

Levi Pennington

People

9-13-1965

Levi Pennington To Parker Pennington, September 13, 1965

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September 13, 1965.

Dear Brother:--

Your letter of day before yesterday arrived today, and it's always good to hear from you. It always was, but for a long time I had four brothers, and now I have only one, and that makes him if anything a bit more "special" than he was before the other three left us.

I'm sorry that writing letters is such a task for you these days, and I can understand it to some extent at least. I can remember two occasions when a letter that I wrote took pretty heavy toll, of every kind of strength I had, which was not much. One was a time of serious illness when I felt that I had to write an important letter on behalf of the college, and it made me sweat as if I were trying to make a world record in a marathon race. The other was a time when a former student of the college found herself in a vicious circle and she saw no way out of it, though I think her father could have solved the difficulty if he had tried as hard as I did. It was in the days when the college had not yet won the recognition that it had later until after my retirement, then lost it, and later gained still higher recognition. Because of our lack of standardization students would attend Pacific College, without paying up their expenses, then take their credits to another college that was standardized, do their last year's work there, where they had to pay their bills, then get teaching positions that we could not provide them, and postpone payment to us indefinitely, which meant in many cases never. There was an accumulation of more than \$20,000.00 of accumulated debts -- yes, it had accumulated, as my use of the word has done; and the board decided that we should not give any transfers of credits on our books until the student's debts to the college were paid. Well, this girl had attended Pacific College for part of her course, then the family moved to another state and she entered the normal school there to prepare to teach. Finished her course there and was ready to graduate if she had her credits from Pacific College. But we could not give her her credits until her debts were paid; she could not pay her debts until she earned the money by teaching; she could not teach until she got her diploma from the normal school; she could not get her diploma without her credits from Pacific College; she could not get her credits until her debts were paid; she could not pay her debts till she earned the money teaching; and "round and round she goes and where she stops nobody knows."

(What a beastly lot of words. I didn't think it would take so many. Sick as I was when I got her appeal, I tried to do some hard thinking, and I sweat till the sheet was plenty wet. Then I worked it out. The college owed me some thousands of dollars. I could give them credit for a payment to me of what the girl owed; she could give me her note, signed by herself and her father; the college would be released from their indebtedness to me for that sum, they would be paid for this tuition and other expense, and I would have the note, and we could send the girl her credits. Everybody was happy. And I recovered from the illness that made this little stunt so hard.