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John Muir Newsletter, Winter 1990/1991

John Muir Center for Regional Studies

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John Muir Newsletter

winter, 1990-1991

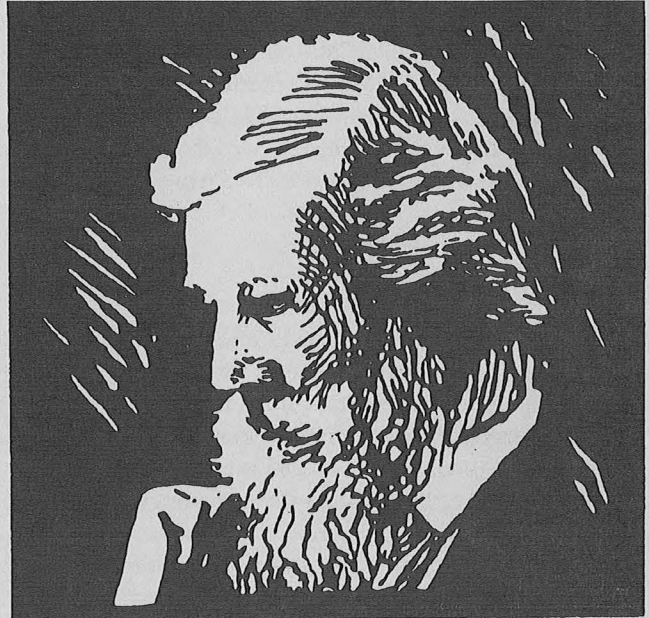
new series, volume 1 number 1

JOHN MUIR NEWSLETTER REVIVED

The John Muir Center for Regional Studies at the University of the Pacific is very pleased to begin republication of the *John Muir Newsletter*. The first newsletter under this title ran six years and ended with the publication of the *John Muir Papers* (microform edition) in 1986. The current quarterly *Newsletter* will be published in fall and spring of each year, starting with this fall 1990 issue. The *Newsletter* will serve as a clearing house of information on John Muir, publications and events concerning Muir and his legacy, news of the environment, appropriate book reviews and announcements, short features and other items of interest. Its pages will be open to anyone who wishes to share such news and information with the readers of the *Newsletter*. Its success will, therefore, very much depend on the support it receives from its readers. If readers send in their news and announcements, the *Newsletter* will allow Muir enthusiasts to keep in contact with each other and with events in which they have a mutual interest. The John Muir Center takes great pride in aiding the work which Muir undertook of enhancing awareness of the environment. In that spirit, the Center will be delighted to receive any appropriate news, notices, anecdotes, graphics and environment-related information. Deadlines for submissions are January 1, April 1, July 1 and October 1. The editor will make final decisions on acceptance of submissions. This first issue of the *Newsletter* is available free to interested parties, and will be sent to past participants of the California History Institute. Subsequent issues will be distributed to subscribers only. If you wish to continue receiving this publication, see subscription information on page five.

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YOSEMITE AND SEQUOIA PARKS FEATURED

The Summer 1990 issue of *California History*, the quarterly journal of the California Historical Society, is devoted to the subject of "Yosemite and Sequoia: A Century of California National Parks." Guest editor of the special issue is Alfred Runte, distinguished historian of the national parks and author of a recently-published history of Yosemite. The richly illustrated, expanded issue includes an introductory essay by Runte, an historical overview of preservation and resource management at Sequoia and King's Canyon by Lary M. Dilsaver and Douglas H. Strong, a piece by Peter J. Blodgett on tourism in Yosemite, a study of 19th century Yosemite painters and photographers by Kate Nearpass Ogden, an article by Anne F. Hyde on early tourist travel, a biographical essay on Joseph Grinnell by Runte, a study of Yosemite's built environment before 1940 by Robert C. Pavlik, and an article by Lary Dilsaver on the founding of Kings Canyon National Park. Copies of this special issue are available by mail for \$7.95 (plus \$2.50 postage) from the California Historical Society, 2090 Jackson Street, San Francisco, 94109.

GOLD MINING THE THEME OF THE 1991 CALIFORNIA HISTORY INSTITUTE

“California’s Gold Rushes: Past and Present” is the focus for the 1991 California History Institute. Sponsored by the John Muir Center for Regional Studies and scheduled for April 18-21, 1991 at the University of the Pacific, the event will feature two days of academic sessions, followed by a two-day field trip with an overnight stay at one of Northern California’s early railroad resorts, Feather River Inn.

