



John Muir Correspondence (PDFs)

1881-08-16

Letter from John Muir to [Louie Strentzel Muir], 1881 Aug 16.

John Muir

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U. S. Revenue Marine,

Point Barrow,

Aug. 16th, 1881.

10.45 P.M.

Love John Muir.
 Point Barrow Aug 18th
 We are all here will
 leave today for the Southward
 Have written two Bulletin
 letters to go down by the
 Legal Tender, These will
 give you particulars of
 our ice-battles.

My beloved wife. Heaven only knows my joy this night
 in hearing that you were well. Old as the letter is
 + great as the number of the days + nights that have
 passed since your love was written, it yet seems
 as if I had once more been up stairs + held you
 + Wanda in my arms. Ah you little know the lonely
 icy days so strangely restless that I have longed +
 longed for one word from you. The dangers great as
 they were while groping + spending among the vast
 immeasurable icefields about that mysterious
 Wrangel Land would have seemed as nothing
 before I knew you. But most of the special dangers
 are past + I have good news for you my love
 for we have succeeded in landing on that strange
 ice-ghost country + our work is nearly all done
 + I am coming home by the middle of October
 No thought of wintering now + attempting to cross the
 frozen ocean from Siberia. We will take no more
 risks. All is well with our stanch little ship, she is

seems already in my arms. Not in dreams this time. From father + husband +

I shall soon be home. I shall soon be home. I shall soon be home. I shall soon be home. I shall soon be home.

I learn at all injured by the pounding I experienced when she has undergone, & sailing home seems nothing more than crossing San Francisco bay.

We have added a large territory to the domain of the United States & amassed a grand lot of knowledge of one earth & another.

Now we sail from here tomorrow for Cape Lisburne or if stormy to Plover Bay to coal & repair our rudder wh is a little weak. Thence we will go again around the margin of the main Polar pack about Wrangel Land but not into it, & possibly discover a clear way to land upon it again & obtain more of its geography. Then leave the Arctic about the 10th of Sep. Call at St Michaels & at Oonahaska & then straight home.

I shall not write at length now as this is to go down by the Legal Tender who sails in a few days & expects to reach S. F. by the 20th of Sep, but we may reach home nearly as soon as she. I have to dash off a letter for the Bulletin tonight yet, though I ought to go to bed. Not a word of it is yet written.

We came poking & feeling our way along this icy shore a few hrs ago through the fog little thinking that a letter from you was just ahead. Then the fog lifted & we saw four whalers at anchor & a strange vessel. When the Captain of the Belvidere shouted "Letters for you Captain," by the Legal Tender" wh was the strange vessel. Our hearts leaped, & a boat was speedily sent along side. I got the letter package & handed them round, & yours love was the very last in the package. I dreaded there was none. The Rodgers had not yet been heard from.

One of the whale ships was caught here & crushed in the ice & sunk in 2 minutes & moments ago.