

Levi Pennington

People

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Memorial to Levi T. Pennington, July 23, 1975

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MEMORIAL to

Levi T. Pennington —

(Read at Northwest Yearly Meeting memorial observance, July 23, 1975)

Levi T. Pennington, president emeritus of George Fox College passed away March 17, 1975, at the age of 99. He would have been 100 on August 29.

Levi Pennington served as president of Pacific College, now George Fox College, from 1911 to 1941, the longest tenure of any Oregon president. Pennington Hall on campus, constructed in 1962 as the first structure in the 1960's building period, was named for Dr. Pennington and his wife, Rebecca.

Levi Pennington worked with a number of church and civic organizations. These included the American Friends Service Committee since its beginning in 1917, the National Council for Prevention of War, National Education Association, and the Heifer Project (for overseas relief). Dr. Pennington was one of the organizers of the Friends Committee for National Legislation, and while taking leave of absence from Pacific College was executive director of Forward Movement of Friends in America for two years. He served repeatedly as president of the Association of Independent Colleges of Oregon and was a Chautauqua and Lyceum lecturer for years. He served for nine years as Clerk of Northwest Yearly Meeting. Since his retirement he continued to serve these organizations and others, including the Herbert Hoover Foundation of Oregon.

Three books of verse, All Kinds of Weather, Variable Winds, and Vagrant Breezes, as well as an autobiographical volume, Rambling Recollections of Ninety Happy Years, are products of his writing talents, all written in recent years.

Numbered among his many friends were such prominent names as President Herbert Hoover, evangelist Billy Sunday, and lyric tenor Roland Hayes. He was widely known and respected in the United States, Canada, and England.

Emmett Gulley, a colleague of Levi Pennington and a former George Fox College president, wrote:

"Few men of our time have had the ability and opportunity to serve God and man as did Levi T. Pennington. Coming from Christian parents, he was endowed with a healthy mind and body and a taste for spiritual and moral values. For nearly 100 years, he used those qualities in an unusual degree, but he had the unique ability to use his gifts in practical ways. Hundreds of students will remember him as the person who made it possible for them to go to college. Thousands of unnamed hungry, and displaced people lived because Levi Pennington was instrumental in helping to send food, medicines, seed, and heifers and other animals for relief of hunger. His efforts for peace and his struggle against the use of liquor were monumental. Few people have surpassed him in their efforts to help people who were in need."

At the close of Friends Church morning worship at Newberg, Levi Pennington often gave the closing prayer. On December 30, 1973, he was led to sing the following benediction without accompaniment:

Shortly before his death, Levi Pennington taped a radio program in the office of President David LeShana. Listen to his reply to the question: "What kind of advice would you give to young people of today?"

(Bob Gilmore will run tape at this point)