



1881-06-14

## Letter from [John Muir] to [Louie Strentzel Muir], 1881 Jun 14.

John Muir

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Plover Bay, Siberia.

June 14, 1881.

My beloved wife, The whaler Tom Pope came in to the bay & anchored to the edge of the ice alongside of us yesterday, much to our surprise. She has already taken in a full cargo of oil & is going to leave tomorrow or next day for San Francisco thus giving us a chance we little expected to send letters. & so I must make haste to tell you the main points of interest in our cruise thus far. After leaving St Paul Island we steered for St Matthews Island noted for polar bears, but next day we came up to the edge of the ice-pack & were compelled to steer far to the westward along the edge of the pack, & so near the Siberian coast that we sighted land after crossing Anadyr Gulph. While yet 70 miles off

rudder. It was snowing at the time & the thickness of the weather was the cause of the difficulty. However we promptly constructed a jury rudder out of some long spars by which we steered without any great danger out into open water, & made haste back out of the archipelago towards this good harbor to repair damages. ~~We were stopped & not~~ however before we had landed our search party with the dogs opposite Kolintchin Island. When within 25 miles of this harbor which is the best hereabouts we were again stopped by the Behring Sea pack & compelled to turn N. again & put into St Lawrence bay. In two days afterward we made another attempt to get into Plover Bay & were again baffled by the ice, when we steered for St Lawrence Island where we lay at anchor two days & then tried yet again & were successful.

from the shore I was delighted to discover clear traces of glaciation upon a beautiful group of mts near where we are at present. We first anchored at the SW end of St. Lawrence Island & traded with the natives of whom I have a thousand things to tell you, then we pushed on North through Behring Strait calling at the two diorades on the way & buying some 20 dogs to draw the sleds for the land party to be sent out. also at a little settlement at Marcus Bay <sup>where we got an interpreter</sup> not far from here & at St. Lawrence Bay <sup>& six dogs</sup> ~~where~~. We found the strait free of ice on the W. side & entering the polar ocean pushed W. along the Siberian coast about 150 miles W. of Cape Serdze when we were stopped by the pack & compelled to turn back. Shortly after midnight we got into the edge of the closing pack, & in breaking out of it were so unfortunate as to lose our

We reached here at midnight on the 11<sup>th</sup> & our rudder is already stronger than before it was broken. We are now taking on coal, & intend to leave on the 16<sup>th</sup> perhaps for St. Michael. Then pursue nearly as circumstances will admit, the course I have already given you. I have had an extremely interesting & profitable trip thus far & am growing fat & strong again. I am moreover extremely comfortable, & well used every way though I <sup>long to see my child & the</sup> months will soon pass by however & then how glad I will be when homeward bound & when every minute brings me nearer to you.

I found traces of both local & general glaciation all along the coast as far as I have been & also on the islands. You remember that I told you long ago how eager I was to get upon those islands in the middle of the Behring sea & strait to read the ice record there well I have already seen some of them & the grand truth is plain that a vast gl. swept down thru the strait & sea & no doubt excavated their basins created them. Before the gl. period the continents