

Abraham Lincoln papers

From Henry H. Sibley to Abraham Lincoln¹, December 15, 1862

1 Sibley was the first governor of the State of Minnesota and commanded the state militia during the Dakota War of 1862.

Time Received 7 PM

Washington, D. C., Dec 15th 1862.

St Paul 10 AM Dec 15th

Your order of 6th Inst.² for the Execution of 39 Indians just recd by Special messenger They are imprisoned at Mankato 90 miles distant & the time fixed 19th is too short for preparation & for concentrating the troops necessary to protect the other Indians & preserve the peace The excitement prevails all sections of the state & secret combinations exist embracing thousands of citizens pledged to execute all the Indians matters must be managed with great discretion & as much secrecy as possible to prevent a fearful commission collision between the U. S. forces & the citizens. I respectfully ask for authority to postpone the Execution one week from the 19th Inst if I deem necessary Please reply at once.³ Your directions of 9th relative to Chakaydon rec"d today by mail & will be obeyed.⁴

2 Of the three hundred Sioux who were condemned to death for their role in the conflict, all but thirty-nine had their sentences commuted by Lincoln. See *Collected Works*, V, 542-43. There are several documents in this collection that pertain to the Dakota War of 1862.

3 Lincoln telegraphed Sibley on the following day that the executions could be postponed until December 26. See *Collected Works*, VI, 6.

4 See John G. Nicolay to Sibley, December 9, 1862.

Respy

H H Sibley

Br Gen Comdg