

Letters to Manville

Edited by Trail End State Historic Site Superintendent Cynde Georgen; from *Trail End Notes*, June 2001

Manville Kendrick received dozens of letters - if not hundreds of them - from his father over the years, some informative, some criticizing, some full of praise. One of the earliest, written in 1905 and referring to Manville's brief attendance at school during an extended visit to Texas with his mother and sister, shows John's tongue-in-cheek sense of humor. All the letters save this first were addressed to "My Dear Son."

The excerpts printed here are from letters John sent to Manville between 1905 and 1933. They are part of the Manville Kendrick Collection housed at the Trail End State Historic Site.



Manville and John Kendrick, c1927 (Bilyeu Collection, TESHHS)

2 May 1905, On the Train to New Mexico - My Dear Little Son – I am glad to hear from your letter that you are going to school and that you like your teachers. No doubt you have come by this fondness for your teachers in a natural way: as a boy I just loved the woman teachers. Especially those that were young and good looking. Of course, no manly boy will ever be cross or naughty to a woman teacher ... you can manage women just about your own way by simply making them believe they are managing you.

22 January 1911, State Senate Chambers, Cheyenne, Wyoming - Our legislature met on Jan 10th and the new members who were elected at the last election were sworn into office; I don't exactly recall all the different things that we swore to in taking the oath but we said anyway that we had not paid out any counterfeit money to aid us in getting elected and that we would not take any while here in Cheyenne!

4 April 1917, U. S. Senate Chambers, Washington, D.C. - Though but a few hours since you said good-bye to your mother and to me I am writing just a line to assure you that we both grieved to see you go and now that you are gone we miss you more than can be told in words.

... Today the Senate has under discussion the resolution amounting to a declaration of war and several Senators are taking the opportunity of making speeches. I am taking the opportunity of writing my first letter in this chamber, and that to you.

1 July 1917, Washington, D.C. - Just a line to let you know that I am thinking of you today and wishing that I might be with you out in the west. ... Every day or morning when I wake I take a little mental journey out to the group of Dear Ones somewhere in Wyoming or Montana and wish that I were free to be with them and to enjoy the company of those that I love and the countless other blessings that we have and do not appreciate.

28 October 1917, Aboard the USMS Philadelphia - On the way over [to France] I have been reminded many times by the surrounding circumstances of my Irish mother's trip across this old old ocean in a sail ship a little more than 60 years ago when she was about the age your sister is now. She had a sister with her and they were going among strangers in quest of home and fortune. Don't you think she was a brave girl that grandmother of yours and are you not glad she had the courage to go out to America? I surely am.

6 January 1923, Washington, D.C. - It has seemed rather quiet in the house since [cousins] Eula, Francis and yourself have all gone; also, everything is moving along in a more orderly way, to the extent at least that I find my car in the garage every morning.

4 June 1923, OW Ranch - I received your letter this morning and as requested am sending you a check for \$200.00. It is not at all difficult for me to understand the elusive nature of a cash balance. ... Incidentally I might say it is not with regret but with genuine satisfaction that I am sending you a check. ... it is not an exaggeration to say that no boy has in the past or will in the future give his parents as little trouble about money matters as you have given your Mother and me. I think it not too much to say that you have proved yourself trustworthy, that is so far as any boy is trustworthy.

24 November 1930, Washington, D.C. - In the rush of saying goodbye to numbers of people I always experience a sense of regret that I failed to say the things that should be said in leaving my loved ones. I could not tell you how it grieved me to leave both Diana and you; nevertheless I not only felt it but felt it sorely indeed. There are two phases of such experience, one of them is the sadness of farewells, the other is the unqualified satisfaction that you have loved ones who are sufficiently dear to you to compel such feelings of sadness.

4 May 1933, Washington, D.C. - I intend that this business, as a company, shall be guided by the rules which I established as a young man, that is to stand loyally by its owners and employees who manifest a spirit of loyalty to the company. ... I note your statement that you

“will never get the first idea of business through my head.” I think it may interest you to know that as a business man you suit me exactly and as a son you suit me ideally.



© 2020 – Trail End Guilds, Inc. & Trail End State Historic Site

All Rights Reserved

For more information, visit www.trailend.org