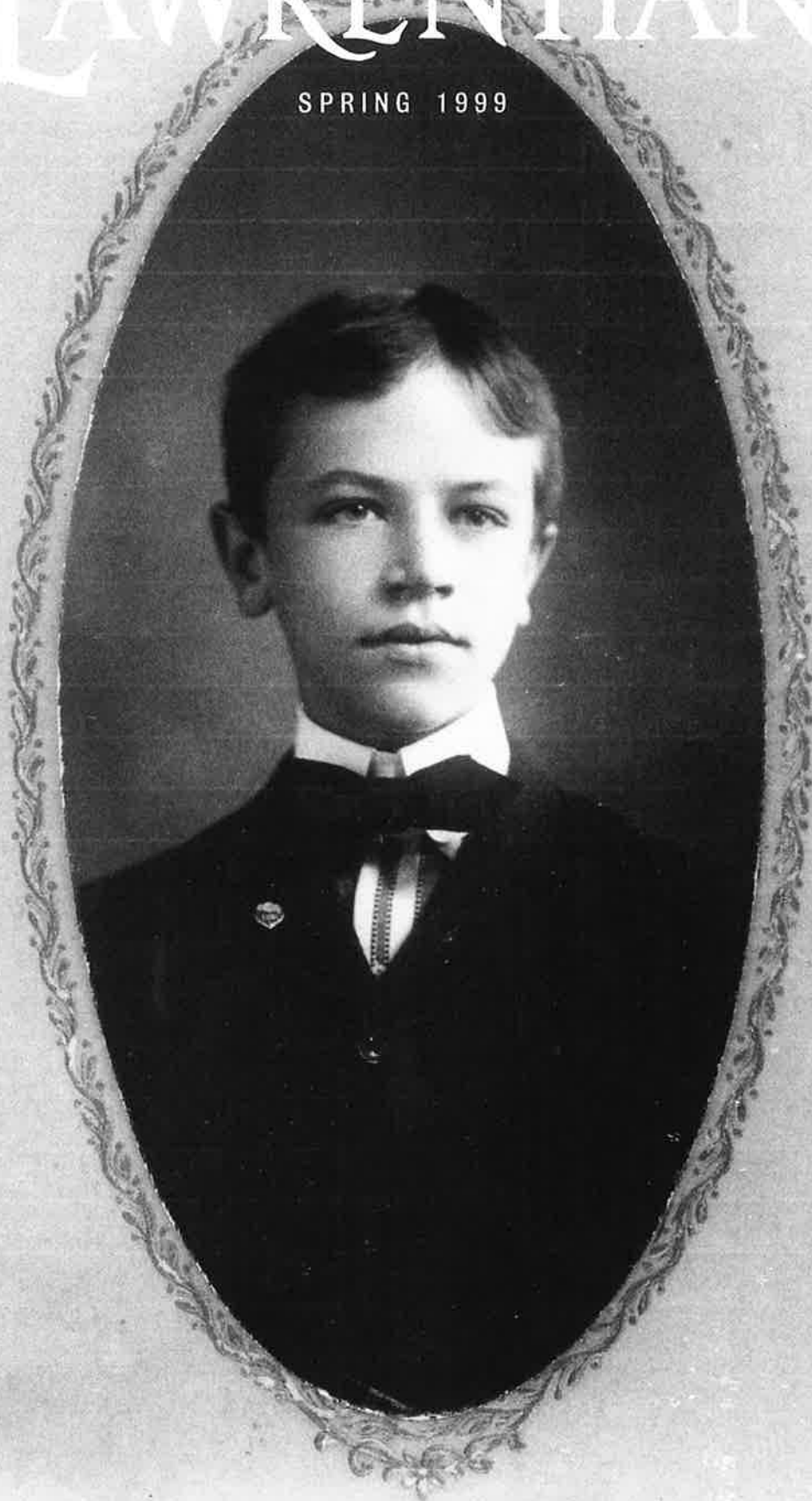


LAWRENTIAN

SPRING 1999



“Now write us fully my boy...”

