

Governor William Pickering to Arthur Denny, 1 April 1865

Denny, A. - Corresponding
Pickering, W. - Denny

I would like you to keep this confidential, - except to our true Union friends - especially about Wallace's do nothing ways. And then you show it to, I beg them entire silence. you can scarcely tell anything, but somehow, they tell every body.

Washington City D.C.
April 1st 1865

A. Denny Esq.
Olympia W. T.

Dear Sir,

The Steamer will leave N. York on Monday 3rd inst, ^{23rd} President Lincoln went to City Point on Sunday before last, ^(22nd) took Mrs Lincoln with him, he went on the Steamer "River Queen". and makes that his home stead, during his stay, ^{Eating & Sleeping on Board.} Gen. Grant has a Steam Boat for his home, & rides on Board with his family, has his Head Quarters at an Office built on shore, he can then move about where he pleases, without delay.

The President went to City Point on the James River. (at the Point formed by the mouth of the Appomattox running into James,) to meet Generals Grant, Sherman, ^{Sheridan} Meade, Hancock, Warren, Bide, & Hooker, in Council of War. Sherman left for his Army in N. Carolina, on Monday of this week, All the other Generals left for their several Commands on Tuesday 28th and Gen. Grant left City Point on ^{Wednesday morning 29th} for the front, to open the Spring Campaign, against the Enemy. The Council of War was held at City Point, ^{on Saturday 25th March,} The President was affected back to Washington on Wednesday 29th. And as no business could be transacted at Washington by ^{any} ~~all~~ of those who were waiting for his return, I took that opportunity, ^{I used that truthful reason} to prevail upon Senator Williams, & Gov. Wallace, to go with me to see Gen. Grant, to endeavour to prevail upon him to issue an order to direct Gen. Alford, to remain at his present position, in Command of the Military District of Oregon, Wash. & Idaho Territories, - for some vile Slanderer has furnished wilful & wicked Slanders, against Gen. Alford, - and Copperheads Nesmith, Harding, Cole, ^{these men} ^(Rep. Henderson joined me in endeavouring to stop their wicked plans) ^{upon hearing this} have been urging the removal of Gen. Alford, ^{and at length, with great difficulty, I succeeded in prevailing upon Senator Williams & Wallace from Oregon, & Wallace from Idaho, at last agreed to}

Governor William Pickering to Arthur Denny, 1 April 1865

sign a statement setting forth our united request for Alwood being ordered to remain in his present command, Henderson told me that Williams had informed him, that he had rec^d some petitions from Gov^t Gibbs & others in Oregon, to the Sec. of War, requesting that Gen. Alwood might remain in his present Command, On receiving it, Williams went ^{alone} to the Sec. of War, who bluffed him off roughly, by stating that Gen^l Grant had ordered, that Gen^l Alwood should be recalled, & mustered out of service, but the Sec. of War had delayed sometime, & had sent an order for Alwood to report himself to the East, (or to the Sec. of War perhaps) —

On Henderson telling me this, I promptly said, ^{to Henderson} that I would volunteer my request to Gen^l Grant, to stay such one sided proceedings, and hear Gen^l Alwoods defence, ^{before cutting his head off.} for it was another villainous removal of a good man, because he was a good man, another villainous removal by Copperheads A. Smith, Harding, & Cole, as they & Mc Gilvera to help them yes, & Henry too as I believe, had conspired to remove Mr Hale simply because Hale was an honest man, & refused to rob the Indians of \$17,000, for the benefit of Clough & A. Smith. — I would ask him, ^{Henderson,} Williams and Wallace to join me, Henderson cheerfully agreed to the Justice & rightfulness of our joining to do so, I asked him to write out a statement of the case, ^{and then he & I would sign it} & I replied that we would ask Williams & Wallace to sign it — leaving spaces for Seneca Williams to sign it at the top, & Hendersons next, then a space for Wallace, & I would sign my name at the bottom — Henderson said he had not time left to spare to write out anything, as Mrs Henderson had been sick all the voyage & was still sick, ^{and he must go with her to Chicago} therefore he wished I would write out the statement, and he would sign it with me, I must then take it to Williams, & Wallace, I wrote out my views on the subject next morning, I took it to Henderson, who agreed with ^{every line of} it cordially, & immediately ^{met Mrs Henderson left that day for Missouri,} & cheerfully signed it, I went to Senator Williams' room, he was not at home, I then went to Wallaces Room at the far side of George Town — 2 miles off, he was not at home, I lost that journey, I went next morning, & got to his room by eight o'clock, & found him in

