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1-10-1824

## Letter from George Sibley to David Barton January 10, 1824

George Champlin Sibley  
*Fort Osage*

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Hon. David Barton  
Senator from Missouri  
Washington City

Geo. C. Sibley

Fort Osage January 10th, 1824

Dr. Sir,

I do not believe you could render a more acceptable Service to this Section of our State, than by procuring an appropriation of Money for the extinguishment of the Indian Title to the Land claimed by the Kansas on the south side of the Missouri within the bounds of the state- It is with good reason I assure you that the above Land has obtained from those who have explored it, the appellation of "The Garden of Missouri".

Besides, the uncommon excellence of the soil, and beautiful aspect of the country, it possesses other great natural advantages, what would render it a garden indeed, if once Settled and owned by our enterprising citizens- This fine tract of Country now lies an unproductive Wilderness; utterly useless to the Savages who claim it; and interdicted to our people; thousands of whom are now anxiously waiting for our Govt. to purchase it, that they may enter upon it, and Reap from it those great advantages which it is presumable the God of Nature designed for the use of Civilized man.

Were this section purchased by Govt. and immediately placed in Market, the Rapidity of its Settlement and improvement would undoubtedly surpass that of any other part of the state or Union- Its rich and exuberant soil would quickly yield a copious overflow of valuable commodities to enrich the state- its water falls which are numerous, and some of them of very great value, would soon give life to Manufacturing establishments, and our State would be Strengthened by the Speedy accession of another community of hardy freeman- The Kansas are willing to sell their claim to the U. States, for a mere trifle as compared with the immense value of the Land,- and I am very Sure there can be no good reason urged why the Govt. should Refuse to purchase it.

It is in vain to attempt to Restrain our People from occupying any part of the State which they desire, such restriction tends to make a vast number of idle unproductive citizens, who tenaciously refuse to purchase Lands or to settle themselves anywhere, 'till the favorite spot is within their Reach- it tends to multiply to a great extend Squatters upon the Public Land, and the consequent injury therefor by destruction of Timber &.

I believe there are more than an Hundred instances within my own knowledge, of Men with families, who are now Squatted on the Public Land, who are able to purchase, but who will not 'till they can purchase in the tract I am Speaking of.

Meanwhile they are utterly useless to themselves, or the State, living chiefly upon the bounties of wild Nature, the Venison and Honey and wild fruits of the Land, - they necessarily contract habits of idleness & a sort of semi-savage barbarism of manners, that in some degree unfits them for the duties of civilized life- They are in Short homeless wanderers,- and such is the stubbornness of their Nature that they will rather remain as they are than to forego the great privilege of occupying the home of their own free choice- For my own part I could never approve that policy which seems to have been too often adopted by the General Government, of Refusing access to any very desirable Section of the Public domain 'till some other less desirable sections by far are Sold and Settled- this Sort of "Bible and cheese" policy will never be submitted to by emigrants, as I have said before, they will not settle at all - - - -  
(crossed out)

The favour, if favour it can be called, which we ask of the Government is simply this- "Purchase this valuable Tract of Country from the Kansas to whom it is useless, and sell it to our own Citizens who desire it and will make a valuable use of it, for an immense profit"- This favour may well be asked by Missouri as an act of Justice; indeed it would appear very strange if it should be refused after a proper examination of the subject; the more especially as the like Requests from other States have never I believe been refused- Be this as it may, it is very certain that the settlement of the Tract in question will very materially benefit this state, whose policy it ought most undoubtedly now to be during these "Piping times of Peace," to encourage and foster the Settlement of our extreme frontiers; and to draw into action all the resources within our limits- To suffer this fine section of country to remain much longer a wilderness, while so many of our People are desirous of Settling and improving it,- would be in my opinion deserve Severe Reprehension.- For myself, I assure you Sir I have not other interest in this matter than as one Settled in the country and who feels a desire to See Something like civilized Society grow up around him- I have no Speculations in view nor do I expect to have any growing out of the proposed purchase from the Kansas- I am principally, induced to address these very hasty remarks to you, in consequence of the very numerous enquiries that have Recently been made of me on the Subject by persons who are anxious to Settle in the country I have mentioned, and being persuaded that you will very willingly exert yourself to effect any Reasonable and practicable object desired by so many

of your fellow Citizens in this part of the State; I very freely consented to make this communication in their behalf.

In order to throw Some light on the Subject and to give you some idea of the probably cost of this Land above mentioned, - I enclose you a Copy of a Report I made to Gov<sup>r</sup>. Clark in relation to this proposed purchase in the year 1818, when I was serving in the Indian department.- A

You would much oblige and gratify a host of anxious enquirers, if you would write me once or twice to say what progress this subject is likely to make during this Session of Congress.-

I am with great respect

Y<sup>r</sup>. friend & Mo. Ob<sup>t</sup>. Serv<sup>t</sup>.

G. C. Sibley

Hon. David Barton  
Senator from Missouri  
Washington City