

Levi Pennington

People

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Pennington to Lloyd Cressman, June 15, 1947

Levi T. Pennington

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June 15, 1947.

Lloyd S. Cressman,
McCormick Theological Seminary,
2330 North Halsted Street,
Chicago 14, Illinois.

Dear Friend:--

Your air mail letter of the 9th. arrived right in the midst of the busiest time of the year, but I was glad indeed to hear from you, and will bring to the monthly meeting the matter of the renewal of your minute. I have no doubt whatever that your request will be granted with satisfaction to everybody. If there were any doubt of your worthiness of it, the minute of the Carmel Friends should put our minds at ease.

I was interested to know that Jesse Johnson is a member of Carmel meeting. I have written his name scores of times on college bulletins and catalogues, but so far as I remember have never met him. I am glad to know that the two of you, the only Pacific College graduates in Carmel so far as I know, are such good friends. I was not even sure that he was a Friend.

There are two more days of yearly meeting, with the departments of Evangelism and Church Extension, Finance and Foreign Missions yet to report. There are those who have feared that our expansion in recent years is going to bring us to the verge if not over the verge of bankruptcy as a yearly meeting. At any rate it is clear that some church departments as well as the college are going to be in need of considerable red ink, unless there is either a marked increase in income or a reduction in expenditure.

How much you have heard about the college situation I do not know, but if it has not been in a mess, then I do not know what a mess is. Those who fought me when I was president, with a considerable addition probably of those who did not favor my administration but did not feel free or for some reason willing to oppose it openly, were after President Gulley hot and heavy two years ago, and he twice resigned, his resignation being accepted the second time it was offered. A man who had known me for more than a quarter of a century -- I mean more than a third of a century -- and Emmett Gulley more than half as long, and who believed in both of us, was planning to give us his entire estate with the exception of some \$25,000.00. He threatened to cut down his gift by more than half when he learned of the attacks on Gulley; but when Emmett was given a five years contract and was promised loyalty and cooperation, he went the whole way, made his will just as Emmett and I advised, making the college residuary legatee to his estate, which is somewhere between \$250,000.00 and \$500,000.00 and perhaps nearer to the latter figure. But when the further persecution of Gulley last November -- I think persecution is the right word -- brought in a lot of students to the board meeting, coached by Gulley's enemies on the board and in the faculty, he decided again that the situation was untenable, and resigned. His enemies on the board took advantage of the absence of some of his supporters, and the resignation was accepted 6 to 5, the president

of the board, who was favorable to Gulley, not voting, which would have made the vote a tie, and the resignation would not have been accepted -- and I think it would have been withdrawn in another week, as I know it would have been if he could have had any assurance that he could have even half-support. Immediately it was promised that the faculty would be supplied with five or six Ph.D.'s within three months, with their salaries all underwritten, there would be a new president secured by that time, and that in the fall there would be 250 students, with dormitory accommodations provided for them all. Thus far they have just one Ph.D. secured, and the last I heard he thought he might not be able to come on account of ill health. They secured a man "who had the equivalent of a Ph.D." to head the foreign language department. He was a Spaniard who was so grateful for the help given his countrymen during the revolution by the American Friends Service Committee that he wanted to teach in a Friends College. But it was Gulley who administered that relief, and when this man learned that Gulley was being driven out of the institution partly at least because of his connection with the American Friends Service Committee, this Spaniard cancelled his contract and is not coming. There have been ten resignations from the force, and thus far only four replacements have been secured. And the man who was going to give the college from a quarter to a half million dollars has changed his will entirely, cut the college out of it and is giving his wealth to another institution. Others are demanding back some of the money they have given to certain projects that under the new regime will not be carried out, and their demands have been granted -- it will mean the loss of \$10,000.00 paid in or pledged to the proposed Cecil F. Hinshaw Memorial Library, \$5,000.00 of which has already been ordered returned. And there are other losses, and the complete alienation of many former Friends and supporters of the college, including eastern Friends who have given us \$300,000.00 or more during my administration, without which the college could not have survived.

The only hopeful thing that has appeared in recent months happened less than 48 hours ago. Gervas A. Carey was elected to the presidency Friday night. When this was announced to the yearly meeting, there was at first a clearly audible gasp, and then the meeting burst into spontaneous, enthusiastic and long-continued applause such as I do not remember ever to have heard in a Friends church. He may be unable to pull the institution out of its serious condition; but he can come nearer to commanding the support of all elements in the yearly meeting than any other man who could have been named. He'll have my support to the limit. He may cut down the proposed budget for next year, which is about \$25,000.00 more than ever before, and where is it coming from? The budget -- or at least the stated expenditures -- this year were materially above \$100,000.00.

Enough of this. I'll present your request to the monthly meeting the first week in June.

Sincerely your friend,