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10-29-1821

Letter from John Sibley to George Sibley, October 29, 1821

John Sibley
Natchitoches

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George C. Sibley Free Esquire
Postmaster
Fort Osage, M.

Jno. Sibley
29. Octr. 1821.

Nackitosh Octr. 29th, 1821 –

Dear George,

I have just received your letter dated Augt. 20th. & it gave us all great pleasure to hear you are well & s. I am determind to Send this letter by one going out to M- - - (?); but I Shall not be able to half pay you for yours. I Shall at least feel Indebted at the rate of two for one. we are all well & have been Except Hopkins & his Children who had Some ague & fever. my little Girls Henrietta Six years old the 23d. of last July & Hellena four years old the 27th. of this Month & Horatio Nine Months today have never either of them been Sick a day in their lives. the Girls go to School and will do well in that way Horatio is one of the Strongest, Athletic, Resolute playfull Boys I ever Saw & raised by hand since he was three Months old, his Mother falling Sick & he was taken from her. he is Called an uncommonly fine boy.-

You give us Some Expectation of your Visiting & bringing with you Our very dear Relation we all so much want to See we hope & fear when we think & Speak of it.- This Country is healthy we have had but few deaths. Amongst those few is Doctor Slocum our Parish Judge, & an Interesting Officer Lt. John Tucker he used to be a Clerk in the War Office.-

You knew Mr. Austin, the father who died some Months ago he had been to St. Antonio & procured permission to bring into the Province of Texas & Settle three hundred families, his Son has Since been there & Recognized as his fathers Representative & is now Occupied in that Undertaking. I Should not be Surpris'd if in 10 Months 50,000 Americans Should Migrate thither the Country is Larger than all France & finer Climate, & the Soil as Rich as Any & can Support a great population. The Sea Coast & Rivers are now better known & found to be all could be Wished for, the Climate will grow Sugar, Oranges, Pine-apples, Coffee, figs & Grapes, & the existing Spanish Govt. very desirous of getting as many Americans as possible Settled there: they give them the Land & Enough to a family Many are passing through this town from the State of Missouri they say driven away by high Taxes, Lawyers, & hard times; The Settling that Country will make Nackitosh a Large Town it is now Growing fast & building up with Brick.

I have upwards of 30,00 Acres of Land in Texas in Choice Tracts which I think Something of. Indeed I have thought of Making Some improvements there, & Using it or not as a retreat. I Shall Spend the ensuing Winter in New Orleans & Occupy my Seat in the Senate, but no more after this year. I have been Spoken to about Accepting the place of Parish Judge, but have not decided to do so or not, I sepose it will be offered to me- I expect a Visit from the Governor in a few days & that he will Stay with me while he remains in Nackitosh. I have now Layed off a for Sale about One hundred Town Lotts, of Value from 100 to 1000 Dollrs. but we feel the Scarsity of Money & the general depression I cannot sell many at my fix'd prices, but the time is coming along when they will do better.-

The Vice Royalty of Mexico has all declared Independence by Our last Certain Accounts except the Cities of Mexico & Vera Cruz, & it is reported both have given up, they certainly must & probably

have before this time. the last official Accts from Ytervedes head quarters Near Mexico is that the City was Invested by 60,000 Men & defended by about 10,000, that all Intercourse was Cut off, & in the City they were Starving- A Sheep Sold for \$50. & a Hen for \$10- - - - The General Commanding the besiegers sayed he Could take the City Any time, but Some Blood would be Spilled which he wished to Avoid, the Vice Roy had come out and was with Ytervede, & a flag demanding a Cessation of hostilities for 40 hours that terms of Capitulation might be agreed on, there is an immense deal of Wealth in the City, the holders are afraid of Being plundered & it is the Same at Vera Cruitz. it is impossible to avoid the country being Independent by any power in Spain, being the (Almost) Unanimous Voice of Six or Seven Million of People. The Constitution of Spain is to operate as far as is Consistent with Independence, 'till a Congress Meet & agree upon a form of Govt. I was hastily applied to for, & Sent a Vol. of the Constitutions of the U. States published a year ago. The War Seems Nearly over in three of the four Southern Vice Royalties, Lima once fallen & Mexico & all is over & Lost forever to Spain.

Judge Johnston & his family left New Orleans in May last in a Vessel bound to Philada. from thence after Resting went by Land to N. York thence by Steam to Albany, thence by Land to Utica thence by Water Along the Canal at the rate of – or 6 Miles a day in a Boat drawn by Horses & changed every ten Miles as far as the Canal is used, thence to the Niagara falls, thence Visiting the Plaines of Chipeway Lundy's Lane Kings, & Queens Towns, thence down in Steam Boat to Sackets Harbour, thence in a Row Boat to Montreal, thence by Steam to Quebec, & then back by Steam to White Hall So. End of Lak Champlain thence through on Canal to the North River to the Saratoga Springs, then to Boston &, then to N. York & Phila. where they write me last. they wrote me Regularly from anny place, their letters would make an Interesting Volum, they are now about going to Washington to prepare Winter quarters. they Speak during the Recess of Congress of going to Europe.

Jem who they took with them, now Nearly Grown & brought up tenderly & is really one of the finist Servants I ever saw, deserted from them at Montreal & they could not Recover him & they had hired their Other Valuable Servant William for a Steward to the Steam Boat Yankey; the Boiler broke & killed him & five other persons.

