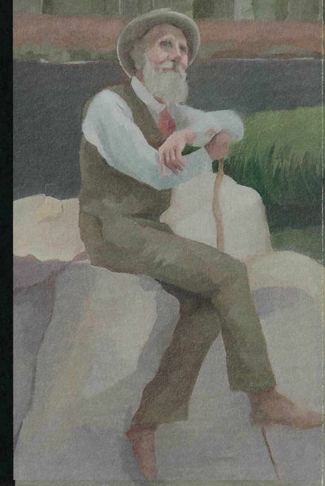
National Historic Site
California

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

John Muir

The battle for conservation will go on endlessly. It is the universal warfare between right and wrong.

John Muir, 1896



The clearest way into the Universe is through a forest wilderness.

John Muir, 1890



John Muir, 1861.
STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF WISCONSIN



Muir was most at home on planet Earth in Yosemite. This painting shows him near Yosemite Falls.
ILLUSTRATIONS NPS / ARCHIL PICHKHADZE

Muir invented a clock desk (right) *to turn book pages to keep up his reading speed.*
STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF WISCONSIN

Muir's Conservation Legacy Lives On

"Why should man value himself as more than a small part of the one great unit of creation?" John Muir asked. His remarkable vision—that all creation is one community made up of equal companions—still inspires people to love nature and to work to save wildlands and wildlife. Muir is often called the father of national parks and forest reservations, forerunners of national forests. Muir urged people to experience wild nature so they would be inspired to defend it and save it.

1836
Nature by Ralph Waldo Emerson published.

1838
John Muir born April 21, Dunbar, Scotland.

1845
Potato crop fails; famine in Europe.

1849
Family emigrates to Wisconsin farm.

1854
Walden by Henry David Thoreau published.

1860
Leaves home; inventions win state fair prize; meets mentor Jeanne Carr.

1861
Enters University of Wisconsin; Civil War begins.

1862
Postpones studies to teach school; Thoreau dies.

1864
To Canada; botanizes and works in a sawmill; *Man and Nature* by George Perkins Marsh published; federal land in Yosemite ceded to California for public use.

1866
To Indiana; works in carriage factory.

1867
Factory accident damages eye; 1,000-mile walk from Kentucky to Gulf of Mexico; writes first journal en route.



On his 1,000-mile walk, Muir kept this journal, published as a book after his death.
HOLT-ATHERTON UNIV. OF THE PACIFIC

1868
To California; first sight of Yosemite.

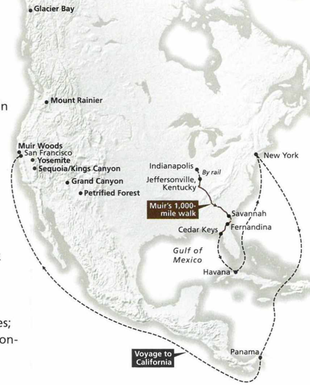
1871
Finds living glacier in Yosemite; meets Ralph Waldo Emerson.

1872
Begins writing for *Overland Monthly* magazine; Yellowstone National Park established.

1874–76
Begins study of trees; advocates federal control of forests.

Muir and Today's National Park System

Muir's love for wild nature aided the creation of several national parks (map below). Our National Parks *(1901), a collection of articles he wrote for the* Atlantic Monthly *about Yellowstone, Yosemite, Sequoia, and General Grant (now part of Kings Canyon) national parks, is still in print.*



Muir's Serendipitous Trip to California

After walking 1,000 miles from Kentucky to the Gulf of Mexico, Muir sailed to Cuba, bound for South America. Short of money and ill with fever, he sailed instead to New York and from there, in steerage, to Panama and California.

1879
First Alaska trip.

1880
Second Alaska trip.

1881
To Alaska on the ship *Corwin*.

1882
Emerson dies.

1882–87
Manages fruit ranch at Martinez *(see other side).*

1888
Health poor; climbs Mount Rainier; wife urges return to conservation writing.

1889
Campaigns for a Yosemite National Park.

1890
Writes *Century* magazine articles; Yosemite National Park established (without Yosemite Valley); explores what is now Muir Glacier in Glacier Bay, Alaska; US census cites end of frontier.

1892
Helps found Sierra Club; elected its first president; forest reserves established in three western states.

1893–94
To Europe; first book, *The Mountains of California,* published.

1896
Tours forests with National Forestry Commission; honorary degree from Harvard.

1898
Honorary degree from University of Wisconsin.

1899
Travels with Harriman Alaska Expedition.

1901
Our National Parks published.

1903–04
Camps in Yosemite with President Theodore Roosevelt; makes world tour; first federal wildlife reserve established.

1905
California cedes Yosemite Valley back to the federal government.

1906
Explores Arizona and Petrified Forest.

1908
Muir Woods National Monument established; begins fight against damming Yosemite National Park's Hetch Hetchy Valley.

