

Levi Pennington

People

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Levi Pennington Writing to Lura Miles, September 23, 1946

Levi T. Pennington

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September 23, 1946.

Dear Friend:--

This could be called, I suppose, a birthday letter from Rebecca. At any rate, this is her birthday, and this, as every letter, is from her as well as from me. Her dear hands shake too much for her to write, though I am glad to tell you that she is decidedly better than she was two months ago, or a month, or a week ago. She is to see Dr. Selling in Portland a week from tomorrow, and I hope he can give her further help.

I'm certainly busy these days for a man who has nothing to do. Prunes, apples, walnuts and filberts are all calling for some of my attention these days, and in addition I have taken on two jobs that mean work and thought and some prayers mixed in.

I may have told you that the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, which was going to put a campaign clear across the country, into every city and town and village, was a complete "flop" in many places, including Newberg. The man who was to have led the work in Newberg, for which we disbanded the committee that had worked on the job last spring, finally told the UNRRA that he was not going to do a thing in the matter, since there was a committee already functioning. He knew that our committee had disbanded, but that did not make any difference to him. He stepped "out from under."

Newberg is just putting on its first Community Chest campaign, the only house to house solicitation that is supposed to be made this year. In their budget are included only those things that are regular and will be more or less uniform from year to year, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Red Cross, Anti-Cancer, Salvation Army, Children's Farm Home, Louise Home, White Shield Home, and things of that sort. No emergency campaign can go into this Community Chest campaign -- and if it did go in for anything like an adequate amount, it would overbalance the rest of the budget. (The total Community Chest budget is to be about \$5,000.00 this year, and I suspect the total from Newberg for relief probably exceeded that sum. We raised nearly \$3,000.00, as I remember it, in our campaign.)

Well, all of this means that as far as Newberg is concerned, the campaign for relief across the seas is up to the churches. (The schools can cooperate if they will.) So I presented the situation to the Ministerial Association at their first meeting of the year a week ago today, and they named a committee of six to promote the campaign, and the committee made me chairman. So that job is now mine, and I'm glad to have it, unless I am keeping some man from it who could do it better.

Then I agreed to take our section of the city, north of First and east of Meridian, for the solicitation of funds in this Community Chest campaign. I have secured my solicitors, and they are to meet here at our house this evening for assignment of territory and plans for our share of the campaign. I'd like to have our part of the city finished first and most thoroughly.

Carl D. Byrd, our new pastor, seems to be getting a good start in his work here. The crowd at the service yesterday morning was much the biggest we have seen for months, I think for years. Of course part of this was due to the fact that college opens tomorrow, and not a few of the new students were on hand. But entirely apart from the student attendance, the number at church is definitely increasing. Mrs. Byrd, who was severely ill for a time after their arrival, is much better, and was at the service yesterday. Mr. Byrd has helped me already with my prunes, and may help with the apples and the nuts down here. I see that he gets "full tariff rates" for any work of this kind that he does for us, and he takes it on as a sort of relief for his day off. I've seen the time when I'd ~~have~~ gladly have spent my weekly day off in physical labor of some sort, at \$1.00 an hour. (I'd have made as much for the one day as I received for all the other five or six of the week.)

The college is confidently expecting much the biggest enrollment it has ever had. Just where they are going to put all of them they do not know. They are appealing to everybody to provide rooms, and we'd spare a room or two if I could believe it would be good for Rebecca to take on that additional responsibility.

A big crew of men, college students and faculty and outsiders such as Harlan Smith, Clyde Thomas and others, have been working for weeks now on three main building projects. The one that is the biggest is the new gymnasium. They have the great arches built and in place now that are to support the roof, and each day makes a bigger showing now than was made when the work was just framing these big arches on the floor of the building and putting in concrete floors in the basement.

The second largest project is the rebuilding of the Old College building after the fire. That is much nearer completion than the gymnasium, and I suppose the boys are moving in there, even if everything is not completely ship-shape.

The third enterprise is the work on the big house, now called the Edwards Dormitory, on the southeast corner of the lot where our home is located. They have made five new bedrooms and a big bath room on the third floor of that building, which will now house ten more girls than it did last year.

Emmett Gulley has sold his farm with the stone house on it, and is now facing the realities of a "housing shortage" himself. Don't know what he will do. There are a number of houses for sale, but any house good enough for the Gulley family and big enough to accommodate them costs like diamonds. But maybe he got a fancy price for his home on the mountain -- indeed he hinted as much, for he said a man wanted to buy it and he put the price so high that he was willing to sell.

Gervas Carey and his wife and daughter are leaving this week for Michigan, Ohio and I do not know what other states. They expect to spend Sunday with Lloyd S. Cressman and his wife in Chicago. They will visit Traverse City, Michigan, and the country thereabouts -- that's where he got his wife, who was once one of my pupils in the country school -- and will attend a family reunion in Ohio somewhere. They expect

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to go east by ~~auto~~^{train} but to come back by auto. We have understood that there are places in the former Northwest Territory where these gasoline vehicles are manufactured. (Rebecca says that this family reunion is to be held at Oberlin.)

This meeting did not look right yesterday, in spite of the large attendance, because of the loss of H. Paul Michener and family and Mrs. Michener's mother, Mrs. Alta Hoover. I am sure I could name a lot of folks that I'd rather have seen leave than these people. But Iowa will be the gainer. They did not know just where they were going to locate, but somewhere in the state where the tall corn is supposed to grow. (If they grow any better corn than Ohio and Indiana and Illinois grow, I'd like to see it.)

But it is time that I left for the Chamber of Commerce meeting, which is to be devoted to the Community Chest campaign today. And after that I am coming back and get Rebecca, and we'll celebrate her birthday by a meal at a restaurant downtown (where the food will not be nearly so good as a meal that she would prepare, but she longs for somebody else's cooking, as so many good cooks do.) Wish you were here to help us celebrate that birthday, and help her pick out a present of some sort.

With love from us both to all you dear people back in Ohio,

Sincerely your friend,

Mrs. Lura C. Miles,
Pleasant Hill, Ohio.