

Levi Pennington

People

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Levi Pennington Writing to C. Walter Borton, January 29, 1947

Levi T. Pennington

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January 29, 1947.

Dear Friend:--

It was a lovely pair of letters that the postman brought this morning, one in letters somewhat like these I am putting on paper, and one in the handwriting of a man who when he was out here last looked as if he might be a youthful 60, but who claimed to have been in the world since very soon after the civil war.

Now that the records seem to indicate that you actually have been about for 80 years, I suppose you will appreciate the story they tell about Julia Ward Howe at the time of her 86th birthday -- I don't know why they delayed it till that time. You don't suppose that at that age she was making them believe that she was just reaching 80. Well, they had a big celebration for her, and each of the literary lights who were present had to write something for the occasion. The prize went to the author of "Leetle Yawkup Strauss" -- I never can remember his name -- for this piece of verse:

"Dis old Fadder Time must be playin' some tricks
Ven he say dat our hostess is age' eighty-six.
An octogeranium -- who would suppose?
My dear Mrs. Julia Ward Howe der time goes!"

And isn't it the truth? How the time does goe, especially after one passes forty, as we both have done -- you twice. But God has been good to us, though we have each known our sorrows. May our last days be our best. How well you wrote the account of that "party" in your honor, with its closing statement about the light at evening. May it always be so.

I do not intend to let the college situation kill me, and I hope it will not make me bitter. It is in many ways a harder thing for Rebecca to bear than it is for me. But maybe the situation is not as hopeless as it seems. The man to whom they have offered the presidency, and who is to come out here to look things over next month is known by Chas. L. Conover, who says that he is a real educator, and who predicts that one of the things he will do before he has been here long will be to get rid of some of the people who have made the most trouble. He is demanding a free hand as a condition of his acceptance of the presidency. He'll never be able to get the \$250,000.00 that has been thrown away by the action leading to President Gulley's resignation, but he could conceivably win back some of the support that has been lost by the action of the minority of the college board, who have taken advantage of the absence of some of the other board members and the removal of another -- the final action by which Gulley was let out was by a vote of only 6 to 5, the president not voting, as he had a right to do, in which case the vote would have been a tie and Gulley would still be president of the college, and the \$250,000.00 would be on its way still.

Ray Newton helped to make last week a strenuous time for me, with a luncheon and afternoon conference Wednesday,

in Portland, visits to Friends in Newberg Thursday, with an evening meeting with a score and more in our home, a meeting with the executive committee of the Northwest Institute of International Relations in Portland Friday, and another conference there Saturday forenoon. Then back here I was in a conference on the subject of the Hoover House and how it should be handled. And finally that evening a good friend came in to ask for advice on a subject that had bothered her for a long time, and she felt that she got the advice she needed, as well as a good deal of encouragement, and she left with grateful tears in her eyes and her voice.

Much of my energies of late have been given to the Heifers-for-Relief campaign. I suspect that you know about this. Bred and tested heifers are being sent to places overseas that have feed for cattle, but no cattle. The plan originated with the Church of the Brethren, but has outgrown that small denomination and is now an inter-faith movement. Already 4,000 of these heifers have been sent, but if it were four million it might not be enough. The movement is just getting well started in Oregon. I organized this county, and am on the state committee. Our meeting here gave the first one that I knew about, in addition to about \$3,000.00 given in cash and tons of clothing. We are hoping to send a carload, or provide for a carload, from this county. It costs \$160.00 to get one of these heifers, bred and tested, to the place where the need is so great, in Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, Jugo-Slavia, Italy, China -- the last shipment of 850 went to China. Each animal furnishes enough milk for ten or twelve children, the calf that is born is given to another family, and so the work goes on. If I had a few thousand dollars, I'd invest some of it this way. As it is, about all I can give is my time and energy. They want me to go to the southern part of the state to speak on the subject in Rotary Clubs, churches, mass meetings, etc. I have not yet consented.

I've wanted to get out to the coast and try for some steelheads, but I have been too busy, and the weather for the most part has been too unpleasant. I did not catch a decent fish all the year that has past, nor the year before, for that matter, for all the first part of the year I was unable to get about, and the rest of the year I was on that eastern trip. If I don't catch some fish this year -- well, that's what I'd have said a year ago, for we expected to spend most of the year's warmer months at the cottage at the coast, and did not get there at all till the middle of October, and then it rained nearly all the time.

Well, since we could not be at that birthday celebration as we'd have greatly enjoyed, it was good to get your letter about it. Many happy returns of the anniversary -- wish you could see us or we could see you before the next one.

Sincerely your friend,

C. Walter Borton,
Moorestown, New Jersey.