Governor William Pickering to Arthur Denny, 1 April 1865

Bed, I roused him up, he read the statement Henderson & I had signed, he hummed & hawed, I asked why Williams had not signed it? I told him that Williams like himself, could only be caught on the spot, ^{Wallace then} ^(to Washington) ~~went back with me~~ ^{he went} on private business to see Wm but evidently did not want me to go with him there & I had no desire to go there ^{at that time} for Dr. Henry held a room in the same house, I stand in the same ParLOUR ^{with Mr. Brund} ^{Harding Williams & Henry,} and I expected to meet Williams elsewhere, but I fully expected Wallace would ^{at that visit} deter Williams from signing it.

I asked Wallace if the statement was not true in every particular? he said well, yes, then why not sign it now? ^{he said} well let Williams see it! I said If you don't like this statement, then I wish you would write down your ^{sign your name to it,} views, and I will sign it with you, and I will go to Genl Grant & present ^{also present} this which Henderson & I have signed — the paper you may please to write, signed by you & myself, and Senator Williams may sign one or ^{or write one out for himself, & sign that,} both papers, just as he pleases ^{But Gov. Wallace} ^{both Williams, Henderson, yourself, & myself, ought all four to go to Genl Grant, & present my statement} in a body, that is the way to come. ^{But Wallace could not go. Oh no, for he had seen} ^{the President only once, during the whole Session. I wanted to see him now, I had been trying for some time past but could not get to see him yet.} ^{At last I found Williams alone in his room, he read it over very carefully, & then read it all over again very slowly, — and at length said, he agreed with all that was said, approving of Genl Wood, but the latter part was rather too strongly expressed, (that was word for word, what Wallace had said to me.) I asked him if it was not true} ^{well, yes, he said, but it was rather too strongly expressed, I told him that was just what Wallace had said? — Doctors they agree about the character & virulence of the Patients case but differ about the best mode of treatment, or differ about the best remedy,}

For my part, I first endeavoured to ascertain the truth, and then support & defend that truth in the strongest manner I could, after I had written it, I felt sorry I had not time to write it over again, for the danger to the peace of the District being destroyed, ought in my opinion to have been more strongly exhibited. — If I could have spared the time to have written it over again, I would have tried to have made that part much stronger as possibly could, for no intelligent man need be afraid or ashamed to sign a true statement, no matter how clearly, or how strongly that truth was expressed — the only question in this case to be inquired about, was, simply is it true? ^{I thought for some time he would not sign it. — He asked at length, what I intended to do with it?}

Why Sir, I shall take it to Genl Grant, & use my best endeavours to prevail upon him to direct Genl Wood, to remain in his present command! ^{He said, they had de-}

