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Letter from George Sibley to Thomas Lindsay, July 28, 1837

George Champlin Sibley
Lindenwood College

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To Mr. Thomas Lindsay

Linden Wood July 28th 1837

My dear Sir,

It will assist me very much in mailing a collection of what is due on the old subscription for building the church, and remove one cause of embarrassment if you will furnish me with a correct list from your book of all the payments made to you directly or indirectly. The original papers are all lost it seems, and the copies are not only not any evidence of the subscriptions but in many cases do not show what were ever made thereon. Some who have only paid part, will say they have paid all. Those who have paid nothing may say so too, and I have no sort of evidence to the contrary. So that I find myself groping in the dark if I attempt these collections, and expose myself to unpleasant scenes oftentimes. But if I knew what each one had actually paid to you, I should feel much less embarrassment, and might in all probability have better success in collecting some of the old debts. I will thank you to send me the statement as soon as possible as soon as you can conveniently. My own subscription, formerly I do not find mentions in any of the papers in my possession. As well as I remember it consisted of a note on Gentlemen Copes, Watson Wardlow and others for \$25 and my order on young Mr. Rice for somewhere about \$30 more for the use of my Stallion Roderick. Pray was this money all collected? If not, how much remains due yet?

I hope those to whom the late Mrs. Brauchamp entrusted the collection and management of the sum she bequeathed for the use of the church will not fail to use proper means to have that money paid into their hands with the least possible delay, and that it may be loaned to the church itself on interest (as Mrs. B intended) to assist in the completion of our House of Worship. In consequences of the mismanagement of that matter, full 3 years interest or about Ninety Dollars will be totally lost, which is a grievous shame to the memory of the dead, for which some of the present living will have to answer I fear.-

I am continually hard pressed to find ready money to proceed with the church. There is evidently some malicious influence busily at work to thwart if possible, the completion of this work. This influence is increasing and untiring – it throws all possible obstacles in our way, and uses every repediant that malice can invent to discourage the workman and to prejudice the whole public against the work. Who are engaged in these vain efforts of spite, I know not, nor do I wish to know, nor does my suspicion rest upon any person or persons, or sort of persons in particular. I only know that fact to be so, and that it gives me much trouble and perplexity, to counteract and defeat the vile influences thus exerted. I am truly happy to have had it in my power to hitherto disappoint those mischievous efforts, and am still more so in the confident belief that He who overrules the devices and projects and petty works of Man will assuredly conduct in safety thro all these difficulties, if our efforts to set “decently and in order” this House of Worship, be made in a proper spirit, with perseverance, and reliance on the help of our Master, the God for whose worship the house is intended, will himself come to our aid – provided we all do our own duty in the premises.

Have the goodness to collect and send me the subscriptions in your neighbourhood. Your nephew Thomas, subscribed \$8 to include all that was due formerly. Will not your brother's family contribute something? I know we can expect but little from them, and from many others, but if they expect to sit in the house after it shall be finished, comfortably, they cannot I presume refuse their mite. This I suggest my dear Sir, not so much for the value of their money, as out of regard for their future comfort.

The house shall most assuredly, be completed decently without the least avoidable delay. And I really do hope and trust, that no member whose solemn duty it will be to enter that house as a worshipper of the living God, will have occasion to reproach himself or herself with having refused such contributions therefore as the circumstances of the case called for, and which they had the ability conveniently or incontinently to make. Churches (and especially Protestant Churches) are most emphatically public places, and of all public accommodations, they are the freest of access and the cheapest for the public at large; and if the claims of religion are insufficient to elicit the public patronage for these temple, surely there are other considerations growing out of their decided moral influences wherever they exist, that ought reasonably to enlist the worldly feeling of worldly people for their worldly interest safety and comfort, in their behalf. Churches in fact, are always and every where, the most prominent and decided public blessings; and their auctions and use ought to be every where a primary object with all sorts of people.

And I will freely venture the assertion, that no person ever did, or ever will sustain any pecuniary loss, or other serious inconvenience, by giving of the means in his power, according to the amount entrusted to his stewardship, to promote those establishments if given proper spirit and confidence. What can a Christian doubt and hesitate on this subject? That the Lord will refuse his blessing upon faithful efforts, made in faith to build up decent and appropriate temples on earth wherein to worship and praise his great and glorious name? In this the words of the royal and inspired Preaches, are greatly applicable. "Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shall find it after many days" - -

Yours Truly,

G. C. Sibley

Mr. Thomas Lindsay Senior