



1910-03-29

Letter from Joseph J. Perkins to John Muir, 1910 Mar 29.

Joseph J. Perkins

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OFFICE OF
JOSEPH J. PERKINS
ATTORNEY AT LAW

NOTARY PUBLIC AND COMMISSIONER OF DEEDS, ETC.

FOR . . .
ARIZONA COLORADO DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
GEORGIA ILLINOIS LOUISIANA
MICHIGAN MISSOURI MASSACHUSETTS
NEW YORK NEW MEXICO OHIO
OREGON PENNSYLVANIA

In re _____

Santa Barbara, Cal.

March 29, 1910.

Mr. John Muir,
Martinez, Cal.

My dear Sir:-

For the last five weeks, with as much patience as I could command, I have been submitting to an enforced rest - as a penalty for too much work and too little recreation. During this rest, I have had ample time to read for the second or third time, two of your books - entitled "Our National Parks" and "The Mountains of California", respectively. I scarcely know how to express to you my cordial appreciation of these two volumes; not only for the accurate information they contain, but for the literary merit of the text - the grace, rhythm and strength of its style and the charm of its descriptions. It is, in short, poetic prose throughout. I cannot tell you how much I have enjoyed them. And when night came, bringing little sleep to overtired nerves, I followed you over the trails and through the forests, in imagination, still recalling the charm of your descriptions and trying to see through your eyes.

The two volumes are a monument to your patience, endurance and industry. Every lover of nature owes you a debt of gratitude, which he will find it difficult to discharge.

As evidence that I am not altogether a "tenderfoot", I might mention, incidentally, that I came from Boston to Santa Barbara

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In re _____

Santa Barbara, Cal.

Mr. John Muir (No.2).

thirty five years ago - to die, as my friends verily believed - and even my physician intimating that if I did not go to a mild climate my friends would be likely to take my remains to Mt. Auburn before Spring. Well, I thought I would try Santa Barbara. When I arrived I weighed 117 lbs., which for a "six-footer", you will admit, was a "light weight." I was a mere skeleton. As soon as I was strong enough to ride, I started for the Santa Ynez range of mountains, exploring its canons, climbing its ridges and finally its highest peak 4000 feet, or to be exact 3985 feet - a mere ant hill compared with some of the peaks of Sierra Nevada - often sleeping on the ground with my saddle for a pillow, wherever night overtook me. In that way I regained my health and, in time, my normal weight 175-180 lbs. I mention this fact as an evidence that I have seen at least some of the foothills of California, if not the mountains. Now the mountains are calling to me, Oh! so loudly! And your books have emphasized the call. I mean to respond to it sometime.

I feel very much interested to know what you used for footwear in Summer in the mountains and also what you used in Winter, when you walled through the snow - four to six feet in depth.

And for my own advantage, in the mountains, I would like to know what kind, or kinds of food you took with you on your five to ten-day tramps. You speak of bread and tea only. How and in

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In re _____

Santa Barbara, Cal.

Mr. John Muir (No. 3.).

What form could you carry enough bread to last you on such long trips? And why did you always take tea with you and not coffee? Did you ever carry almonds and raisins?

Now, I know you are a busy man, and if you cannot find time to answer the above questions drop these lines into your waste-basket and think no more about them.

I shall love you just the same.

Gratefully yours

Joseph J. Perkins.

J.J.P./M.

P.S. I have just finished reading,

"Mountains in the Sierra Nevada" by King
"Wild Life in the Rockies" by Mills, and
"The Mountains" by Stewart Edward White.

King's book contains much information, but the author's style is not pleasant reading. The other two books (to me) are indifferent.

J.J.P.

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