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Letter from George Sibley to Benjamin Reeves, March 23, 1827

George Champlin Sibley
Fort Osage

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Ft. Osage March 23.^d 1827 –

Dear Sir,

I am to acknowledge the rect. Of your letter dated the 20th Last; (?) which informs me of the probable necessity that will oblige you to decline taking part in the completion of the S^{ta}. Fee Road – I very much regret the cause of this necessity, the more especially as it is one not to be obviated by human means entirely, tho' it imposes the obligation to use every possible exertion to that end of effecting its removal – Altho' I have hitherto fully calculated on your joining in. the trip in may to mark the Road ___ and would much rather you would do So; Yet I will most cheerfully go alone and do the work myself rather than urge for one moment your leaving Mrs. Reeves in the ill State of health She is in - traveling I am Sure would be of great Service to her, and it is probable that the Harrodsburgh Waters might also be useful – If it were possible to provide proper accommodations, I should incline to recommend a journey on our Road to Walnut Creek. but I doubt if a female in delicate health could endure the privations and exposure necessarily attendant on Such a journey – Should you think it proper to risk it however, you may assure yourself of my exertions to make our camp as comfortable as possible, and it will afford Mrs. Sibley a pleasure to be able to reside her house +c. agreeable to Mrs. R: while detained in this neighbourhood –

I do not consider it at all necessary for more than one of the Comm. to be present on the Road to direct the Marking ____, as it not contemplated to make any material alternations in the Survey; Such as it may be proper to make on the Track as traveled by the Caravans will not be Sufficiently variant from the Survey to require any alteration of the Map. –

Having made my arrangements already to go on this Service in May, and knowing the aversion of Col. Mather to make the journey, and the probable impracticability of your going without great inconvenience to your family, not to Say pain, on account of Mrs. Reeves' indisposition; I Shall with your concurrence proceed as early in May as I can get ready, to complete the "Marking out" of the Road in the best manner I can do it, and with as much dispatch as possible; expecting that there will arise no difficulty whatever with Col: Mather + yourself in recognising what I do –

In the Supposition therefore, that I Shall finish this Road myself ('tho' I Still Still indulge Some hopes of your being able to accompany me) I will annex to this Letter, a List of Such things as I Shall want for the Service in addition to what I have ordered from St., Louis === I propose to employ altogether in this Service – One Waggoner – two Hunters - Six Labourers – One Herdsman, a Spaniard, - and One Servant.

Three of the Men, I expect you to employ, who will have to bring up the Mules ___ - If you can Send Jo: Wright, or And: Carson for one I w.^d be glad – It will be necessary for me to have a good Compass +Chain along; and as there is none to be had here, you must procure it either on loan, or hire or by Purchase.

Yrs. truly

G. c. Sibley

G.H. Reeves Esqr.

A List of Articles wanted for the S^{ta}: Road, to be Sent up to Ft. Osage early in May by Col: Reeves. __

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A good well adjusted Surveyor's Compass complete with chain +.

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Four Mules to work in the Waggon

One Mule, Mkd: P., for G. c. Sibley,

Twelve other Mules for the Men to Ride –

In all 17 to be Sent up ____.

[A vertical squiggly line separates the three lines enumerating mules from the phrase "In all 17 to be Sent up ____," which is located just to the right of the text on mules. (The symbols in the last word of this phrase appear to match the symbols in the blank just before the postscript at the very end of this list and probably are meant to indicate the postscript.) All other information is in list format as indicated in this transcript. Additionally, numbers of equals signs next to each other indicate double lines. Disregard the spaces between individual equals signs.]

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All the Saddles +Bridles on hand and as many more as necessary to mount 10Men + 3Packs – with proper Blankets to put under Saddles –

[Text in above sentence is hard to make out. "10Men" could also possibly be read as "women," and "3Packs" could also possibly be read as the word "Blacks." Comparing the text to other examples of Sibley's handwriting, it is my personal opinion that the given reading is more probable, but since the second reading was given by the person who prepared the pencil transcription, and since both readings could potentially make sense, I mention the second possibility here.]

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One ____.

=

Ten Strong twilled Bags –

1½ day: Put (?) Tin Cups – 4 Tin kettles for Water

4 Sheet Iron Camp kettles – 12 Tin Pans AB. (?)

2 Frying Pans, Short handles –

4 good falling Axes – One Drawing knife –

3 Augers – 1 large heavy hammer –

20yds: coarse tow Linen for Waggon Cover

2 pounds Har__ Nails diff. Sizes –

There may be other things needed, which I do not now recollect, If So, I will let you know in time. –

G. c. Sibley –

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____. The balance of the Mules had better be Sold. I am told they will be in great demand -