

Levi Pennington

People

1960

Miscellany

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Recommended Citation

Pennington, Levi T., "Miscellany" (1960). *Levi Pennington*. 28.
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MISCELLANY

It was Robert Louis Stevenson, I believe, who wrote,
for children from the age of two to a hundred and two,

The world is so full of a number of things
I'm sure we should all be as happy as kings.

Well, in ninety years a man meets a good many of the
"number of things", and some of them do make one as happy as kings,
while some of them -- on the contrary, as the seasick Frenchman
said when asked if he had dined.

A Petition that Failed I certainly was not pleased when
a man whose son the college faculty had had to discipline circulated
a petition at yearly meeting asking that I be discharged from my
position as president of the college. Not getting as many signatures
as he desired, he presented his plea for my discharge to the college
board. Before this was presented to the board, they passed a reso-
lution of commendation of the faculty and the president for the way
in which the college affairs were being handled, especially in the
matter of discipline. When the plea for my discharge was presented
a motion was made that it be laid on the table, and this was passed
without discussion and by a unanimous vote.

Great Applause When the "farewell party" was held to
mark my retirement from the presidency of the college after thirty
years of service, the announcement was made that I was not to make
a speech. The applause was deafening.

Missed Calling When I was still in my teens, Dell Squires,
who used to cut my hair (for a quarter) and shave me on occasion
(for a dime) said to me, "With your command of the English language
in public speech, I know what you ought to be" Thinking he had in
mind something of what Thomas Gray was thinking about when he wrote

The applause of listening senates to command,
I asked, "What ought I to be. He replied, "An auctioneer."

I NEVER SAID IT Once during the First World War, the
sheriff and one of his deputies came to arrest me for having said
that the enrolment of women for war work was to secure women for
immoral purposes in the army camps. The sheriff had a statement
from the United States District Attorney that charged me with hav-
ing made that statement in a peace address in Springbrook. I told
the sheriff that I was reminded of the time when it was reported
that Bob Ingersoll's son had died of delirium tremens. When the
story got to Bob, he said he did not believe it. In the first place,
liquor did not affect the Ingersolls that way, they never had de-
lirium tremens. In the second place, his son did not drink. In
the third place, his son was not dead. And in the fourth place,
he did not have a son and did not expect to have. So he did not
believe the story. I told the sheriff that I had never given a
peace address in Springbrook; I had not given any kind of address
there since the war began; I had not so much as stepped off the train
in Springbrook since the announcement of the enrolment of women for
war work; and I had never thought of such a thing as I was ac-
cused of saying until the sheriff read it from the District Attor-
ney's letter, and if I had believed it I'd not have said it unless
I was ready to go to federal prison.

Change of Name It had always seemed that Pacific College
was an appropriate name for a peaceful Quaker institution. Before

I had visited Oregon, I thought of the college as being right near the ocean, and I was a bit disappointed to learn how far I'd have to go before I could even see the ocean. But with something like a dozen educational institutions in the coastal states with the word Pacific in the name of each, it was presently decided that Pacific College should change its name. Many names were suggested. I suggested Hoover College and George Fox College, but neither of these nor any of the others that were suggested found much favor for a time. But at one of the meetings that discussed the matter, a letter was received and read from Dr. Arthur Roberts, now professor of Philosophy and Religious Education at the college, making such a vigorous and effective plea for the George Fox name that it was adopted, and George Fox College joined the institutions with quaker names or names that were associated with notable quakers; William Penn College, Whittier College, Earlham College (Earl's Hoome, named for the home of Joseph John Gurney), Swarthmore College, named for the home of George and Margaret Fell Fox, Pendle Hill, named for a famous place in the life of George Fox, Pennington Academy, named for Isaac Pennington, a noted quaker of the first generation, Friends University -- named in honor of all of us -- and Woolman School that was and Woolman School that is, with a well known city in California about to take its campus for a city park.

Honorary Degrees George Fox College has awarded six honorary degrees; Pacific College was not so generous. In its entire history it conferred only one, the degree of D.H.S., Doctor of Humanitarian Service. It was conferred, in absentia, on the 50th anniversary of the opening of Pacific College and of Stanford University. It was the fiftieth honorary degree he had received, and I had the privilege of presenting his diploma to him in the Hoover home on the Stanford campus. He was greatly pleased, as was his queenly wife. Rebecca and I had been invited to be their guests for the entire week of the anniversary celebration, but an attack of neuritis made it impossible for her to go.

Not for a Million Dollars After the resignation of Emmett W. Gulley Pacific College faced a very serious situation, perhaps the gravest in its history. The elation of those who had worked so hard for the termination of his administration of the college was tempered not a little by the question of "Where do we go from here?" Securing a president of so small a college with so meager a backing denominationally and that backing so definitely split into two factions was not an easy task. But there was a feeling among some of the best friends that the college had that if Gervas A. Carey would accept the position as president the case would not look so hopeless. I was asked to go with the group who went to see if he could be persuaded to accept the position. He told us of his deep conviction that he was a teacher, not an administrator; and reminded us that he had said in the yearly meeting that he would not consider the position if it were offered him at a salary of \$15,000 dollars. I told him of the nurse in the South Sea Islands who was working with wounded soldiers, their bodies maimed and torn, gangrenous and filthy, and a visitor who was watching her said to a companion, "I wouldn't do that sort of thing for a million dollars." The nurse heard him, and said, "Neither would I." I said "We believed you when you said that you would not accept the presidency for a salary of \$15,000; but would you accept it to save the college?" He hesitated, said "That calls for some consideration", and after that consideration he accepted the position.

