
Levi Pennington

People

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Pennington to Fredrick Sainty, August 4, 1947

Levi T. Pennington

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August 4, 1947.

Dear Friend:--

Your very interesting letter of July 20 has just reached us, and it was good to hear from you again, and to know something more about how things are going in England, and especially among Friends.

You must have had a very interesting and profitable time at London Yearly Meeting. Such gatherings ought to be an unfailing source of help, inspiration and encouragement, as they always would be if the right spirit were unvaryingly manifested. Unfortunately that is not always the case. Some, whatever their professions, come together more intent on their own way than on finding the will of God and doing it.

The last session of Oregon Yearly Meeting was not free from self-seeking, though there was less of it in some ways than at other times. Edward Mott has not been yearly meeting clerk for the past two years. He was succeeded by Gervas A. Carey, which to my way of thinking was a tremendous improvement. The element that had driven Emmett Gulley out of the presidency of the college had had three different men under consideration for the presidency, but none of the three was willing to accept the position under the circumstances. When the announcement was made in the yearly meeting that Gervas A. Carey was elected to the presidency, there was a distinctly audible gasp all over the house, for most of the folks did not know that his name had ever been suggested; and then there was such applause as I never remember to have heard in any yearly meeting that I have ever attended. He assumed his duties right after yearly meeting, and seems to be doing a good job. He may not be able to bring the college out of the mess it is in, but I know of no man who would have a better chance to do it than he. The yearly meeting can more nearly agree on him than on any other man I know of in the world. He has had little experience as an administrator, but that was true of every one of his predecessors in the presidency here.

When some of us went to see him, he reminded us that in his defence of Emmett Gulley in the yearly meeting two years ago, he had said that he would not accept the presidency of the college for \$15,000.00 a year, supposing it were offered to him, which he was sure it would never be. I told him of the nurse who was caring for wounded, dirty, gangrenous patients in a hospital overseas, when some one watching her at work, said, "I'd not do that sort of thing for a million dollars." "Neither would I", replied the nurse. We told him we knew he'd not accept the presidency for \$15,000.00, and he'd not get more than a very minor share of that sum; but we hoped he'd accept the task to save the institution. And he did.

You'd not know the campus today unless you approached it from straight in front. Coming up from River Street, first, before reaching the campus, you'd come to Edwards Hall, a big residence bought two years ago and made into a dormitory for women students. On the athletic field of former years are three houses for G.I.'s (soldiers of the recent war) each house pro-

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viding accommodations for four families. Then there is a music building; then a kitchen-dining hall building; then a library building, these six wooden buildings coming from Camp Adair near Corvallis, and erected on the campus by the federal government. The former dormitory for women is next on that side of the street, and opposite to it is being erected the new science building, this to be of brick and not a Camp Adair building. Farther to the north is the new gymnasium, also a permanent building, of concrete blocks; and beyond that three more Camp Adair buildings for G.I.'s, these twelve families not being students.

These new buildings will make the older ones much more efficient. The removal of the library from the main building will provide three new class rooms, the removal of the physics laboratory another, and the removal of the home economics laboratory another. The removal of the music and biology from the south wing of the original college building will make that entire building available for men's dormitory, and will provide accommodations for 32 more men. And the removal of the kitchen and dining room from the women's dormitory will make the whole first floor of that building available for additional dormitory rooms for women students. The small building that was used as a chemistry laboratory will be moved to another location on the campus, and will provide living quarters for two more families.

All this, of course, costs money, and they are trying hard to raise it. If there had been no persecution of President Gulley, it would not have been long until the college would have had an additional \$250,000.00 to \$500,000.00, which has now been lost because of the indignation of the man who was making this gift because of his confidence in Emmett Gulley and in me, whom he had known for more than a third of a century.

Well, We are wishing the very best things for Gervas Carey. Wish we could have a bit more confidence in the board that did the things that drove Emmett Gulley from his job. All this building program was instituted by him and carried well toward a conclusion. Indeed all six of the G.I. houses and the library, and the big gymnasium were built before he retired, and work on the others was under way.

I do not remember the contents of my last letter to you and I should probably have written a bit differently if I had supposed that its contents would be shared with others. Still I do not see how it will do harm for the facts to be known, and I am sure that I tried to confine myself to facts.

I was certainly interested in what you told us about the peace testimony of Friends over there, and of the records of the Friends members of parliament. That half of them should have voted for peace-time conscription and only three against it is a shocking sort of thing to folks who have looked upon London Yearly Meeting as the stronghold of our peace testimony. One on this side of the water would hardly feel like judging harshly. You seem so much nearer to danger over there, though with modern means of destruction it would be almost as easy to strike our great centers as to strike London.

