

Levi Pennington

People

---

8-15-1965

## Levi Pennington To the Sanders, August 15, 1965

Levi T. Pennington  
*George Fox University*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/levi\\_pennington](https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/levi_pennington)

---

### Recommended Citation

Pennington, Levi T., "Levi Pennington To the Sanders, August 15, 1965" (1965). *Levi Pennington*. 312.  
[https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/levi\\_pennington/312](https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/levi_pennington/312)

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the People at Digital Commons @ George Fox University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Levi Pennington by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ George Fox University. For more information, please contact [arolfe@georgefox.edu](mailto:arolfe@georgefox.edu).

97312

August 15, 1966.

Dear Friends:--

Why don't people tell me things? How I missed learning that you were going to Africa I never expect to know, but I did miss it entirely, and was as surprised to get a letter from you with a post mark that said Tiriki Kisumu Kenya as you would have been to get one from me with a London or a Paris or a Shanghai post mark. I called the Skene 'phone number, and Mrs. Skene did not know any more about it than I did. (Laurence was out in some part of the farm away from the house, but Rosa Mae was sure he did not know that you were in Africa. But my second call, to the home of Kelsey and Rachel Hinshaw got me some information. Rachel answered my call, and was surprised that I did not know that you were on leave of absence for three years (if it is three, how will you be visiting me in 1967?) from the work of the American Friends Service Committee, and working for the Five Years Meeting on an important teaching job.

It was delightful to get this letter from you, but to have it definitely settled that I shall not be able to see you for two or three years.....it has already been such a long time since I have seen any of you.....but I'm glad that there is such a thing as mail service, and that I can learn something about you through that system of communication. (A few days ago I had a call from a second-cousin-twice-removed and his bride who are on their way back <sup>to</sup> Bogota, Colombia, where they are to work out a written language for a tribe that find it hard to believe that it is possible to put marke on a piece of paper and send it thousands of miles away and have somebody get your thoughts from those marks on that piece of paper. These folks distantly related to me will give the printed bible to this savage tribe through the Wycliffe Translators and the American Bible Society.)

It was certainly a rich pleasure to learn so many things about how things are going with you there. Your mention of the natural beauties makes me think of the old missionary song that begins with the words:

From Greenland's icy mountains,  
From India's coral strand,  
Where Afric's sunny fountains  
Pour down their golden sands

but the part of it that struck me first was:

What though the spicy breezes  
Blow soft o'er Ceylon's isle,  
Where every prospect pleases  
And only man is vile ~

well, human vileness is not confined to pagan lands nor is human nobility of character confined to the lands that call themselves Christian. Any human or inhuman characteristic can be found, I am sure, in any race and in any land. (Right now my heart is disturbed

by the negro riots in Los Angeles that have cost human lives and millions of dollars in loss of property -- and as an editorial in yesterday's Oregonian said, that no more represents the negro race than the riots of Portland High School teen-agers at Seaside represents the white race, or the riots put on by college students from the north in some of the Florida resort cities. I am sure that you will find nobility of character among folks with black skins -- I know you have encountered people whose characters needed improvement among people of blond complexion.)

Pardon me if I ramble on -- and don't try to read the rest of this letter, which I fear will be far too long, until you have time to relax, if there ever is such a time in your busy life there. I remember the last oratorical contest in which I participated in college. I knew in advance, for I had a chance to read all the other orations in the contest, that the best oration among my opponents was that of a negro contestant whose subject was "The Philosophy of the Race Problem -- From the Negro's Standpoint." This negro was one of 14 contestants in his state; there were five judges on thought and five on delivery, and he was given first place by nine of these judges and the other judge gave him fourteenth place. Prejudice, possibly? Well, in one place in his oration he quoted from Ben Tillman or Thomas Dixon, I am not sure which, a sneering reference to the negro's retreating forehead, his kinky wool, his black skin, his broad nose, his thick lips, etc., and the writer of the oration said -- I can hear him yet -- "I thank God that my skin, though black, can cover a heart as white as any man's; that my retreating forehead and my kinky wool can cover a brain that grapples with the same problems that engage my white brother; and that my broad nose and thick lips need not be a badge of shame if in a single generation I can climb to even a semblance of the civilization to which the white race has been climbing for centuries."

