of lines have been restored to reflect Muir’s probable intent; in cases of uncertainty, I place these restored words in brackets. Punctuation marks in brackets represent editorial additions to reflect non-standard expressive features in the original notebook, such as spaces, and to promote clarity of expression. Articles, prepositions, and pronouns in brackets represent editorial additions. Interested scholars will find my complete version of the transcription, with Muir’s deletions and abbreviations, in the John Muir Papers. Thanks are due to Elizabeth Witherell, Editor-in-Chief of The Writings of Henry D. Thoreau, for consultation in regard to formatting the notebook for publication and archival use.

Earth clad in Medicine Mines of Musca 3
Starry Waves

If we inhabited the bottom of the sea[,] ocean atmosphere[,] foams of wavetops [would] be clouds of the water-sky[,] and their shadows fishes[,] birds brilliant and elegant as they[.] Unlike the birds of air[,] their path is lighted and marked with stars[.]

“These are thy toys,” a mistake,—grand ocean infinitely above noticing each minute artificial speck, rills and river are grave as sea[,] Waves in loudest storm speak no defiance[.] Water of [the] Bahama banks [the] most beautiful ever beheld[,] most spiritual, ethereal—did not seem capable of sustaining more than the air but the black deep waters of the open sea with their hollows and valleys and heaped up hills of wave on waves are so firm and field-like that one is

There are only two known photographs of John Muir before he left the eastern United States. This one is probably the first taken of Muir after crossing the Isthmus in 1868. It was most likely taken in the mid 1870s, long after he had established himself in California.

often inclined to step from the vessel rail to walk among them[,] If the storm waves of Galilee were at all like these[,] Peter’s faith was small indeed[,] 

“The deep mysterious gardens of the hot South seem to be made and kept in beauty and order for other eyes than those of man[,] He is fenced out by wild beasts and pestilence and countless gatherings of armed plants[,] I suppose man would have been permitted to inhabit the sea if he could do so without spoiling it[,] He has not marked the sea and done but little to the land[,] which would soon be effaced on his departure from it[,] Ruins of a town[,] Ruins of a plant, a hill, a wave[,] All is changeful—the hills and vales of ocean rise and fall and go from place to place and so do those of the land and of the ocean bottom[,] The difference is caused by time and to those beings who are not held by time[,] land[,] waves[,] rise and fall fast as those of the water. Plants are not a covering or mantle[,] No part of our world needs to be hidden. All is perfectly beauti-

ful[,] Change and death is not plainly written over trees of the South[,] Like the inhabitants of a city[,] the leaves of tropical trees die unnoticed one by one at any time without causing visible change. 

The glory of God is everywhere[,] How could Moses make the request, “Show me thy Glory” [...] 

“Dismal Swamp” [...] No such place in nature[,] Swamps are peopled with plants of the purest beauty and glow in their darkest chambers with the presence of God. Dismal swamps can be found only in the wide desolate wastes of human hearts[,] The ox stepping on ants[,] [the] sea is not cruel[,] winter never “rages,” sees not its victims. As in sailing over the great ocean we see only a little of its surface and in going in the forests and prairies[,] we see only the surface[,] Thus in the sea there are shallow places and places of clear water[,] and so also there are clear and shallow places in the great deep oceans of plants[,] We measure the sea by fathoms and
miles[,] so we measure the great unknown sea of plants and the arithmetical statement of their zones and latitudes is about all we can give[.] By waiting at the shallows and the shores[,] we glean great truths[,] So with plants [,] We have reward in the most glorious views of the Divine mind[,] We gain but a few drops from the ocean of any science[,] but the drops are great to finite minds.

Flowers[,], though differing from each other[,] are still alike[,] The creator’s typical flower is everywhere more or less visible. So the sea surface is like the earth surface and perhaps the seas of heat and light and air are hilly and wavy[,] and so there may exist an ideal form in different portions of the physical and mental world[,] as there is in the plant and animal Kingdoms.

12,000 acres roses at Adrianople[,] for altar

Water of Pacific Coast mostly blackish but everywhere glowing with light[,] by night and day richest reflected light near Panama I ever saw. Rich masses are mirrored from the larger wave slopes[,] and in seasons of increasing winds all are overspread with a loose veil set with innumerable diamonds[.] The phosphoric light of [the] sea differs in amount and appearance at different times and places[,] The greater the storm agitation[,] the more generous disclosures of light[,] The larger waves are the more grandly lighted[,] Upon every foam-capped wave is massed a heavenly treasure of starry light[,] Some places the light is composed mostly of stars of different size[,] some places of smooth equal light as if the water itself was wholly changed to light[,] and in some places of larger masses one-to-ten feet in diameter which glow and flash with a tremulous motion like lightning, or increase slowly in intensity and gradually wane like the spark of a glow worm[,] The paths of fishes are brilliant[,] so those of ships in storm.