While the Gold Rush of 1848-1856 was California’s first and best-known mining excitement, CHI 91 program committee members invite suggestions for a program which moves beyond the popular stereotype to consider gold mining in broad perspective both in space and time. From the 1850s to the present day, successive rushes have dotted the map with boom towns or other sporadic signs of mineral excitement. The events themselves, the forces and personalities behind them, the short and long range impacts of California’s economy, environment, culture, politics, people, and image at home and abroad--these are some of the topics that may be covered in sessions on the UOP campus.

As with previous Institutes over the past 43 years, Conference organizers encourage participation from anyone interested in the theme regardless of academic background or point of view. Sessions are open to participants and presenters from all relevant disciplines, including those in humanities, social science, environmental studies, technology the arts and other fields. Non-academics from the mining industry, service organizations, related businesses, government, and the general public are also welcome to submit proposals or to register as participants and guests.

Those interested in more information should contact Professor R.H. Limbaugh, Director, John Muir Center for Regional Studies, University of the Pacific, Stockton, CA 95211.

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JOHN MUIR'S TRUST IN WILDERNESS

By Terry Isles

(excerpted by permission from *The Countryman*,
(Western Australia), vol. 94 number 3)

In 1984 the John Muir Trust was founded at Dunbar, Scotland, site of Muir’s birth in 1838. The Trust is “to conserve and protect wilderness, while respecting the needs of those living in such area.” The trust now owns some 3,000 acres of superlative mountain country on the Knoydart peninsula in the west Highlands, accessible only by sea or on foot. Despite the remoteness, a small number of people live and work there, engaged in traditional activities such as sheep-farming and newer ones such as shellfish-farming. Rising from the shores of the fiord-like sea-loch to the highest point of Ladhar Bheinn at 3,350 ft., the land contains a wide range of habitats. However, it is classified as a degraded landscape, and it is the trust’s intention, after careful surveys, to bring it back to its full ecological potential. This will mean a lot of effort by volunteers, as well as considerable expense.” For further information, write to Freepost, John Muir Trust, Edinburgh.

ANOTHER JOHN MUIR MONOGRAPH NEARS PUBLICATION

The John Muir Center for Regional Studies is currently preparing for publication a volume based on the proceedings of the 1990 California History Institute which was devoted to the life and work of John Muir. The Institute, one of the most successful in the forty-three years in which these annual conferences have been held, drew over two hundred participants. More than thirty presentations in a dozen sessions were conducted over a three-day period on the campus of the University of the Pacific. At the conclusion of that portion of the Institute, many of the participants went on a field trip to Yosemite National Park for the weekend, where they celebrated John Muir’s birthday and Earth Day.

The monograph, *John Muir and His Legacy*, will include revised versions of many of the Institute presentations. It is anticipated that perhaps two-thirds of the original presentations will be represented in the monograph. The monograph will include chapters on Muir's biography and on Muir and his various interests such as botany, geology, religion, literature and conservation. Several publishers are interested in reviewing the completed manuscript when it is ready. The monograph will be handsomely illustrated and is one which any reader of the *Newsletter* will be anxious to own.

JOHN MUIR LIBRARY CONSERVED

In 1987 the Holt-Atherton Library received \$11,400 from the Skaggs Foundation to repair and conserve over a quarter of the 648 volumes in John Muir's Library Collection. That project is now completed, thanks to the professional efforts of Ms. Gerrilee Hafvenstein, an Art and Book Conservator who was hired to undertake the project. Working part-time in her Sacramento studio, Gerrilee patiently and expertly restored 200 volumes--50 more than the original budget estimate--at an average cost of \$55.07 per book. Scholars now have full access to this rich working library that contains perhaps the most extensive holographic notations within any collection of its kind.

WE NEED NEWS!

To keep abreast of research, publications, events, and ideas among Muir scholars and friends, we need input from our readers. Please send us information that we can share with others. Some specific items of interest: news of ongoing or new research; recent publications of interest; announcements of forthcoming events; environmental issue updates; letters of general interest or concern; book reviews; short essays. All copy for consideration should be mailed directly to Professor Sally M. Miller, Editor, *John Muir Newsletter*, Muir Center for Regional Studies, University of the Pacific, Stockton, CA 95211. Unsolicited material cannot be returned. Editorial policy and review remain the prerogative of the editorial staff.

