

**JOHN MUIR**  
By Carole L. Cooney

John Muir is known as the “Father of our National Parks.” Born in Scotland, John’s family came to the United States when he was 11 years old. He grew up on a farm in Wisconsin where life was very difficult. The woods and fields were his favorite places to escape. He also loved inventing machines. It was his inventions that led the way to his formal education and eventually to becoming a conservationist, naturalist and explorer.

**Setting:** the Muir farm

**Characters:**

Narrator

John

Father

David, John’s younger brother

**Narrator:** John Muir was a famous conservationist, naturalist and explorer. He was born in Scotland and came to the United States when he was 11 years old. He grew up on a farm in Wisconsin where life was very difficult. The woods and fields were his favorite places to escape from hard farm labor. He also loved inventing machines.

**John:** David, let’s take a rest in the woods. This planting corn has tuckered me out!

**David:** Sure, John.

**Narrator:** The boys ran through the corn field into the cool woods. They sat under a large white pine letting the brisk breeze blow over them.

**David:** Have you made that bed you were talking about yet?

**John:** I almost broke my knife whittling the special cogs and levels, but it’s about done.

**David:** I still don’t understand. What’s it going to do?

**John:** I’m going to connect those cogs and levers to my bed and then attach more levers to my clock. You see, when the alarm goes off, the bed will tip me over on the floor. (laughs) That’ll wake me up!

**David:** How on earth do you come up with these ideas?

**John:** I guess I just like figuring out things.

**Narrator:** Just then, the bell rang at John’s house signaling it’s time for lunch.

**John:** Ha! So much time for a rest, huh? I bet I can beat you to the house. Come on!

**Narrator:** After lunch, John’s father spoke to the boys.

**Father:** John, you have given a bad example to your younger brother, David. There is to be no resting when you’ve been sent to the fields to plant. As your punishment, you must continue to plant until the sun sets. Remember what the Bible teaches, “We plough the fields and scatter, the good seed on the land, but it is fed and watered, by God’s Almighty Hand.” Now go and do man’s work.

**John:** Yes, Father.

**David:** Father, may I go help John?

**Father:** For the Glory of God's work, you may go, David.

**Narrator:** The boys continued their planting as the afternoon sun beat down upon them.

**John:** Thank you, David, for coming with me. You make this chore agreeable.

**David:** And you make it agreeable when you tell me about your inventions. What are you thinking of doing next?

**John:** You know how much I love to read. Well, I'm thinking of a studying machine with a turn table that can open different books at different times. Then I could just sit there and read and read and read.

**David:** (laughing) And never stop!

**John:** Yes, something like that.

**Narrator:** Even though John did not go to a formal school, he did read eagerly. Eventually, as he grew older, it was his inventions that gained him people who sponsored his education at the University of Wisconsin. His hopes of becoming a physician changed as he grew more and more interested in nature and wildlife. His adventures are recorded in the many books he wrote. One of his greatest achievements was founding the Sierra Club with his supporters. His love of natural beauty inspired the conservation programs of national parks throughout America, earning John Muir the title of the "Father of our National Parks."