Crossing the Panama isthmus we find but little of swamp and none at all of level meadow[,] but hemispherical knobby hills rise singly and in heaps[,] increasing in size and complexity of grouping as we approach the Pacific. Of the myriad plant existences of these luxurious fields of tropical light[,] the Palms excel in open majesty and rise above each on the hill slopes in lordly array[,] but many of their fellows are truly magnificent[,] flaming with the most gorgeous flowers that chain the eye with almost equal power[,] And myriads of smaller beings by sheltered stream banks and covered in shade throb with equal beauty and equal joy.

Banana flower [is] yellowish, monopetal[,] small flowers of milky plant of [snow] hill small yellow[,] fruit black when ripe, edible; fields of luxurious ferns...Panama[,] C.A.

I do not think that the poor of any other country are half so successful in [their] efforts for
cleanliness[,] Man [the] only dirty creature that
God made[,] All other creatures like creation[,] making one beautiful whole and fit into places
smoothly[,] etc[,] as stones of [a] temple[,] As
civilization advances Dirt[,] like most other
things[,] becomes more complicated[,] Some
philosopher has said "Show me tools of peo­
ple[,] etc[,] and I will[...] I say "Show me dirts
and compounds[,]"

Those dirt formations of slow and difficult
deposit are most hideous when joined with dis­
ease upon the human face divine[,] I saw the
most perfect specimen of these dirts upon the
person of a sickly Floridian[,] Her filth enveloped
[.] fitted exactly[,] It did not touch her face but
loomed up mysteriously as land often does over
sea[,] All species of dirt swarm in legions about
the grander dwellings of the South[,] Like their
plants[,] all kinds grow with tropical luxuriance
as from the most elementary rinds and slushes
to the (tropics of dirt) most unexplainable[,] un­
fathomable corruptions that stretch far and
wide in layers[,] liquids[,] and atmospheres in[,] on[,] and about them forever[,] Dirt living and
dead[,] All of humans’ bodies[,] it is said[,] last but
some years[,] Many dirts are of longer growth
and life[,] Dirt marks the presence of the lords
of creation[,] Negroes of Panama [are] much superior to
[those] of North America in form and cleanli­
ness[,] They] are dressed in white clothes which
are clean and elegantly loose[,] Simple and natu­
ral in habits and enjoy more than [the] artificially
refined[,] Their open cane sheds are among ba­
nanas and palms[,] and whatever be their suffer­
ings[,] they are exempt from [the] pain and deg­
ration of want[,] Females have] musical voices
and nearly handsome children[,] naked[,] Saw
small boy standing with smaller in arms.
Twain coffee browns (one flesh) elegantly[,] grace­fully balanced[...] on one pair of legs and
the twain seemed to be one flesh[,]"
Portions of William T. Hornaday Library added to Pacific’s Holt-Atherton Special Collections

By W.R. Swagerty
Director, John Muir Center
University of the Pacific

Around fifty books from William T. Hornaday’s personal library have been added to Pacific’s library. Donated by retired microbiologist Dr. David Pierce of Moscow, Idaho, most of the books are presentation-copies to Hornaday from fellow naturalists and enthusiasts of the outdoors. Many have special inscriptions and a few have letters attached. Hornaday (1854-1937) was an Indianan by birth who attended Iowa State University, subsequently becoming world-renowned as a collector of natural history specimens and a champion of wildlife protection. In 1880 he founded the National Society of American Taxidermists and was named Chief Taxidermist of the National Museum (Smithsonian Institution), a position he held until 1890. While collecting for the museum, Hornaday alerted all to the near-extinction of the American bison. His report (1889) helped secure protection for bison in Yellowstone and elsewhere.

Hornaday revolutionized how museums displayed wildlife exhibits. Instead of merely mounting stuffed animals on boards, Hornaday created life-like three-dimensional habitats with animals mounted in their natural settings. This led to an interest in live zoological exhibits and the creation of the National Zoological Garden in Washington, D.C., as well as living animal exhibits at the New York Zoological Garden (The Bronx Zoo), where he served as Director from 1896 to 1926.

