

Levi Pennington

People

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Pennington to Mary & Cecil Pearson, April 1, 1965

Levi T. Pennington

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April 1, 1965.

Dear Mary and Cecil:--

This is just a sort of "progress report", and there is to be no joke about it, even if the date is "all Fools' Day", as this particular date is sometimes called.

I wrote you Monday that the floor at the end of the sink in El TeePee was pretty well "shot to pieces", or something of the sort. Well, I didn't guess how much deterioration there had been. (Deterioration is a thing that does not help to make me cheerful as I see it going on all around, and it seems to me faster and faster.) It appears that there must have been a slow leak in the water pipe under the sink that had been helping to rot the sill, the floor joists, the sub-floor, the regular floor and the linoleum that is the final layer there. The dimensions of lumber required for this job were: 1X4, 1X6, 2X4, 2X6, 2X8, and 4X6, and lengths ran 8, 10, 10, 10 and 14 feet. I had to hunt in six different places to find two jacks -- Harlan had not realized that we needed them, or he'd have brought his; Harlan had the necessary flooring for the job; and now the job is finished. We went out Tuesday and got the job about half done, but he had an important church meeting and had to be back Tuesday evening. We went again yesterday, and he got the job done.

But because I do not like to drive at night, we left the house in a mess. The floor needs sweeping, there are tools and sawdust and scraps from flooring and other parts of the lumber, and worst of all, there are dishes left on the table that are not washed at all, and other dishes that were washed in cold water. You see the linoleum had to be turned back over the cook stove so that we could have no fire in that stove without destroying the linoleum, and even if we could have had hot water, Harlan and his tools were right in the way of any dish-washing job. And when he got the job done and the linoleum down it was time to come back to Newberg unless I wanted to drive at night, for which I had not the slightest desire.

I had worked as I felt that I could allow myself to do sawing up the limbs and trunk of the willow tree that had caused part of our trouble, and making pretty poor fuel out of what was left of the decayed roof boards of the garage. The biggest parts of the double trunk of the willow are yet to saw up; the old shingles are right where they ^{were} shoveled off between the garage and the dilapidated building next to it on the south; a padlock is to be put on the gate; there are two pickets to replace on the back fence -- Daryl Williams did not want to wait two or three seconds till I could reach him to get a big chunk of the willow trunk over into the yard; and I wish the four feet between the house and the lot line were spaded up. But some time I hope to get out there to stay longer than two days. Wish I had some congenial man or man and wife who wanted to spend a week out there, with me on their hands. Maybe some day.....

But not very soon. Sunday special meetings begin at the church, and though I do not expect to be there every night,

it would not be considered a seemly thing for me to be away with no satisfactory explanation. The evangelist is Dr. Everett L. Cattell, president of Malone College which grew out of the Cleveland Bible Institute of which Walter Malone was so long the head. Dr. Cattell was long a Quaker Pastor in Ohio Yearly Meeting; was 21 years a missionary in India; he returned to the United States in 1957 to be superintendent of Ohio Yearly Meeting; he became president of Malone College in 1960. He is one of the leaders in the Friends Evangelical Alliance. He is an able and effective speaker, and he ought to do a lot of good, and I hope he does. I heard him at the gathering of the Evangelical Friends in Newberg some years ago. He'll be dogmatic, I suppose, and it is my guess that he will have people at the altar who have been there before enough to weaken their testimony in the minds of some; but if he can get across some basic morals with the religion that he teaches, it will save a lot of heartbreak.

You know of the case of shocking sex immorality that involved the daughter of the college field secretary, a preacher, the son of the Newberg Friends pastor and the son of the quarterly meeting superintendent, another quaker preacher. It was the worst mess we ever had during the thirty years I was president. But in little if any more than a year there were three hurry-up weddings among the George Fox student body; one involving the son of the pastor of one of the biggest churches in Oregon Yearly meeting and the chairman of the Foreign Mission Board; another the son of another pastor of a large meeting in the yearly meeting and the daughter of a college board member; another involving the daughter of another pastor in the yearly meeting who was for a time pastor at Newberg in an interim capacity; another -- I said three but I meant four -- was the son of a man so prominent that to mention his position would identify him. It was a heart-sickening mess.

There is a big stir in Oregon these days over a questionnaire that has been sent to parents of women students of the University of Oregon by the dean of women, asking the parents what limitations they want enforced on their daughters in the matter of where these daughters may spend their nights. One question was if they were willing for their daughters to spend their nights in men's quarters; and the questionnaire included the information that no restrictions would be placed on the women students that were not named by the parents. Some members of the state legislature now in session do not think that that is a proper question to ask, with the implication that if the parents are willing that their daughters should spend their nights in the men's dormitory the University will not raise any objections.

In going through the last year's correspondence that I have thus far handled, I found correspondence dealing with the split-up of the Wabash Friends Church by the Ku Klux Klan when their pastor became a KKK organizer while retaining his position as pastor. I wrote to the presidents of Haverford College and Earlham College, suggesting as the subject of a Master's thesis or a Doctor's dissertation "Quakers and the Ku Klux Klan." Both presidents agreed that it was a good subject, the proper handling of which would be very much worth while. But President Hugh Borton thought it would be more appropriate for an Earlham student to handle it, as the KKK did not get any considerable footing in Pennsylvania and other parts of the east, while it was very strong in Indiana and involved in vast scandals -- it seems to me that three

successive governors served prison sentences as a result of the scandals that involved the KKK in some ways. President Bolling thought it a very worth-while subject, and turned the matter over to Lewis M. Hoskins, head of the History Department. Yesterday I had a letter from Lewis, expressing appreciation for the suggestion, and recognizing the excellence of the subject and at the same time its difficulties. He said that if they could find the right student to handle it, they'd surely encourage him to do it. I really do not expect anything to come of it, but I feel sure that it would be a more profitable theme than some on which people spend their energies. (In H. G. Wells' novel, "The Food of the Gods", he had a man working on a theme for an advanced degree, "The Diurnal Variations in the Butting of a Bull Calf." I read a list of themes that had actually been used that seemed to me quite as valueless as that.)

I've done little that was any more valuable than that today. I think the only matter of note aside from the writing of a few letters was getting a much needed hair cut. I thought I'd get some more seeds put into the ground, but I lacked what Parker's Interlochen man-of-all-work used to call his "enthusiastic." Maybe tomorrow I'll get the dishes washed, get some clothes washed -- I think it's too much to hope that I'll vacuum the carpets.

Anyhow I ought to get to bed tonight instead of tomorrow, as has been the usual thing for months. I didn't get up this morning till nearly or quite nine o'clock. The little clock said it was 6:50, but when I got dressed and looked at my watch it was nearly 9:30. I had forgotten to wind the clock last night.

With love to both of you,

Dr. and Mrs. Cecil E. Pearson,
P. O. Box 241,
Greene, New York.