Governor William Pickering to Arthur Denny, 1 April 1865

signed the case, — and nothing could be done, to change their order, — I told him if
 no change had been ordered, there would be no use, or occasion for us to con-
 plain — but it was simply because of the fact, that a great wrong had wrong-
 been determined upon, which called for the propriety & necessity for our complain-
 ing & protesting against that grievous wrong being perpetrated & inflicted upon
 Gen. Alvord, upon the whole population of his District — and if nobody else
 would have joined me, I would do my duty, both to Gen. Alvord & to the population
 of Washington Territory — Mr. Henderson said it was right & just we
 should do so. I he approved very cheerfully with every word that he had willing-
 signed his name to — If he (Williams) & Gov. Wallace would both sign it,
 I should be glad, or if one or both refused to sign it, I should feel sorry, but I
 was determined to do what I considered my duty, both as an act of Justice to
 Gen. Alvord, and to the population of Wash. Territory — Other Gentlemen
 of course would do as they pleased, No man should belie, or slander Alvord,
 without my calling out loudly against it. I did not care who the slanderers were,
 Williams very slowly took the Pen & signed it, — I then told him, that as Wallace
 had declined, or in fact had refused to sign it — or as he had said, until after
 Judge Williams had seen it — plainly meaning that he would not sign it, unless
 Senator Williams signed it first. Now, I would go again to George town, & show
 him the three names to it, with Senator Williams at the head of the list, perhaps
 he might sign his name ^{then} in the blank space beneath Hendersons name, &
 above my name ^{which was} at the bottom of the Paper —
 I then urged Williams to go with me to Grant, he said he should like the trip,
 but he had business on hand, that all moved so slowly, and he must stick to the
 business he had on hand, until it was finished — He wanted to see the President, &
 must go away morning & evening until he got to see him, — So Wms could not go with me
 to see Gen. Grant. I then went to Wallace, at George town, — at 9 o'clock that night, to catch him at his
 time of going to bed — waited there until 10, at which time he arrived, showed him
 Senator Wms name — Ah, he said, so Judge Wms signed it? Yes Sir, there is the Senators
 name & full length — Officially signed, as U.S. Senator from Oregon, — and there is
 a space left for your name, above mine — Wallace read it over again, & then
 signed it — then, I tried to persuade him to go with me to see Grant, but like
 Williams, Wallace had very important business on hand, and must see the Pre-
 sident, and he had only seen him once during the whole Session, — I had been trying
 every day from 9 till two — & from 7 to 9 or 10 in the evenings for two or three weeks, &
 must continue his visits every day until he could get to see him, — So he could not
 go with me to see Grant, — very well, then Sir, I will go alone, altho I have as much
 important business on my hands as either you or Judge Wms, but it will only
 take 3 days to go & come, — and this business is as important to all our people in
 Oregon, Washington, & Idaho, & all the rest of the business of Youngs, Williams, & mine
 now on our hands — and we can all three arrange our business at Washington
 so that it will not suffer or be delayed by our absence for 3 days — I mention these
 particulars, to show you from the start, the determined & nothing notions of Wallace
 which he had inculcated into Williams — for they had evidently agreed not to sign
 the application to Grant, that Henderson & myself had signed — And they had both pre-
 determined not to go with any to see Grant, — And I suspect it was Wallace that had
 made the Dec. of War, & the Secret General, that it was of no use our attempting to open
 that Wallace as strongest reasons for his unwillingness to change their plans. — But I forgot to add
 arose from Wallaces apprehension, & his belief that Gen. Alvord had shilled to be relieved
 and to get himself ordered home into the active duties, & being placed in front to have an appeal
 made with other Brs. generally to win laurels, some & soldiers glory, promotion,
 All this nonsense of Wallaces, I attempted to show was entirely un-
 defense, of extreme delusion, towards Alvords supposed preferences, I showed to Wallace & others
 that just recd from Gen. to Alvord one public, enclosing a letter of introduction to Major Gen. Stears
 Corps the other letter, entirely private, respecting his public duties on
 instructions on the part of the Gov.

Governor William Pickering to Arthur Denny, 1 April 1865

572 page - April 1st 1865.

