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## Letter from Thomas McKenney to George Sibley, June 21, 1821

Thomas L. McKenney

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Thomas L. McKenny to George C. Sibley

Office of Indian Trade June 21 1821

G C Sibley U.S Factor

Sir, I have directed Mr. Fitzhugh to copy several letters which have been addressed to you within the period in which you have ceased to receive any. I did not reply to your answer to my letter on the subject of the New Madrid claim, because I have heard nothing further on the subject since I put the Secretary of War in possession of your reply, I believe whatever exception is taken to your having purchased that property would have been met, had you, as your agent for the government after having bought it, as you state to secure it from future involments, offered it to the Government.

I regret to learn that so many causes have conspired to disturb the regular intercourse with the Indians, but most particularly that some power is not exercised to keep these unfortunate & infatuated Indians in a state of peace and harmony. Nothing can effect this desirable end but their education, and this must refer to the rising generation, or the system now in operation amongst several other tribes; and which I hope soon to see as high up as the Council bluffs, at least. It is vain to expect these people to throw off their war habits, and root up their war propensities, in which they have been settled from the beginning, without the help of new lights, & a counter instruction.

The congress has done the same thing over again. It is the same kind of process that is restored to by the Physician, with his dying patient. Opiates however will not impart vigor. The system will die of itself soon, by the very policy of congress & then it will be charged upon those who have had the care of it.

There were but five persons, active for the overthrow of the system, but these five had influence with the rest so as to secure their votes. I expect the people will speak at the next session. they may be heard. If the design to civilize the Indians be sincere, an abandonment of them to the artifices of privet traders can never be received as evidence of that necessity. They should be taken completely out of their hands, and no influence should reach them except that which tends to facilitate their reformation.

I have no objection provided, you can leave your charge in proper condition & provided it will not suffer on account of your absence to your visiting Washington at the next session of Congress no doubt, but the whole force of the congress will be marshaled then, but against it will be the voice of the people.

It was said in Congress that the Indians do not want a continuance of trade. I remember one of your Indians once said, "The man who thought so was a fool." Perhaps you could send on their wishes . it was said too, roundly that there were no treaty obligations to keep the Factories amongst any of the Indian Tribes! And when the treaty with the Osages was shewn to a member who made the declaration, he persisted in his assertion!!!-

Your bill referred to in your letter of the 19<sup>th</sup> of April will be paid on presentation.

T L McK