



John Muir Correspondence (PDFs)

1913-09-07

Letter from Marion Foster Washburne to John Muir, 1913 Sep 7.

Marion Foster Washburne

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Hollywood, Sept 7 - 1913

My dear Mr. Miss:-

Your friendly letter, with its words of warm appreciation of my uncle, Gen. Noble, & of helpful suggestions for me, was just what I hoped for — & it is not often that a letter is quite that, is it? Indeed, its kindness, & the fact that the objects of the Sierra Club, as set forth on your letter-head, include the publishing of "authentic information concerning" the mountain regions of this coast, encourage me & ask you many more questions.

We are on the eve of departure for Tulare, where

My son has a position in the public schools, so that will them naturally be my headquarters, we have thought that, other things being equal, the Sequoia National Park, or nearby regions like the Kaweah, would be preferable for us; and next to that possibly the Yosemite.

Could we find it possible to live in the Sequoia National Park for a year? Do the snows grow too deep? Could we get a cabin? And supplies? And mail?

Or would there be pleasant, secluded places, yet convenient to supplies, in the foothills below the Sequoia Park, on the Kaweah River?

We don't wish to get into the deep snow.

What you say about the Yosemite & the possibility of living there all winter interests us very much. How deep does the snow get on the north side of the valley? And how many months does it lie on the ground? Does the store you refer to keep open all winter? And can we get all necessary food supplies as well as camping outfit there? Could we lease a cabin within accessible distance of the store - so we could get to it without snow-shoeing? We should prefer a cabin to a tent, if we can possibly get it.

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Perhaps you can give us the name & address of some one in the Park - perhaps the store-keeper? - who can tell us specifically about a cabin, a tent, the cost of food-supplies, etc.

As for the Redwoods, of which you speak, may I ask what part of the Redwoods you would recommend? There are scattering belts of these trees all up along the coast from southern Monterey Co. to the northern line of the State, are there not? I've always understood these trees grow where there was a heavy rain-fall extending over many months as well as frequent dense fogs. Is this always so? For in that case it seems as if it would be more beneficial to our

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health to have some sun ³ with more sunshine & clear air, rather than fogs & dense moisture. However we would be very glad to hear more definitely about any redwoods, especially those toward this end of the State, where these conditions might be modified.

It warmed the cockles of my heart to have you say "I would be 'dearly welcome' at the Solumine Soda Spring. I know what it would be - or I can guess - to go there under a word from you; & if I were my usual self I should be delighted to avail myself of the suggestion next summer. But meanwhile what my brother & I are both seeking is seclusion, so

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complete as ⁶³two beings who
have withstood under nearly
a half-century of civiliza-
tion can be expected to
survive. We are humili-
ated to confess that we are
still tied tight by one leg
at least to the customary
feeding-places. We mail
mail once in a while, &
a store for supplies. If
we are permitted to do so
in a National Park we should
be glad to make a little
garden, keep a few chickens
& a cow - & thus become
a trifle more independent.
Can we do this?

But barring these necessi-
ties we want this year to
be as simple & silent &
primitive as we can man-

age to get. We don't want people ⁴,
for a while, even the wisest,
but the different, deep wisdom
of trees & hills.

When you write of the
Sequoias at worship at
sunset, I read with dim
eyes & a heart full of
an aching homesickness.

If I were coming north
just now I would surely
avail myself of your con-
siderate invitation to talk
with you personally. I know
we should be friends at once,
- for my spirit answers
to that which yours speaks
in your books - I'm going
to take only a dozen or
so with us into the wilder-
ness, but at least two of yours

Shall be of the ^{copy} dozen.

Please address me
as below.

Gratefully yours,
(Mrs.) Marion Foster Washburne

% C. W. Washburne,
Tulare,
Calif.