A

POST CARD PORTRAIT

with memorabilia

of

John Burroughs

Literary Naturalist

From The Private
Post Card Collection
Of
Dorothy Unruh Bloodgood

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Courtesy of the American Museum of Natural History

The naturalist who felt a child was never too young to understand. John Burroughs patiently explained the reason until the child understood.

"A rare gem of a man."

FORWARD

This is an intimate insight into the life of John Burroughs, world-famed naturalist and author.

Each post card and memorabilia within the pages of this pictorial review, has its own story to relate. It is hoped that this living tribute to John Burroughs will enable the reader to capture his image, so that when they read his works, they will feel he is a literary friend.

Down through the years, John Burroughs has brought his dedication, awe and love of nature to everyone who seeks it.

A year before his death, in a reflection on his life and beliefs, he said as a message for the young readers of Dr. Barrus' John Burroughs, Boy and Man:

The most precious things in life Are near at hand, without money And without price. Each of you Has the whole wealth of the Universe At your very door. All that I ever Had, or still have, may be yours By stretching forth your hand And taking it.

FORWARD

In this book about John Burroughs, Mrs. Carlton F. Bloodgood does what no one else has done before, uses picture post cards to tell the story of his life. Though some of the post cards are recent pictures of places associated with him, most of the pictures were taken during his lifetime. Wherever he went, it seems, he had to face cameras. He was the most photographed author this country has ever had, known everywhere and immensely popular both with adults and with children. Commencing in the late 1880's, his books were read year after year in schools from coast to coast so a generation of young people grew up who were familiar with John Burroughs' work. Many wrote him after Slabsides was built. They came in great numbers to see him. There has never been anything else like it in American literary history. Because for a half century and more, thousands read his books, to him we owe much of the current interest in our environment.

In a number of ways he seems to belong to our own day. His style is as fresh and readable as if he were a contemporary and he does not preach and moralize in his books as other nineteenth century authors did. As he said, he did not try to find "sermons in stones." He was more interested in the life under the stone. Writing seventy years ago in a time of industrial expansion and increasing wealth, he advocates getting back to nature. His ideas about outdoor education are the last word now. As for conservation, some of the statements he made in his essay "The Noon of Science" about pollution, waste, noise, and the depletion of our natural resources are being much quoted today.

Edwin Way Teale, in a tribute to John Burroughs in The Harvest of a Quiet Eye (1976) says that Burroughs' books have outlived those of many other authors because he wrote of "the simple, enduring, natural things, things that are part of 'the eternal ways." His nature essays, published from 1865 to 1921, are his observations on such subjects as rocks, apples, wild flowers, the sea, birds in many places, and rain. In some of his essays he shares with his readers his adventures in mountain-climbing, fishing in trout streams, and exploration here and in other countries. Some of his essays deal with both American and British authors. Other essays express his views of life based on years of observation, reading and reflection. In The Summit of The Years he tells us that he has never wanted a better world because he could not begin to exhaust the knowledge and the delights of this one.

A good deal has been written about John Burroughs lately as there is at present increasing interest in his works, most of which has been reprinted. To Dr. Perry D. Westbrook, who has written the book on Burroughs for the Twayne American Authors Series, John Burroughs, the gifted amateur, proves the Whitmanesque statement that ordinary people from humble circumstances can be great, that each of us contains infinities.

Elizabeth Burroughs Kelley

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The Arrival Of John Burroughs In Roxbury, Delaware County New York 1837



Name: John

Date: April 3, 1837

Arrived at the Homestead Farm of Chauncey and Amy Kelley Burroughs, Roxbury, Delaware County, New York

All's Well

John was the seventh of the ten children born to Chauncey and Amy Kelley Burroughs. He was the only one of their children who wanted a formal education. He also one day wanted to be an author. As they grew older, John Burroughs' brothers and sisters continued to farm in the Catskills, keeping it a close knit family.



John Burroughs loved his birth month, April. Each of its thirty days brought out the sparkle in him like no other month of the year. It was as precious to him as is April's birthstone, the diamond.

John Burroughs' favorite spring flower was the Arbutus, his birth month flower. It is a creeping plant which has fragrant pink or white flowers in the early spring. To him, this flower was the very spirit and breath of the woods. As he would step forth to look upon the great out-of-doors, he felt the earth never looked so inviting as it did in April. "One could almost eat it; it is the staff of life." There was so much to see and hear and enjoy.

April was truly the "month of John Burroughs' heart." He called it, "My April".....and it truly was.....

His birthday is April third

His only child was born on April fifteenth and

John Burroughs was buried on April third.

Birthplace Of John Burroughs



Photograph by Oliver P. Medsger

Birthplace of John Burroughs, Roxbury, N. Y

The birthplace of John Burroughs lies on the shoulder of "old clump hill," a mountain in Delaware County. It is tucked high up in the beautiful mountainous region of the Catskills Mountains, three miles above the village of Roxbury, New York on the road to West Settlement.

John Burroughs always felt it was part of his good luck to have been born on a farm. From In the Catskills he wrote, "Blessed is he whose youth was passed upon the farm, and if it was a dairy farm, his memories will be all the more fragrant."

Throughout John Burroughs' lifetime, reflections of his boyhood days on the farm were continually noted in his essays and poetry. There was a very strong bond between John Burroughs, his family, and the Homestead Farm. He visited both the Homestead and the family often throughout the years; a yearning always prevailed. Whenever John Burroughs spoke of "home", it usually meant his birthplace.

In the later years of his life, the desire for the place of his childhood became so intense, that he returned to "old clump hill" each summer to live amidst the simplest things of life and to continue his writings.

The Heart Of John Burroughs Speaks....

