

Levi Pennington

People

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Levi Pennington Writing to Pickett, Morris, & Newton, April 2, 1947

Levi T. Pennington

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1000 Sheridan St.,
Newberg, Oregon,
April 2, 1947.

Clarence B. Pickett,
Homer L. Morris
and
Ray Newton,
20 South Twelfth Street,
Philadelphia, Penn.

Dear Friends:--

Possibly you have already received information concerning the meeting in Portland to consider making a request for the establishment of a branch of the American Friends Service Committee for Oregon. Perhaps Emmett W. Gulley has written you, or Grace Conover, the former the presiding and the latter the recording Friend at the gathering. But I took notes, as I usually do at such a gathering, and perhaps you will get a more complete picture if I tell you what happened, and what was said by the different folks who were there. I did not take the names of all of them, though I am sure Grace Conover has all the names.

The first thing after the devotional period was the reading of the minutes of the previous meeting, and Grace Conover had done a very good job of getting the gist of the discussions as well as the actions that were taken at that previous meeting with Homer Morris. The three principal actions were that Emmett Gulley should tell leading officers of the yearly meeting that an organization of the AFSC is in prospect, that Adena Joy and I were to confer with the committee appointed while Ray Newton was here, and the third that some three Friends who were named should make a preliminary canvass to see what funds were available from Friends.

Emmett Gulley reported that he had attended to the object of his appointment. The only reaction that he reported was the remark from Joseph G. Reece, yearly meeting superintendent, that it is a pity that we cannot all work together. In view of Oregon Yearly Meeting's withdrawal from the AFSC, that remark sounded a bit strange to some of the folks there, but I have known stranger things than that in this yearly meeting, even in its relation to the AFSC.

Adena Joy reported on our conference with the earlier committee, to which we both belong. I read the action which that committee took, hastily worded as it was but expressing their feeling quite accurately, I believe, as follows: "The group that met to promote the organization of a branch of the American Friends Service Committee, Peace Section, have learned with satisfaction of the prospect of the organization of a branch of the American Friends Service Committee in Oregon. We wish to pledge our support to such a project, and hope that the organization may soon be formed. Since it was our aim to promote such an organization, when it is accomplished we shall feel that our function has been fulfilled, and we shall then be eager to cooperate in any way that is desired." I am sure that I have written you about the meeting of the committee which took the action to adopt the above minute.

Only two of the three appointed to canvass interested Friends for conditional subscriptions were present to report.

Ross Miles reported that the group at Corvallis thought they could provide \$30.00 to \$35.00 per month; Salem Friends tentatively pledged \$900.00 for the year, and he quoted Dr. Sceva B. Laughlin that another \$300.00 could be secured. Chase L. Conover reported \$440.00 pledged with only eleven persons solicited, and that at least some of these were thinking in terms not of a single pledge for a year, but made their pledges on a basis that they hoped to make from year to year.

Ross Miles then asked us to consider "one guy's opinion" that if we could "only reach the nuclei of the right kind of thinking," that the money could be raised, and he offered to spend time and energy in securing it.

Adena Joy spoke of the reason for the organization of the committee while Ray Newton was in Portland. She said that the other fields of activity in which the AFSC engaged seemed to be fairly well covered in this area except the peace education program.

Hubert Armstrong stated that it seemed to him we must prepare to meet the whole budget without any aid from the Northwest Institute of International Relations, since we could not be sure of their cooperation.

Della Osburn asked if it was desirable to have the executive secretary of the branch of the AFSC if one is organized giving half his time to the Institute.

Laurence Skene said he thought it would be desirable if possible, for the sake of the institute, which needed some such direction.

Henry Keeney spoke of the need for leadership, especially along the line of racial and religious understanding. He spoke of six experimental inter-racial schools in Portland; of the interest of the school system in having teachers attend the Institute; of the cooperation between Protestants, Catholics and Jews, etc.

Della Osburn spoke of the disturbed feeling about the Institute on the part of religious and peace minded people, and said if the Institute is to be saved, there must be better cooperation among Friends. She urged that we be financially independent of the Institute, and be prepared to provide spiritual leadership.

With the suggestion of a possible budget of \$10,000.00 for the first year, the question was raised as to where the other \$8,000.00 is to be secured, the total tentatively promised being about \$2,000.00.

Della Osburn suggested that a good share of the \$150.00 per month which the Fellowship of Reconciliation had raised for a Portland office and which had not been used might come to this branch of the AFSC if organized.

Adena Joy stated that the previously organized committee interested primarily in peace education felt that it would not go on successfully without the cooperation of the Institute.

Hubert Armstrong suggested that a finance committee be appointed to propose a definite budget, and to make a much more extensive solicitation for funds than had yet been made, to report to a subsequent meeting of the group interested.

Mrs. Prideaux stated that there are people scattered about Oregon with no great financial resources but with great spiritual resources, and that something is needed to get these folks together.

Carl Sandoz suggested that instead of saying, "What will you give if it is decided to start a branch of the AFSC in Oregon?" we should determine that we are going to have a branch of the AFSC in Oregon if it is at all possible, and see what can be secured to make it possible. "Do we really want to have such a branch here?" he asked.

Emmett Gulley suggested that we face just that question, "Do we want a branch of the AFSC here in Oregon?"

Laurence Skene said he favored it. It might not be possible, but if it is, he held it highly desirable.

Ross Miles said there were 20 people in Corvallis and a number in Salem who would work for it.

Robert V. Sieloff asked if we had faced sufficiently the effect on Oregon Yearly Meeting if such a branch is organized here. "What ramifications will this action take? Can we do this thing without splitting Oregon Yearly Meeting wide open? And what would be the effect on Pacific College if this is done? Is there a connection between such a branch and the future of the college?"

