



1894-08-10

Letter from Mrs. Lydia Muir Johnson to John Muir, 1894 Aug 10.

Lydia Muir Johnson

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[4]
Father's early death, he became
the support of his widowed mother,
and her young children. Arriving at
manhood, he married a Virginia girl,
who brought him a beautiful face, like
that of "Mary Queen of Scots," and
made his life so bright with the
sunshine of her presence, that when
Death claimed her, he might have
had written on his heart "sacred to
the memory of my wife." My father
was engaged in the Hardware business,
and was a great Whig, a supporter of
Henry Clay, and his personal friend.
He was Mayor of his native city,
Alexandria, Va. and was highly
honored by all. I am his eldest
daughter, I married in 1862. Dr. J. B. Johnson of
Jefferson Co., West Va. who was a

"920 N. St., n. w. Washington, D. C.
address August 10th 1894.

[1]
Mr John Muir-

Dear Sir-

When you realize that I, a stranger, even in name,
am taking the liberty of addressing
a letter to you, you will perhaps
be surprised if not offended; but
when you learn, that some impulse,
stronger than my own sense
of the fitness of things - impels me
to write, you may, while condemning,
pardon me the offence.

Several years ago, when the
"Muir Glacier," was first introduced
to the public, and an account
of your connection with it given
in one of our local papers, the unusual
name, and the family likeness

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were so strong, that my love for the dear old Scotch name (which was my father's and eldest brother's, as well as my grandfather's) prompted me then to write and ask, "if you are in any way, related to, or connected with the Muirs of Ayr, Scotland? My grandfather John Muir, a Scotchman, came to America in 1785 or thereabout, and married in Philadelphia, a Miss Mary Lang, a Scotch lass. and my father was their son. My grandfather was an Importer of Fine Woods, such as Mahogany Rosewood &c, and he imported the wood and had from it, manufactured the coffin in which George Washington was buried in 1800.

At various times I have seen your name mentioned in the papers, and each time have felt almost irresistibly impelled to write and ask "if you are a member of the Ayr family of Muirs? and on last Sunday, our local paper, "The Washington Post," published an article concerning you and your pursuits, accompanying which was a woodcut, called a likeness, and although as a rule, these woodcuts are but caricatures, the likeness to my father, was too great, to be the result of accident, and so, I now write, after all these promptings, and ask the question written above. My father was a man of rare mental abilities, self-educated, after his

physician of fine reputation,
 having a large practice while
 in Alex. of which city, he also
 was Mayor; afterward remo-
 ving to this city, where he had
 an extensive practice. He died
 Jan 20th 1893, aged sixty two
 years, leaving me a widow
 with one daughter just grown
 a son, who will graduate in
 medicine next year; and a
 step daughter about 35 years
 of age. Not knowing your
 exact address, I venture this,
 sending it out, as Noah did
 the Dove, and if like it, it
 returns to me after many days,
 I shall have the satisfaction
 of having attempted at least,
 to satisfy the feelings which

John J. Davis
 or relatives?

so persistently haunted me, at all times, when you or your name, were the subject of conversation. If I have, in your estimation, overstepped the bounds of womanly propriety, pardon the offence, and attribute it, not to curiosity, but think of it as Tupper has it.

"A reaching forth to grasp the invisible threads of kinship," which "like cobwebs floating in the wind," oft catch events on their approach with sure and apt presentiment."

If this reaches you, and your time is not too fully occupied with other matters, I will be glad to have my uncertainty

made certain, in some way by you; and if there is relationship existing, between us, and as this world is not such a big one after all, why the time may come, when you may make up your mind that you want to see the Capital & Capitol of these United States, and then, nothing need prevent your coming this way. Craving your pardon for this lengthy epistle I am

Most Respectfully
Mrs Lydia Muir Johnson
1920 N. St., N. W.
Washington City

I have just written to D. C.
a cousin, John A. Muir, who is at
Grand View Sanitarium, Wernersville