

Governor Pickering to Arthur Denny, 4 May 1865

Springfield Illinois
Thursday May 14th 1865

Arthur D. Deming Esq
Olympia Washington Territory

Dear Sir,

We have this day
laid the earthly remains of Abraham
Lincoln in the vault of his last resting
place on Earth, ~~there to lie until~~
the Trumpet shall sound for all the
dead to rise from their Graves, and
appear before the Judge of every thing
that has been done on Earth, by every
human being, and when all will be re-
warded according to the deeds they
have each done on Earth, whether they
have been good or evil, for that
which a man doeth, that he shall
reap.

I was writing in my room
about 10 o'clock on the night of President
Lincoln's Assassination. I have a gentle
man whose name I have written, and

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rushing in, and hastily told me, "the Pre-
sident has just been shot in Ford's Theatre,
and is dying." I asked as suddenly, "the
President has been shot, when, where, &
how?" - He again said, "in Ford's Theatre,
by Wilkes Booth, an actor, and he is
now dying." - I snatched up my hat
& cane, I ran to the place, about two
hundred yards off - they had just
removed him across the street, into a pri-
vate house, - a large crowd had
gathered around the house, soldiers soon
came, and kept the profane & enquiring
population away from the house, - I stood
about two hours, ~~listening~~ listening to the
statements given by many who had seen
the whole affair, - I went down until two
o'clock, then went back to the crowd of
people, who had been coming & going,
but had become more numerous -
Mr Lincoln had not spoken, and was
sinking rapidly - I went back with a sorrowful
heart, - and deeply convinced that every
Rebel, & every Rebel sympathizer within the
U. S. ought to be hanged -
Next morning - he died at 22 minutes
past seven o'clock - at nine they removed
his body from the house where he died, to the
White House, in a large outside coffin in
a hearse, I followed it on foot, with J. N.
Arnold of Chicago - and about half a dozen
Officers, in the Rain, I and 6 or 8 others deep
about 20 minutes - two lines, on
each side of the hearse - when he was taken
into his Bed Chamber and all left the room
for the embalmers to embalm the body -

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I came all the way from Washington City with the
rewards to Springfield - I have this day seen
him placed inside the Vault - and the Iron
Door shut & locked - and the outside Stone
Doors shut & locked, - and there we left
him - You will see by the Papers, all
the crowded streets of every City & Town, large
& small, all the way from Washington to
Springfield. - the whole population gathered
to the Road side, and remained many hours
waiting, by night as well as by day light, to
see the train pass, with their ~~dead~~ ^{dead} President -
At least One Million of People stood
on both sides of the Street along the whole length
of the Streets through which the procession
passed at New York City -
Dr. Henry did not go with the party who
seen accompanied the body to Springfield -
While we were in New York, Dr. H. came
from Washington & staid one day & a night at the
Metropolitan Hotel, where the company attending the
interment staid at - He went back to Washington -
This reported he tried to get the Office of Secy -
of Interior, where Cabinet Officer, whether this re-
port is true or not, I do not know - but none
doubts his intention of endeavouring to get appoint-
ed Secy of Genl Land Office, - Comr of Indian
Affairs, or Comr of Patents -
But it is generally thought, that President John-
son will not make any changes, unless for special
reasons, or causes, such as improper conduct - So as
the Chief Board now stands, it is not expected that Mr.
Sims will be able to build the same amount of influence
with President Johnson in behalf of his friends & favorites
that he had with President Lincoln - So the present
prospect is, that Mr. Hunt will return to Olympia to his old
office, & there take a course to the Peace of all times
union men -
I intend to go to Adams Edwards County, Mo. Grayville
in the West in Adams County where John lives, & stay
there about six weeks - then go to Washington & try to
secure the re-appointment of Mr. P. L. Moore, unless that has
already been done, as the Commissioner of Internal Revenue
has performed me should be done, and also to secure

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the re-appointment of the Indian Agents, and their all-
responsible duties, & personal good will towards all our
brother Officer holders will have been well & duly and
well as successfully performed, for all of which I feel
truly thankful to Almighty God; for although I have
never hunted at such a thing before, yet for every day
for one full month & four days, I was in full fear of
expectation, ~~and~~ ^{and} every night that I should
not be able to get our single Officer holder re-
appointed - and during every moment of those 34 days
I felt an agony of vexation, grief, and mortification
that I never ~~before~~ ^{before} and never shall endeavour to
describe. ~~that~~ ^{that} I thank God for all his success,
that painful mental anguish is over, and what
more thankful is the solid sub-
stantial fact that I have happily succeeded in
procuring all the ~~re-appointments~~ ^{re-appointments} and broken
down the hindrances & barriers that had been
fixed & established against all possible hopes of
procuring relief for the deplorable situation of
the four Land Officers in W. T. for ~~the~~ ^{the} I could
not get the appropriation actually passed, at the late
session, yet what the good success of breaking the ice
or rather way of breaking down all the formidable
& strongly fixed prejudices of Mr Edmunds' Court
of General Land Officers, which he was formerly
named to make, which he stoutly made for some
time against all allowances or relief being made
to the four Land Officers at Olympia & Vancouver,
for at length after besieging him as systematic
the "old" as the English & French barons & bar-
toples, he gradually surrendered his fixed
objections, and at length wrote a friendly
letter in behalf of relief for the past, but they
gaily refused his consent to change the present method
of compensating Registers & Receivers at local Land
Officers - and that letter of Mr Edmunds will
permanently tell his further objections to the headed re-
lief - so that letter will be the foundation of an ap-
propriation next session, & I am most anxious about
the election, but still hope for our Union friends
doing all the can possibly & good faith, and well
hope to trust that God will be with us
My sincere regards to all our true friends
Very truly, your Obedt Servt
William Pickering