Like Theodore Roosevelt and many other Progressive Era conservationists, Hornaday was both wildlife enthusiast and big game hunter. In fact his early dedication to hunting led him into taxidermy and into “museology,” as he called the science of creating museum exhibits. And like Roosevelt, Hornaday was zealous in his crusades. As biographer Peter Wild has put it, “Hornaday made an eighty-three-year career of bragging.” Those who disagreed with him “were prey to be hunted down, cornered, and verbally cut to pieces with the ruthlessness of one who perceives himself as the hero of a sacred war.”

In his study, An American Crusade for Wildlife, James B. Trefethen agrees with Wild on Hornaday’s tactics, but reaches a slightly different conclusion:

Hornaday’s appearance, commanding personality, and caustic statements endeared him to the press, and he received more publicity than any other conservationist of his time. Moreover, his controversial statements and his national reputation as a crusader brought his prolific writings ready acceptance in editorial circles.

His path and that of Muir took very different routes, but both intersected on the importance of wildlife preservation. And both traveled the world; Muir on a personal crusade to see the largest trees on earth and to compare geological features; Hornaday to collect specimens—dead and alive—for his habitat exhibits and for live animal zoos. These field trips, beginning in 1874, led to a wealth of knowledge of the rapid depletion of wildlife around the world, some of it by his own gun in the interest of “science.” Despite the irony of such acts, Hornaday was instrumental in helping to curb the commercial slaughter of many species, especially in the United States and Canada. These include Alaska’s fur seals, as well as many wetland waterfowl, whose feathers were prized in the millinery industry.

In 1910 he founded the The Permanent Wild Life Protection Fund, raising over $100,000 to endow it and attracting such donors as Henry Ford, George Eastman, and Andrew Carnegie. With this fund, Hornaday alerted the public to market hunters and sportsmen alike who he labeled “game hogs,” leading the effort in passage of state and federal regulations that established the main outlines of American wildlife laws in the first two decades of the twentieth century. These include the Lacey Act of 1900, the first federal wildlife law in the United States, which declared it a criminal act to engage in the interstate commerce of “dead bodies or parts

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thereof of any wild animals or birds” taken or possessed in violation of state law;³ The Treaty for the Preservation and Protection of Fur Seals;⁴ the Weeks-McLean Migratory Bird Act,⁵ and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918,⁶ among others.

Hornaday also helped to found the American Bison Society in 1905 and served as its president from 1907-1910 and was an early promoter of outdoor recreation for youth through the Camp Fire Club and the Boy Scouts of America. Unlike Muir, there is no major biography of Hornaday, whose militant and uncompromising stance on many issues alienated those around him.⁷ Peter Wild contextualizes Hornaday thus: “Some times call for a cantankerous personality such as Hornaday’s to raise the more disagreeable questions—and to insist that they be addressed—an extremist who can stir up the public. Whatever may be said of the campaigner’s excesses, he produced results when reforms were badly needed.”⁹

Among the many Hornaday titles that continue to be of use to environmental historians and natural scientists, the following stand out:

The Minds and Manners of Wild Animals (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1922).
Wild Animal Interviews and Wild Opinions of Us (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1928).
Thirty Years War for Wild Life: Gains and Losses in the Thankless Task (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1931).

With this new addition to the University of the Pacific, students and the public will have a valuable new resource for topics overlapping the interests and wildlife agendas championed by John Muir.

ENDNOTES

With this new addition to the University of the Pacific, students and the public will have a valuable new resource for topics overlapping the interests and wildlife agendas championed by John Muir.
Obituary
Daisy Hawryluk
By Graham White

Florence Daisy Hawryluk, née Waller,
Died: 31 January, 2011 in Dunbar, aged 86.

Daisy Hawryluk, the long-time owner of John Muir’s Birthplace, passed away in her Dunbar home, at the age of 83 on Monday, January 31st 2011. She was brought-up in 1930s Edinburgh and was raised among the Irish and Italian immigrants of Leith, Edinburgh’s sea-port. A self-made entrepreneur she was by turns: wartime ambulance driver, post-war nurse, fishwife, fish-shop-owner, antiques-trader, restaurateur and photography shop owner. Daisy’s father was an Edinburgh grocer who supplied food to prisoner of war camps in East Lothian, where in 1948 she met Wasyl Hawryluk, a Ukrainian P.O.W. They were married in St Paul’s Episcopal Church, Edinburgh and the marriage produced four daughters: Hilda, Jacqueline, Stefany and Hannah.