Aldo Leopold's Letters From Lawrenceville



by Curt Meine

On the morning of January 5, 1904, Aldo Leopold '05 did what, over the decades, untold numbers of young people from small towns across the American hinterlands have done: he left childhood behind and went away to school. As The Lawrenceville School had drawn so many into its halls, it drew Aldo — one week shy of his 17th birthday — from the Mississippi River town of Burlington, Iowa.

Aldo boarded a train in Burlington and arrived the next day in the exotic eastern environs of Lawrenceville, New Jersey. It was the first step outward in a journey that would lead him into a career destined to transform the American conservation movement. The impact of that journey reverberates still.

Aldo was the eldest son of Carl Leopold, a successful manufacturer of office furniture and (in Aldo's later words) a "pioneer in conservation," and Clara Starker Leopold, a native Burlingtonian with an abiding love of grand opera, gardens, German cooking, and her four children. It was primarily through Clara's intervention and insistence that Aldo ended up at Lawrenceville. To ease her debilitating hay fever, Clara traveled with her family every summer to the north end of Lake Huron, where they stayed at a summer cabin in the Les Che-neaux Islands. There the Leopolds made the acquaintance of Dr. Simon McPherson, Lawrenceville's Head Master.

When the idea of Aldo's heading east to school was first broached, Clara was enthusiastic: she had attended finishing school Back East herself and thought

an eastern education would be best for her special oldest boy. Carl saw the matter in a more practical light; what could Lawrenceville offer that Burlington's excellent high school could not? Carl's view apparently shifted when Aldo developed a strong interest in the then-emerging field of forestry. Aldo and his father shared an all but intuitive concern over the loss of wild things. These years saw, too, the final depletion of the great pineries of the upper Great Lakes. With the opening of Yale University's forestry school in 1905, young men now had a sure path to follow in pursuit of a conservation career. The Lawrenceville School, Aldo's parents reasoned, offered better preparation for admission to Yale.



The Aldo Leopold who boarded the train that day was intelligent, self-confident, and conscientious. Already he showed the combination of talents and predilections that would mark his later work as a forester, wildlife ecologist, and wilderness advocate. He displayed his mother's aesthetic sensitivity and facility with words, as well as his father's pragmatism, sense of responsibility, and love of the hunt. Aldo had been a hunter himself since he was first able to accompany his father out on the Iowa prairies and into the duck marshes along the Mississippi River. In his teens, Aldo began to study birds more systematically, and he considered himself an aspiring

I have attempted a map of this vicinity, which, although of course inaccurate, may help you to understand the various places to which I refer. It is almost lettering now so will close.

Your Aldo

Originally rendered in brightly colored pencils, Aldo's map of the "Vicinity of Lawrenceville" was enclosed in a four-page letter to his mother. Part of the February 6, 1904 letter in his handwriting is reproduced above.



Robert McCall

The LAWRENTIAN is delighted to treat readers to a major literary event: the first publication of Aldo Leopold's '05 letters home from Lawrenceville.

The founding father of America's conservation movement, Aldo Leopold was also a towering literary figure. Anyone doubting the enduring influence of Mr. Leopold need look no further than pages 9 and 17 of this issue, where a United States Senator and America's poet laureate, call him a leading influence in their respective lives.

To Ted Stanley '43, whose generosity has revived the Leopold legacy for a new Lawrenceville generation, and who brought the Leopold letters to the attention of Lawrenceville Science Department Chair Kevin Mattingly P'99 '01; to Dr. Mattingly for bringing the letters to *our* attention; to the Leopold Foundation, which granted permission to publish this selection of them; to the University of Wisconsin-Madison Archives, which provided us with letter facsimiles and photographs of Mr. Leopold; and to Curt Meine, conservation biologist and acclaimed Leopold biographer, who chose and edited the letters and wrote the lovely essay on (at left) Mr. Leopold's Lawrenceville years, the LAWRENTIAN owes a debt of gratitude.

ornithologist. He was unusually self-aware for a boy his age. Above all he was an earnest lad, not given (not yet, anyway) to the hijinks of his soon-to-be classmates.

