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Letter from George Sibley to Riordan Price, March 18, 1811

George Champlin Sibley

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Fort Osage March 18th. 1811

My dear Sir,

Your Letter of the 5th. Inst. by the hand of Mr. Hempstead found me yesterday in the very act of complying with its contents by anticipation, that is, I was just concluding the Sale and delivery of all your Hogs, Corn, Potatoes &c. to Mr. Cottle and Mr. Audrain- I was Strongly impelled to hasten the disposal of these things by a variety of causes- The Indians were assembled here in considerable numbers and Seemed more than usually inclined to be mischievous- In Spite of my Repeated efforts to prevent it, I Saw with Regret and Mortification, that your property was daily destroyed in the most Shameful manner- Indeed there has been a most dreadful and ^{afirming} destruction of Individual property here; and yours has Sustained its full Share, as you will find from the enclosed papers which contain a full Statement and Settlement of your business here as far as I have any knowledge of it, and is the [^]result of my Very best endeavors to turn your property here to the best account for you.-

About a Month ago, I bargained with Mr. Cottle to deliver him your whole Stock of Hogs and 100 Bus^{ls}. of Corn for \$550 payable in 12 Months, and engaged that the number Should be at least 180- all over that number were to be paid for in addition, at the rate of 180 for \$550 and all under were to be deducted at the Same [^]ate- Not long before this arrangement was made, I had myself Seen and counted upwards of 150 and Wells assured me that there could be no doubt that there would be more than 180 when all were collected- Cottle was So Remarkably prudent that he would not agree to take the Hogs as they Run for \$180 which I pressed him to do, and he was advised by others to do it- He would have them delivered and exactly counted- for my own part, I had not the Smallest doubt but there were at least 200 of them- I immediately employed Wells for a Month (I discharged him from my Service early in [^]ebry. having nothing for him to do) and Set

him to collecting the Hogs- In the meantime the Indians arrived, and necessarily Required all my time and attention, and of course proved a Serious detriment to Wells in his pursuit of the Hogs- I Several times sent out parties of young Indians to assist Wells, and went out with them once or twice myself- After a constant and I believe a faithful Search for near a month; will you believe it? only 96 Hogs can be got up, and no more are to be found (Save the Skeletons and bones) except a Small gang of very wild ones that cannot be caught, and which no one here will offer even one Dollar for- If I had not myself Rode all through the country about here I could not possibly believe that in So Short a time, So many Hogs could have been destroyed, but I really am compelled to Submit to the truth however unpleasant. I will not attempt to investigate the causes of this destruction, it lays at the doors of the wolves, the Indian Hogs, the Indians and the Soldiers, but they Shift it from one to the other, and all deny it except the Wolves and Dogs, who are the most honorable of them all in this matter, and I Suspect the last culpable- As to the Corn, it has fallen Short of my estimate- a great deal of it was fed away to your Hogs and a great deal of it was latterly Stolen by Osages, who broke the Houses Repeatedly at Night, Spoiled the Locks &c. and induced me to offer it all to Mr. Audrain at 75 C^{ts}. per Bu^l. rather than keep it a trouble on my hands for the Indians to prey on- The Potatoes had not escaped the Indians either, and many of them were rotten- The Bulls, the Plow and old Oxcart have Sold for their full value.

I had borrowed 10 Bus^{ls}. of your Corn (the Indians having Spoiled the Lock of my Corn House so that I could not use it) which I have given you Credit for at 75 C^{ts}. I cannot expect- express to you how much ^{down} chagrined and disappointed at the result of this business which promised so fairly Six Months ago, and which I so confidently hoped and believed would in 12 Months net you a handsome profit but time

and chance happeneth to all things" and we must not wonder if Speculations go backwards at this "Savage place", when we find it so frequently the case among Civilized Christians, in a land of liberty and Laws-

I have Sold off the Remnant of my Stock of Hogs for old Horses, which of the two I thought would be the Safest and least troublesome- In proportion to the number I have Sustained about as great a loss in the Hog way as you have. Enclosed I send you Twenty Dollars being in full of the Acc^t. between you (as Agent ~~for~~ of D^r. R.) and myself as per Statement herewith- When you have examined and approved of this account, you will be pleased to Send me an acquittance of all Acc^{ts}. in your hands between D^r. R. & I, that is, Bal^{ce}. on a Signed Acc^t. up to 28th Feb. last for \$60 and price of a Cow and Calf \$30 which you know I gave you due bills for, and which you will find credited in the acc^t. now Sent.

The Sum due from Mr. Rawlings to D^r. R. is about \$30- I have Requested him to write you on the Subject-

Excuse haste- I am Surrounded by Indians.

Yours truly

G. C. Sibley

Mr. R. H. Price

St. Louis

Papers Sent Vizt.

Acct. Current R. H. Price with G. C. S. up to this day	
Note Jas. H. Audrain for -----	\$118.87
Note Ira Cottle for -----	303.33 1/3
Acct. agt. Audrain for 43 1/2 Busls. Corn at \$1.	
Acct. agt. ditto for Sund ^s . - (Settled by Note)	
Acct. agt. Cottle for d ^o . ditton-	
3 Bank Notes for 20 Dollars.	

Sent also by the Boat a Small Box of Glass for Mr. Price-