Daisy was the original conservator of John Muir’s historic birthplace in Dunbar, which she acquired in the early 1970s when the building was a dry-cleaning business. She and Wasyl planned to convert the three storey property into an upmarket fish and chip café - but Frank Tindall, the County Planner for East Lothian, advised that this was not the best use for such an historic building, which had just been identified as the birthplace of John Muir. Ironically, Daisy already shared Tindall’s passion for the life of John Muir; she had been taught about him by Miss Hannah Johnston, at Edinburgh’s London Street School in 1935. She soon agreed to Frank Tindall’s plan to preserve the birthplace with the support of East Lothian Council. The top floor was conserved as the Muir family’s apartment, where John Muir had been born. Many original features from Muir’s time were faithfully conserved: the fireplace, the window casements and stonework, the wooden plank ceiling. The middle floor was converted as an apartment for rent and the ground floor was rebuilt as a photography studio and shop for Stefany Hawryluk, Daisy’s daughter.

Daisy used her knowledge of the antiques trade to purchase furniture, chattels and bedding, authentic to the period, for the birthplace-museum; she did this entirely at her own expense. She and Wasyl helped Alec Ainsley, the Athelstaneford blacksmith, to drag a cast-iron fire range, weighing a quarter of a ton, up two flights of stone stairs to install in the top floor apartment. She furnished the rooms with beds, mahogany dressers, a ‘hope chest’, crockery and cooking pans, smoothing irons, npery, linen, cutlery, a great family bible and a tin bath. These were not the Muir family’s real possessions, but they gave an authentic air to the birthplace and delighted visitors.

Daisy served as unpaid conservator and guide to the Muir birthplace for almost 20 years. Often, when a teacher arrived with a group of children, she would drop what she was doing in the photography shop to guide them around the birthplace. When children climbed the stairs to her Victorian time-machine they were whisked back to the days of: coal-fired ranges, smoothing-irons, brass bed-warmer and stone hot water bottles; porcelain chamber pots, cut-throat razors, oil lamps and wooden porridge bowls. She made them imagine the horrors of a barefoot trip to the outside-toilet, clutching a candle on a wet and windy night; she asked them to walk in the shoes of the poor servant-girl, hauling many buckets of water each day, up two flights of stairs, from the Dunbar-pump, a hundred yards away. She thrilled them with stories of John Muir scrambling out onto the lofty pantiled roof, nightshirt billowing in the wind. They cringed at the story of young John being scourged with a scrubbing brush in the cold, salty pools of Dunbar’s shore. They squealed at the stories of the Edinburgh body-snatchers; the ‘Dandy Doctors’ of John Muir’s nightmares, who snatched children from the street, stifling their screams with sticking plaster, before cutting them up in Edinburgh’s medical school. This was genuine ‘environmental education’: children could handle authentic period artefacts, in an 18th Century house, filled with furniture of the time and mysterious objects, each trailing its own historical tale.

Children would inevitably ask: ‘Why is there no toilet? Where are the bathroom and water faucets? Did they have central-heating and electric lights? Where is the phone?’

They soon realised that this Victorian home had no: radio, television, computers, hi-fi or telephones; it was lit only by candles and oil lamps; just one coal fire heated the kitchen and the freezing bedrooms were unheated – at 56 degrees North; the Muir family rose and went to bed with the Sun. Daisy explained how cholera, diphtheria and the ‘white plague’ of tuberculosis, ravaged Dunbar each winter and how the Parish kirkyard, was filled with the graves of hundreds of children from John Muir’s time, because they had no vaccinations, no antibiotics, no x rays, no national health service in 1840.

She told them the story of this ordinary Dunbar boy, just like themselves, who sailed away to America in 1849, to a life filled with mountain adventures and bright achievements; who became a great author and advocate for conservation, and ‘The Father of the National Parks’. She explained how much of what we now call ‘Conservation’, started right here, in this cramped Dunbar apartment by Scotland’s stormy North Sea.

As children staggered back down into the bright sunshine and breezes of Dunbar’s High Street, they were released from the gloomy dungeon of 19th Century Calvinism into the light of the modern age; they would run laughing down to the harbour to enjoy the fishing boats, the grey seals and the cries of the kitiwakes, with the same sense of joy and release that young John expressed in 1848. If time allowed their teacher might take them further West to the mile-long sweep of Belhaven Bay with its silver sands and turquoise waters, to hunt for crabs and limpets in the rock pools, and to watch the gannets, terns and eider-ducks plunging into the waves, exactly as John Muir describes.