On January 7, 1904, Carl Leopold wrote a first letter to his son. "Mamma has written to you each day since your departure so that you will probably hear from us quite often." Clara, with her severe Germanic script, fell easily into the role of family correspondent; Carl, with his undisciplined hand, dictated occasional notes at his office. But Carl's affection for his son flowed no less. He wrote to Aldo,

"Now write us fully my boy, as often as you can every detail of your life in school as it will be of interest to us."

It might be said that with this instruction Aldo Leopold began his life as a writer. For it soon became evident that Aldo regarded letter writing as much more than a filial duty. Over the next 18 months, the duration of his Lawrenceville career, Aldo would send home to his family some 165 letters. Those 165, at least, are the ones that have been preserved. In fact, all of these date from Aldo's first semester (January to June 1904) and last semester (January to

June 1905). Those from the intervening period have apparently been lost, although letters to Aldo from his family at this time were saved.

Even given this gap, the Leopold letters provide a remarkable record of stu-

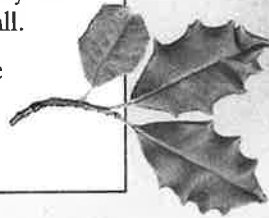
dent life at Lawrenceville after the turn of the century. They also provide a glimpse into the emergence of a remarkable personality. For writers, the letters carry the earliest tones of a voice that would transform how we write about the natural world. For conservationists, they show one of the most perceptive minds of the 20th century as it first began to look out into the world. For students, the letters offer a reminder that, even in an age of word processors, e-mail, overnight express, and media overkill, the written word holds powers and forms bonds that time cannot easily erode.

Any Lawrenceville student away from home for the first time will strike some of the same notes. Aldo's very first letter, dated January 8, 1904, began with the mundane. Upon settling into Kennedy House, Aldo reported to his mother that his room was "small but well lighted, and I like it very well. Of course it looks bare at first, but [it] will come out all right." But

ABOUT THE AUTHOR/EDITOR

Dr. Curt Meine is a conservation biologist and research associate with the International Crane Foundation in Baraboo, Wisconsin. He is author of the biography *Aldo Leopold: His Life and Work*, (University of Wisconsin Press, 1988) and co-editor with Richard L. Knight of *The Essential Aldo Leopold: Quotations and Commentaries*, which will be published by the University of Wisconsin Press this fall.

In editing these letters, Dr. Meine has preserved Mr. Leopold's original spelling and grammar.



the next day he wrote again, describing the first of his "tramps," his almost daily excursions into the countryside around Lawrenceville. Aldo was an inveterate walker and explorer and observer, and during his time there the New Jersey countryside would richly feed his burgeoning naturalist's senses. Upon returning to Kennedy House, Aldo's first priority was always to record his experience, in all its youthful acuity and exuberance, for the benefit of his family back home.

Within a month of his arrival, Aldo's classmates had tagged him as "the naturalist." In his brief but intense tenure at Lawrenceville, Aldo would further verify the label. Already well versed in the birds of the Midwest, he learned the birds of the East through one fall and two spring migrations. When in the spring of 1905 he acquired a copy of Asa Gray's classic *Manual of Botany*, an entirely new realm of discovery—and writing—opened to him. In his descriptions of crow hunts and gloomy beech woods, white-eyed vireos and blooming black cherries, the boulders of Stony Brook and the green mountains beyond Washington's Crossing, Aldo Leopold began to draw the long line of ink that would give the conservation movement one of its great texts, *A Sand County Almanac*, and its philosophical touchstone "The Land Ethic."

Yet, one cannot read these passages—Aldo's "news of the woods and fields"—without a sharp pang of sadness. The world Aldo Leopold knew at Lawrenceville in 1904 has been transformed, and many of its delights lost. Time for exploration seems foreshortened, and the places to explore are sadly eroded, as we close out the century. We read these accounts with some nostalgia. We wonder what students another century hence will see, and hear, and smell, and what they will write about in letters home to their families.

So read these selections, too, with a sure sense of realism. If we hope to protect and restore the delights—delights that were available to Aldo Leopold for the price of a durable pair of walking shoes—we will have to work hard at it. We will have to alert ourselves, our students, our instructors, our neighbors, and our elected representatives. In one of Leopold's last letters from Lawrenceville, the new graduate asked on the verge of his future, "Is it right to harden our hearts at such a time as this? For what but opportunity is there ahead? And who could ask more?" On the verge of our own future, we might ask the same.