MUIR CONFERENCE VIDEO PRODUCTION CONTEMPLATED

At the Muir Conference in April a professional camera crew taped over half of the sessions and recorded a half-dozen interviews by participants from sessions not otherwise taped. Most of the slides from session programs were also taped separately, to be dubbed in later. That was Phase I of a project designed to yield eventually a series of video-cassettes for the academic market. Funding for Phase I, amounting to several thousand dollars, was provided by a grant from a private donor and from the University's Office of Life-long Learning. Phase II, the editing of the raw footage, is now in the planning stages. A new fund-raising effort will be required to complete the project. We will issue a progress report in our next issue. Any suggestions for obtaining the necessary funding will be appreciated.

YOSEMITE CELEBRATES ITS CENTENNIAL

As is well known, the year 1990 marks the centennial of the law establishing Yosemite National Park. The centennial has been marked with many programs at the Park, some of which had to be canceled during the third week in July when the park was evacuated and closed for a week because of an enormous fire. Talks, concerts, and other events have been held in order to underline a century of increasing consciousness of the environment and the need for even more extensive recognition of the preservation ethic.

Recent programs have included a portrayal by Thomas Smith of West Valley College in Saratoga, California, of Sgt. Carruthers whose military career included service in Tuolumne Meadows when the United States Cavalry was responsible for management of the national park in its earliest days. Reporter Gene Rose, who has covered both Yosemite and Sequoia National Parks for the *Fresno Bee* for

many years, gave a talk on preservation and the role of the media. The Superintendent of Yosemite National Park, Mike Finley, spoke on the evolution of park management over the seventy-four years of the existence of the National Park Service.

Concerts have included one by the United States Air Force Band of the Golden West. Another featured music inspired by Yosemite by musician Rick Erlien who back-packed with a keyboard, composing as he went.

Over the summer, Lee Stetson performed his well-known one-man show as John Muir. He also presented a stage show entitled "Stickeen" in which Muir has a number of encounters with those he called his "fellow mortals." The famous Muir story of the little dog named Stickeen with whom Muir was trapped on a glacier in Alaska was highlighted. A third show offered by Stetson was called "The Spirit of John Muir-- A Centennial Celebration."

As a special event, a time capsule was buried in front of the Yosemite Valley Visitor Center which is intended to be opened on the bicentennial of the park, October 1, 2090.

THE JOHN MUIR CENTER ONE YEAR LATER

Only a year ago the John Muir Center for Regional Studies was established to promote research into Muir's life and legacy, to foster regional studies from a multi-disciplinary viewpoint, to build closer relationships between regional scholars and the lay community, to encourage out-of-classroom learning experiences, to provide opportunities for undergraduate research, and to publish the results of qualitative regional research. These general objectives were to be achieved through annual conferences with a regional thematic emphasis, a special publications program that would include a newsletter and a monograph series, periodic seminars and workshops for the UOP campus community, grant projects to raise special funds for regional research and publication, and course offerings with a regional component or emphasis.

Looking back 12 months into the program is perhaps too early to assess its impact or accomplishments, yet we think we have earned a few high marks. The Muir Conference and Field Trip in April, by all accounts, was an outstanding event that underscored the educational value of bringing together specialists and the general public in a

critical mass of interested people focused on a single subject. The combination of two days of concentrated seminar study, followed by a two-day field trip, demonstrated how well experiential learning can supplement and enliven the passive mode of teaching by lectures and slide-shows. Feedback was so enthusiastic that we have adopted this four-day campus-field format for at least the 1991 California History Institute, if not for the indefinite future. Readers may look forward to another holistic experience in 1991 as the gold rush theme is pursued from a variety of academic dimensions and field observations.

During the spring semester of 1990 Professor Ron Limbaugh directed a special undergraduate team research project centering on the Chinese community that occupied Knight's Ferry, California, from the early Gold Rush to the 1920s. Statistical data from court records, tax assessment rolls, manuscript census records and other quantitative resources were directly entered on computer and analyzed with SPSS software to produce a statistical profile of the Chinese community and its economic status. At the same time standard literary sources were combed for corroborative evidence of Chinese social and cultural developments, and students built upon those written records with raw data from oral interviews, photographs and on-site inspection. Although still in the drafting stage, the final result should be a modest but substantive monograph that will be published by the John Muir Center.

