

Shrugfield Illinois
Thursday May 4th 1865

Arthur A. Denny Esqr
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 be until the Trumpet shall sound for all the dead to rise from their Graves, and appear before the Judge of everything that has been done on Earth, by every human being, and when all will be awarded according to the deeds they have each done on Earth, whether they have been good or Evil – for that which a man soweth, that he shall reap.

I was writing in my room about 10 am o'clock] on the night of President Lincoln's assassination - -when a Gentleman whose room joined mine, came rushing in, and hastily told me, "the President 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, & ran to the place, about two hundred yards off----they had just removed him across the street, into a private house. A large crowd had gathered around the House, soldiers soon came, and kept the anxiously enquiring population away from the House. I stayed about two hours, listening to the statements given by many who had seen the whole affair. I went & wrote 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 D.N. Arnold of Chicago , and about half a dozen officers, in the rain, and mud 6 or 8 inches deep about 50 mounted Dragoons in two lines on each side of the Hearse. When he was taken into his Bed Chamber, and all left the room, [illeg] the embalmers to embalm the body.

I came all the way from Washington City with the remains to Springfield, & 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 roadside and remained many hours waiting, by night as well as by day light to see the train pass, with their dead President.

At least one million & a half of People stood at 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 accompanied the body to Springfield. While we were in New York, Dr. H came from Washington & staid [sic] one day & a night at the Metropolitan Hotel, where the company attending Mr. Lincoln staid {sic} at. He went back to Washington. It is reported he tried to get the Office of Sec'y of Interior, the Cabinet Officer, whether the report is true or not, I do not know, but none doubts his intention of endeavoring to get appointed Com. of Game & Land Office, Com. Of Indian Affairs, or Com. of Patents.

But it is generally thought, that President Johnson will not make any changes, unless for special reasons or causes, such as improper conduct. So as the Chess Board now stands, it is not expected that Mrs. Lincoln will be able to wield the same amount of influence with President Johnson...so the present prospect is that Dr. Henry will return to Olympia to his old office, & there to be a curse to the Peace of all true Union men.

I intend to go to Albion Edwards County, into Grayville on the Wabash in White County where John lives & stay there about 3 weeks, then go to Washington & try to secure the reappointment of Mr. A.D. Moore, unless that has already been done, as the Commissioner of Internal Revenue promised me should be done, and also to secure the reappointment of the Indian Agents, and then all responsible duties, & personal good will towards all our brother Office holders will have been well & duly as well as successfully performed, for all of which I feel truly thankful to Almighty God, for although I have never hinted at such a thing before, yet for every day for one solid month & four days, I was in full fear and expectation, every day & every night—that I should not be able to get one single office holder reappointed---and during every moment of those 34 days I felt an agony of vexation, grief, and mortification that I never can and never shall endeavor to describe.

Thank God for all his mercies that painful mental anguish is over, and what makes one still more thankful, is the solid, substantial fact that I have happily succeeded in procuring all the reappointments, and broken down the bulwarks & barriers that had been fixed & established against all possible hope of procuring relief for the deficient salaries of the four Land Officers in W.T., for although I could not get the appropriation actually passed, at the late session, yet I had the good success of breaking the Ice, or rather say of breaking down all the formidable & strongly fixed prejudice of Mr. Edmunds Com. of

General Land Office, which he was first determined to make, & which he stoutly made for some time against all allowance on relief being made to the four Land Officers in Olympia & Vancouver for at length after besieging him as systematically as the English & French besieged Sebastople [sic], he gradually surrendered his feigned objections, and at length wrote a friendly letter on behalf of relief for the past, but doggedly refused his consent to change the present method of compensating Registrars & Receivers at local Land Offices. Well that letter of Mr. Edmunds will prevent all his further objections to the needed relief, and that letter will be the foundation of an appropriation next session.

I am most anxious about the Election, but still hope for our union friends doing all they can [illeg] in good faith, and well hope & trust that God will be with us.

My sincere regards to all our true friends.

Very truly your [illeg]

William Pickering