January 8, 1904

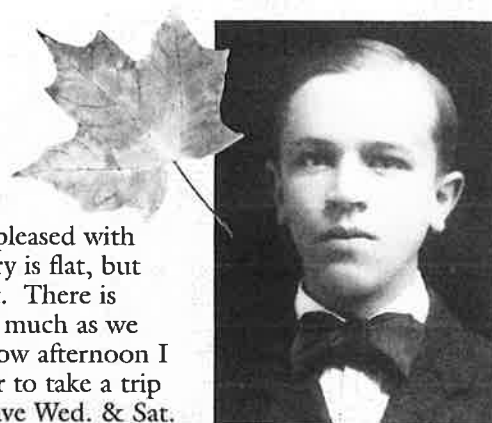
My dear Mama,

...So far I am well pleased with everything. The country is flat, but not so bad as I thought. There is much timber, almost as much as we have at home. Tomorrow afternoon I intend either to skate or to take a trip into the country (we have Wed. & Sat. afternoons as half holidays). There seem to be a good many birds here; in passing around the grounds I have seen Purple Finches, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, and Golden-crowned Kinglets, which are rare with us in winter. ...

There are some very nice fellows here, also a great number who are not. I like most of my teachers, but of course have not seen much of them yet. Everything is kept very clean, and all the houses are in good condition. The Recitation Hall and Chapel are very fine buildings. ...

I can not write a long letter today, as I am very busy. Remember me to Papa and the rest. Hoping you are well, I remain

Your Aldo



Kennedy House
January 12, 1904

My dear Mama,

...[The 7:00 a.m. "call"] is the most uncanny thing I ever heard. A waiter comes into the upper hall with a big bell. Then, the second the bell on the Hamill House begins to ring, he walks around to each door swinging it (his bell) with all his might. It makes so much noise that the bed shakes, and you must put the cover over your ears. The worst is, that it keeps up for five minutes. At the end you are certainly very much awake. ...

The weather here is beautiful, with warm sunny days and cool nights. The daily range of temperature is much less than at home, which is here called "Out West."

How are the birds doing? I contemplate another walk tomorrow afternoon. I see at least a dozen bluebirds here daily in coming to and from recitations. ...

With love to you and the others, I remain
Your Aldo

January 27, 1904

My dear Mama,

...This noon at the table we were joshing [George] Orr ['06] over his crow hunting. He belongs to the gun club and often goes out to shoot crows without apparent success. One of the boys was telling of the great number of crows he had seen in a certain field, and recommending it to Orr, when Poittie Page, the shy New Yorker, said that all the crows in this neighborhood, when they cawed, seemed to say Orr! Orr! Orr! Everybody roared, [Latin and Greek Master] Mr. Henry tried merely to smile but soon was concerned in keeping his seat, while [Kennedy house-master] Mr. Robinson, who was at the far table and had not heard the joke, looked fierce. ...

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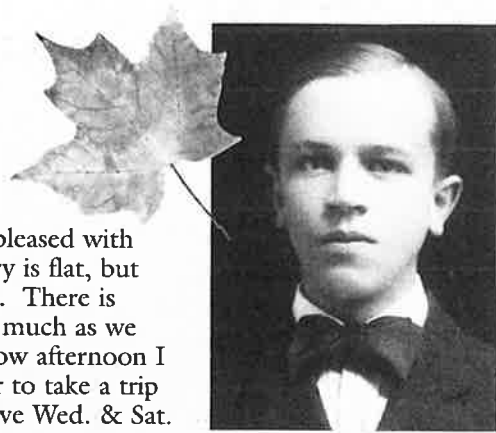
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THE ALDO LEOPOLD FOUNDATION

The LAWRENTIAN thanks the Aldo Leopold Foundation, a nonprofit organization founded by the children of Mr. Leopold, for permission to publish his letters from Lawrenceville.