The feedback from teachers was always the same: their trip to Dunbar and their encounter with Daisy in the Muir birthplace, had been one of the best educational trips that their pupils had experienced.

For fifteen years or more, Daisy served as unofficial, unpaid ‘Muir ambassador’ for Scotland, Dunbar and the Muir birthplace - welcoming hundreds of Americans, who
had often travelled 12,000 miles from California on their green pilgrimage. One morning in the late 1970s as she unlocked the door, she discovered an eminent Japanese Professor of Conservation, kneeling on the sidewalk, reciting Buddhist Sutras. He told her he was giving thanks for the life of the 'Great Soul', John Muir, whose conservation-ethos and writings had inspired his own life's work, and his biography of Muir. This was almost certainly Ryozo Azuma – (1879-1980), although no record was kept. He was welcomed by Daisy and given tea - and in faltering English, he explained that he wanted to make a gift to the people of Dunbar, as a small repayment of his debt to John Muir. Daisy alerted the town Council and a cheque was handed over - which enabled the creation of a 15 seat video-classroom, complete with a 36 inch television and a videotape player. The funding also enabled the Council to commission a superb Muir film documentary which educated children for many years.

Many visitors returned to America with vivid memories of a remarkable Scots-woman, who cared passionately about John Muir and his place in history.

Daisy played a second historic role in the saving of John Muir’s birthplace – by enabling the present public ownership of the building. In the late 1990s Daisy and Wasyl passed the house to their daughter Stefany, who at one point needed to sell the building, in order to provide a home for herself and her growing children. There was an urgent need to secure the Muir house, since, if it were sold and sub-divided as planned, it would never again come into public ownership. Neither East Lothian Council nor the John Muir Trust had funds to buy the house at that time- and it was difficult to impress upon them the extreme urgency of the situation.

In the end it was the direct intervention of thousands of members of the American Sierra Club, via email, which finally galvanised the Council and the JMT into action.

Nevertheless, it took the John Muir Trust and East Lothian Council more than a year to incorporate the Birthplace Trust and the Hawryluk family suffered a considerable penalty in holding off the sale of the house until such time as funds could be raised. Having helped to secure John Muir’s Birthplace for posterity and entrusted it to East Lothian Council and the Birthplace Trust, Daisy expressed her outrage when, secret plans to ‘develop’ the historic building were finally leaked in 2000.

Sadly the objections of: Daisy Hawryluk, the entire Muir family in America, the Scottish Civic Trust, The Scottish Architectural Heritage Society, dozens of learned academics, architects, hundreds of Dunbar residents and thousands of British and American conservationists, were completely ignored. The 18th Century house interior was completely destroyed and all three floors were replaced by an appalling, chrome and glass computer tower. It is arguably the greatest destruction of Scottish cultural heritage in recent decades; Daisy Hawryluk never set foot in the building again.

Daisy made a lifelong contribution to the civic life of Dunbar; she served as a Community Councillor for over 17 years and played a leading role in raising funds and helping to manage the Dunbar Sea Cadets for young people.

Above all, Daisy will be remembered as a great matriarch; a loving mother to her four daughters and a doting grandmother to her many grandchildren.

She was a great human being, larger than life, a true force of Nature, who seemed to have sprung from the pages of some epic tale by Charles Dickens; her wit and humour were legendary; any encounter was always memorable and she made ordinary mortals seem pale and characterless. To observe her morning progress along Dunbar’s High Street, was like watching a stately galleon moving through the smaller boats which clustered about her, eager to be filled with her cargo of news and gossip – which would be spread across the town, from harbour to kirk, within the hour.

Her laughter struck you with the force of an autumn gale; her kindness and compassion were doled out in ample measure to any in need; the lash of her moral contempt was reserved for: liars, thieves, drunkards and politicians, whose defects were sometimes combined in a single individual. There were no shades of grey in Daisy's ethical universe; her moral compass never wavered.

With Muir, she agreed that:

“The battle we have fought, and are still fighting . . is a part of the eternal conflict between right and wrong, and we cannot expect to see the end of it”

The forces of Evil were forever pitted against the Light - and Daisy left you in no doubt as to which side of the barricades you should be standing: you should be united, shoulder to shoulder with her and John Muir, defending the Light against the Darkness and the tender green world from the forces of destruction. Her Christian faith was profound and unfaltering as the waves of Dunbar, by whose stormy shores she spent most of her life, and from whose natural, God-given bounty she made her living.
THE JOHN MUIR CENTER

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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.

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