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Letter from George Sibley to the Voters of St. Charles & Warren Counties, July 4, 1844

George Champlin Sibley
St. Charles County, Missouri

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St. Charles County, July 4th, 1844

To The Voters of
St. Charles & Warren

Something of this sort is doubtless expected from me, by many whig friends at least. I believe it will not be unwelcome to any; I request for it a candid reading and consideration; and for myself, in my present attitude before you, a fair judgment- nothing more. My position is somewhat peculiar; but I do not think it any the worse for that, nor is its peculiarity and fault of mine. I have announced myself a candidate for your suffrages; and it is true that I have done so entirely upon my own responsibility, upon my own deliberate judgment, sanctioned by the approbation of many sound whigs; and yet without a word of consultation with, or previous knowledge (of my intention) of anyone. On my return home from the Baltimore whig convention of the 1st May, (in which I served as a delegate from this electoral district) I was much surprised to learn, that up to the 4th of June there was no whig candidate announced to represent our district in the state senate; and that there was no probability of there being any. Both of the democratic parties had their candidates fairly in the field, as I was informed. As was very natural for one just from the midst of a series of exciting scenes, such as I had witnessed and cordially participated in, I asked, in allusion to the want of a whig candidate, what is to become of our whig voters? Will they be willing to vote for any loco? The answer was, in effect, "O, it has been arranged that the whigs had better all vote for Mr. Wells, the soft democrat. (If they vote at all) in order to put down Col. Benton, with his cliques and currency projects. Not satisfied with this explanation I inquired, if this arrangement was the result of a general agreement among the whigs? Of any public meetings, or of any action of our Whig clubs? The reply was, No, but a number of the leading whigs has consulted one another informally, as individuals, and had concluded it to be best for the whig cause not to run any candidate of our own party for the senate; but to throw as

much of our weight as possible into the soft loco scale, and thus secure a loco-foco vote in the senate against Mr. Benton. Knowing the strength of the whig party in our district, as I believed, I could not refrain from asking, "Why resort to this uncertain and useless expedient? Would not a sound whig senator serve the whig cause quite as well and faithfully too, as any loco? And under all existing circumstances, is it not much more probable that we can elect a whig, than a loco? Pray, how many whigs of this county are expected to give their votes to Mr. Wells, should there be no whig candidate in the field? To this I was answered, "Our leading whig brethren have supposed that about two hundred whig votes may be relied on for Mr. Wells in St. Charles county; and they have encouraged him to expect that there not be and whig candidate to oppose him." Again I asked, "supposing it possible for Mr. Wells to get elected, to what extent is it known that he will support our whig principles?" Answer- Mr. Wells will vote against the re-election of Col. Benton, and gain his currency bills. He will vote for districting the state, and for a just representation in the General Assembly, based on population." "Will he go no further with us?" I asked, "No", was the reply, "he is in all other points an ultra locofoco." I made no further enquiry; what I had heard satisfied me, that as a whig voter, I must withhold my vote from Mr. Wells, and of course not be able to vote at all; and I was dissatisfied with this state of things, as were many others of our party, I knew.

Who those leading whigs were, I did not know, nor enquire, nor was I informed, I did not, nor do I now doubt their acting upon their best judgment, and with the best intentions: and am persuaded that they never designed to set themselves up as a clique to control any of us. I differ with them widely, however, as to the propriety of the course they are understood to have recommended. When they consider more maturely the divisions and dissatisfaction and confusion consequent, in the whig party, upon the attempt to run a loco of any stripe, as our

candidate, I am persuaded they will, one and all, as good whigs, cordially unite in support of a full whig ticket. Warren should have furnished a whig candidate, I think, and I anxiously hoped she would have done so, till it seemed to me utterly hopeless to look for one from any quarter. I was convinced that at least three-fifths of the whig voters of this county would not vote at all unless we had a whig candidate, and had good reason to believe, that as many as may choose to vote for a loco, would divide about equally between Wells and Shelton.

Upon this view of our political arena, I voluntarily entered it, feeling myself perfectly free to do so, though I assure you that nothing but my deep conviction of the urgency as well as the strict propriety of the step, under all the circumstances, could have drawn me into this conflict. I believed it to be my duty; and I have done it. I wish you had a better candidate, friends- but you can doubtless elect me, if you choose, even such as I am. Should you decide, you may rely upon this as certain: If I live, Warren and St. Charles will be represented in the senate of Missouri by a whig, who never did mission to the decision in favor of the Nominee, and pledged to him their warm and Steady Support. Mr. Green of N. Jersey & Mr. Berrien of Georgia each addressed the convention in compliment to the Nominee & c. – their Speeches were listened to with breathless attention, and frequently cheered by the surrounding Multitude- Mr. Leigh of Virginia also addressed the Convention in his happiest Style and manner; congratulating the Assembly and the great party they so fully represented; on the perfect unanimity and excellent good feeling prevailing in the Convention in Reference to the important business now so happily completed, in the nomination of Henry Clay and Theodore Frelinghuysen for the highest offices in the gift of the freeman of these United States.

At 5 o'clock: P: M: the Convention adjourned & was dissolved- I doubt if ever any constituency in any country were more fairly and fully represented than the whigs of the U.

States were in the Convention of this day- Not a single incident occurred to trouble or interrupt our proceedings from first to last, (except a momentary apprehension that one of the Galleries was giving way from the weight of the people crowded there, which was only momentary) all went on in an orderly and dignified, & perfectly harmonious manner- This remark I mean to apply not only to the Convention of delegates (among whom were many of the best & most talented men of our Country) but also to the Thousands who thronged the Aisles & Galleries & c. of the Church, as witnesses0 As a whole, I am proud to be able testify, that it was conducted throughout, with that dignity & solemnity that befitted the great political party there represented- all which I cannot doubt will be fully approved and confirmed by a vast majority of the voters throughout the union in November next- and unless I greatly mistake “The Signs of the Times”, Missouri will then be found for Clay & Frelinghuysen. Nor ever will flinch from, or compromise sound whig principles.

George C. Sibley

St. Charles County, July 4th, 1844.