THE peace of the hills is about me and upon me, and the leisure of the summer clouds is mine. The dissonance and turbulence of cities, how far off they seem! The noise and dust, and the acrimony of politics, how completely the hum of the honey-bee, and the twitter of the swallows, blot them out!

.... The deep, cradle-like valleys, and the long flowing mountain-lines make a fit receptacle for the day's beauty....

The valleys are vast blue urns that hold a generous portion of the lucid hours.

John Burroughs in "The Summit of the Years"

A View Of Roxbury....



During the years of John Burroughs' life, the village of Roxbury was known as one of the most beautiful villages in New York State. Within Delaware County, it was generally acknowledged to be the gem of the Catskills. The homes conveyed the impression of being uniformly white with green window blinds — uniform also in the trimness and neatness of their lawns. The main street with its half mile of overhanging maples, was as immaculate as a parlor. In the autumn, with the falling leaves, it was daily swept from end to end. Roxbury always emanated peace and contentment.

The Boyhood Days of John Burroughs

The Bird That Influenced John Burroughs Life

As a young boy of seven or eight, John Burroughs' first sight of the unfamiliar bird, the Black Throated Blue Warbler, influenced him in his love of nature.

It happened on a Sunday in May, when John and his brothers were out looking for wintergreen, a low-growing, woody, evergreen plant with red berries, white flowers, and leaves which give off a pleasant, spicy odor. John stopped to rest. Sprawling on the ground,



he gazed up in the trees above him and saw flitting about in the branches, a small bluish songbird with a white spot on each wing. The sight of this bird brought excitement to John Burroughs, a strange tingling emotion. He thought he was watching a mysterious visitor from far away. Though John's brothers gave no thought to the bird, John Burroughs always remembered the bird "in-the-back-of-his-mind."

Twenty years later, when John Burroughs saw the works of John James Audubon on birds of North America, he recognized the bird of his youth as the "Black Throated Blue Warbler". The strange tingling emotion was aroused once again as he recalled it was this bird that started him on his life's work in the interim of years in both writing and the study of nature.

It was in the autumn of 1863 that John Burroughs wrote his earliest nature essay on birds. He drew mostly on the experiences of his boyhood days on the farm in Roxbury.

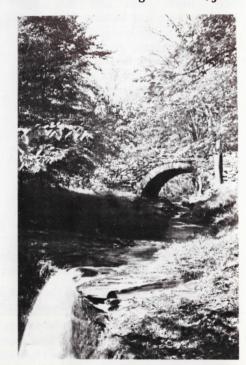
John Burroughs' School Days



At the age of five, Mrs. Burroughs wove her son, John, a white-stripped cotton suit and sent him off to the little stone schoolhouse about a mile from the farm. She understood her son's eagerness to learn and did what she could to encourage it, by persuading John's father to buy an algebra book for him. During his school days, John Burroughs used to go to Stratton Falls, in Roxbury, for slate to be used for pencils. From about the age of twelve, John

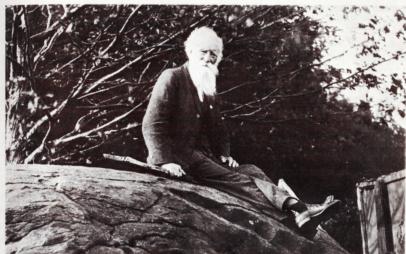
was permitted to attend the West Settlement School only during the winter months when he was not needed for the many, many chores that go with farm life. After several terms at the Roxbury School, John Burroughs ended his formal education with three months each at the Hedding Literary Institute in Ashland, New York and the Seminary in Cooperstown, New York, for which he earned the money himself.

John Burroughs "liked the environment of being a farm boy," but he couldn't say that he especially liked the work.... except at sugar-making time. He was healthy and gladly did all the work that came to him. John Burroughs appreciated the many opportunities the farm afforded for pleasure,



especially going into the woods and gathering the sap from the maple trees to make syrup, cream, and candies. All its associations appealed to him and it was his Spring!

John Burroughs' Boyhood Rock



John Burroughs at Boyhood Rock, Roxbury, New Yor

A giant glacier deposited on the upper pasture of the Burroughs Homestead farm long ago, was claimed by John Burroughs as his "Boyhood Rock." Here John Burroughs played as a boy. As a youth, he received his inspiration to make a mark for himself outside the county line of Delaware County and to see the world. As he sat upon the giant boulder, looking out over the beautiful, breathtaking view before him of Montgomery Hollow and the awe-inspiring mountain ranges of the Catskills, John daydreamed that in years to come, he would see fulfillment. A look at that life outside the county line of Delaware County came through butter, the main source of income from the Burroughs self-sustaining dairy farm. John accompanied his father on a trip with a load of butter, valued at three hundred dollars, to Catskill, a town fifty miles from Roxbury, located along the Hudson River. This trip gave John Burroughs a glimpse of what life was like past the limits he knew in and around Roxbury.

Every summer through his life, John Burroughs would visit his "Boyhood Rock." Always, it brought him comfort and inspiration. And yes, in his later years of life, his daydreams were fulfilled....he made his mark in the literary world.

Cutting Loose From The Homestead Farm

"Cutting loose from father's farm" An expression of John Burroughs.



Tongore School

At the age of seventeen, John Burroughs became a rural school teacher leaving behind him his boyhood days on the farm.

John Burroughs' first teaching position was at Tongore. This is located at the southern end of Ashokan Reservoir and its Aerating plant, built some sixty years later near Olive Bridge (formerly Village of Tongore), New York. John was now fifty miles from the farm, still in the beautiful mountainous Catskill farming country, though it was not dairy.

