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10-6-1823

Letter from George Sibley to George Graham, October 6, 1823

George Champlin Sibley
Fort Osage

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Forst Osage October 6 1823.

Sir,

I have just had the honour to receive your letter of the 30th of last August in which you call my attention to two notes of mine and Mr. Baillios' for \$4653 $\frac{12}{100}$ and \$129 $\frac{02}{100}$ for goods sold me by Mr. Saml. Blunt and which have been laying over since the 4th of last June. And in which you also express your disappointment that Mr. Baillio did not arrive at Washington by the 1 of June provided with funds to discharge the notes above named, as you were led to expect from information given you by Mr. Blunt- I lose no time in forwarding my reply to the above Letter –

Since the departure of Mr. Blunt from this place I have written him as I remember, three letters in each of which I sated to him the progress we were making in getting our first ____ to St. Louis- He was advised that in consequence of the great rains and other unforeseen difficulties, it would be entirely impossible to get our furs _ to market in time to meet our notes that would be due on the 1. of June at Washington - He was apprised that Mr. Baillio was out in the Osage country, using every effort to bring our furs __ from the __, __ to the Marain (?) De Cisne (?), from whence he could take them to S. Louis, but that he had great difficulties to encounter. –

These facts I requested Mr. Blunt to lay before you – – on the _ of June I wrote to Mr. Jene (?), Mr. Rovaugh (?) in relation to my accounts, and took occasion to state to him (with the request that __ would communicate the fact to you) that Mr. Baillio and Mr. Boggs __ __ expecting themselves to get our furs to Market and that __ still had the same difficulties to overcome that I mentioned __ Black. On the __ July I again wrote to Mr. Rovaugh (__ = __ you) _____ failed to get our _____ the _____ that we had as prospect of effecting (?) that object __ this expectation (?) __ __ would not be any means _____ St. Louis from here a parcel of Peltries. Follow which _____ money - - directed him to _____ the proceeds of that sale _____ was quite insufficient however to meet the Bill, that were __ and as mine and Mr. Baillios' protested __ were pressed for payment, and there being also several cash accounts due for expences of our trade transportation _ which were urged for payment. Mr. Boggs deemed it best to discharge those demands. At the same moment he was offered a lot of Indian goods very low for cash, which it was very desirable for us to obtain to enable us to work off the balance of the old Factory Stock, and these he purchased. – Mr. Boggs would not however have made these expenditures (__ would have remitted the whole sum he received to Washington) had he not been in hourly and confident expectation of the arrival of Mr. Baillio, by way of the Osage River, with the bulk of our Furs and Peltries. –

Mr. Baillio labored till about the 20th . of June in the Osage Country, to get the Furs + in as far as the ____ from whence he proposed to take them to St. Louis – All his exertions failed however, and the River fell below navigation mark. Mr. B. went to St. Louis to provide a few trifling article to enable him to make the most of the Red Skin Trade, and immediately returned to his port on the ____ - He was attacked with a severe illness (fever) which kept him prostrate for some time - He is now busily engaged as he writes me, building Perogues to take the Peltries and Furs down the Nee Orho and Arkansas Rivers to the Mississippi + thence up to St. Louis (_ St. Louis) where the prices are yet

pretty good and sales ready. - Mr. Baillio's whole time has been devoted to this object (the getting the Furs + to Market) since April last and will continue to be so devoted till he effects it – I have directed him to realize the money (in proper paper) with all possible speed. to make sale of the whole even at some sacrifice, in order to increase the Amount of Cash as much as possible and to remit the whole to Washington. the Surplus (after discharging the Bills now due) to go in advance towards the Bill that will be due the 1. of next June. – I will not venture to say what may be the probable sum that we may be able to remit you after Mr. Baillio shall have affronted the sale of what Furs and Peltries are on hand at Our T. House on the Nee Orho River - It will certainly be considerably more however there than will discharge our Notes now due at Washington. –

I was very early convinced that the time allowed for our first payment was too short and mentioned the subject to Mr. Blunt. It would have been barely possible under the most favourable circumstances for us to have got our Peltries + to St. Louis by the 1. of June. The arrangement had been settled however, our Notes given and the Goods sent out to the Osage Country before the Matter was discussed – We did not any of us believe that the payment could be effected in time from the Sale of our Furs and Peltries (our only resource) – We ventured to hope that we should be favoured with a reasonable indulgence; and surely we ~~have~~ have been favoured in this respect- most liberally; for which we are truly thankful. –

We could not have anticipated that our Notes would have been yet laying over unpaid. Our Means have at all times been ample to discharge all our debts, could we have got them to St. Louis.

