

## John Pickering an Wilhelm von Humboldt, 18.02.1822

Handschrift: Grundlage der Edition: Ehem. Preußische Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, gegenwärtig in der Jagiellonen-Bibliothek Krakau, Coll. ling. fol. 52, Bl. 17–18; Kopie: Boston, Public Library, MS q. 1900, No. 3, Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library/Rare Books

Nachweis: Mueller-Vollmer 1993, S. 207f.

Mattson 1980, Nr. 11678

[Adelung, Friedrich von Eliot, John van Beeck-Vollenhoven, Jacob](#) Adelung, Friedrich von: Übersicht aller bekannten Sprachen und ihrer Dialekte (St. Petersburg: Nic. Gretsch 1820) Eliot, John: The Indian Grammar begun: or, An essay to bring the Indian language into rules, for the help of such as desire to learn the same, for the furtherance of the Gospel among them (Cambridge: Marmaduke Johnson 1666) Eliot, John / Pickering, John / Du Ponceau, Peter Stephen / Davis, John: A Grammar of the Massachusetts Indian Language (Boston: Phelps and Farnham 1822) Humboldt, Wilhelm von: Prüfung der Untersuchungen über die Urbewohner Hispaniens vermittelt der Vaskischen Sprache (Berlin: Ferdinand Dümmler 1821) Pickering, John: Rezension zu Frederick Adelung: A Survey of all the known Languages and their Dialects. In: North American Review 14, 1822, S. 128–144

|17r| Sir,<sup>[a]</sup>

I did myself the honour, on the 24.<sup>th</sup> of August last, to address a letter to you in answer to yours of the 24.<sup>th</sup> of February preceding; and I forwarded to you at the same time a small packet containing some books and some short extracts of MSS. relative to our Indian Languages. The letter & packet were send by a vessel bound to [Amsterdam](#), and were directed to the care of [His Prussian Majesty's Consul](#)<sup>[b]</sup> in that place. I hope they have arrived safely, and that you may have received some little gratification from them. If they should possess no intrinsick *|sic|* worth in the estimation of a person, who is so rich in philological treasures as you are, still I hope they will have the adventitious value of mere curiosities from a distant country. I

---

**a)** |Editor| Oben rechts WvH in Bleistift: "Pickering." In Tinte: "Nr. 2."

**b)** |Editor| Im *Handbuch für den Königlich Preußischen Hof und Staat* (Berlin: Decker) für das Jahr 1821 (S. 140) und 1824 (S. 115) wird als preußischer Consul in Amsterdam genannt: "van Beck-Vollenhoven, Geheimer Commerzienrath". Im Niederländischen Nationaal Archief findet sich ein entsprechender Eintrag zu "Jacob van Beeck Vollenhoven 1780–1834 ... 'Kommerzienrat' en consul van het Koninkrijk Pruisen te Amsterdam". [FZ]

sincerely wish it had been |17v| in my power to send you something which would have been more worthy of your acceptance.

In my former letter I mentioned that our [Massachusetts Historical Society](#) was about to reprint, under my direction, [Eliot's Grammar of the Massachusetts Indian Language](#), which was originally published by that distinguished missionary in the year 1666. The work is just completed; and I have had a few copies printed separately (from the Society's volume) for distribution among my friends; and I beg you, Sir, to accept one of them. I hope, so far as I am myself answerable for any part of this publication, you will find nothing to censure, if there is nothing to commend. You will see that I have taken the liberty (a liberty which I trust you will pardon) to introduce your name into my Observations prefixed to the Grammar. I was impelled to do this, both from the desire of expressing my own feelings, and also from a wish to hold up to the view of my countrymen, such an example of genius & learning as could not fail to stimulate them to the |18r| prosecution of these Researches. I have also put into the packet a copy of a little Review (just published in the North American Review for January) of the Honourable [F. Adelung's Uebersicht etc.](#) These publications will, I trust, have a tendency to excite the attention of my countrymen to these subjects; and I hope we shall be able before a long time to make our just contributions to the common cause of learning. I can already discover an increasing desire to investigate the languages of this Continent; and, with the hope of keeping up that interest, I am procuring correspondents in different parts of the United States. By this means I hope I shall be able to collect some facts, that may be useful; and, after we have collected such facts, we shall cheerfully submit them to the consideration of our brethren in Europe, whose extensive learning & acquaintance with other Languages will enable them to give us, in return, just theories of human Speech in general.

I cannot close this Letter without mentioning, that I have just had the pleasure of seeing, for a moment, your late work on |18v| the Basque Language; but I was under the necessity of returning it to the possessor, before I had an opportunity of studying it as I wished to do. It will, however, be at my service again in a short time, and I shall then read it with the attention, which so profoundly learned a work deserves.

I have the honour to be

Sir,

with the highest consideration,

your most obedient

& most humble

servant

Jn<sup>o</sup>Pickering

Salem, near Boston, in Massachusetts,

Feb. 18.<sup>th</sup> 1822.