

Levi Pennington

People

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Levi Pennington Writing to Parker, February 12, 1947

Levi T. Pennington

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February 12, 1947.

Dear Brother Parker:—

Your letter of yesterday has just arrived -- I did not mean yesterday, but day before. Even that is considerably faster than in the days when cross-country transportation was by ox team.

I am enclosing the copy you asked for of the poem you sent. I hope it will be a long time before it is read at your funeral, but it is a beautiful thing. Punctuation is so far from being an exact science that no man can guarantee that his punctuation even of a simple newspaper paragraph will please everybody. But this is punctuated the way I think I'd punctuate it.

Before your letter reached me I had done just as you suggested. President Gulley, Prof. Lewis, Prof. Skene and I have a date for a fishing trip, starting Friday afternoon at 2 o'clock. We'll be coming back Saturday evening. If our pastor can go, it will make a party of five, but Saturday is not a very favorable time for preachers, butchers and barbers to be away. (I did not have to open my bible to know the wording of the reference you gave me.)

That does look like a pretty long trip for the amount of fishing you'd get. With less travel than that you could get a lot more fishing if you and Dr. Simpson just took a trip together, into some part of Canada not far from where you are. Unless some of the stories one reads are tremendous lies, there is wonderful fishing in Ontario much less than 1,000 miles from you -- less than 600 miles, for a guess, without that extra 3,000. Of course if it were just a trip with Otis, taking fishing tackle along and fishing within driving distance of a hotel that would be at least comfortable, that would be something different.

But I want you to be out here for some weeks some time when the gasoline shortage will not restrict us to any one part of Oregon -- or Washington. Don't know when I'll ever get to fish some of the Oregon lakes unless you come out some time. If you were here, I'd cut loose from everything and we'd do some real fishing, for more than one kind of fish. But we might hit it just right on the Big Nestucca. My two biggest fish, 32 and 46 pounds, were caught Friday evening and the next morning. David White caught his two salmon, 28½ and 30 pounds, within an hour of each other. I caught two steelheads, 6 and 8 pounds, on two successive casts -- and did not have another strike all day.

I was just getting ready to go out and plant some peas, and now it has started to rain again. The forenoon was lovely. At noon the Rotary Club had its Valentine Party for the Rotary Annes. I was to have gone to Portland this afternoon, but a telephone call said the man who wanted to see me was tied up for all afternoon, and so I am going in tomorrow morning.

You remember telling me to get rid of that acreage at Rex. Well, if I were able to take care of it properly, I could not afford to sell it. But in view of everything, we've sold it -- at least there is an earnest payment in the hands of the lawyer who is making out the papers. There are three more entries to be made on the abstract, and then we get cash for it, \$1,350.00 minus commission, cost of abstract, attorney fee, etc. And if you could have what will be left of it when we get through paying taxes, a note on the Woods place, paying back the money we borrowed from Rebecca's savings account, making a final payment (with interest) on the cost of the paving on two sides of this property, and a few little things like that -- well, you might not want to stick what was left into your eye, but you'd not be overloaded with it if it were in gold, silver or copper.

The college mess does not seem to be getting any better. And the field secretary, who seems to think he is the president, the board, the faculty, the student body and the yearly meeting, has found it a lot easier to say that in three months he'd have five or six Ph. D.'s under contract, with their salaries underwritten, than actually to make good on it. His time is up, and thus far he may have one, though I am not even sure of that. The man who was offered the presidency, and who was to have been here last week, did not come, and sent word that he was not coming. This field secretary, without anybody's authority, flew back to Cleveland to see him, with what result deponent sayeth not. A lot of the present faculty are not going to be back, and that includes some of the best of them, though not all. Some of the old standbys will still stand by, though I do not know how many of them. Weesner was here before I came; Miss Sutton was the first one I ever put on the force; Macy has been on the force for twenty years or more; and some of the others have been here so long it would take two figures to write it. How I'd like to be on the force under the circumstances -- I don't think. But if I had still been on the force, there would not have been the present circumstances. There have been several chances to block the opposition that have not been taken advantage of, partly because they were not seen and partly because of a lack of stiffness of the spine on the part of the folks who "mean well feebly."

Gulley has already had a number of offers better than anything he has ever had here from a financial standpoint, and far easier in other ways. Two other Quaker colleges want him, one of them offering him as much for nine months as I ever got here for the full year; one business offer is for \$3,600.00 a year and half the profits of the business. My guess is that he will not be in this part of the earth a year from now, though there is one job that may develop that would keep him here.

Must work a bit -- can't spend all my time having fun writing to you.

With love from both of us to all of you,

Parker O. Pennington,
688 Collingwood Ave.,
Detroit 2, Michigan.

Sometime at eve, when the tide is low,
I shall slip my mooring and sail away,
With no response to a friendly hail,
In the silent hush of the twilight pale,
When the night steps down to embrace the day,
And the voices call in the water's flow --
Sometime at eve, when the water is low,
I shall slip my moorings and sail away,
Through the purple shadows that darkly trail
O'er the ebbing tide of the unknown sea,
And a ripple of water to tell the tale
Of a lonely voyager sailing away
To a mystic isle where at anchor lay
The craft of those who have gone before,
O'er the unknown sea to the unknown shore.

A few who have watched me sail away
Will miss my craft from the busy bay,
Some friendly barks that were anchored near,
Some loving souls that my heart held dear
In silent sorrow will drop a tear.
But I shall have peacefully furled my sail
In mooring sheltered from storm and gale,
And be greeting the friends who have sailed before
O'er the unknown sea to the unknown shore.