

Levi Pennington

People

3-11-1948

Pennington to Binfords & Mort Publishing Company, March 11, 1948

Levi T. Pennington

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Recommended Citation

Pennington, Levi T., "Pennington to Binfords & Mort Publishing Company, March 11, 1948" (1948). *Levi Pennington*. 247.

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March 11, 1948.

Binfords & Mort,
102 N. W. Ninth,
Portland, Oregon.

Gentlemen:--

History is considered by many to be a very uninteresting study, but I sometimes get very much interested in it, especially when it has a real personal touch.

This evening I keep thinking of my decision now a good many months ago that I would arrange if possible to have some of my verses printed in book form. I was encouraged to do this by a letter from Merrill Root, the best known Quaker poet in America, which he later let me use as a foreword to the little volume. (This was not by any means the only encouragement, but it helped much toward the decision.)

Mr. Root put me in touch with a literary friend and literary critic through whom I received an offer to publish the book from a firm outside of Oregon, at what I now know was a very reasonable figure, with the assurance that they would have it ready for distribution by the first of September, which would have enabled me to have it on sale at the meeting of the Friends World Committee, which my wife and I attended; at Indiana Yearly Meeting of Friends, which we also attended and where I preached the opening sermon, by special request; and at the Centennial Celebration of Earlham College, which we also attended.

But I wanted the book printed right here at home, by the firm that prints the books of Ben Hur Lampman and other authors whom I know. And I was really pleased no end when you consented to take the job of printing, and in the first place I hoped it would be done by Christmas. Just before we left for the east, however, I was assured that you could not promise to have it done by Christmas, so I gave up the idea of using these volumes as Christmas gifts to some of my nearer relatives and very close friends, with the assurance that it would be done early in 1948.

When I made inquiry about the matter in January, I was assured that it would be completed not later than early March. Well, I thought then that nothing after the middle of the month could be considered early in that month.

Surprisingly soon after that visit to your office I got my first galley proofs, and after these had been corrected the page proofs. And then it appeared that my estimate of the number of pages the verses would take was more nearly accurate than yours, and I sent some more of the verses, with the expectation that I should soon have another page proof, since there was some rearrangement necessary in connection with the additional verses I had sent. With nothing happening, so far as I could tell, I called up on one of my visits to Portland,

and was told that another two months or so would do it. That would mean April or May -- or some other time. But when I recalled the promise to have it out by early March, I was told that I should have some more proofs soon -- I don't know yet just when "soon" is.

I do not want to seem improperly impatient or unduly insistent on speed in this matter. I myself gave up the getting of these books ready for sale at the three gatherings that offered the best immediate opportunities for their sale, the Friends World Committee, where I met friends of mine from a good many different countries, Indiana Yearly Meeting, the largest in America, to which both my wife and I belonged all our lives till we came to Oregon, and the Earlham College Centennial, and my name is still rather well known in that area, with scores of my old Earlham College friends back for that celebration. I am not sorry I did it, for I still want to be a Binfords & Mort "author." But the sooner this book can be on sale, the better I shall like it. Oregon Yearly Meeting and California Yearly Meeting both come in June, as does Nebraska, the nearest one to the east. And then they all string along during the summer and fall, Kansas, Iowa, Western, Indiana, Wilmington, Ohio, New York, New England, Canada, North Carolina, Baltimore -- we are too late now for Philadelphia, where I hoped to have more sales than any other yearly meeting except Oregon and Indiana.

I know that this is not a very profitable publication for you, and if I should venture on another book, that would not be, either, for I'm never going to write a best seller, nor even one that will run into thousands. But on the strength of my supposition that the book was to be out by this time, Who's Who in America, Who's Who on the Pacific Coast, International World Who's Who, Leaders in Education and perhaps one or two others are coming out with their new volumes saying that I am the author of "All Kinds of Weather." I'd hate to have a representative of one of these reference books call on me and say, "May I see a copy of this book?" and have to tell him, "Well, it is not yet published, but it's going to be." Then if he should say, "When?", I confess that I'd not know just what to tell him.

Maybe you can't tell me what I should tell him, either. But some day we shall know. I hope it may be soon.

Sincerely your friends,

Levi T. Pennington.