Very recently the Center concluded an agreement with the Bank of Stockton to inventory and catalog some 30,000 photographs in two significant collections, one of

PURCHASERS: THE JOHN MUIR PAPERS ON MICROFILM

Anchorage Municipal Library
Brigham Young University
California State Library
Colorado State Library
Denver State University
Ohio State University
Oregon State University
Princeton University
Schofield, Mr. Edmund
Southern Methodist University
Texas Tech University
University of Arizona
University of California, Berkeley (Reels 23-33, 35-50)
University of California, Los Angeles (UC System Joint Purchase)
University of Minnesota, Minneapolis
University of Nevada, Reno
University of Oklahoma
University of Oregon
University of Texas, Austin
University of the Pacific
University of Utah
University of Wisconsin, Madison
University of Wyoming
Yale

which was recently acquired by the Bank to supplement its own historic photo resources. This \$50,000 contract, extending over two years, will utilize the latest computer technology to input data directly on laser disk for permanent storage and ready access. The Muir Center staff will supervise and administer the project, including the hiring of a photo catalog specialist and a student assistant, while the Bank will provide the financial resources, the computer hardware and software, and the physical space.

In conjunction with the UOP Summer School program, Professors Curt Kramer and Ron Limbaugh have teamed up to offer a two-course combination that next summer, hopefully, will attract students from around the country. The pair of courses, tentatively entitled "California Geology" and "California History", will offer a combination of classroom study and joint field trips over a five-week period to three distinctive geologic and historic regions in Northern California: the North Bay and Coastal areas in Napa and Sonoma Counties, the Mother Lode area and the Southern Mines in Calaveras and Tuolumne Counties, and the High Sierra area in and around Nevada, Plumas and Butte Counties. Brochure describing the offerings is being distributed to all major academic institutions across the U.S.

Other projects are contemplated for the near future, including regular faculty/student campus seminars and workshops, grant projects involving a consortium of regional historians, and contract research projects in conjunction with the staff of the Sociology Department. All in all, despite our relatively low profile and our need to piggyback on the support staff of the History Department and the UOP administration, we have been as active as the extent of our resources allow, and we have a vision of the future that includes the development of a full-fledged center for regional research, publication and teaching.

BE A MEMBER OF THE JOHN MUIR CENTER FOR REGIONAL STUDIES

Costs are a problem everywhere, especially in academia today. We can only continue publishing and distributing this modest newsletter through support from our readers. By becoming a member of the John Muir Center, you will be assured of receiving the Newsletter for a full year. You will also be kept on our mailing list to receive information on the annual California History Institute and other events and opportunities sponsored by the John Muir Center.

Please join us by completing the following form and returning it, along with a \$15. check made payable to The John Muir Center for Regional Studies, University of the Pacific, 3601 Pacific Ave., Stockton, CA 95211.

Yes, I want to join the John Muir Center and continue to receive the *John Muir Newsletter*.. Enclosed is \$15 for a one-year membership .

Name _____

Institution/Affiliation _____

Mailing address & zip _____

NEWS OF OUR READERS

Sherry Hanna, John Muir's granddaughter-in-law, writes that Shell Oil Company is erecting a statue of John Muir in Martinez, on the corner of Alhambra Valley Road and Alhambra Avenue. Rather than lose the lot to developers who wanted to construct an office building, the City of Martinez purchased the lot and will maintain it as landscaped open space.

S. Michael Hall of the Department of Tourism Management of the School of Resource Science and Management of the University of New England, Australia, reports that his Australian Research Council grant has been renewed. This will enable him to continue work on his project on the significance of John Muir's travels in Australasia in 1903-04 and their role in developing conservation thought. Dr. Hall was a presenter at the California History Institute in April, 1991. He promises to send the *Newsletter* reports on news of interest from the South Pacific from time to time.

Ron Limbaugh recently presented a paper, "John Muir as Environmental Educator," at a meeting of the Association of Environmental and Outdoor Educators, held in Yosemite National Park in an outdoor amphitheater with the temperature hovering at a brisk 35 degrees. Muir might have considered it a fine test for any outdoor enthusiast.

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