At the age of twenty (1857), John Burroughs married Ursula North, who lived with her family in Olive, near Tongore. Ursula sensed an unusualness about John Burroughs. A woman's instinct told her John would achieve success in some field. "Sulie" as Ursula was called, was a very immaculate person in her appearance and would always be in her own home. "Sulie's" favorite color was pastel grey; it enhanced her grey blue eyes and fair complexion.

In the interim of the following ten years, John Burroughs taught school in various places. When not teaching, John and Ursula would return to the farm in Roxbury and John would help with the farm work. During one of the "in-between-times", John Burroughs wrote his first essay (1860), "Expression," for the Atlantic Monthly. John patterned his writing after that of Ralph Waldo Emerson, American Essayist, Poet, and Philosopher, but the context of "Expression" came from within John Burroughs himself, giving his

essay a genuineness and value. It was also during an "off teaching" time, that John Burroughs began reading with intense interest the poems of the American poet, Walt Whitman. Little did John Burroughs realize at the time, that he and Walt Whitman were to meet and become close friends for many years to come.

During the days of 1862, John Burroughs started to become disenchanted with being a rural school teacher. He thought he might like to become a doctor. He studied with Dr. Hull in Olive. In the hope of combining medicine with essay-writing, John Burroughs was studying physiology and anatomy, but his heart was not in it.

John Burroughs was now twenty-five years old. He was a very disheartened man because of the uncertainties of his livelihood, he had little money and he was disturbed, too, by the Civil War. Gloom and despair engulfed him, but yet, despite it something seemed to say to him, so he recalled writing of this time years later...."Courage. All will yet be well. You are bound to have your own, whatever happens." "Doubtless," he says, "this feeling had been nurtured in me by the brave words of Emerson. At any rate, there in a little dingy backroom of Dr. Hull's office, I paused in my study of anatomy and wrote 'Waiting."

John Burroughs later discarded the fifth stanza. He decided the other was better, which he used thereafter.

John Burroughs' biographer, Dr. Clara Barrus, says that probably more than any one thing from his pen, "Waiting" has most endeared John Burroughs to his readers.

Over the years countless people told John Burroughs how much the poem had meant to them, that they treasured it for it was full of consolation for them.

In attempting to give reason for its success, John Burroughs once said, "It voices absolute faith and trust in what, in the language of our fathers, would be called the ways of God with man...It is sincere enough to go to the heart and poetic enough to stir the imagination." Its appeal seems to be universal.

It was also in 1862 that John Burroughs and Myron Benton, popular poet, formed a friendship that lasted forty years. The friendship began after John Burroughs received mail from Myron Benton pertaining to his essays. After an initial meeting, John Burroughs visited Myron Benton at his home in Amenia, New York, located across the Hudson River from West Park, New York, where the Burroughs settled down to live in 1873. Myron Benton was not only a popular poet but also a successful farmer...and John Burroughs always thought the Benton farm, "Troutbeck," was the most ideal farm and country home he had ever seen.

lack my hands & was nor Come for wind now tide now see; rand not more gainst time or fate, For lot my were shall come to me. I stong may haste, I make delay s, In what avoid this longer place ? I stoud smid the strend ways and what is nine shall know my face. About awall, by night on stay.
The friences I shall me electing me;
his wind can arine my thouse askay,
her change the ticle of starting What muston if I stand about ? I main with you the Coming years, my heart shall resp where it hat soen that your ap its fruit of tears. The land of love bond; every treat-and Knots of to its intended Kin' now can vun lines pland lang afrant From souls our acoust sund, worth sin, The stars come nightly to the sky, the tidel were tomis to the seen, nor time, nor space, nor day, nor high, can keep my own away pone me form Burzoughs.

The Burroughs Years In Washington, D.C. 1863-1873



Washington, D.C.

During 1863, a new way of life unfolded for the Burroughs. It was a change that primarily took them away from their beloved Catskill Mountains for an interim of nine happy years in Washington, D.C.

Our nation's capitol held for John Burroughs the new horizon that he had been searching for since becoming tired of teaching. He had received an invitation from a friend in Washington to come and look over D.C. for possible employment and meet his friend, Walt Whitman, the American Poet, whose works he knew John Burroughs had become intensely interested in. Obtaining assistance from his New York State Senator and the Congressman representing his home region of Delaware County, after weeks of waiting, he acquired a position with the Bureau of National Banks, in the Treasury Building. Here he was in charge of an iron vault. The vault contained all the surplus bank notes and it was John Burroughs' responsibility to keep track of the money that was put in and taken out. There were hours throughout the workday when John Burroughs "just sat" in front of the vault — he put those hours to good use — he jotted down on paper his thoughts about nature, working on the essays that would later be printed in his first nature book.

Walt Whitman and John Burroughs became the best of friends, seeing each other almost everyday. They enjoyed being out in the open air, and took long walks around Washington, D.C., discussing natural science, philosophy, and literature.

John and Ursula took up housekeeping in a rented, brick, two story house that stood near the Capitol, right where the great marble Senate Office



Building stands today. There was enough land so that John Burroughs was able to grow a truck garden, and people would come and buy his produce. He also had a cow and some chickens, which enabled him to sell milk and eggs. It made him think of the Homestead Farm and that made him happy. A high fence surrounded his home, and as Burroughs worked about in his farm-like atmosphere, he could look up at the Capitol dome, that beamed at him from over the fence. Washington in 1863, was like a country village and there were market gardens all over D.C., even on Capitol Hill.

The Burroughs days in Washington, D.C. were very satisfying ones — they found themselves financially secure and indeed happy with their friends and lifestyle. In 1868, John Burroughs built a house for himself and Ursula with, of course, provisions for a garden. They resided there until 1872, when John Burroughs, upon resigning from his position in the Treasury Department as Chief in the Organization Division of the Bureau of National Banks, went to Middletown, New York as a Bank Receiver.