And in both letters, not one word was said in reference to his removal from his present command, nor about his application to be relieved, & ordered East to be placed in the front. ^{as Wallace pretended was the fact, as he believed it.} And I concluded from his silence on those subjects in his two letters to me, that he ^{Gen. Alford} had not entertained any such a desire to be called to the East, or he certainly would have requested me to aid the fulfillment of such a request, had he made it. His silence on all that subject, both about his application to be changed to the East ^{about} and any order from the War Department directing him to report ^{himself} in the East - was full proof to my judgment that no such thoughts of his ^{Gen. Alford} wishing to come East, & no such order for him to come to the East, had been in ^{his} contemplation, or had been received by him at the time he wrote those two letters to me, both dated 26. January 1865.

Well Sir, after Wallace had signed the request for Gen. Alford to remain where he is, I started to prevail upon Wallace to go with me to see Gen. Grant. Then I obtained a Pass from Major Leach, Chief of Grants Staff at his Head Quarters in Washington. - Then got a Letter of Official Introduction from the Department of State, signed by Wm. H. Seward, Sec. of State - for myself, to Lieut. Gen. Grant - not a private, but an official letter of ten times the value of an Official Letter. - Also, one from our mutual old friend E. B. Washburne M.C. from the Galena District, Illinois - (Grants District, & Washburne had been to City Point a few days before, to present to Grant the Gold Medal voted to him by Congress.) - Had I known that, I would have gone with Washburne & his committee, and a warm hearted Letter from ^{my trusty old friend} Gov. Yates, Senator from Illinois - in which Yates urged Grant to comply with my wishes & retain Gen. Alford in his present command. - this was worth its weight in Gold many times over. - for this is more likely to win than all else we could tie together; -

On ~~Friday~~ Thursday Morning 23rd ^{March} the President left Washington, reached City Point on the James River, at Grants Head Quarters, on Friday 24th ult.

I then called upon Senator Williams, & urged him to go with me to see Grant,

Governor William Pickering to Arthur Denny, 1 April 1865

urging, that as the President was absent, all those who were waiting to see him had holiday, I full leave to be absent from Wash. also. That, I have obtained a Pass to City Point, and shewed it to him and promised to get a pass for him also, from Grants head Quarters, he said he could get a pass from the War Dept. I told him, that it would be a common Soldiers pass only, while a pass from Grants head Quarters, would be held & esteemed as an Officers pass. — At length, he slowly consented to go with me, I told Wms that I would urge Wallace to go with us, also Dr. Randle formerly an old friend residing many years at Alton Illinois — but of late years a resident in California & Wash. Terr., as Surgeon in the U.S. Service, — and I would get a pass for Dr. Randle also.

I engaged Dr. R. to go to visit Gov. Wallace, on my behalf, to try to enlist him to go with us — gave the Dr. a note of introduction, in which I urgently invited Wallace to join Williams, my self & Dr. Randle, in one united Company, to visit Gen. Grant. I promised to get him a pass, if he would consent to go with us. Dr. R. had hard work to prevail upon Wallace to go — Randle knew Alford well, I Randle spoke earnestly in behalf of every man who knew Alford ^{that it was his duty} to struggle to get justice done to him, & Dr. R. "does not give up the ship"; finally he prevailed upon Wallace to consent to go with us, next day I got passes for Williams, Wallace, & Randle, & on Tuesday we started — got there on Wednesday, Grant had gone to the front in the morning of the day we arrived at about noon, on Wednesday,

We went to his Head Quarters, found Grant had taken all the members of his staff with him, leaving only Col. E. Bowers in charge of the Office of his Head Quarters, with 3 or 4 clerks — when we went to Grants Office imagine my surprise, when I found Col. Bowers, an old neighbour & personal friend — that was great good luck for Bowers enjoys the confi-

