



c.1875

Oregon State Library

Matthew P. Deady (1824-1893)

Matthew P. Deady was born in Maryland. He apprenticed as a blacksmith but chose to study law and was admitted to the Ohio State Bar in 1846. Deady came to the Oregon Territory in late 1846. He was elected into the Territorial Legislature in 1847 and became friends with Joseph Lane who persuaded President Pierce to appoint Deady to the Territorial Supreme Court in 1853.¹

Deady was a close friend of Asahel Bush II, and became a member of the Salem Clique. Even so, Deady was critical of Bush for his support of Joseph Lane.² Deady agreed with Bush's assessments of editor, Thomas Dryer, of the *Oregonian*, and often made references to the Temperance Movement when commenting on Dryer.³ Deady was proslavery but not necessarily for Oregon. He was elected to the Supreme Court in 1858, but accepted President Buchanan's appointment to the Federal bench instead. He was a delegate to the Constitutional Convention in 1857 and campaigned for Joseph Lane in 1860.

Secession changed Deady's political opinions and he switched to the Republican Party. Deady never changed his perspective on slavery, however, he fought to protect Chinese immigrants. Deady upheld the interests of workers and the public against corporations which he did not believe served the public good. In land disputes he was inclined to uphold decisions for legal holders instead of settlers. Deady helped codified Oregon laws in 1864 and 1872.³

To supplement his income, Deady wrote for the *San Francisco Bulletin* in 1863. He had many charitable affiliations and was on the University of Oregon Board of Regents for 20 years. Deady suffered a stroke in the winter of 1892 but continued to appear in court until he died in Portland during the summer of 1893.⁴

Letters to Bush from 1851 to 1889

The Deady letters are political but of a friendly nature as well. Topics include newspaper subscribers and articles, Indian Wars, political races and legal cases, travel, his colleagues, the Salem Clique and jokes.

Deady counseled Bush to be careful what he wrote to protect his legacy from future biographers. He chastised Bush for publishing Deady's letters in the *Oregon Statesman* and wished his private correspondence to be burned. In 1889 Deady thanked Bush for "thawing out their friendship" after 29 years and extended an invitation to a celebration stating, "You are the only one above ground. Please come."

¹ Oliver Tatom, "Matthew Deady," *Oregon Encyclopedia*,

https://oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/deady_matthew_1824_1893/#.WQ9OTNLYtPY (accessed 5/7/17).

² Barbara Mahoney, *The Salem Clique: Oregon's Founding Brothers*, (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2017), 30, 103.

³ Mahoney, *Salem Clique*, 55.

⁴ Tatom, "Deady," *Oregon Encyclopedia*, (accessed 5/7/17).