John Burroughs had two books published while living in Washington, D.C. Notes on Walt Whitman as Poet and Person and Wake Robin. Both received fine reviews though few copies of the former were sold. He later rewrote it. About a third of his essays are in the field of literary criticism.

Riverby, Slabsides, West Park, New York

Remobal

lease note the change in my address, Then next you send a letter.
The've just removed, and must confess
The like this place much better.

New Address of Mr. & Mrs. John Burroughs
Riverby
West Park, Ulster County, New York
At Home after November 1, 1874

The appointment of John Burroughs to Middletown by the federal government, as a receiver of a bankrupt bank (1873) and then a Special Examiner (1874), brought the Burroughs into the Hudson Valley "fruit growing" region of New York State. This is located on the western side of the Hudson River (the better side for fruit growing) between Newburgh and Kingston, along today's Route 9-w.

Before John Burroughs moved to Washington, D.C. his writings were winning acclaim from the literary critics. His popularity was also growing among his readers. John Burroughs lost his salaried position when Cleveland became President in 1885. John Burroughs wanted to devote his days to nature study and writing. He set out to look for a place that would have enough land to support his decision and financially support Ursula, himself, and hopefully a family. The search ended when John Burroughs purchased a nine-acre River Fruit Farm Estate, located in West Park, Ulster County, New York, in 1873. The farm was well cultivated, growing grapes (John Burroughs' main source of income), apples, pears, currents, strawberries, and raspberries.

Happily, John and Ursula were only a day's journey to Roxbury. Often throughout the following years, frequent visits were made to the family in Roxbury. The family in turn visited the Burroughs in West Park. In his lifetime, John Burroughs' longing for his kin and the countryside of Delaware County was continuously with them in thought and heart. Now he was close enough to satisfy this need.

Riverby (River-be)

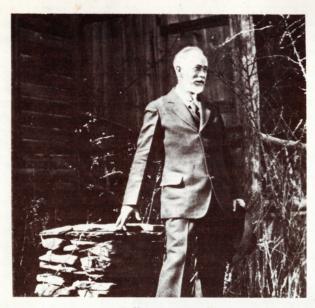
For his newly purchased property, John Burroughs discovered plenty of stone in the nearby hills to build a stone house. He had made up his mind that the only type of house he would build would be of stone. In the summer of 1873, John Burroughs started construction of his house, that he called Riverby, because it overlooked the Hudson River. The cost was six thousand dollars and that included the expense of hauling the stone out of the woods. While the house was being constructed, Ursula and John lived temporarily in the former owner's farmhouse. The basic plan for the house was: dining room, kitchen and pantries on the lowest floor, the library and parlor on the floor above and the bedrooms on the third floor, with the attic and storage room on the fourth floor. One of the rooms on the third floor was claimed by John Burroughs as his Study and it was here where he continued his writing. The Study faced the West, towards his beloved Catskill Mountains. Native oiled woods made of oak, cherry, butternut, maple and birch were used for the interior of Riverby. By November, 1874, Ursula and John were settled in their new home. Among the first visitors to Riverby were poets Myron Benton and Walt Whitman, his close and intimate friends.



Residence of John Burroughs, West Park, N.Y.

John Burroughs was firm in his thoughts that his fruit farm had to pay for itself, and that it did. He hired a man to cultivate the soil, which yielded an income of more than seven or eight hundred dollars a year.

Near Riverby, there were woods in which John Burroughs walked, attuning himself to nature. He said, "Poking around the woods and sitting under the trees was a mental stimulus to be close to the soil, and a delight to take the birds and other wild creatures into my intimacy and affection." In 1875, John Burroughs completed "Winter Sunshine," his second Nature book that he started while living in Washington, D.C. It was well received by the critics as was his "Birds and Poets," written in 1877.



Julian Burroughs

Name: Julian Parents: Ursula & John Burroughs

Arrival: April 15, 1878

Riverby, West Park, N.Y.

Schools: Riverview Academy

Poughkeepsie, N.Y.

Harvard University '01 B.A. Degree, cum laude Cambridge, Massachusetts

Married: Emily Dubois Mackay St. Huberts, N.Y.

September 25, 1902

At Home: Riverby, West Park, N.Y. Children: Elizabeth, Ursula & John Julian: Architect; Writer; Lecturer; Photographer; Landscape Artist

Died: December 15, 1954

Buried: Ascension Church Cemetery, West Park

In life, Julian was his father's living representative.

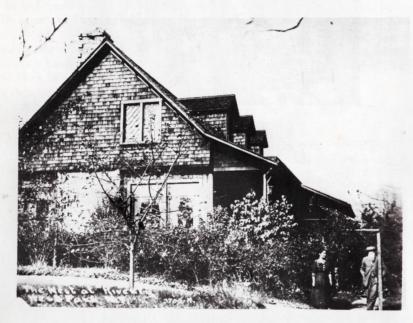
He was like him in height, build, same fair skin, and twinkling blue eyes, that were bluer than his father's. Even their walks were the same. After John Burroughs' death, Julian was the link to John Burroughs, Riverby, Sladsides and Woodchuck Lodge.

Ursula and John at last had the fulfillment and hapiness they had always prayed and hoped for, a child. Completeness encircled their lives; they now knew joy that they had never experienced before. Ursula and John were so proud and pleased. Riverby was not the same — there was the noise and

activity about the rooms that had never been heard before — music to Ursula and John's ears. Love abounded! At times, though, John escaped to the surrounding woods with his dog, for a change of pace.