The foundation keeps his legacy alive by promoting the "Land Ethic" so eloquently defined by Mr. Leopold. Its mission is to promote harmony between people and land. The foundation engages in ecological restoration, education, and scientific research on the private 1,400-acre Leopold Memorial Reserve in central Wisconsin. The centerpiece of the reserve is the original Leopold Sand County farm and "Shack," now a registered national historic landmark. Its activities include restoring and managing prairie, savanna, and wetland communities; conducting ecological research; and performing environmental education.

As a nonprofit organization, the foundation depends on private contributions to keep the Leopold legacy alive. For more information about the foundation's activities and services contact: Aldo Leopold Foundation
P.O. Box 77 Baraboo, WI 53913
608 355-0279, 608 356-7309 (fax),
e-mail: leopold@baraboo.com

Kennedy House
February 10. [1904]

My Dear Mama:

...A novelty in the way of a lecturer today. A full-blooded Indian spoke on "The School of Savagery." His name is Eastman, and he is a graduate of Dartmouth, of fine build and knows his business. Like a true Indian, he talks little, says a great deal to those who have understanding and nothing to those who have not. He ventured no opinions on the present state of his race, holding fast to his subject, or, the education of the young Indian, evidently as it was before the time of white-demoralization, at least he did not mention the latter. Some words and phrases which I have never heard anywhere else impressed me particularly. He said, after speaking of the Indian's knowledge of nature "Nature is the gate to the Great Mystery." The words are simple enough, but the meaning unfathomable. ...

Will write again in a few days, meanwhile, I am
Your Aldo

Kennedy
February 24, 1904

My dear Mama,

...I had an interesting trip today, went directly north, intending to find where the crows roost so regularly. I passed through the grove country, and reached the divide of Stony Brook, which is further than I have yet been. Here I had a view which answered many questions. On the opposite divide, across the brook, are a range of very high hills, which extend to the suburbs of Trenton. They are apparently sandy, and almost covered by forest, and it is there that the crows roost. They are too far for a half days [sic] trip, but some time when I get a whole day I will visit them.

...I estimate that one may see from a thousand to fifteen hundred crows here in a half days [sic] tramp. They are even more foxy than our Iowa Jims but could easily be shot in great numbers when they fly to roost. ...

Your Aldo

Kennedy
March 12. [1904]

My dear Mama,

...There was a half holiday today, Mr. Robinson having arranged all the lessons this afternoon, so unwilling to miss the opportunity I started on my usual walk. In spite of the snow it was quite pleasant where the cold wind did not penetrate, as the sun shone brightly. ...I went along the Johnson Trolley toward Princeton and reaching Stony Brook Mill crossed into the hills. Here I was joined by [Hudson] Kelley ['05] and [Edward] Bullock ['06], who wanted to accompany me on one of my trips. (By the way, it has become a very general amusement here to tramp around the country with a staff and brag about miles when returned home). I took them through the woods to the gorge, where they expostulated about the boulders, but when we came to "The Boulders" themselves and the magnificent view from their summit they were much surprised at there "being anything worthwhile in this country." ...

With love to you and the rest, I am
Your Aldo

Kennedy House
March 16, 1904

My dear Mama,

...Returning from the game this morning Orr and I thought we would look at the drained pond to see the Killdeer, and accordingly went there. Out of curiosity we waded out through the mud to look at a few shallow pools which still remain, and had quite a surprise. The whole bottom was covered with thousands of dead tadpoles, catfish, bass, sunfish, shiners, white perch and chub. Most were fingerlings, but we found several 1 lb. catfish. In the pools were still a few hundred live fish, mostly catfish and tadpoles. Why on earth they drain the pond I cannot imagine, they do nothing but toward

summer fill it up again. Unless I can find a reason I intend to speak to the Doctor [John McPherson, Head Master] about it. George and I procured a bucket and gathered each a dozen or so fish to keep and restock the pond when it is filled again. ...

With best wishes to you all, I am,
Your Aldo

May 4, 1904

My dear Mama,

...Today, Wednesday, I took my usual walk, and down the country a way met [Goerge] Jones ['06].... He continued with me and saw about a dozen new species before evening, which pleased him greatly. The first new migrant for me was a White-eyed Vireo. I found him in a rather animated argument with his neighbors of all species, and he came out ahead as usual. They are a queer bird, and attract nearly as much attention from other birds as the blue Jay. It is very amusing to have one eye you critically for a while, and then break out into a sarcastic, "Who are you, eh?" They have an endless variety of songs and calls.

