

Levi Pennington

People

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## Levi Pennington Writing to Charles Wells, October 12, 1946

Levi T. Pennington

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October 12, 1946.

Mr. Charles A. Wells,  
152 Madison Avenue,  
New York 16, N.Y.

Dear Friend:--

Your letter of the 8th. is just received. I wondered if you were the same Charles A. Wells that I knew when your father was in Oregon Yearly Meeting.

I confess that I am a bit sensitive about things that are said and written about Herbert Hoover. So many outrageous and in some cases impossible lies have been told about him that I find it hard to accept any statement made against the man or his administration without wanting to know the source of every derogatory statement. The "smear" campaign at the end of his term as president brought out such statements as the one by the Haldemans-Julius publications that he had 10,000 slaves working his mines in Australia; the statement that he made a million dollars out of Belgian relief, when as a matter of fact he lost four million; and such things as that. The bitterness of that dirtiest of all the presidential campaigns that I have known has followed him ever since. The dam that was named in his honor, and that had Congressional appropriations in that name was renamed because the man then in the White House could not bear to have even a dam named after Hoover.

I'll have to have more evidence than your letter furnishes before I shall accept the statement that "The first plowing-under program was initiated under the Republicans, during the Hoover administration." That there was an effort to direct the agricultural interests of the country toward the raising of crops that were needed and away from those of which there was already an oversupply is quite consistent with the Hoover policy, but that is a long ways from a "plowing-under program." When one realizes that the American Food Administration under Hoover was carried on on a basis of cooperation rather than compulsion -- there was no law requiring meatless days and wheatless bread and all that program which Hoover worked so well -- it is unthinkable to me that he would either inaugurate or permit a "plowing-under program" without any authority for it granted by Congress. And if such a law had been passed, it would have been, as you know, passed by a Democratic congress, for Hoover was hampered all the time by a congress that would not cooperate. I happened to eat in the White House with the Hoovers on the day when Hoover had urged congress not to play politics with human misery -- a thing which they did, however. In my judgment the depression would never have been so severe if a Democratic congress had not done so much to block Hoover's efforts at recovery, and the recovery would have been far quicker. And that's not half of it.

Sincerely your friend,

Levi T. Pennington.