As Julian grew into boyhood, he and his father went tramping, climbing, boating, fishing, and camping together. John Burroughs read the classics to his son, and in so doing, instilled in Julian the love of good literature, the ambition to write, and the love of the great out-of-doors. Julian came to know the woods surrounding Riverby as well as his father.

Julian was a very observant man and one who exemplified sensitivity. Julian's friendship with his fellow mankind knew no bounds — he lived a full life and was loved and admired by all who crossed his path.



Home of Julian Burroughs

Built in 1902 at Riverby by Julian Burroughs with some help from his father.

Here, Julian brought his bride and the three children were born. John Burroughs spent considerable time in this charming house to be with Julian and Emily and his grandchildren. When in 1913, Julian accepted a position at Colonel Payne's and they moved, Dr. Clara Barrus rented the house from Julian.

In this house, Dr. Barrus cared for Mrs. John Burroughs in her last illness.

Mr. and Mrs. John Burroughs had their last parting in this house and it was in this house that the funeral of John Burroughs was held on April 2, 1921.

Chestnut Bark Study - 1881

The Chestnut Bark Study was a one room cabin located east of Riverby on a hilltop overlooking the Hudson River

Size: 16 feet by 20 feet

Interior:

North End — large stone fireplace

South End — sunny bay window

East Side — two large windows facing Hudson River

West Side — window for cross ventilation

East Side — door where John Burroughs hung his hat and coat

Chimney: Coblestone

Walls: covered with chestnut bark to give picturesque appearance

Shelves: all available wall space for treasured books and those of interest. John

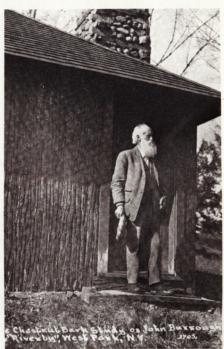
Burroughs was a constant reader

Furnishings: Table, desk, several chairs, settee, and a cot (at times, John Burroughs stayed over)

Object of Structure: a retreat where John Burroughs could write in quietude and he and his friends could visit

It is assumed John Burroughs withdrew from his Riverby Study because the household daily distractions interfered with his concentration and trend of thought when writing. He also wanted to place himself closer to nature.

January 5, 1882, was the first time John Burroughs sat at his new desk. The opening of the first essay he wrote in the Chestnut Bark Study was, "One has only to sit down in the woods or fields, or by the shore of the river or lake, and nearly everything of interest will come round to him, the birds, the animals, and the insects...." In the silence of winter, his thoughts turned to contemplation of the Universe and Infinity, Time and Space. These are the thoughts he placed on paper:



The Chestnut Bark Study of John Burroughs, at

"The Universe, Eternity, the Infinite, are typified by the sphere. The earth is the symbol of All, of the riddle of riddles. We speak of the ends of the earth, but the earth has no ends. In a sphere every point is a center, and every point is the highest point, and this explains the puzzle of Time and Space. There was never a beginning of Time, and there never will be an end....This moment is the center of Time; this instant is the highest point in the revolving sphere. The same with that other form of Time, Space. There is no end to Space and no beginning. This point where you stand, this chair, this tree, is the center of Space; it all balances from this point....We cannot understand it, but we can see why we cannot understand it."

"Accepting the Universe" published in 1920

The first visitor to the Chestnut Bark Study was poet Myron Benton, longtime friend. Outside, the Study was steeped in snow, but inside, there was warmth, comfort and pleasure. John and Myron sat by the hearth in front of a crackling fire and talked at great length.

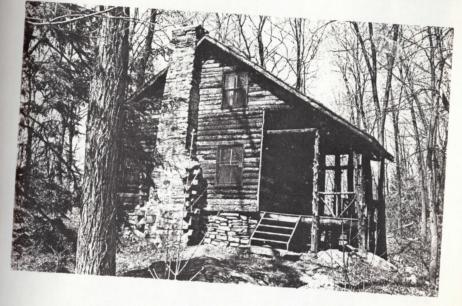
The Chestnut Bark Study afforded John Burroughs the peace and quiet he sought to write his poems and essays and also the privacy to visit with his literary friends.

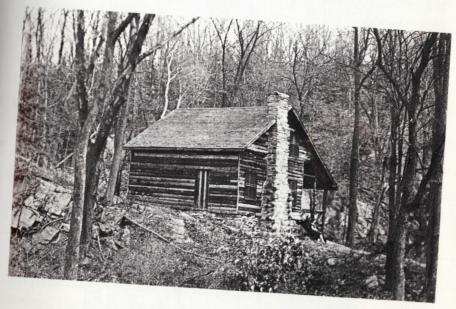


Photograph by Albert Houghton Pratt

John Burroughs' Study and Summer-house at Riverby, West Park, New York

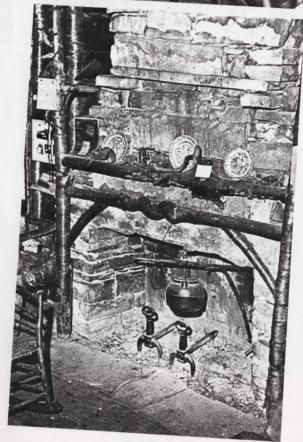
Slabsides





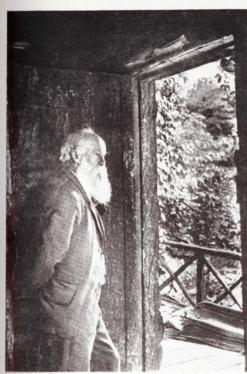
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Slabsides



Photograph by Dr. John Douglas Johnson

The Hermit of Slabsides, West Park on the Hudson

Site found by Julian: November 2, 1893

Clearing the swamp: May 1, 1895

Began building Slabsides: November 25, 1895

Size: One and a half story dwelling

East Side: rustic porch with cedar posts and railings

West Side: long sloping roof

Foundation: local stone

John Burroughs did not realize that in years to come, Slabsides would be a literary shrine.