With best wishes to you all,
Your Aldo

May 18, 1904

My dear Mama,

...The spring migration has begun to wane, although by no means all transients have left. Sunday afternoon in a hurried walk, I was rewarded by seeing the first Hummingbird. On Monday the Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, a rather rare bird, was seen. Yesterday and today are blanks, the first since April. For a while I averaged five or six per day. In finding new species I have also been fortunate, thirteen having been added up to date. Inclusive of these I am now acquainted with 274 species of birds in the United States. Of course, this is but idle talk and not by any means the end or object of my study of Ornithology, but still rather interesting to note. ...

With best wishes to you all
Your Aldo

January 22, 1905

My dear Mama,

...In passing through the tract of woods down along the lower Shipitaquin, I found four grey squirrels in one tree, and could have killed any or all of them during any one of the twenty minutes which I spent watching their antics. Before this I did not know that there were four squirrels in that whole tract, with which I am well acquainted. I call it "The Woods of Eerie Gloom" on account of the prevalence of beech in its boundaries, and have more than once gone out of my way to pass through it at dusk and feel the magic of the beeches. Even in the day-time there is a vague dimness and mystery about the beechwoods, which would be

second only to the mystery of the pine-glooms, were they not entirely dissimilar. Many poets and writers have written about the pines, and some have succeeded, but I have never read of the "beeches in winter."

...I hope you have enjoyed as fine weather as we here in Jersey. I almost said Jerseymen, but that would not hold for me; I am always "from Ioway." It is tantalizing to hear Eastern people say "Io'-wa," putting the accent on the o as if the word were Greek or French.

All this, however, fails to agree with my resolution of ending this letter, so with best wishes to the home folks
"from Ioway"

Lawrenceville, New Jersey
Upper House, January 25, 1905.

My dear Marie,

...It has now snowed hard and increasingly for just 27 hours. The wind is blowing a gale from the north, and the temperature hovers near 0 [degrees] F. The depth of the snow in the open varies from none at all to three or four feet, and drifts are as much as twenty feet tall. ...

Happily today is Wednesday, so at one o'clock I started out prepared for the drifts with my knee boots under instead of outside. The plan worked to perfection.

It would take a tenderfoot to declare that he could walk ten miles on an afternoon like this. Progress was in some places impossible. ... It was fine in the woods when the wind could only be heard overhead. The snow was two feet deep there, but it was really a luxury to be out of the wind. When the limit of the wood was reached, I got in the lee of the trolley embankment, and by a hundred yards run, into the next piece of timber. It was beautiful there, especially along the creek. On some isolated rocks in the creek channel the snow was piled into large cones and domes as much as two feet high and hardly a foot in diameter at the base. There were some chickadees, the forever cheerful, in these woods. It was with reluctance that I started back, but the wind was of a different opinion from myself. ...

I do not remember ever enjoying a bit of winter weather more than this of today. Neither have I heard so many maledictions as were today heaped upon this "blasted Jersey Climate" by persons who put on a hat, gloves, overcoat, gaiters, sweaters, and what not, to go from here to Chapel or to Memorial Hall.

Perhaps these trips are dull reading for you, but today was a great day among the great. I must get to work now, so will end with best wishes to all from

Your brother
Aldo

Lawrenceville, New Jersey
March 5, 1905.

My dear Papa,

I have written Marie today, so I cannot make this letter as long as I would like to. You will no doubt expect to hear of many signs of Spring here, but such is not the case, - in fact the weather is very cold and a new

snow covers the ground to a depth of three inches. It is not at all disagreeable, though.... I have seen things of interest, – of sufficient interest to carry across a continent and prove none the less to you. To make a long story short – I saw a magnificent Bald Eagle, in all the splendor of his white plumes and dusky pinions, over on Stony Brook yesterday. He was a beauty, and reminded me of those that used to winter down on Big Island, and how shamefully they have been slaughtered. ...

