



John Muir Correspondence (PDFs)

1910-06-29

Letter from J[oseph] T[aplin] Lovewell to John Muir, 1910 Jun 29.

Joseph Taplin Lovewell

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KANSAS
ACADEMY OF SCIENCE.

J. T. LOVEWELL, Ph. D.,
SECRETARY.



OFFICERS, 1909.

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TOPEKA, KANSAS, June 29, 1910.

Mr. John Muir,
Martinez, Calif.

Dear Sir:-

Do your thoughts, in the evening of life, sometimes revert to earlier days? This letter will test your memory of an experience more than fifty years ago, in '59 I think, when you lived a few months at Prairie du Chien, Wis.

You will recall your friend, Mrs. Edward Pelton, and their niece, Emily who later went to California, and from there wrote to my wife, (ne Maggie Bissell) of meeting and finding you "the same true-hearted, unaffected friend" she had known in earlier days, and she said you were then esteemed as the most desirable pilot to the wonderful Yosemite. My wife died in 1876 and I have lost track of Emily Pelton, who afterward married. Do you know if she is still living?

You will remember Norman Wiard, the ice boat man, who told you to draw a billiard ball as his first and last lesson in engineering, and you found it difficult to make your drawing appear any other than a flat figure.

We all admired your mechanical handiwork in constructing the "seythe of time" and the student's bedstead, which would almost think for him if he was inclined to shirk the virtue of early rising. There was a hint of poetic thought in these early performances, and I doubt not that you smile as you remember them and the days before "you had found yourself".

I early began to read your charming magazine sketches of the mountains, and have admiringly noted your development in fame and achievement. The late ~~Late~~ Joseph Cook, lecturing here many years ago, and speaking of John Muir, said "he was or ought to be the State Geologist of California.

It is more than thirty years since I came to Topeka, and my knowledge of Wisconsin consists largely of memories. You may remember that I had a little school in Prairie du Chien, and most of my life has been spent in educational pursuits. The vocation has brought me neither fame nor fortune, but even such a life has compensations.

I have had continued good health, with all faculties preserved, so that I can enjoy literature and science as well as ever, and my bodily vigor has but little abated.

This letter may seem an intrusion and very likely you may fail altogether to connect me with events of that time and recall one who did nothing to impress his personality on you.

Wishing you long enjoyment of the glorious mountain scenery whose beauties you have done so much to reveal and conserve, I remain

Truly your friend,

J. T. Lovewell

04820