Completion of Rough Stone Chimney: December 24, 1895 Work on Interior: January 1896

John Burroughs built a fire on the hearth to keep warm while working on the interior

of Slabsides. He also put a crane in the fireplace, on which to hang a kettle for heating water.

Trim: smooth-barked yellow birch

Furnishings: made mostly by John Burroughs himself....he used mainly smooth-barked yellow birch....it included two big bedsteads, one in the screened-off alcove downstairs and the other in the guest room upstairs. On the kitchen table, John Burroughs placed a kerosene stove for extra cooking. The cupboard was filled with china and kitchen utensils. The outer walls of Slabsides were covered with slabs of various kinds of wood, such as hemlock and chestnut. It gave the exterior of the cabin a varied texture and color tone. Slabsides had picturesque lines and it belonged to the spot where it had been built. The name Slabsides had been suggested to John Burroughs by a friend and neighbor. It was built about two miles inland from Riverby, serving as a retreat for himself and as a guest house to entertain his friends, in an environment of natural beauty.

During March of 1896, John Burroughs started to entertain at Slabsides. Many outstanding and prominent visitors were greeted at the door.

One of the early visitors of note, was Naturalist John Muir. Burroughs felt his good friend Muir was about the truest lover of all nature. In 1899, Muir and Burroughs had the honor to travel to Alaska as members of the E.H. Harriman Alaska Expedition, along with some other specialists. In 1909, they traveled again to the Grand Canyon, Yosemite and the Petrified Forest.

July 10, 1903, President and Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt visited Slabsides. John Burroughs had great delight preparing the dinner. The menu consisted of broiled chicken (cooked over the fire), potatoes and onions (baked in the ashes of the fire), and peas (cooked on the little kerosene stove), and lettuce and celery freshly picked from the garden. Dessert was cherry pie baked at John Burroughs' request by Mrs. Burroughs. After dinner, Julian drove Mrs. Roosevelt and Ursula to Riverby, the rest of the party walked; there Ursula served ice cream. The Roosevelts departed on the Presidential yacht that was anchored on the Hudson River. The previous March, John Burroughs had accompanied President Roosevelt on a trip to Yellowstone Park, visiting first at the White House. It had been remarked, that the President could not be in better company than with poet-naturalist John Burroughs.

Over the years hundreds, literally thousands of visitors, came to visit John Burroughs at Slabsides. They came in groups, some came alone. No other American writer has had more contact with his readers than John Burroughs did and most of these contacts were made at Slabsides. Girls from the famous boarding schools, or women from various types of clubs would come. Slabsides was the starting point for their nature walks with John Burroughs. The idea of groups spending the day with John Burroughs had become very popular all up and down the Hudson River and it was difficult to get an appointment.

John Burroughs had especially close ties with Vassar College. The Vassar girls' visits to Slabsides brought John Burroughs happy memories, and they in appreciation, said that their lives were richer and fuller because of John Burroughs. "He seemed almost a part of our college — an outlying part, to be sure, but still he belonged to us" — that is the way the Vassar girls felt about John Burroughs. With faculty approval, the girls in the bird study group, organized it into a club, calling it the Wake-Robin Club.



John Burroughs with visitors at Slabsides - 1907

The Return Woodchuck Lodge, Roxbury

138-John Burroughs, the Poet and Naturalist, at "Woodchuck Lodge," Roxbury, N. Y.



Woodchuck Lodge Roxbury, N.Y. 1910

"Those hills (the Catskills) comfort me as no other place in the world. It is home there."

Burroughs - Life & Letters

In his lifetime, John Burroughs had traveled throughout the United States and abroad. His travels never quieted the yearning that always prevailed within him for his birthplace and the surrounding region he so dearly loved. John was now seventy-three years old and not only had his parents died in the course of time, but also all but 2 brothers and a sister. It was during the summer of 1910 that John Burroughs made the decision to convert a farmhouse built by his brother Curtis into a summer retreat for himself and the family. It was called Woodchuck Lodge. The following spring, repairs and improvements were made. One could usually find John Burroughs at home at Woodchuck Lodge, during "sugartime" and June through October. His happiness and contentment knew no bounds....the mountain air completely accelerated him. It was here that John Burroughs wrote some of his finest essays. In the years that followed, there were many frequent visitors. Burroughs was a renowned literary naturalist. People from all walks of life came to meet and talk with the man who had established such a profound influence in stimulating appreciation of nature.

It is said from "A Child's View of a Naturalist" by Harriet B. Shatraw* (The Catskills-Winter '73):

She and her sister would think up verses to sing, as they sat on the logs to steady them in the woodshed at Woodchuck Lodge. As the logs were being sawed into firewood for the Franklin Stove, the verses were being sung to the tune of the Mulberry Bush —

"This is for the Franklin Stove, the Franklin Stove, the Franklin Stove; this is for the Franklin Stove, to toast our toes in the evening."

The last lines had to be sung just as the chunks of wood fell with a thud into the sawdust.

John Burroughs used to join in and help contribute last lines.

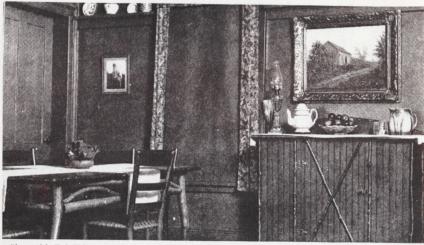


The Franklin Stove at Woodchuck Lodge, Roxbury, N. Y.

