

Levi Pennington

People

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Pennington to Lura Miles, April 12, 1948

Levi T. Pennington

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April 12, 1948.

Dear Friend:--

Your lovely bluebirdy and blueflowery letter of Tuesday night reached us today just as we were leaving for Portland, where Rebecca spent hours looking in vain for a dress. Don't let that surprise you; it's true that she has a dress; but she wanted two of them. I do not know how many of the big stores she tried, Meier & Frank and Bedell's, I know, and I think Lipman, Wolfe & Co. She found lots of 'em for teen-agers, and for little women, but when it came to her size, they were "far and few between" as the Oregonian said about an entirely different matter the other day, and those that they did have were either old stock that they were trying to get rid of or dresses that were not less than \$500.00 -- a dozen. Well, she did not find anything that she wanted, and so we came back and bought some onions at Gumm's market just out of Newberg.

We were so glad to know that your sister is doing so well now, and hope that she may continue to gain without any interruption.

Yes, we really think that we have a lovely kitchen now, and today two men have been at work on the installation of our new oil heating system. We are going to be proud, stuck-up, haughty and extremely snooty along this street, with three houses in succession having oil heat, for Mrs. Van Blaricom is putting it in, too. (She sold her filling station some time ago for \$15,000.00, and we were very glad she could do it and have some money at her disposal. She has her sister with her, and two other widows living in her house, so that she has some income from that source. And wrestling heavy wood for that furnace of hers was no better for her than it is for Rebecca.)

It has been gratifying to us to learn that the government will provide free transportation for 1,000 heifers and 2,000 goats during this spring and summer. I almost feel that I ought to be ashamed that I am so plump, with so many folks starving across the water. But I am trying to help. I've been asked to make a trip to Idaho in the interests of this campaign, and if you were here to live with Rebecca while I was gone, I think I'd try it. As it is, I don't see how I can do it.

I was glad to hear what you wrote about Dan West's wife. I remember once when a man was being considered for an important position in the work of Friends, I mean when two men were being considered, the matter simmered down to this: "If M. is given that place, we shall have him minus his wife, and she can tear down almost as fast as he can build up; if F. is given the place, we shall have him plus his wife, and in some ways she is a better man than he is." Needless to say F. got the place, though man for man M. had some decided advantages. Well, the work for humanity has Dan West plus his wife, and I can appreciate that, for my work has had Levi plus Rebecca all these years.

You suggest that you'd love to have Bertha May, Esther and Jean Gulley for a week end some time. Well, think what a lovely thing that would be for them. But under present circumstances I'd think you have enough on your hands without having a dozen or fourteen or twenty-eight or a hundred and seventy-six or whatever big number it was that you had for company on a recent day.

It is almost enough to make one despair of the human race when we realize that with all the horror of the two wars that most of the people now living have seen, we are thinking in terms of another that might almost wipe the human race off the earth -- indeed I do not think such a result impossible if atomic warfare is pushed much farther. Last night I had a horrible dream of the coming of the smash-up of our civilization, atomic bombing, poison gas material dropped right in our yard, and me bidding Rebecca good-bye, for the enemy that had taken over believed in the community of women, and she could no longer be my wife -- we were spending our last hours together in terror and dread -- do you wonder that I was glad when I awoke?

In Meier & Frank's store today, we saw a number of the salmon that have been entered in the Oregonian-Meier & Frank Derby for this year, where the first prize is a \$1,000.00 Sportstrailer, the second prize a boat worth some hundreds of dollars, etc., with weekly prizes of \$100.00, \$50.00 and \$25.00. The fish that took first prize a year ago weighed 41 pounds 6 ounces. This year a fish was landed that weighed 41 pounds 8 ounces, and it seemed likely that that might take the first prize; but the next week one was caught that weighed 41 pounds 9 ounces, and it looked as if that one ounce was going to be worth several hundred dollars. But late Saturday another one was landed that weighed 42 pounds -- it took the \$100.00 weekly prize, and may take the \$1,000.00 Sportstrailer. (Unless I get a 46 pounder, for instance. Though I wrote to Mr. Hammer, head of the sports department of Meier & Frank, that I might let Rebecca take first prize and her husband take second -- I could very well use that boat.)

As a matter of fact, I have no very good prospect of getting any fishing done for salmon this month, and the derby ends May 1. On that date the trout fishing season opens, and I hope to catch some trout that day, though we have made no definite plans. Last year Rebecca did not go the first day, and I went with Emmett and Ross Gulley, and all three of us got the limit, though none of them were big fish.

I learned today that Church World Service has "folded up", the leader of the work in Portland had directions to wind things up at once. They say that there are two things that have brought about this result. One is that some of the leading denominations wish to carry on their own programs of relief, rather than to cooperate with other denominations. The other is the feeling on the part of some churches that the giving of relief is not enough, and they cannot cooperate unless the preaching of the gospel accompanies the giving of food and clothing and medicine. I believe in the preaching of the gospel, but I should hate to know that I had let somebody starve to death

because I refused to cooperate with folks who were getting the food across, even if they did not preach as much as I thought they ought.

This Church World Service, under the direction of the executive secretary of the Oregon Council of Churches, had set up a state wide campaign for clothing through the schools. It is hoped that we can induce this executive secretary to carry out the campaign as a representative of the American Friends Service Committee, taking a place on the Foreign Service Section of our state organization. I must write to him and encourage him to do that -- he seems to have considerable regard for me, believe it or not.

I must also write to the son of the woman who had decided to leave all that she has when she dies to me for use in promoting the dry cause. She has sold her home -- Rebecca and I had to go down there Thursday and sign the deed -- and is to go soon to California where her son is providing for her a big trailer to live in, so that she can spend the summer at his trailer camp in the mountains, with occasional stays at the sea shore if she desires, and spend the winters further south where the weather is warmer.

Rebecca has gone to a meeting of the nominating committee of the monthly meeting, along with Mrs. Van Blaricom (who was late, as usual, which disgusted Rebecca, as usual, but she consented to go with Mrs. Van Blaricom, as usual, and I told her what I'd do if I were in her place, as usual, and next time she will wait for her good neighbor, as usual, and be indignant because she is made late, as usual.)

But if I am to get all the writing done that I ought to do this evening, I must stop this rambling on and on.

With love from both of us to all of you,

Sincerely your friend,

Mrs. Lura C. Miles,
Pleasant Hill, Ohio.