

Letter #1

Date: May 6, 1902

From: John Ferguson Weir, American Painter and half-brother of Julian Alden Weir

To: Julian Alden Weir, owner of Weir Farm, American Impressionist Painter

Background/summary: John Ferguson Weir stayed at his brother's farm in Branchville, Connecticut frequently. In this letter, John writes to Julian from Europe, explaining how he misses Weir Farm. Many American artists during the late nineteenth-century felt compelled to travel and study in Europe. Here, John turns this European ideal on its head, lamenting the fact that his travels have prevented him from experiencing "the glory of a fine day at Branchville." Weir Farm, and the paintings inspired by its surrounding landscape, brought legitimacy to a young American art scene.

Text: "I look forward to hearing of your going to Branchville and all that that implies. Don't get too much involved in affairs—keep the paints and make that business the conspicuous first. I fancy you coming along the road with a six foot canvas over your back and the old fresh glow of enthusiasm over a good day's work... No glories here equal—or quite equal the glory of a fine day at Branchville when we have come in for a fine dinner after good day's work: that marks the high watermark of joy and happiness. Goodbye, old boy—I again look out the window to waft a zephyr toward you..."

Letter #2

Date: May 5, 1897

From: Albert Pinkham Ryder, American Painter, early American Modernist

To: Julian Alden Weir, owner of Weir Farm, American Impressionist Painter

Background/summary: Albert Pinkham Ryder was an American painter known for his dark and moody seascapes and epic paintings. His trip to the Connecticut countryside was uncharacteristic and had a profoundly uplifting affect on his otherwise somber disposition. This "thank you letter" from Ryder demonstrates the deep personal friendships Weir made beyond his fellow American Impressionists. More importantly, it shows how Weir Farm's uniquely bright and relaxed atmosphere could coax even the most reclusive person out of his shell.

Text: "My Dear Julian, I feel it my duty to drop you a line to let you know what good your kind interest and brotherly friendship have done for me. I sleep nights, Mr. and Mrs. Remy [the farm's caretakers] are as kind as possible; I like the domestic noise and bustle of their dwelling, and the busy planning of the garden which comes on apace.

I have never seen the beauty of a spring before; which is something to have lived and suffered for. The landscape and the air are full of promise. That eloquent little fruit tree that we looked at together, like a

spirit among the more earthly colors, is already losing its fairy blossoms, showing the lesson of life; how alert we must be if we would have its gift and values.

My little guide Carl Remy waits in the morning to see what I would do; and is altogether a sweet and amiable little lad and his brother also.

If when I get cured I could only learn to have language so as not to be continually misunderstood, except by you and those who have known me so many years.

I wish you could have been here and enjoyed the beauty of your own place.

I am still quite weak in the head, so with kind remembrances and best wishes for Mrs. Weir and the children I am yours in all friendship and appreciation,

Albert P. Ryder”

Letter #3

Date: August 3, 1903

From: Wilfred Von Glehn, English Impressionist Painter

To: Julian Alden Weir, owner of Weir Farm, American Impressionist Painter

Background/summary: Wilfred Von Glehn was a famous English artist during Weir’s time. Like Weir, he studied in Paris, and returned to his homeland as an Impressionist painter. Glehn is best known for his mural work with John Singer Sargent (another Weir Farm lover) in the Boston Public Library. This letter describes the new American ideal. In the early 1800’s, famous English artists like Thomas Cole came to America to paint grand vistas; in the early 1900’s a new generation of painters came to experience a more peaceful, “intimate” America.

Text:

“I write you—as from a different country, so great is the change here after the quiet, peaceful and pastoral Branchville—that will always represent for me, when I return to England—the peace loving “intimate” America and very dear to think of—I’m glad to come back to you and am looking forward to it...

I can’t tell you how I enjoyed those good days with you all—the fields—the woods—the fishing—silent hours, the peaceful times at night looking up into the stars...”