R.O.T.C. When World War I drew America into the conflict, the colleges of Oregon were eager to install Reserved Officers Training Corps units, and nearly all of them did. Pacific College naturally was not among them. And most of them felt before the experience was over like the Irishman who saw a cat up in a tree and thought he would bring it down and make a pet of it. But he had not realized just what kind of a cat it was, and when he got his hands on it the cat proceeded to tear him and his clothes up in a very workmanlike manner. There was such an outcry up there among the limbs that someone on the ground said "Pat, do you want somebody to come up and help you hold him?" "No," replied Pat, ~~when I get him~~ "but Oi wish wan of yez would come up an' help me let 'm go." ~~One~~ The president of one of the colleges said "We have not been running a college, but a military training institution." He did not use as careful language as that. In one of the church related colleges that did not allow smoking on the campus the military commandant took over the president's office, and if you had wanted to call on him, you could have seen him, if the smoke was not too thick, with his feet on the president's desk and using words that the president was not in the habit of using -- at least not as the commandant used them.

Shot at Sunrise? One of the college student who is now a member of the college board, was not able to convince his draft board of the sincerity of his conscientious objections to war, so he was sent to Camp Lewis. Here he was told to take a shower in preparation for his physical examination, and while he was under the shower his civilian clothes were taken and a uniform was left -- put on the uniform or go naked. Again and again he was brought before officers who asked him what they intended to be difficult questions, many of which began with "What would you do it ----" Quartered with the ~~other~~ soldiers, he had no easy life there. One night after they were in their bunks, one of them said "I know what I think out to be done with this slacker. ~~They ought to be taken out~~ He ought to be taken out and shot at sunrise, to save the Huns the trouble." Another spoke up and said, "That may be the way you look at it; but I think that a man who takes the stand that this man has taken and maintains it in the face of all that he he has had to face has mure guts than all the rest of us put together."

~~Oregon Yearly Meeting War Relief Service~~

Oregon Yearly Meeting War Relief Service. Elsewhere I have referred to the way in which students of Pacific College responded to the need for service for the relief of the suffering that war had caused during World War I and following. There were others not connected with the college who gave their service with equal devotion. The list from Oregon Yearly meeting who were in that service from 1917 to 1919 follows, the ones from Pacific College being underlined.

Floyd E. Bates, Ellis H. Beals, Thomas Arthur Benson, Cassius Carter, Laurence Clendenen, Frank C. Colcord, Benjamin A. Darling, Meade G. Elliott, Paul S. Elliott, Harlan J. Fuller, Olin C. Hadley, Ward L. Haines, Laura Hammer, Ezra B. Hinshaw, Virgil V. Hinshaw, Addison R. Kaufman, Henry G. Keeney, John W. Magee, Ross C. Miles, Dillon W. Mills, Harold P. Mills, Herman F. Openlander, Cecil E. Pearson, J. Howard Pearson, James W. Ragsdale, Ralph M. Rutledge, Floyd W. Schmoee, A. Clark Smith, J. Emel Swanson, Harry E. Tamplin, Harold M. Tucker, Lester B. Wright.

"delirius tantrums", which wasn't so bad as an interpretation. I dictated "old fogey ideas" and they turned out as "old foggy ideas", and that was not as bad a miss as some. I quoted the scriptural statement about Jesus, "He must needs go through Samaria", and it appeared as "He must needs go through some area", which I suppose was true enough, but not an exact scriptural quotation. "Erin go bragh" became "Aaron Graba." "Seismological" came back as "seasonological"; "cataclysm" became "catechism", which some folks think is just as bad.

VARIETY THE SPICE OF LIFE?

The variety of things that one college president used to do may be judged by an item in one of my annual reports to the college board and the yearly meeting. Here's one paragraph of it;

It may be of interest to know some of the work of the president aside from class instruction, correspondence, college administration, etc. In addition to the hundreds of class recitations, private conferences with students and teachers, committee meetings, etc., the president has participated in more than a hundred chapel services during the past year, has presided at 35 faculty meetings, has attended 210 religious meetings and 55 other meetings such as college board meetings, peace meetings, educational gatherings, etc., and has given over 60 special addresses in addition to ordinary chapel talks. Many calls for addresses have had to be declined for lack of time. While every effort has been made to do these extra services in such a way as not to interfere with the regular work, it has been felt that it is to the advantage of the college that it should be represented frequently by the president and other members of its faculty in educational, humanitarian and religious gatherings, and it is hoped that these opportunities for service may be accepted in the future as in the past.