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Letter from George Sibley to David Barton January 16, 1824

George Champlin Sibley
Fort Osage

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Hon. David Barton

Geo. C. Sibley

Fort Osage, Jan. 16, '24.

Dr. Sir,

I had the honour to address a Letter to you a few days ago, on the Subject of purchasing from the Kansas Indians a valuable Tract of country which they own within the limits of this State, South West of the Missouri River-

In reference to this same subject, I beg leave to ask your attention to another object which is intimately connected with it, & which it would be very desirable to effect if it can be done Consistently with existing Laws and certain obligations which it has been heretofore the policy of the Govt. to impose upon itself in its relation with the Indian Tribes near our border-

If it be competent for the Executive to dispense with those obligations So far as to allow our Citizens to occupy the Lands above referred to, unless the Kansas Nation actually objects to it, there can certainly be no impropriety in doing so- while on the other hand it would be extending to a very numerous body our People, a very great favour. It would be anticipating (for 2 or 3 years perhaps) an event that must inevitably happen. I mean the Settlement of the Lands in question, & by that much the sooner form a valuable and important Settlement on this frontier- Genl. Atkinson has an order from the War Dept. to prevent White People from entering upon the Land of the Kansas- If that order was issued under the Supposition that the Kansas are opposed to our People Settling on their Lands within our Limits, I am certain that the Supposition is erroneaous, for I well remember that one of the chief inducements that was urged among themselves, (in favour of Selling to the U. States) previously to their entering into the arrangement with me in 1818, was that by the Sale, white Settlements would soon be formed near them, from which they promised themselves many advantages- I do not by any means suggest that the Gvt. ought or could with any Propriety, Sanction the intrusion of any of our People upon the Lands of the Kansas beyond the State line and it ought to be well understood, that Should the present order be Suspended, it would be renewed and enforced whenever the Kansas, as a Nation, Required it- Many of those who are waiting to move into the country, would be willing to go there upon those conditions, indeed I entertain but little doubt of a very thick Settlement being formed in a few months, if the present order and prohibition was withdrawn, and I have no doubt at all of the perfect acquiescence of the Kansas, who would be very glad to See the country filled up with White Inhabitants, who would form a kind of defence or barrier between them and their enemies from the Mississippi-

It might be well however to limit the permission to Settlers to a certain distance (say 15 Miles) from the Missouri, and a discretionary power to regulate this matter might be very safely and usefully lodged with Genl. Atkinson- Considering that the country must in a short time belong to the U. States- that the owners of it have actually agrees to Sell it, and I may Say look upon it as already Sold, and have pretty much abandoned it- I really cannot anticipate any difficulty in obtaining from the President a withdrawal of the orders to Genl. Atkinson, which if you can speedily effect, will entitle you to the thanks of many very worthy people, in shose behalf I have used the freedom to address you, having no

other interest in the Matter myself than to promote the improvement of a fine country and that I may have Neighbors.

I am etc.

(Signed) G. C. Sibley

Hon. D. Barton