Do you wonder that I felt some of the appreciation that Scott suggested in his words that do not sound just right for a pacifist, but as Mr. Britling had said when a boy, "I know what they mean":

That stern delight which warriors feel  
In foemen worthy of their steel.

Well, now, that "spasm" has passed, and I can refer to your letter.

I am glad indeed that you have found such warm and friendly welcome among the folks there. I never heard of a "Fifteen Meeting" before, but surely I have known for years of a Five Years Meeting that met every three years. (Now it is Friends United Meeting, and I am glad that it includes African Friends, and I wish it were far more united than it is, and that it included some yearly meetings that have never been in it and some that have seceded -- but what's the idea of bringing that up? But I am again writing on "Random Recollections of Ninety Happy Years" it started twenty years ago with the word "Seventy" in place of the "Ninety", and in writing about Oregon Yearly Meeting's withdrawal -- let's think about something pleasant.)

I've never been in a situation where I need<sup>ed</sup> an interpreter - interrupter they are often called. Our Refugee Committee, which started as an independent venture of interested Newberg

Friends but is now a Monthly Meeting committee, is starting on its fifth sponsorship. The first was a German family of five that had lost everything in the way of property when driven out of Bessarabia and had lived in Austria, Poland, East Germany and West Germany, where they had lived, the five of them, for seven years in a single room, and they knew very few English words, but we had German-speaking friends among the Schaaads and a former pastor of the German Methodist Church here, and we could tell one of them a whole string of talk and he or she could put it into German, and they were soon speaking English, especially the younger of the two teenage boys, who entered High School speaking very little English and was on the honor roll the second year. Our next sponsorship was a man and his wife from Czecho-Slovakia, but they spoke fairly good English. Then a Dutch-Indonesian family of four, well educated and speaking very well in English. Then a single young Dutch-Indonesian, who went back to Holland after two years here, with a Dutch girl who had also been sponsored by a Newberg family, and they were married on the 4th and will be back here in a few days now to resume their jobs in Portland, though living in a house at Rex. But the pair that we have now agreed to sponsor are escapees from Jugo-Slavia who found asylum in Italy and have been in three different camps since then, eager to get to America but with no definite hope till they receive the letter that I wrote Monday telling them of our decision to sponsor them which we reached Sunday. And they have very little formal education, he only four years in the primary school and she only two years, and they speak only Serbo/Croat, a tongue that I never heard of before. We'll surely wish that we had an "interrupter" when they arrive. Maybe they can pick up a bit of English before they get here so that they'll know that "Hello" is not a 'swear' word.

But I have written far too much before trying to deal with your concern for Samuel Muhanda, and I wish that I could say or do something that would help that young man to get to George Fox College, but my interview with Earl Craven, head of the admissions force of the college, gives me little hope that the college itself can provide him with board and room in addition to free tuition. I do not know how many African students they expect to have here next year, but I do know some of the difficulties they have had in some cases where students have arrived with no adequate provision for anything beyond tuition -- I helped to raise the money for transportation back to Africa for one of the men here some time ago from there.

The college has a scholarship program that calls for \$60,000, and only \$18,000 of this is provided in cash. And of course tuition does not by any means provide all the expenses that the college must undergo aside from board and room.

Willingness to work in payment for board and room has in some places and at some times assured a student of a chance for a college education, but in a town of this size it is not easy to find work enough for a student to do work enough to pay for board and room unless he is an excellent student with extra energy and little or no interest in anything but his college work. And most of the worth-while jobs that are available are already taken by students who have been here long enough to prove their mettle.

There are cases where foreign students are sponsored by some responsible individual or organization that guarantees to see that expenses for board and room are provided. There is one

student who is to be here from Alaska this year whose board and room are guaranteed by a Woman Friends organization.

