Chapter 2: Maps and Sketches

One of the first activities Leopold did after hiking to several locales around Lawrenceville was to draw a map for his family so that they could visualize the locations of his walks relative to the school. The first document provided in this section shows Leopold's map of the area drawn on February 4th, one month after his arrival, with names that he prescribed based on prominent features of each particular wooded lot. In addition to mapping the Lawrenceville area, Leopold occasionally added wildlife sketches in his letters home to illustrate a verbal description. Also included in Chapter Two are four such sketches.
Map included with February 4th, 1904 letter
From March 13, 1904 letter

"...The whole has an odor of carrion to attract early flies. I have seen no flies as yet, but the coming of the Phoebe indicates it is time for them..."
From February 3rd, 1904 letter

yet seen. Here I gathered some rare-shaped specimens of "Daedalea quercina," a common mushroom here. (The fruiting bodies of a tree fungus found on oaks and hickory & beech stumps.) I also brought home some good specimens of a plant called the "Card Pealess" "Hyacinthus azulicrus" one plant of which I found a week ago. Its empty seed cases look somewhat like the following, and are used for sticking a surface on wool cloth in England.

The plant is rare in this country.

In the above mentioned timber I found some native white pine (about 6 large trees) in natural growth, I did not have time to fully explore this timber, as the sun was going down and I was at least six miles from home, where, by the way, I arrived some minutes late for supper, i.e., after I had dressed.
Lawrenceville M. J.
Upper House
Apr. 9, 1905

My dear Mama:

Another Sunday has come around, and brought with it the ever increasing change in the progress of the spring. It may be able to announce to you how we have having an extraordinary season; that Hepatica, Bloodroots, Sarsaparilla, and Candelions are blooming, but to no here the first flower mean a great deal, just as they did to you a week ago. In the whole, my yesterday's trip was very unmarked. It was a typical April day, of varying clouds alternated by glimpses of brightest blue, with bursts of the most grateful sunshine followed by cold, dark and wintry periods. My quest of the first Kingfisher has not yet been realized, so to Stony Brook was the only choice. And well it was too, for although the one blue coated fisherman had still tarried in the sunny Southland, another had taken his place, as I soon saw by the profusion of numerous footprints along the muddy shores. With eye alert for the maker of the tracks, whose identity I well knew, but whose presence I wanted visual evidence, I hurried down the green two bordered meadows along the brook, and soon came upon Mr. Cret's blue heron, accentually fishing for minnows. He saw
Another remarkable observation was made on the Whip-poor-will. He flushed, as usual, from a small-firing among the undergrowth, and flamed his phantom like flight for about forty feet. Then the remarkable happened. On a little open space lay a dead oak limb, the back half fallen away. On the same place a single ray of sunshine, separated into flecks and shadows by the leaves above, was playing. And the Whip-poor-will, when he saw the bright patch in the shadow well above.

Anyone who has seen the shapely plumage of the whip-poor-will can see how indistinguishable the bird would be on a decayed bough, especially when flushed with broken sunlight to match the spot. Moreover, you will see at the point at that I have tried to reproduce, where the other piece of the original catch was broken off, also how perfectly the bird replaced the same. Of course the position may have been accidental, but also possibly not.

Doctor MacPherson gave the best sermon I have ever heard this morning on the subject of clothes.

Fourth form "Fron" or annual dance came off in the gymnasium before yesterday. It was a very elaborate affair.