dence of Gen^l Grant, — Bowers, was glad to see me, & gladly willing to serve me, — The Pres^t soon after came into Grant's Office, from his "River Queen" Steamer — after an introduction of Williams, Wallace & Beaudette, all of whom Mr Lincoln recollected — Williams & Wallace left. I then told the President, that we had not intended to add to his labours, any trouble about the business we had come to see Gen^l Grant about, but as we had not had the satisfaction of meeting Gen^l G., but had the unexpected pleasure of meeting him, I believed the best thing we could then do was to ask him to take the trouble of looking at our business. He said well after I have looked at it, I believe I shall have to refer it to Gen^l Grant, well Sir I said your looking at our paper will do it no hurt whatever, it is signed Officially by Senator Williams & Rep^t Henderson from the State of Oregon, by Gov^r Wallace delegate from Idaho, & by myself from W. D. I handed it to him, he read it nearly through — when we came a telegraphic dispatch from Grant, covering a page of a letter sheet, he read it over twice got up & looked at a Military Map of the Seat of War, set down again read over again the telegram, — and then handed me our paper and said to me, I reckon, you had better leave this paper with Col^l Bower, & ask him to present it to Gen^l Grant, when he thinks Grant will have a fair opportunity to examine it carefully — But I reckon, Col^l Bower had better not present it just now, but Gen^l Grant may be very busily engaged for awhile — I thanked him for his considerate advice, told him I would do so — & then shook hands & left the Head Quarters Office — I then obtained paper from the Provost Marshall Gen^l of Grant's Head Quarters, & of City Point for myself & party — to visit the lines of our

Army, & the front - that night - a cannonading began at 9 - & held on till 1 week morning - the whole length of the lines, from both sides such a continuous roar of Artillery was surely never heard, the nearest part was 5 miles from us. attending almost 10 miles along the fortifications on both sides, with a continuous rolling of musketry we could see the shells flying & bursting. - and the flashes of the guns.

Next morning Dr Randles & myself went 18 or 20 miles on the military Rail Road along & through our whole line to Humphreys Station called Hatchers run - where 140 ambulances came in close file with two wounded soldiers in each, from the battle field, about 200 or 250 wounded came up before we left, and 400 Rebel prisoners, our train took them all to City point.

I had seen nothing of the War, before this journey, neither the tremendous preparations & supplies, nor the terrible effects -

there are 5000 sick & wounded in the Hospitals at City point - 1500 graves of Union soldiers with neat white head boards with the names, Company & Regt of each dead soldier neatly painted, about 100 of the bodies have been fetched away by their relatives - about 300 or 400 Rebels graves without any names there -

the Mammoth Bakery there consumes 500 Bar Flour every day & bakes 100,000 Bread Rations every day -

The Bales of Hay & Sacks of Buts stored in Warehouses would certainly feed 100,000 Horses Mules & Oxen a long time - The piles of provisions for the men would astonish the world -

From the Mouth of James River to City point is one vast wilderness on both sides the River all the wide spread fields are grown up with Brown dead weeds of last years growth - not a fence rail to be seen - and all the way from City Point to Hatchers run the R.R. goes through old fields & cornucopias with last years weeds - not a fence rail, nor a plow marked furrow to be seen - The whole 20 miles runs through Camps -

subtrenchments & Rifle pits, by the thousands, heavy Batteries & fortifications in continuous lines, - the vast amount of labor that has been expended in earthworks for 20 miles in length is truly astonishing - The spheres of Petersburg plainly to be seen from the R.R. - we passed close by & through the battle fields of the day before, - the heavy Rain had obliterated the learning up the ground by the shot & shell, General Meades Headquarters, a good farm House had upward of 200 shot & shell brown on all sides of it the night before we saw it, many went over the House, & later over the R.R. we were upon -

Talk about the Sacred Soil of Virginia, there is not an inch of it sacred except where Washington & a few Revolutionary heroes are buried - and the graves of our Union soldiers, and where the soil was drenched with the Blood of our God & by all good men - the hundreds of dead, embayed in carrying supplies to City Point, & Berkeley hundred, and carrying back sick & wounded soldiers, carrying fresh troops, is surpassing in numbers - All our soldiers in the field, are waiting for the day of battle & a few weeks will crush our foe, do what he may to try to avoid it.