Climb the mountains and get their good tidings.

John Muir, 1901

1909
Stickeen published.

1911
My First Summer in the Sierra published; travels to South America and Africa; honorary degree from Yale.

1912
The Yosemite published.

1913
The Story of My Boyhood and Youth published; Hetch Hetchy battle lost; honorary degree from University of California.

1914
Dies December 24, age 76.

2000
Creation of Sequoia National Monument continues Muir's conservation agenda.

Sierra Club logo

FOUNDED 1892

John Muir
Earth-planet
Universe



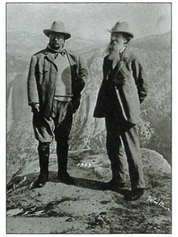
Muir studies petrified wood in what is now Petrified Forest National Park, Arizona.
COURTESY BANCROFT LIBRARY, UNIV. OF CALIF., BERKELEY



Postage stamps in 1964 (left) *and 1998 commemorate John Muir's founding role in the American conservation movement.*
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In love with Yosemite, Muir stayed five years in the valley. He worked as a shepherd, sawyer, and guide. He filled his journals with sketches and musings on the "mountain mansion."
THE SIERRA CLUB



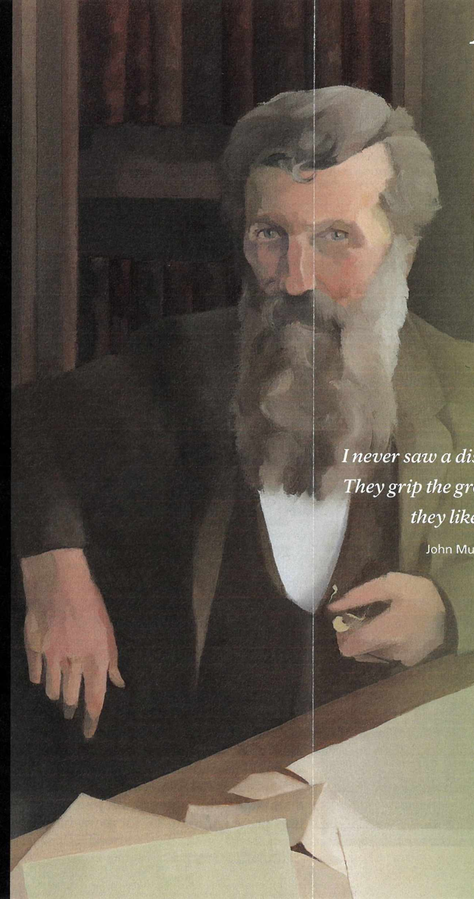


Muir camped with President Theodore Roosevelt, a fan of his writings, near Glacier Point in Yosemite.
COURTESY BANCROFT LIBRARY, UNIV. OF CALIF., BERKELEY

At the University of Wisconsin, Muir read Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau on nature. He studied Louis Agassiz's new geology and Asa Gray's plant science. Later, he used these tools to achieve success in conservation. Muir arrived in California in 1868. He lived in the Yosemite area of the southern Sierra Range off and on for several years, and studied its botany and geology. In 1871, in an article in the *New York Tribune*, Muir argued that glaciers had carved Yosemite Valley. California's state geologist ridiculed his views, which were substantially correct. After five years as an active fruit rancher, Muir began his most important campaign to preserve the American wilderness *(see other side).* Muir enraged critics with the charge that lumbermen and sheepherders, with their "hoofed locusts," were ruining Yosemite's wildness. He attacked the prevailing notion that nature existed only to provide commodities for humans. With *Century* magazine editor Robert Underwood Johnson, Muir pushed for the creation of Yosemite National Park. His magazine and newspaper articles helped change Americans' attitude toward wilderness and wildness *(see timeline).* After Muir's death, his journals and other writings provided material for many more books.

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John Muir: Fruit Rancher



I never saw a discontented tree. They grip the ground as though they liked it . . .

John Muir, 1890

In an upstairs "scribble den" Muir wrote the books and articles that secure his role as a leading voice in American conservation history.
ILLUSTRATIONS NPS / ARCHIL PICHKADZE

Muir & Family in Martinez

John Muir married into the fruit-ranching Strentzel family in 1880 at age 42. Martinez would be his home until he died in 1914. He and wife Louie raised their two daughters here *(photos at right)*. Hard-working and astute, Muir took over the fruit business and earned enough in five years to support the family for his lifetime. Louie then urged her overworked husband to revisit the wilds and resume his conservation writing and advocacy. Their daughters inherited the house from Louie in 1905. Muir bought it in 1912.