Emmett Gulley said he did not know what the connection is, but there probably is one.

Robert Sieloff spoke of a doubt as to the future role of the college, and wondered if this would be a channeling of support that might otherwise go to the college.

Emmett Gulley spoke of the ironic situation presented by the fact that a man just employed by the college as a foreign language teacher, a native of Spain, is coming to Pacific College, a Friends institution, largely because of the aid given to Spain by the Friends through the AFSC, while he, Gulley, is being driven out of the college largely because of his association with that same AFSC; and the group did not know whether to laugh or weep.

Frank Cole said that the yearly meeting would not give any support to the branch of the AFSC, nor would the college, and so far as he could see there was no official problem.

Della Osburn said if we do this thing it will create a disturbance in the yearly meeting, with much criticism of us, but if we can take it without fighting back, the disturbance will pass. But for a time there will be more or less of a flurry, from a group that is decidedly vocal.

Laurence Skene remarked that there was already a flurry, and there was already criticism which was already vocal, and he did not see that matters would be made any worse.

Henry Keeney remarked that this would provide some real Quaker education, which he thought was sadly lacking.

Hubert Armstrong said that we ought to decide whether this action is right, and if it is right, do it and not worry. If this is a challenge, we must meet it, he said. We should not do it unless we feel that we must. We cannot escape criticism in any case. This project means much more than the raising of money. It means lots of work for a lot of people, and busy people who if they do this must do it in preference to some other things that they are doing now.

Emmett Gulley asked, "Are we agreed that we should seek to have a branch of the AFSC here?"

Frank Cole said that he was not decided. He did not see how he could spare any time for it.

Adena Joy asked if we had given adequate consideration to some arrangement by which the work here would be done under the Seattle office.

Della Osburn stated that she had felt for years the need of a place where we could do such service as would be provided by this branch. Maybe if we had provided it a long time ago, we'd have been spared some of the difficulties we face today. I have an increasing feeling that it is right to go ahead.

Harold Fowler expressed the opinion that we should agree on the matter, then go ahead and raise the money.

Mrs. (Elizabeth) Prideaux asked just what do we propose to do through this organization. She wished we could be very concrete before we go out to get the money.

Adena Joy stated that the committee originally chosen when Ray Newton was here had a very definite idea of the promotion of peace education.

Elizabeth Prideaux said that there were very many folks who had little idea as to what the AFSC is and what it does.

Carl Sandoz remarked that this financial canvass would be directed to the folks who do know, not to strangers.

Della Hanville stated that we must reach concerned Friends and then reach out. We must find the folks who are concerned now.

L.T.P. suggested that a finance committee be chosen, and also a committee on organization, to propose names for the executive committee, the officers, and to suggest a name for executive secretary if he could be found. This suggestion was approved, and the following committees were appointed:

Finance, Ross Miles, Chase L. Conover, Russell Thornburg, Adena Joy, Hubert Armstrong and Richard Kneeland.

Organization, Emmett W. Gulley, Levi T. Pennington, Grace Conover, Carl Sandoz, Henry Keeney.

The meeting adjourned subject to the call of the chairman, Emmett W. Gulley.

Well, that's the story. You may be interested in the personnel of the gathering, though there were a goodly number present who were not vocal, and whose names I cannot give you.

Emmett W. Gulley is president of Pacific College, on his way out, I am sorry to say, and with him goes from a quarter to a half million dollars that was to have come to the college on the death of a friend of mine and Gulley's, who changed his will when he learned how Gulley had been treated. Mission work in Mexico, A.F.S.C. in Spain and Cuba, field secy. N.Y. yearly Mtg.

Grace Conover, former teacher on the Pacific College faculty, wife of Chase L. Conover, A.F.S.C. work in Cuba, etc. Leader in community work at Dundee. Member Newberg meeting.

Chase L. Conover, former teacher in Pacific College, work for AFSC in Cuba and elsewhere, sometime public school teacher, etc.

Adena Joy, teacher in Lewis & Clark College in Portland. Sister of Elizabeth Prideaux.

Ross Miles, member South Salem meeting, former student of Pacific College.

Hubert Armstrong, graduate of Pacific College, later teacher in the college, now superintendent of schools of Newberg.

Bella Osburn, graduate of Pacific College, on peace pilgrimages of AFSC in former years, member of Newberg meeting.

Laurence Skene, professor of Chemistry at Pacific College and vice president; entered Newberg Friends' meeting some years ago.

Henry Keeney, graduate of Pacific College and Penn College, principal of one of the Portland schools, now a member and elder in Westminster Presbyterian Church in Portland.

Robert V. Sieloff, graduate of Pacific College, M.A. Haverford, formerly employee of the State School for Boys, now in some sort of welfare work in Portland, I think in connection with the court of domestic relations. Membership in Newberg.

Elizabeth Prideaux, lives in Newberg, wife of John Prideaux, do not attend meeting often. Little son Jackie died suddenly with cerebro-spinal meningitis, and they asked that no flowers be sent, but that money be given for Heifers-for-Relief. As result, three heifers have been provided, and another is possible.

Carl Sandoz, graduate of Pacific College, formerly in Seattle Friends Center, in social service work, etc.

Frank Cole, graduate of Pacific College, in government personnel work for years, former member of Pacific College board until he moved to California, now back in Portland.

Harold Fowler, graduate of Pacific College, member of Newberg meeting.

Richard Kneeland, yearly meeting treasurer, Portland mtg.

Sincerely your friend,