In looking back upon our doings, I can find nothing for which we can deserve reproof; unless it be due to Mr. Boggs for not remitting the fund he had at St. Louis, previous to his knowing that Mr. Baillio could not get the great bulk of our fur + to St. Louis; as Stated in another part of this letter. – I am well satisfied that every exertion has been made to get our Peltries to Market-; other consideration, than the payment of our Notes (which however the first object) urged us to use every expedient within our reach – We Hired and even Bought Waggons + Learns when there were prepared for operation, the rains get in and literally deluged the whole country. This Stoped our Learns – Mr. Baillio and our Interpreter ___ applied to the Osage for Mules and Horses, to Pack. In this they failed, at this they offered most extravagant prices for their hire. The Osages refused on the ground that their Horses and Mules were too poor and weak- Mr. Baillio then waited till the Osage went to Mr. Oleigne (?) to meet Major Galeaur (?) the Agent asserting confidently, and relying on the promises of the chief, that he would without doubt then get his Peltries + packed in to the Mr. Oleigne (?) - He was disappointed however in this his ___ hopes. The Indians could not be persuaded to pack their Horses, because they were all all in such ___ to be fine (?) at the Mr. Oleigne (?) where they expected to receive presents – No one would pack his Horse ___ it might detain him 'till all the presents were distributed. – When this last project failed, about the 20th of June, the Mr. Oleigne (?) had fallen so low that it was with difficulty a Small Boat could find sufficient depth of Water to get out of it. –

I have probably tired you with the relation of the above particulars - they are intended to show you that if your Notes are not paid, it is because of our disappointment and ill luck; and not our ____ or neglect.

Mr. Baillio will I trust succeed in his present project. He will have to descend the Nee Orho and Arkansas River upwards of one thousand Miles, an arduous undertaking; and not exempt from danger. there does not appear to be any other practicable route now open to St. Louis; and Mr. Baillio is resolved not to neglect any thing on his part to affect the object he has taken in hand. I have every confidence in his prudence, perseverance and industry. –

As to Mr. Baillio's going to Washington; Mr. Blunt was entirely mistaken if he considered that there was any positive arrangement to that effect.

Mr. Baillio mentioned (in January I think) that he should probably be obliged to go to Washington in the Spring to Settle Some Accounts – and it was suggested that in that event Mr. B. could carry funds to pay our notes, provided we could obtain the fund in time, - this journey of Mr. Baillio's depended however on so many contingencies, that it was never considered in any other light than as a mere project; which I should have supposed my Letters to Mr. Blunt and Mr. Bouought (?) would have shewn sufficiently to have been abandoned – It is more than probable that if Mr. Baillio could have got the Furs and Paltries to St. Louis in tolerable __ ____, he would have gone to Washington and have taken funds with him to discharge our notes; tho' I believe he does not now consider it necessary for him to go there to settle his own accounts – I can only add the assurance that no time will be lost in transmitting funds to Washington to discharge our notes now due, and to pay a part in advance of the one that will be due – the 1. of next June –. I cannot remit those funds 'till I get theirs however, from the Sale of our Furs and Peltries, which Mr. Baillio is now engaged transporting to Market – Such is the peculiar nature of our business; that our engagement to pay Money ought not to have been limited to a day, as in ordinary commercial transactions, but should rather have been made contingent upon the arrival of our Fur +. in Market, as is customary in the Indian Trade I am informed. Payment depending at any rate on that contingency.

As I have never yet received any acknowledgement from the Indian Office of the receipt of my Accounts (which I sent in last Winter) I am led to conclude that they were never received - I set about preparing a very full statement of my accounts (to embrace nearly the whole term of my agency) early in July last, and should have completed it before this time; if I had not been interrupted by an attack of fever, which confined me nearly two months and totally unfitted me for any business 'till within the last ten days – I shall proceed in a day or two with those accounts and get them ready as soon as I can - They will show very clearly, a considerable Balance in my favour. –

I am very Respectfully Sir

__. Mo. Obt. Ser.

G. C. Sibley

George Graham Esqr.

Priced. (?) Agent in

___ Office

Washington City