



John Muir Correspondence (PDFs)

1894-02-24

Letter from John Muir to [Robert Underwood] Johnson, 1894 Feb 24.

John Muir

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Martinez Feb. 24, 1894.

My dear Mr Johnson.

In my haste yesterday to get off the Alaska M.S. I forgot the maps. I have no good map of the Territory, Glacier Bay, or the Muir Glacier, but you can get all these through Miss Sedmore. A general sketch map of Alaska may easily be found; but the only maps of Glacier Bay & the Muir Glacier are those of Prof. Harry Fielding Reid. He worked two summers with good instruments borrowed from the Coast Survey in making them. I think they were published by the Appletons. You can easily find them through Miss Sedmore. I made rough sketches, but Reid's are infinitely better than mine.

In looking over the M.S. as I have arranged it you will see that the first article is a general view of the Territory & a description of the steamer trip through Southeastern Alaska as seen by a tourist. The overabundance of material in my mind in going over the route made it difficult to keep from saying too much & to keep from repeating what I had already written on the subject. Still I think you will now find it a fair picture of the trip. Anyhow I have carefully revised it & done my best. This kind of touch-&-go writing is hard for me. Women do it best.

The 2^d article, - Glacier Bay reads well I think & is not blurred by anything not belonging to it. You will notice that I have added two pages of introduction

which if you don't like you can easily leave out. and if you wish to add the notes on the Indians they may be placed either as a head or tail to the article under a subtitle. But as I suggested in yesterday's letter if used at all they should with such additions & the setting I can give them form a 3^d article.

I'm sorry this cold m. s. should have given you so much trouble. I thought at first the article was to be one published in two parts like a continued story, & in writing it I tried to fancy myself on one of the pleasure steamers with a crowd of tourists talking to me. This accounts for the desultoriness you complain of. If your readers would only stand still & listen how gladly & easily I could give them a score of articles instead of two, taking up one subject at a time & staying lovingly with it as if nothing else in the world existed.

As to the illustrations, they seem to me generally good. But the grand frontal discharging wall the only part of the Muir Glacier that most of the tourists see, is shown in only one picture

† This one is a view from the west shore of the inlet where not one tourist in a thousand ever goes. Besides the picture seems to me singularly dull & untelling. I called Mr Frazer's attention to it on my return from Europe but I see nothing has been done in the matter. Therefore I now send you some photographs to choose from, hoping there may still be time to make a better picture of the great wall & the ice-cliffs. Please return when done with them as they belong to a set I want to keep.

Tell me in your next about Tesla's plans if you have anything new. Who publishes his book?

Mrs Muir says try to make Mr Johnson come with Tesla. I devoutly wish you would. We will try to keep the Yosemite dogs off you.

How different were my experiences in New York from yours in California. I'm ashamed of my country - the Irish of it. Ever truly
Your friend John Muir