The following is an anonymous rhyme, that John Burroughs cut from a magazine and tacked to the bookcase in the living room at Woodchuck Lodge. It was a favorite of his and it is still there. Visitors who come to visit Woodchuck Lodge often stop to read it:

"King Soloman and King David
Led merry, merry lives:
With many, many lady friends
And many, many wives.
But when old age crept o'er
them,
With many, many qualms,
King Soloman wrote the Proverbs
And King David wrote the Psalms."

*(Harriet B. Shatraw was the niece of Dr. Clara Barrus, John Burroughs' biographer, who spent part of the time at Woodchuck Lodge.)



Photograph by Clyde Fisher

Living-room at Woodchuck Lodge, Roxbury, N. Y.

With the help of a nephew, John Burroughs made much of the furniture for Woodchuck Lodge, including the sideboard and table and chairs shown in the above postcard.



John Burroughs Providing for the Chipmunks, Roxbury, N. Y

A John Burroughs quote from Riverby:

"The chipmunk is quite a solitary creature:....
What a clean, pert, dapper, nervous little fellow he is!"



Photograph by Clyde Fisher

John Burroughs on Veranda at Woodchuck Lodge, Roxbury, N. Y.

On the Veranda of Woodchuck Lodge, John Burroughs faced his cot toward the east. It is here where he slept nights. He would say, "those first rays of the sun, how could anyone want to miss them?"

On October 3, 1920, he wrote: "The most impressive moment of the day here in the mountains is the sunrise. From my cot on my sleeping porch I see the first flash of His coming. Before that moment I see His rays glint here and there through the forest trees that give a mane to the mountain-crest....I watch for it each morning as if I were seeing it for the first. It is the critical moment of the day. You actually see the earth turning...."





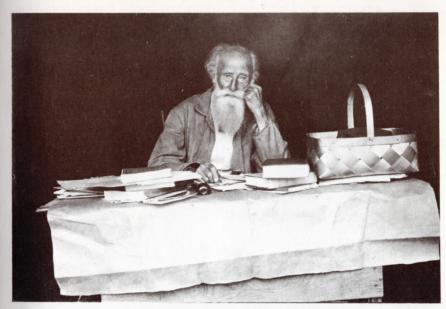


The Laird of Woodchuck Lodge, Roxbury in the Catskills

Long before John Burroughs was an old man, he gave up hunting — except for shooting woodchucks. Woodchucks are a pesky nuisance on a farm where a farm animal, such as a horse, is concerned. The animal could break its leg in one of their holes.

Someone asked John Burroughs if he protected woodchucks. He said, "No, but I make them protect me," and he displayed a fur coat made of woodchuck skins.

He never lost his pleasure in fishing however and all of his life he fished in the streams of the Catskills. His book, Locusts and Wild Honey tells of some of his experiences.



Courtesy of the American Museum of Natural History

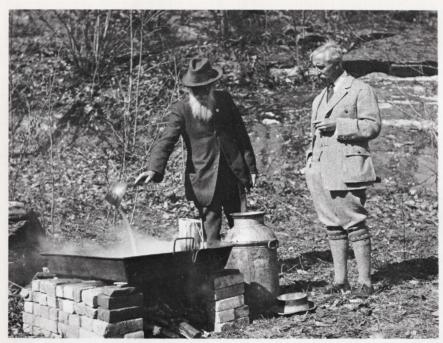
Barn Study

John Burroughs seated at the writing table looking out toward what is now Memorial Field.

It is here, downstairs in the barn study, that he wrote some of his essays.

John Burroughs carried his writing materials in the slat basket on the table.

"The Hay-barn Study", as it was called, was wrecked in the hurricane of 1953.



Courtesy of the American Museum of Natural History

"Sugar Time"

John Burroughs boiling down maple sap on his 83rd birthday, April 3, 1920 at Yama Farms.

Once on his birthday, John Burroughs gave a "Lockjaw Party" to the school children who came bringing bouquets of wild flowers to him at West Park.

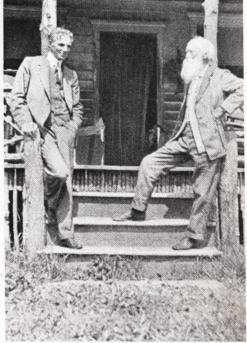
Over an open fire, he cooked maple syrup to a consistency of wax and placed gobs of it in a pan of snow. Each person would then take a fork full and chew it....their jaws hopelessly but pleasantly gummed together until it melted away leaving a flavor that they would remember for many a day.

Burroughs Friendship With: Henry Ford Thomas A. Edison Harvey S. Firestone

Henry Ford, founder of the Ford Motor Company, Detroit, Michigan held high regard for John Burroughs, long before they met. He was a man who enjoyed outdoor life, and found much pleasure in reading the works of John Burroughs.

On December 1, 1912, John Burroughs received a letter from Henry Ford. The letter stated that out of admiration for the naturalist, he would like to send him a new Model-T Ford car. John Burroughs accepted the generous gift. When the car arrived in January, Henry Ford had sent along an instructor. Julian was taught how to drive the car, and in turn, taught his father.