Your Aldo

March 28, 1905

My dear Mama,

... The best part...of these long and glorious days is the early morning, before breakfast. Lately I have studied until a half-hour before breakfast, and then had a stroll about the dew-laden campus and woods, just enjoying deep breaths of the sweet, clear air, laden with early sunshine and robin-songs. ... I find that Geometry can be done most profitably before breakfast, as it takes the clearest condition of even a clear head to get it thoroughly. This is only one of many ways of getting along without genius.

...Hoping every one of you is as well as I, and with best wishes to all

Your Aldo

April 24, 1905
Easter Sunday

My dear Papa,

...The joy of Easter's Resurrection is today symbolized in as fine a day as ever was given to an unappreciative world. The first Sweet White Violets are blooming, and a beautiful flower they are, – unsurpassed for the delicacy of their perfume. Bank swallows have arrived and are skimming merrily over the pond all day long. In the woods is a handsome big Towhee, quite alone so far, who arrived Friday. Chimney Swifts are already abundant, the first ones having appeared late on Thursday. Truly May is drawing near if these birds have already appeared, and I look forward with ever increasing anticipation to this wonderful season of increasing delights. The Black Cherry Trees are already well in bloom, and made a beautiful decoration combined with Palms and Easter Lilies in the chapel this morning. The Doctor's Sermon was excellent, as even the chronic "kickers" admitted, and I am sure brought to everyone a much needed increase of appreciation of what the fact of the Resurrection really means. I wonder if the Holy Land is blessed with such a Resurrection of Nature as occurs with us here at this season. For surely it is the most eloquent of all Easter-day sermons to breathe the Spring-breeze laden with the warmth of sunny skies, the essence of April flowers and the joy of a thousand bird-songs, and then to realize that countless centuries would not have prepared such an abode for us if we terminated our existence in the grave. For that indeed would be action without an object, and such is not the way of the universe, as we have only to look about us to see.

But the shadows on the campus are lengthening, and it is time for Vespers. I trust that you all have been given as glorious an Easter-day as this.... Hoping that our fickle but rich and generous old Iowa climate, whom we have all learned to love long before this, has been kind to you all this day, and that all are well and happy, I am still

Your Aldo

(P.M. 5-01-5)
Lawrenceville N. J. MAY!

My dear Mama: –

I am at a loss to begin today. Such weather! such a flood of flowers and birds! One cannot spend ten minutes outdoors without finding something new or surprising, or old and well known, but just returned. ...For the first Apple-blossoms are out, the Black Cherries showering down their white petals, the Pears and Plums are like great snowbanks, across the campus the Spirea and Forsythia alternate in a white and yellow ribbon under the tender green of sprouting maple and Lindens, all set against the green ivy on the houses beyond. In woodland the Perfoliate and Sessile-leaved Belloworts are well under way, Indian Turnip and Ground Ivy fleck the edges with purple, the first early Dogwoods appear like lace-work above the green screen of leaving Kinnickinick or Cornel, which is especially abundant in the Pond Grove. In some woodlands the Allspice and Shad-bush and Service-berry embower the brooklets in their blossoms. In the fields are the Purple Violets, and what would we do without them? The books call them "common." So they are in that every pasture is purpled with them, but not otherwise. In the woods I visited yesterday near Pennington great numbers of Wood- and Rue-Anemones and a perfect sod of Adder's Tongues were still lining the creeksides, and White and Yellow Violets on every knoll. Verily this is a country rich in wild-flowers.

Best wishes to all from
Your Aldo

May 6, 1905

My dear Papa,

...Once in a while one will strike a Red-letter day anywhere, and especially in May. And if today was not one, I am off my definition. For imagine yourself in a beautiful piece of brushy, timbered hillside, an ideal place for wood-birds, and feeling rather disappointed because the long trip has so far revealed nothing. Then you hear a shard cheep! cheep! note which you take for an Ovenbird and idly follow it up. From out a clump of newly-leaved Kinnickinick springs an olive-green bird too large for most warblers and too small for anything else, and with flight of no unusual character but astonishing rapidity flies low over the ground to the next clump. You follow and peer in. Nothing moves. You look more closely. Perfectly motionless, a bird with spread tail and greenish back perches on the trunk of a sapling. He turns! a flash of black and gold! and Ye

Gods! – A Hooded Warbler! He regards you still motionless, but on the alert for your slightest movement. Nervously you fumble for glasses, get them focused successfully, and look and look and look. A Hooded sure enough, and O what a beauty!

