



John Muir Correspondence (PDFs)

1885-09-09

Letter from [John Muir] to [Annie] Wanda [Muir], 1885 Sep 9/10.

John Muir

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At Grandma Muir's house
Portage City
Wisconsin
Sep 9th 1885.

My dear Wanda,

Every day since
papa went away, many times he
has wanted to see his own little girl,
because papa loves her so much,
and papa will soon be home &
then he will see his little girl
all the time & bring something
to her from Portage City, & Grandma
Muir walked down to Uncle David's
store today to buy something for you,
& gave it to me to take to you on the
cars, & papa will be careful not to
lose it. And Aunt Anna is going
to try to come to see you with papa

There is a pretty lake where papa
used to live when he was a little boy,
& pretty ducks & fishes swim about

in the lake, ² & beautiful lilies like
roses grow around the edges of
the lake, & violets & lilies & ferns
in a meadow, & blue flowers & some
pink ones & white ones, & papa
picked some for baby & mamma,
& you can show them to Grandma
& Grandpa. Papa hardly knew the
places when he used to live when
he was little like you because
somebody else lives there now, &
new houses have been built, &
fences, & the trees have been cut down,
& many little trees have grown up,
& the apple trees that papa planted
most all died last winter because
it was so frosty, although they were
so big & old, all but the crabapple
trees & the kind they call the Duchers
of Oldenburg, & you can tell Grandpa
that & show him this.

In Yosemite Valley the water falls down out of the sky, & in the Yellowstone Valley the water spouts up out of the ground into the sky, & the water is very hot & boils all the time without any body making a fire. & the water that spouts up so is called a geyser & it looks like this  & many holes in the ground have boiling water in them & some are very beautiful & shaped like flowers & colored blue like flowers too. & many funny little squirrels run about in the valley where the hot water is & they are not afraid & birds too & they know that the geysers will not hurt them, & big deer with large horns & they are not afraid of the noisy rumbling geysers but the Indians are afraid when they hear the queer noise under the ground. & some other people are afraid too & some are not.

Papa's
Always
I want you
back to you
& I want
to know
his name
& I will
tell you
his name
every
night

Papa saw a waterouzel playing about
& sucking his supper one night
when a cool pretty river runs down
a valley with hundreds of smoking ways
spouting geysers all along its sides
but the dear little birdie was not
afraid of the smoke & noise & knew
the cold water & was careful not
to go into the hot water. Some wild
sheep are jumping about on the tops
of the mountains all the time & they
look down at the hot water &
sometimes come to warm themselves
beside it in winter when the snow
covers all the ground except where
it is hot. & some buffaloes come
too. Buffaloes are just like cows
& I will show you what kind of
horns they have when I come home
Papa had to buy an overcoat, it is so
cold & people make big fires in stoves to
keep warm. & everybody said how old is
little Wander & I said that is not her name
it is Wanda & they said we thought it was
Wander because her papa was a wanderer