

Levi Pennington

People

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Levi Pennington Writing to the Hilers and the Bairds, June 16, 1946

Levi T. Pennington

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June 16, 1946.

Dear Folks:--

When I got that letter from Ionia written on the 4th. and telling where you were to be for a while, I intended at the first opportunity to write to you so that you'd get the letter while you were at Ludington RFD. Well, this is the first opportunity. I've been going it, not exactly night and day, but so near that that I've not found it possible to write to you without disrupting or disturbing or something.

First of all, which means last of all, Oregon Yearly Meeting is in session, and while I do not have as many things to do as I used to have, there is still plenty. And I try to attend to all the business that comes my way, and there seems to be plenty of that. And we have had guests, and before the yearly meeting came commencement -- guess I've probably told you about a lot of that.

By the time this letter gets to you, unless I send it air mail and it goes faster than the air mail does sometimes, the yearly meeting will be over, and we'll be taking it a good deal easier. The thing that has been occupying some of my time today is getting off some press stuff to the Portland papers. The press committee should have been appointed Thursday evening, and I did not know but that it had been, for I was not there at that opening meeting, where the only yearly meeting business that was done was the reading of the lists of representatives and instructions to them -- the press committee should have been named but was not. Well, they named the press committee last evening, and I was given the job of furnishing the report to the Portland papers and to the Newberg paper. So I gave this machine some punishment this afternoon.

Bertha May has been here for the week-end (and Fathers' Day), and we have had company, which arrived just after I got the first line of this letter written, and left just long enough ago for me to write on down to here. We have had two Philadelphia Friends here for part of the yearly meeting -- they are gone now -- and for part of the time we have had Percy Thomas, field man for the Five Years Meeting of Friends in America. And from Tuesday night till Friday afternoon we had Otis Knight Pennington with us, and glad indeed we were to have him here. We could not give him as much time as we wanted to, for we had to be at the Alumni banquet Tuesday evening and could not meet him in Portland, and Thursday afternoon and again Friday we had to be in yearly meeting sessions. But we got to drive about the valley here quite a good deal, and Friday forenoon we drove up the Columbia Highway as far as the Bonneville Dam, and saw that and the better sights along the highway, Horsetail Falls, Multnomah Falls (one sheer drop of 541 feet), Wah-Kee-Nah Falls, Oneonta Gorge, Shepperd's Dell, Latourelle Falls, and all the rest, though we could not stay long at any one place. We returned by way of Oregon City and saw the falls there, and the places where folks fish for salmon -- and some folks catch them.

We hope that you are having just the best time ever at White Haven. We'd like it still better if we were all out at

El Teepee, but as Sam Lemon says, "We'll save that for again."

We've had some excitement about the place here, but it is all over but the paying for it now. Some of our plumbing fixtures were acting in a way that puzzled me. We could ordinarily see nothing out of the way at all; but occasionally the toilet bowl would overflow when water was running in the sink or the washbowl. Well, we found out when we got a plumber on the job. Rats had excavated around the drain pipe leading out to the sewer, and the pipe had broken off or come apart or something between the house and the street. But there was left a sort of accidental cesspool about the break in the pipe, ~~mm~~ and when the water had been given time to soak away into the soil, you could flush a toilet or even pour a tub of water into the sink and all seemed to go right. But when water ran in too long, the drain would fill up, and the downstairs toilet, the lowest of the fixtures, would overflow. Well, now we have a four inch solid metal soil pipe running almost to the street -- guess we'll not have any more trouble of this sort.

Pacific College has released George Moore from his teaching position on the faculty and made him field secretary and financial agent. Wish I had more confidence in his ability to raise money while remaining loyal to the college ideals that I believe in -- not quite the same as those which he represents, for he's the man who said in the faculty that a student might go through a course and at the end of the term not know one thing about the subject matter of the course but still deserve an A grade because of his attitude. (Don't tell Howard and Mary that I have less than full confidence in him, for they think he is fine, and maybe he'll do a lot better than I expect him to do.)

The report of the institution presented at the meeting yesterday was a very favorable one. It gave, among other things, a resume of the achievements of the past five years, the first five of Guiley's administration. The endowment has increased by more than \$120,000.00, of which I was responsible for more than half, I have little doubt. I suspect that he is listing the Roberts bequest at \$50,000.00, and it is worth all of that, for the college is one of five to share the gift equally, and the building could be sold for a quarter of a million right now; I suppose he rates the Hinshaw gift at \$12,000.00 to \$15,000.00, and at present income rates and considering what that property is bringing in it might well rate higher than the \$15,000.00; and he had nothing to do with getting either of these bequests. But he mentioned my name as responsible for part of the financial advancement of the past half-decade, and that was fine -- I'm not too much accustomed to such things. (After I had worked like a slave for fourteen years to get the college recognized as a standard institution, at the celebration of that happy consummation the high encomiums I got were the single reference in one speech to "the cooperation of the president and faculty" in just those words and no more.) In addition to the two bequests I have mentioned, I raised something like \$4,000.00 per year of "living endowment", and that still has a year to run.