I wish I knew whom to suggest who might become personally responsible for the board and room of this friend of yours. My guess, from what you write, is that he has a better chance to be in Whittier College next year than in George Fox.

When one realizes that the college put more than a million dollars into buildings on the campus in the four years that ended a year ago, and that during the current year has completed or is completing another million in buildings, he wonders that there should be any question about the board and room for another student, which is now \$795 in a college dormitory. But of the four main buildings of recent construction, one, the Shanhaugh Library, was given to the college by a former member of the faculty and his wife, who was my first secretary, at a cost of \$270,000; another, Calder Center, was a gift from a foundation established by a friend of Herbert Hoover, a \$300,000 building; and the two dormitories, Pennington Hall, \$450,000, and Edwards Hall, \$400,000, were built with federal loan to be covered by dormitory fees, that are paid by the college to the Housing administration, and do not apply on the running expenses of the college. They had to put on a campaign earlier this year to raise a deficit for the year of more than \$30,000, as I recall it. They did not raise it all, but they did raise more than the whole annual budget of the college away back when,

Back to your letter. What a change in your life it must mean to go from California to Kenya. The change in the matter of music alone must be a drastic one. How I wish I could know your children better -- indeed I can't claim to know them at all. I hope you, Marian, get to know what you are supposed to do and find it not only possible but pleasant to handle jobs that require such versatility. I see no inconsistency between the work of a librarian and the teaching of typing or education, philosophy, cooking, sewing or what not; but I know people who could teach philosophy but who could not "make a noise like a librarian", as they used to say when I was on earth the first time.

I've remembered you to the Skenes, Bertha McCracken Haworth, Mary Sutton (Dr. Sutton, if you please, for George Fox College made her a Litt. D. some years ago, as you doubtless know), and I do not remember how many others

My two daughters and some other folks that I could name are much interested in a certain birthday that is due on the 29th. It might be an exaggeration to say that they are all agog, just going from one gog right into another, but at any rate there is a lot of interest in that day, which is something a bit special, for if I last till then it will be the first time in my life that I have ever been 90 years old.

Living in the Pacific Northwest, I have few near relatives, none closer than second cousins except my daughter Bertha May. My near relatives are more than 2000 miles away -- a sort of paradox, for my near relatives are distant and my distant relatives are near. But for this 90th birthday I'm expecting my older daughter and her husband, who have been in Oregon since July 1; my younger daughter Bertha May and her husband and the two daughters, my granddaughters of the second order -- I have three kinds of granddaughters; a favorite niece from Detroit (I have more than one

5. (Didn't I tell you this letter was going to be too long?)

one favorite niece, and more than one favorite nephew, too); from Ann Arbor a nephew and his wife and perhaps their oldest son and his wife; and from Rolling Hills, California, a cousin and his wife. Quite a party for that birthday dinner.

And by the "grapevine" I have learned that the church and the college have planned or are planning an "open house" at Pennington Hall, on the campus at the corner of Sheridan and River streets, about a hundred yards and in plain sight from the window by which I am writing. Wish I could see you there.

The second day from now Oregon Yearly Meeting begins, to close a week from tonight. I wish I could look forward to its sessions with unmixed joy. How fine it would be if the little girl's prayer could be fully answered, "O Lord, make all bad people good, and make all good people nice."

I'm sure my manner of life would seem scandalous to some people if they knew about it. I started this letter this morning, I've forgotten whether it was after one o'clock or after two or after three. I've written it off and on, more or less, little by little, now and again, and all that sort of thing. I wish I knew whom you'd like to know about. As it is, I think I'll end this long-drawn-out epistle, and do the unusual thing and go to bed before midnight.

With love and best wishes to all of you,

Sincerely your friend,

Levi T. Pennington.

Marian, Ed and Other Sanders,  
Kaimosi  
Teachers Training College,  
P.O. Tiriki, Kisumu, Kenya, East Africa.