



John Muir Correspondence (PDFs)

1901-08-17

Letter from A. H. Sellers to John Muir, 1901 Aug 17.

A. H. Sellers

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CHICAGO Aug 17th 1901.

My dear friend Muir:-

Your welcome letter, written in the mountains near the Yosemite on July 14th and mailed Aug 13th, reached me today.

It is strange, but for the past month you and your dear family have been so much in our minds. Only last night Fay said to me, "now that you have got your business closed, you must write to Mr. Muir", I replied, "yes he is the first of my absent friends that I am going to write the good news to"; and this morning I said to her, after breakfast, that when I had looked the morning paper over I would write to you. In less than half an hour the postman came with your letter.

Well, Muir, I am at last a free man, I dont have to hang my nose over a desk willy-nilly, nor pace up and down my little private office room, in the intervals between troublesome business questions, longing for the beautiful "outdoors". We came home from California the last of April, on a telegram that the consolidation was finally taking shape, and I was needed here. Ever since then I have been tied up, scheming and working to bring about the deal, and now at last it is practically accomplished. At least I have got my money out of it, and what is more have gotten myself out of the wearing, tearing, troublesome business. The other day they paid me about ninety thousand dollars in cash, and \$ 27,500. in stock of the consolidated company, which stock, they claim, is or will soon be worth from 35 to 40,000 dollars. I did not care for any more of the stock, as I am sick and tired of the business, and did not want to have but few "eggs in that basket".

While I am very happy over my final escape from the weary detail of

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CHICAGO
the business in the hot and close Canons of the city, I am sorry to write you that the confinement here, for the past three months, has largely neutralized the good effects of a winter in California upon my dear wife's health. I am, in a few days, going to take her up to our little cottage, at the Club house near your old home in Wisconsin, to spend a couple of months so as to get her to live as near to the bosom of old mother earth as I can, that she may absorb some of her great vitality.

Had your letter been mailed when written, Mrs. Sellers would have written to Mrs. Muir, but from the fact that it was mailed at Martinez, a month after it was written, shows us that you and the girls have returned home.

How I would have enjoyed being on that trip with you, I would have taken so much pleasure in seeing the girls enjoy it, as I know they must have done. I think such a trip would make Fay a new woman. Poor girl, she has had a greatdeal of trouble since she returned from California; first her nephew (her oldest brother's oldest son, about 27 years of age) died; next her sister Josie was quite ill; then her dear old mother was taken down with Pneumonia; and to cap the climax, her brother George, who had invented a new fire-work, while stirring a mixture of phosphorus and other stuff it exploded in his face, burning him frightfully. For several weeks it was feared he might lose his eyes, but, fortunately, they have been saved, and while he is somewhat scarred up he is coming out of it all right. For the six weeks that he was in the hospital, Fay was in daily attendance, and you can probably imagine the strain she was under. In fact she seems to have been under one continuous strain of misfortunes ever since she came home, and it is not surprising that she should be paying for it now.

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CHICAGO

You speak of being free, after finishing your book, why, Muir, if I had the knowledge and ability to write such a book, I would regard the giving of that knowledge to the world, in the beautiful language that only you can express it in, as the greatest pleasure in life. Instead of feeling that the work was a hardship, that I was glad to be free from, I should feel that it was a work of love, and be sorry when it was finished.

I suppose you have, by this time, noticed the great improvement in my handwriting; I bought this machine the other day and am learning to write with it

Fay says it greatly improves my handwriting but not my spelling, I tell her it is a lapsus machina. You ought to buy one, I am sure Helen would like to write with it, and she could help you so much in your work.

Fay and I often speak of our pleasant visit with you and your family. We would have been glad if the girls could have been with us this summer, but my worry over the business and Fay's many family misfortunes, would have made it almost impossible for us to have given them the attention we should have wished to.

I am afraid the ease of writing on this machine and my great regard for you all has led me to inflict upon you, after telling of our good luck, entirely too much of our family misfortunes, but Fay says, Mr. Muir always seems to be one of our family.

She joins me in much love to you, Mrs. Muir and the girls.

Yours very truly,