The following June, John Burroughs met Henry Ford in Detroit. Immediately, a strong



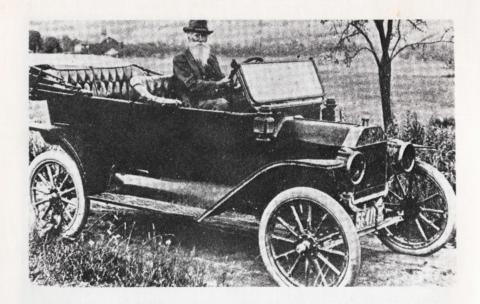
Photograph by Albert Houghton Pratt

John Burroughs and Henry Ford at Woodchuck Lodge, Roxbury-in-the-Catskills

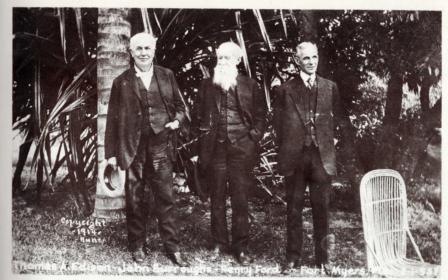
bond of friendship formed between the two men.

In August, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Ford visited the Burroughs at Woodchuck Lodge. The Fords were delighted with the pleasures and the closeness to nature they enjoyed during their stay.

During the same month, Thomas Edison visited John Burroughs at Woodchuck Lodge. A few summers later he returned for another visit accompanied by Harvey S. Firestone.



High esteem for John Burroughs and the love for the outdoor environment, are the links that brought these four outstanding and great Americans together in friendship....enjoying fine times in each other's company.



Thomas A. Edison - John Burroughs - Henry Ford — Fort Myers, Fla.

Ursula and John spent the winter of 1914 in Georgia. During their stay, John took time out, along with Henry Ford, to enjoy a memorable visit with Thomas Edison at his winter home in Fort Myers, Florida. Ursula was happy to remain in Georgia with friends until John's return.

In February, 1917, John Burroughs accompanied Mr. and Mrs. Henry Ford on a cruise to Havana, Cuba. While in Havana, John received word that Ursula had died the day before, March 6.

Ursula died at the age of eighty, she had been in failing health for some time. After receiving the news of Ursula's death, John Burroughs walked in grief, in the hills of Havana. They had been united in marriage for nearly sixty years. Upon his return to West Park, John, with Julian and Dr. Barrus, journeyed with Ursula to Tongore, where she was buried in the Tongore Cemetery beside her mother and father.

In her lifetime, Ursula was an immaculate housekeeper; everything had to be spotless within the home. In a moment of humor, John once said, "Even the cat knew enough to wipe her feet on the mat before she came into the house; for she knew for her mistress' well-being that her home be spotless." John was unable to work well in that sort of environment and through their lives, this was the only irritation that existed between them. Those were the days John retreated to the Chestnut Bark Study and Slabsides. There he was able to write and visit with his literary friends.

In 1918, John Burroughs, Thomas A. Edison, Henry Ford and Harvey S. Firestone took an auto trip to the Smokey Mountains in Tennessee. Ford was very good at cutting wood; Firestone was a splendid organizer; Edison told great tales around the campfire and Burroughs held classes in nature. Four great men having a great time.



John Burroughs being congratulated on his Doctor of Letters degree at Yale in 1910.

Among the honors John Burroughs received in his later years were degrees from several universities. He was one of the first to be elected to the American Academy of Art and Letters and was the recipient of the gold medal which is awarded for excellence in "belles-lettres."

The Final Trip

John Burroughs' Final Return To Woodchuck Lodge

John Burroughs spent the winter of 1921 in California, in the company of his granddaughter, Ursula, and Dr. Barrus and her nieces, Eleanor and Harriet. It was on their return home to West Park on the train, that John Burroughs died in his sleep on March 29. On his 84th birthday, April 3rd, John Burroughs made his last trip from West Park to Roxbury. It was his wish that he be buried upon the old farm where he had been born, beside his "Boyhood Rock." It was also his wish that the field in which the rock and grave are located, be cared for perpetually.

John Burroughs' wishes were carried out, and the field is known as Burroughs Memorial Field. It has been designated as a historic site and is cared for by New York State and the Roxbury Burroughs Club, Roxbury, New York.

The Memorial Tablet on the Boyhood Rock was unveiled by John Burroughs' grandchildren, Ursula and John, on April 3, 1922. The bas-relief reproduction by C.S. Paolo is of a statue C.S. Petro sculptured of John Burroughs at Woodchuck Lodge. The Tablet bears lines from the poem "Waiting" as well as the naturalist's name and year of his birth and death.

Each year, people from many of our own states and from abroad, travel to Roxbury to visit Memorial Field. It is there they sign the register that is kept in a copper box by the grave site. Every June an Open House is held at Woodchuck Lodge, hosted by the Burroughs family and the Roxbury Burroughs Club. Brief talks are given by people of note; a service is held at the grave site and then, all in attendance gather on the side lawn of Woodchuck Lodge for cookies and punch.

After John Burroughs' death, Julian Burroughs gave Slabsides to his father's close friends, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Ford, who in turn presented it to the John Burroughs Memorial Association in New York to be cared for perpetually. On the third Saturday in May and the first in October, admirers of John Burroughs gather at Slabsides to pay homage to him. Slabsides Day is hosted by members of the Burroughs family and the John Burroughs Memorial Association. Talks are given by members of the Association, and there are guided walks along the nature trails. As one enjoys one's own picnic lunch outside of Slabsides, the surrounding environment of natural beauty holds you in indescribable awe.

John Burroughs will continue to inspire and influence the thought of all who read his essays, and also stimulate the appreciation of nature during the todays and tomorrows to come.

Remember John Burroughs' recipe for happiness:

"Keep the currents moving, don't let your life stagnate."



This photograph post card was taken by Allyn H. Wright in 1919 in the courtyard of the Francis W. Parker School, San Diego California. This was the third trip Burroughs had made to California and the next to last made in 1921.



Memorial tablet of John Burroughs on boyhood rock, Roxbury, N.Y.



A New York State Historic Site

Where John Burroughs is buried.

Memorial Field Roxbury, N.Y.

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