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7-29-1814

## Letter from George Sibley to William Rector, July 29, 1814

George Champlin Sibley

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**George C. Sibley to William Rector**

July 29 1814

The Grand Saline, is situated about 280 miles SW of Fort Osage between the forks of a small branch of the Arkansaw, one of which washes its Southern extremity, and the other (the principal one) runs nearly parallel with, and within a mile of its opposite side--- It is a hard level plain of redish Cold Land , of an irregular or mix'd figure, its greatest length is, from NW to SE, and its circumference full from 2 to 6 inches deep with a crust of clean white Salt, in this state the Saline bears a striking resemblance to a field of brilliant white Snow with a Crust on it after a rain---

The Grand Saline is environed by ridges of Sand Hills, Some of which are perfectly naked, some thinly, clothed with Verdue and small trees, and others afford on their declivities thicketts of Dwarf Plum bushes not over 30 inches high, which yielded us (23d June) a great abundance of ripe Plums the largest and finest I ever tasted--- I am of opinion that the Salt may easily be waggoned from this place to the Arkansaw where Keel Boats may receive it at certain Seasons--- the root is thro' an open Prairie all the way, and the distance not over 80 or 90 miles.---

The Rock Saline, lies about 75 miles NW of the Grand Saline Surrounded by naked Mountains of red clay and Gypsum. It is a level flat of hard red land of about 500 acres, thro' which passes a small stream, dividing it into two unequal parts, one fifth of which, or about 100 acres, being on the SW side close about a tremendous Hill, from the base of which issue several springs of Salt water, which gradually cover the plain, and by the action of the Sun is in certain dry hot seasons converted into a solid mass of Salt several inches thick---

There are also within this plain, 4 springs of salt water perfectly saturated--- around which are formed hollow co [MS. Torn] Rock Salt from 12 to 20 Inches in thickness. When I visited this saline, it had just been inundated by excessive rains, and all the salt was swept off except that around the 4 springs--- yet I found an immense quantity there, and actually blocked out with my tomahawk a very Clean Piece full 16 inches thick. --- From what I saw myself, and what my faithful Indian guides told me on the spot, and had often told me before, I have not the least doubt but there are times, when this whole Section (next the Hills) is covered completely with a Solid Rock of Salt from 4 to 12 Inches thick, and immediately around the 4 Springs 12 to 20 Inches thick, resembling a field of Ice in large flakes--- The other Section produces Salt exactly like that of the Grand Saline--- The country around the Rock Saline is very mountainous, and the saline can only be approached on foot or (with some difficulty on Horseback) You have a Specimen of the salt which I got at this Saline from one of the Springs--- therefore I need not describe it.

Very Respectfully yr. Mo. Obt. Svt.

G. C. Sibley

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