Henry continues in the Practice of Medicine at Rapids in partnership with a Doctor Mattox from Virginia & educated at Edinburg. they have a good deal of Practice have Purchased Some property. Henry made us a Visit at Nackitosh last Week, he says you Never write to him he is much Esteemed where he lives; but is becoming a little old looking fellow his hair is getting grey & he puts one to look at him, in mind of a dried apple, he is going to be married to a Very Young Girl by the name of Wills a Native of that place, her father & mother are both dead, I know Nothing about her, she is entirely reputable, & has a little property perhaps \$5000- The foregoing Scrawl was written with the Children about me, amidst momentary interruptions. I believe it will be difficult for you to make it out.-

We have here an Excellent School under the Superintendency of Mr. Samuel Ruddock late of Charleston, S. C. where he had kept an Academy for many years, he Excels in Astronomy & the higher Branches of Mathematick. you would be pleased with the progress of Ann & Eliza are Making.

You may Remember a Relation of Ours, Cyrus Sibley being a long time a prisoner in the Havanna & when he returned found his Houses, Mills, & all Burnt, his Cattle lost & and had Nothing left but the Esteem of those who knew him. I lately Recd. a letter from him. He is now one of the Judges in the State of Alibami- & is worth in Mills, House, Negroes & Lands from Sixty to one hundred thousand dollars. is unmarried & highly Esteemed by his Neighbors.- By our last census the whol population of

the Parish of Nackitosh was a little less than ten thousand & in the Town Near one thousand the State about 152,000. There will be an Effort made at the Ensuing Session of our Legislature to Call a Convention to Amend our Constitution, there are many parts of it highly objectionable, & now the Subject of the Admission of W. Florida is Settled, that part of the State require the right of passing at least upon the Constitution under which they are placed.- By the Treaty with Spain the Commissioners of Both Parties were to meet at Nackitosh within a Year from the Ratification of it, but Since Mexico has become Independent Some difficulty will probably arise. the Independent Country will hardly permit a Royal Commissioner to fix their boundaries. Col McRea of Wilmington No. Carolina was appointed by the President the Commissioner on the part of Our Government, Several other Persons were Nominated for that appointment, Amongst them I was one, & have been informed by a letter from Washington that in Case Col. Mc Rea Should not Accept I Stood the Next on the list. there will be a difficulty about the River Sabine. the Main Branch is the Nachez, which is beyond Nacozdoches, the treaty Obliges the Commissioners to begin in the Sea at the Mouth of Sabine & Keep up on the West Bank. by the old Maps it lost the Name of Sabine from the Junction of the Nachez which is about Sixty Miles from its Mouth. & the Branch that Moderns call Sabine used to be Called the Mexicano River. Should be we able to fix the Nachez as the Boundary it will give us an Accession of a tract of country of about one hundred Miles by Three hundred. & will give us at least three hundred Miles more of the South Bank of Red River than though the East Branch is taken. many Intelligent Gentlemen are of my opinion, on this Subject.-

I Recd. a letter yesterday from Johnston Written in Washington where he came 25th Sept^r to procure Some Armed Vessel to be Sent into the Gulph of Mexico to pursue the Pirates. it is done. he procured quarters for the Winter. Returned Back to Philada. where Ann Eliza was, he had been by himselfe to Connecticut in the Steam Boat Connecticut, the papers describe the Scene in the Storm; he was out in it.

Give my Love to Our Daughter in Law tell her how much we all want to See her-

Yours affectionately,
John Sibley

George C. Sibley Esq.

Sibley Mss. V. I
Missouri Historical Society

[I have two typescript copies of this letter. This transcription was made from the one that appears to be newer. There are a few minor differences between the two typescripts, which were evidently copied independently from the original. These differences are primarily in regards to spelling, and are usually not major (although the first manuscript's "Chipeway" (in the 6th paragraph) is rendered "Phiperway" on the second typescript). However, in most ways the typescripts appear identical. The typescript that

appears to be older does include a few marginal notes that were made afterwards in pen, and are described as follows:

In the 3^d paragraph, “Mr. Austin” is underlined and marginally identified as “(Moses Austin)”.

In the 3^d paragraph, “son” is underlined and marginally identified as “(Stephen Austin)”.

In the 4th paragraph, the sentence “I have been spoken to about accepting the place of Parish Judge, but have not decided to do so or not, I Sepose (?) it will be offered to me” is underlined and referred to by a marginal note reading: “He was not appointed”.

In the 6th paragraph, “Judge Johnston” is underlined, and a corresponding marginal note is lengthy and difficult to make out. Leaving blanks for words that cannot be made out, or for parts of words that cannot be made out: “Josiah Stoddard Johnston, was an Elder brother of General Albert Sidney Johnston, N SAFCSA; he was U.S. Senator from Louisiana. (Born in Corm.) Killed in a boat explosion. Held many offices in this State. Lived at Alexandria for a number of years. Was a ___d L__y _ in the early days of La.

Regarding this marginal note for the 6th paragraph: The letters “N SAFCSA” are especially uncertain as their meaning is unknown, so letters cannot be figured out from context. Possible readings for the last sentence include but are not limited to “Was assigned Luroy _ in the early days of La.” “Was appointed Surveyor in the early days of La.”]

In the 8th paragraph, “Doctor Mattoz” is underlined, (in the newer typescript (from which this transcript was made) this name is rendered “Doctor Mattox”) and a marginal note reads: “Should be Maddox.”]