2414 Adams Ave.
Des Moines, Iowa 50310
Feb. 9, 1982

Dear Mr. Kent,

On Feb. 8, about 9:30 a.m., a snowy owl flew across I-80 just west
of Newton (about 5 miles)--I was headed for a business appointment in
Iowa City. I didn't see where the bird came from, and it continued on
over a hill, so I didn't see it perched, but feel confident of the
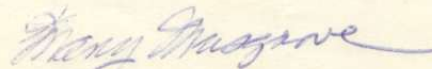identification for the following reasons:

1. It was essentially all white. The only other possibility in this
categorn would by a white phase gyrfalcon. We saw such a gyrfalcon
at Cheever Lake in Emmet County at the end of a day's duck hunting
back in the late 1940s, and it was such a memorable experience I doubt
I'll ever forget the bird. I saw this owl's back clearly and it was
white, which eliminates the northern goshawk.

2. Its flight was slow, wing beats slow and irregular--not falcon-like.

3. Its head was short, blunt, and wide or thick, as seen from the side,
compared to the rest of it; again, not falcon-like.

4. The tail was shorter than a falcon, wider, and somewhat rounded.

5. The body was thicker and shorter than a falcon.

6. The wings were short, wide, and the tips were rounded--again, not
like a falcon.

It appears to me that a snowy owl is the only thing it could be. Nobody
else saw it; I was alone in the car except for my dog, and she was asleep!

I have seen quite a number of snowy owls, though not in the recent past.
During the years we lived in Spirit Lake (1919-1929), while I was growing
up, we saw them several winters. My parents were Drs. Frank and Mary
Roberts; Dad was once president of IOU. After we moved to Iowa City for
several years, and later after Jack and I were married and lived in Des
Moines, we saw few snowy owls, but did see them occasionally. In my
own mind, having seen both the snowy owl quite a few times and the white
phase gyrfalcon once, I feel confident of the identification.

Temperature about 10 degrees F., wind northerly, sky cloudy. What a winter!

Sincerely,

Mary Musgrove

Mary R. Musgrove
(Mrs. Jack W. Musgrove)