Best wishes to you all from
Your Aldo

May 21, 1905

My dear Mama,

...I almost fear to begin on the news of the woods and fields for the past week; in fact, I sadly fear my attempts are too frequently narrow and dry. We can put on paper that such-and-such flowers are added to the list, that these birds have arrived and those are nesting, but who can write the great things, the deep changes, the wonderful nameless things, which are the real object of study of any kind? Who can put on paper the air of the May-morning, tingling with the music of Bobolinks, and laden with odors of a thousand springing leaves waiting to catch the first sunbeams? Who can breathe the spirit of the flowery meadows, waving in the fragrant afternoon breeze, of describe the cool and leafy greenness of the woodland temple at noonday? So that when I start off on my "lists," is it the irrepressible expression, worthless in itself, but standing for a definite amount of the real work and observation which gives the real satisfaction.

Best wishes to all from
Your Aldo

May 31, 1905

My dear Papa,

...The toll-gate keeper of the bridge which now marks Washington's crossing keeps a very neat little store, where we added to our lunch-bag a goodly number of bottle of Pop, being very thirsty after our long trip. Then we struck up the river, and where a clear, rocky, woodland brook joins it, found an ideal spot to enjoy our noonday meal. Right in the course of the cool little stream, shaded by flowering Cornel-bushes and giant Tulip-trees and Sycamores, the former in full bloom, is a large flat rock with most convenient smaller rocks for seats. Here we halted, and for a most delightful two hours listened to the birds singing overhead and watched a shoal of pretty red-finned minnows devouring bits of bread in the pool below our feet, all the while not forgetting the pop and a generous heap of good old roast beef sandwiches. After the dusty roads and hot sun, the delightfully cool and fragrant breeze, blowing over the broad expanse of river, was most welcome, and looking across at the green mountains of Pennsylvania, we both decided that we had never spent a more ideal day. Although we didn't say it, I am sure we both wished that the folks could be here to enjoy it with us, and I at least thought of the many days spent with you in the old squirrel-hunting days in much the same way. ...

Best wishes to all – must go now, remaining
Your Aldo

June 3, 1905

My dear Mama,

...Somehow I cannot write today.... This is the last regular old Lawrenceville Sunday, for next week is Commencement, and everywhere one is conscious that school-days are drawing to a close. One hates to admit, even to one's self, that he cannot think of leaving the old place without a tug of regret, even though it be to enter the last and important stage of preparation for the work of the world. And who is not impatient to enter that work, and show some real returns for the expensive course of training? Yet the fact remains that the tug is there. May I be able to say, though, that it is not a shrinking from what is to come, but a love for what has passed. And in order that you may understand, I still cherish the hope that you will see the old school some day, perhaps in the spring-time, when the campus and woods and fields are as full of peace and beauty as at this present hour.

Is it right to harden our hearts at such a time as this? ... For what but opportunity is there ahead? And who could ask more? ...

Best wishes from
Your Aldo



Robert McCabe



THE UNIVERSITY
OF WISCONSIN-
MADISON ARCHIVES

Aldo Leopold's letters home from Lawrenceville, in their original form, are in The Aldo Leopold Collection of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Archives. There they keep good company with more than 100 boxes of Mr. Leopold's correspondence, manuscripts, journals, research files, memorabilia and more than 1,000 photographs. The Leopold Collection documents his entire life—from his childhood in Burlington, Iowa, to his final days in and around "The Shack" in Sauk County, Wisconsin. With minor restrictions, the Leopold Collection is open to researchers by appointment.

The Leopold Collection is one of 4,000 major document collections housed in the University of Wisconsin-Madison Archives, along with four million photographs illustrating the history of the campus and surrounding area. Most of these holdings are also open to researchers from the general public. For further information, contact Bernard Schermetzler, University of Wisconsin-Madison Archives, Room 434 Steenbock Library, 550 Babcock Drive, Madison, WI 53706. Phone: 608 262-0428. E-mail: bernies@macc.wisc.edu