We're not taking on any load in connection with the rebuilding of the old college building, not that nor anything else for a while at least. When yearly meeting ends wednesday afternoon, we'll just putter around here for a little while, and then we'll be going off to the cottage at the coast, to

Stay
 please
 shall
 time
 some

stay three days or three weeks or three months, just as we please. Part of the time, for just a few days I suppose, we shall have our pastor and his wife with us. But most of the time nobody but the two of us will be there.

How glad we all are that Muri and his family can spend some time at that Bay Shore cottage. And wouldn't I like to be up there for a while myself? Don't know what the future holds, but I'd surely like to spend months instead of days in Michigan. I'd like to visit every spot I ever was in in that state. I'd like to go all over Traverse City, locating every place where we lived or where I worked in a mill or a grocery store or on the docks or in the trenches or in the back yards bucking up wood and all the other spots I knew there. I'd like to go out to Long Lake and go as nearly around that lovely body of water as I could -- and I'd like to fish it a good deal, too. I'd like to have some time to visit Maple City and Grawn and Suttons Bay and Northport and Acme and Williamsburg and Manton and Kingsley and Sights Siding and Manistee and Petoskey and Charlevoix and Mancelona and Kalkaska and Thompsonville and Walton and a whole string of other towns and wide places in the road that I could mention, including Cheboygan, Onaway and Rogers City. I'd like to fish every stream I ever wet a line in, and in addition to get a try at the mackinaw trout -- I never had a chance to fish for them a minute.

Wake up, Levi; you're having a night-mare's-nest.

You don't hear from Willis and Cora? Well, I am surprised. Isn't she a typist, who can dash off a letter with a dash, even if she does not put any dashes in it? Why I hear from Willis even oftener than I used to hear from Ike. I confess that my correspondence with Cora has not been very extensive as yet, but give us time.

(Speaking of that last three words, did I tell you the story that they tell of Lady Astor once when she was running for Parliament and was in a meeting where her opponent was speaking? Lady Astor is very proud of her children, and she has, for modern times, a goodly number of them. In his speech her opponent said, "Lady Astor is so proud of her children. Why, I have eight children while she has only five." Quick as a flash Lady Astor called out, "Give me time! Give me time!" It brought down the house, and Lady Astor was reelected.)

Our weather here is still cold for this time of year. A fire is burning in the fireplace in the other room, and this morning we took off the chill with a fire for a time in the furnace.

And it is still the same old wood furnace. All the efforts that I have thus far put forth have not resulted in getting a gas furnace established. I wanted to ask another question about that, by the way. I know, of course, that if we do succeed in getting a gas furnace installed, it will be good-bye to Rebecca's house plants, for though human beings can live for a time in a gas heated house, I have been told that plants cannot do it. What I wanted to ask is, has the gas killed all the trees about 3 Wagar Place in Ionia, or only part of them?

Before I was interrupted by the injection of that stove -- I do not mean that the stove took an injection nor that the stove was used as an injection, but only that the stove -- I mean the furnace -- was injected into the conversation, if such it can be called -- I intended to tell you that the cool weather so long continued is not doing the garden all the good that one could desire. The corn looks a bit yellow, the tomatoes are not growing as rapidly as one ought to expect, the beans are not doing as well as they would if the weather were twenty or thirty degrees warmer, and the entire planting of lima beans rotted in the ground. But some of the things are doing very well, and I never saw finer cherries than we have this year. Now I wish I could set a peck or so of them down before you now, the Governor Woods and the Eltons, pink and yellow, good size, sweet and bursting with juice, really delicious but too soft when cooked, so that those that are not eaten out of hand will just rot on the trees or drop to the ground, dried up. Some years the ground under the Governor Wood tree is practically covered with cherry pits. I brought in a limb just before Bertha May started back to Portland this afternoon, for that's the easiest way to pick them somethimes. I have little idea how many have been eaten off of that limb, but I know that I picked off some bunches for Bertha May and that Mother has been eating from it some, and I've been responsible for several cherries not now being on that limb. The limb is less than 33 inches long -- I just now measured it, with some of it left below the first bunch of cherries and some beyond the highest bunch. It now has more than 70 cherries on it, and it must have had more than a hundred, for I counted just the top bunch, not quite so ripe as the rest and therefore not eaten, and hanging in that bunch all touching each other like a bunch of grapes were 40 cherries, and I counted them carefully. Well, I wish that you could have a peck of them, or a bushel, or more. They are fine to eat, not much good to can. The Royal Ann tree, what is left of it, is loaded, and while we do not like them as well as we do the ones with more authority, we'll put them up, those that we do not eat out of hand. We have fewer of the Montmorencys this year than last -- I'd guess not half so many.

The paper tells that they have opened the Mackenzie Pass, though they had to use dynamite to get some of the ice out of it. You may remember that I forgot to learn if it was open when I started to Sisters for that commencement address, and in consequence I did 100 miles of extra driving.

But it is getting close to my bedtime -- for a good while I've not got my full quota of sleep. Guess I'll end this, listen to the news over the radio, and then get to bed.

With love from both of us to all of you,

Affectionately your brother,

The Hilers and the Bairds,
White Twn, R. 3,
Ludington, Michigan.