The pressure that the government is putting on for universal military training, which in itself is, of course, peace time conscription and more, is tremendous. Opposition to this liberty-destroying proposal has not been too vigorous

of late, though some of us have no inclination to abate our zeal in the matter. Hearings in the house committee on military affairs was stopped with many persons and organizations still wanting to be heard, most of them in opposition. The proponents of the measure had been given much more time than the opposition, and the stopping of the hearings was on the basis that the ones who had not yet spoken would have nothing new to offer. Just when in the new session of Congress the matter will come up again, and just what form it will assume I think nobody is wise enough to know.

It takes a very deep-seated conviction to keep a man true to his pacifist principles under the stress of war or the threat of war. In 1928 I heard Sherwood Eddy in one of the most impressive addresses I ever listened to, as he spoke to the students of Pacific College. He was telling of various religious experiences he had had, his conversion, his call to the mission field, etc. In connection with his peace convictions he told of his ancestry, with military men and ideals back of him for generations, of his own conviction when World War I came that he must help to defeat the Germans, of the doubts that assailed him even as he did his work of morale-building through the Y.M.C.A., of the cumulative evidence as the years passed after the war, convincing him that the war method was hopelessly wrong, and he concluded that part of his address with substantially these words, "After ten years, fighting every inch of the way, stiff-necked and slow of heart to believe, I have become convinced that war is always and everywhere wrong, and that I can never again bless it nor participate in it." I remember the dejection of Kirby Page when, in answer to my inquiry, he had to inform me that Eddy had deserted his pacifist position entirely, and was supporting World War II.

How apt your words are in regard to the after-effects of the war, physical, mental, spiritual. Crimes, suicides, mental derangements and all sorts of other evils are cropping up in unexpected places, and in great numbers. It was to have been expected that marriages made as so many were just before men took their departure from America would lack permanence. And we should not have been surprised, though it seems that each new generation is, that war, which contravenes every moral law, should break down morals, making property, virtue and life itself very cheap. Gambling is rampant all over the United States, many a state, Oregon among them, taking a share of the profits from the gambling on the dog and horse racing. Consumption of liquor per capita had multiplies more than nine times since the repeal of prohibition and the establishment of state sale of hard liquor -- this increase is in hard liquor only; the consumption of beer and light wine has multiplied many fold. That is in Oregon, and this is not the worst state along that line; bad as we are, conditions are much worse in California.

Well, if we had to believe that God was dead, we'd be in a very bad way. Outside of our trust in Him the prospects for the human race are not bright. A. Ruth Fry's "No War or No World" is a statement "too nice and yet too true", as Shakespeare makes one of his characters say, using the word "nice" in its true meaning, rather than as we Americans use it colloquially when we say it is a nice day or that that is a nice view.

We never cease to regret that we did not get to your home while we were so near it. But we were so tired much of the time that we had to miss a good many things that we very much wanted to see and to do. When the Smiths at Wickham Hall, Witham, invited us to spend another day with them, we were just too worn out to make the trip from London out to their home, much as we wanted to be with them again. And so it went many times. In Ireland I knew that I wanted to see the Giant's Causeway, the Lakes of Killarney, and Blarney Castle. (I had forgotten the Round Towers.) When we got to Cork, both our energy and our money were so completely exhausted that I was going to miss both the lakes and the castle if Miss Beal had not insisted that we make the trip, which we did, and have been no end glad of it ever since. Well, that's too long an introduction to what I intended to say, that we hope you get the repairs made to your house that you desire. We had to have our house reroofed last year as we had to have it painted the year before, and both cost an amount that would have been unbelievable ten years before.

But I must not ramble on and on. We came back yesterday after a week of rest at our little place over at the coast, where we were the least active of any ~~week~~ of my life when I was not in bed, I believe. Soon I must go out with a new man who is to take a field position with the State Heifers for Relief campaign, supposedly to get him started in the way that he should go. When this work first started in Oregon, I helped their first field man, an interesting young fellow, to organize this county. I knew the right people, we got a fine committee organized, and we sent from this county the first carload of heifers that went from Oregon. And now the state committee feel that I ought to repeat, so they sent me to Grants Pass to organize that county, and now they want me to go with this new man to organize some county, Polk or Marion or Tillamook, and I have agreed to do what I can, though it will not be done as it was here, where I knew my ground so well.

Be sure that you and your wife have our very best wishes always. We hope that your health is good -- you did not tell us much about yourselves personally. I shall never be entirely free of some of the effects of that attack of polyneuritis which kept me in bed for five months, much of the time in utter torture, but I am able to do many things now that would have killed me outright ten years ago. Rebecca has not been nearly so well as we could wish for weeks now, but she does seem to be improving, and we hope she will continue to gain. She is up all the time and doing her regular duties in the home and in the church, especially as head of the local service committee and convenor of the foreign service section of the Oregon branch of the American Friends Service Committee recently organized. But she does not have her customary energy and buoyancy. (Do you suppose we both are older than we were when we were married more than 42 years ago?)

With love and best wishes from both of us to both of you,

Sincerely your friend,

Frederick B. Sainty,
51 Stanley Avenue,
Potslade, England.