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...Hotel Florence

H. E. CHANEY,
PROPRIETOR.

STEAM HEAT ELECTRIC LIGHT
ELECTRIC BELLS

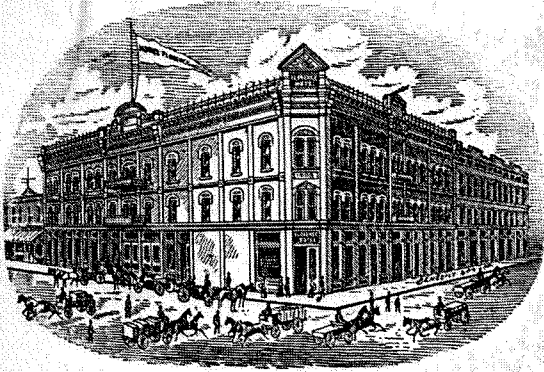
Missoula, Mont., July 23 1896

Dear Mother and Father,

There has been a complete change of plan since I wrote you two days ago, or was it yesterday? The Commission has decided, wisely as I think, that I can be more useful by spending three weeks in the Bitter Root Mountains than by going to Alaska with John Muir. Of course the Alaska trip would be the most pleasant, but I hardly think it would do as much either to help the general cause, or to give me a knowledge of the forests. The plan is now as follows. On Monday, Harry & I start from a place called Hamilton, 50 or 60 miles from here, with a pack train, & cross the mountains which, ahem, rather to my regret, is going with us. It is most fortunate that he is, for I suppose it would

Muir leaves Missoula
Pinchot to Selway

1896



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It is impossible to select a better companion for a mountain trip. As his lab. told me, he is past master in all that relates to mountain travel. He has done a great deal of exploring, and from his great success is evidently a skillful & prudent woodsman. He is also an enthusiast about forestry, and has been instrumental in getting the agitation started for a great area which he first explored, & which I believe will some day be reserved. So I am greatly delighted that I am to have his company. Beside all his other qualities he is a very pleasant companion.

The region where we are going is one of the most interesting in the country. We shall cross the mountains about 60 miles south of Missoula & go down the Clearwater, traveling westward, until we reach the neighborhood of the Nez Percé Indian Res.



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and then return through Elk City and the
Ney Perce's Pass in the Bitter Root Mts,
reaching Missoula again in 20 or 25 days.
Graves arrives here tomorrow, and I suppose
we shall start early Monday morning from
Hamilton. We have the man recommended
as the best in this region for head guide, the
man he profess^{of all the horses}, he tells me, will probably go
as second man, and Ahern will bring a
man of his company as cook. His men are
all colored. So we shall be fitted out in
the most beautiful style, and as to provisions,
we are going to take five pack horses, not to
mention that this country is famous for elk
and trout. So I don't think we could be
much better fixed. It is a good bear
country too, but mostly black & brown. Also, as
the berries are not yet ripe, we shall probably
not get any bears.

I am finishing this, beginning on the first page.



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on the 24th. The party has just left for Spokane via the Coeur d'Alene region. I shall miss certain things I would like to see by staying here, but expect to meet the Com. in Portland & see the Cascade Reserve, and all of California, with them. So what I miss will be nothing compared to what I shall gain.

This morning I shall spend getting my accounts in shape to transmit to Washington, but in the mean time I must ask for another deposit. This trip will cost about \$500., and I shall have to pay for it when I come out of the mts. The Com. pays Haney's expenses while in the mts.

I am as well as possible, & weigh 171, which is six pounds more than usual in the woods. If that wretched Sargent had only made plans in advance, this would have been an ideal trip for Amos. But I can't tell anything about my movements even a short time ahead.

so far as the plans of the Commission are concerned. If Amos could join me here, or better in Portland, for he would not be alone there if I were a day or two late, & I wouldn't have to wait for him, I am sure we could get into the woods in Oregon and California, and have a delightful time.

Please address letters to Missoula. I shall be back here en route to the coast as soon as I come out of the belt.

With much love to you all,
your loving son,
Gifford.