Louisa "Louie" Wanda Strentzel Muir
HOLT-ATHERTON UNIV. OF THE PACIFIC
© MUIR-HANNA TRUST



Annie Wanda (left) *and Helen Muir*
STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF WISCONSIN

1760s
Karkin Indians of Ohlone group are still living in the area.

1769
Spanish expeditions enter San Francisco Bay.

1770–1834
Mission life in California at its peak.

1820
Mission records show no Ohlones left in area.

1821
Mexico wins independence from Spain.

1823
Don Ygnacio Martinez gets 17,700-acre Rancho El Pinole land grant in Contra Costa County.

1848
United States takes California in war with Mexico; gold discovered at Sutter's Mill in California.

1849
Col. William Smith acquires 120 acres from Martinez family and founds city of Martinez.

1849
Don Ygnacio's son Vicente Martinez builds two-story adobe home (now a part of John Muir National Historic Site).



Exhibits in the 1849 adobe tell the history of the Martinez area and the Juan Bautista de Anza Expedition.
NPS

1853
Dr. and Mrs. John T. Strentzel buy land in Alhambra Valley.

1869
Dr. Strentzel extends markets by devising carbonized-bran method of shipping fruit; transcontinental railroad completed.

1877
Central Pacific Railroad reaches Martinez, provides long-distance shipping for Alhambra Valley produce.

1879
Engaged to Strentzel daughter Louisa "Louie" Wanda.

1880
Muir marries April 14, age 42; Martinez population 875.

1881
Daughter Annie Wanda Muir born.

1882
Father-in-law Dr. Strentzel builds the Italianate house on the hill.



In 1882 the Strentzels built the hilltop house now known as the John Muir Home.
COURTESY STEVE AND PATTY PAULY

1882–87
Fruit ranching at Martinez.

1884
Telephone service brought to house.

1886
Daughter Helen Muir born.

1890
Father-in-law Dr. Strentzel dies.

1890s
Muir adds brick water tower to rear of house; paints house smoky gray with red trim.

1897
Mother-in-law Louisiana Strentzel dies.

1905
Wife Louie dies; house passes to daughters.

1906
Earthquake strikes; Muir repairs chimneys, and reconfigures first floor.

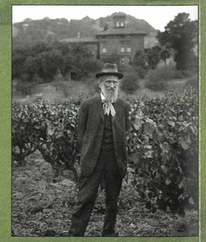
1912
Muir buys house from daughters.

1914
House electrified; Muir dies December 24, age 76.

1915
Helen and Annie Wanda sell house.

Muir, his wife Louie, and daughters Annie Wanda (left) *and Helen pose on the front steps of the big house.*
COURTESY BANCROFT LIBRARY UNIV. OF CALIF., BERKELEY





Muir's successful fruit-ranching business built on his father-in-law's pioneering horticulture.
COURTESY BANCROFT LIBRARY UNIV. OF CALIF., BERKELEY

Few people associate raising a family and fruit ranching with "John of the Mountains" Muir, but he thrived at both. As a young man he achieved success as an inventor and machine shop designer and operator. Muir's Strentzel in-laws had pioneered the fruit business, but Muir made it pay handsomely. He grew up on a Wisconsin farm and knew the value of hard work. Passionate about efficiency and savvy about business, he closely followed his father-in-law's horticultural experiments and innovations, influential throughout California. (Dr. Strentzel showed 91 varieties of seven fruits at one county fair.) The family eventually owned 2,600 agricultural acres in Martinez. Muir focused solely on fruit ranching from 1882 through 1887, when Louie, concerned about his health, convinced him to turn the operation over to others and resume his conservation work and travels. After Dr. Strentzel died in 1890, the Muir family moved to the big house. Here in his second-floor "scribble den" Muir wrote most of his published writings and all of his books—which place him among the world's classic nature writers. From here Muir also traveled to Alaska to study glaciers and around the world to study trees and other plants. Everywhere he went, Muir advocated saving wildness.

Visiting the Muir Home

The house and grounds are open daily, 10 am to 5 pm. The park is closed Thanksgiving Day, December 25, and January 1. Allow 1½ hours to tour the house and grounds, and view the film. The visitor center and first floor of the house are wheelchair-accessible. We strive to make our facilities, services, and programs accessible to all; call or check our website. Find information about safety, and on walks and hikes on Mount Wanda (open year-round, sunrise to sunset), at the visitor center. For firearms regulations check the park website.

More Information
John Muir
National Historic Site
4202 Alhambra Avenue
Martinez, CA 94553-3883
www.nps.gov/jomu
925-228-8860

John Muir National Historic Site is one of over 400 parks in the National Park System. To learn more about national parks and National Park Service programs in America's communities, visit www.nps.gov.

Heaven knows that John the Baptist was not more eager to get all his fellow sinners into the Jordan than I to baptise all of mine in the beauty of God's mountains.

John Muir, 1871