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Letter from Archibald Gamble to George Sibley, July 13, 1841

Archibald Gamble

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George C. Sibley Esq
St. Charles
Mo.

Archd Gamble
July 12, '41
Ansd 17th- (Recd.
16th at night)

St. Louis, July 13th, 1841.

Dr Major

You must give me full credit for my labour in copying the following letter from my friend Russell, I do it to show how good a friend he is to you

Washington City July 2 1841

Dear Sir

Upon my arrival here nearly three weeks ago I recd from Thos. S. Anderson Esq your letter of 10th May brought by Mr. Allen (who had left this place for Richmond) He has since gone East, that I have not seen him here. I seen Mr. Allen in Phila we were some days at the same house before he arrived here. I do not believe that Dr. Silas Reeds nomination as Surveyor Genl will be confirmed by the Senate. Nor do I believe when it is rejected, that Genl Milburn will be nominated, and think it more probable if Dr. Reed is rejected, that J. C. Brown Esq will be nominated. Col. Birch is still here, and I incline to believe has considerable influence in some of the departments as to nominations & appointments in Missouri.

Your letter of the 10th June I recd on 21st and same day Thos. S. Anderson and I drew up a recommendation for Majr. Sibley, recommending him as every way fit & qualified for the office of Superintendent of Indian Affairs & soliciting that he be appointed- It was signed by Dr. Mitchell (I believe of Clark Co Mo) by Mr. Richardson of Palmyra Mr. Anderson & myself and handed to the Sectry of War the same day- Coln. Birch & Coln. Churchill of St. Louis declined signing it, under pretence (as Mr Anderson told me) of being pledged to support other applicants!!!! Mr. Allen was not here (he remained here but a few hours on his way from Richmond Eastward, and I did not see him) Your Brother had not then arrived, and when he did arrive remained only about 24 hours, when he and Mr Anderson left here together for Baltimore. that I only seen your Brother once, and that at a distance too great to speak to him. I called afterwards on the Sectry of War & had a conversation with him upon the subject- He spoke of there being several applications for the place, and dwelt upon the large disbursements which had to be made through that office & &, but made no intimation as to which of the applicants would be preferred. A day or two after Mr. Anderson & your Brother had left for Balto, I recd your letter of 14th June with its two enclosures. One from Majr Sibley to Sectry of War which has been delivered. The other from Majr Sibley to James T Morehead Senator from Kentucky, which I delivered to him, it contained not a word to Morehead, but merely a letter directed by Majr Sibley to Thos S. Anderson Esq which Mr. Morehead handed to me, as Mr. Anderson was then gone I still have it, not knowing where to send it to overtake Mr. Anderson. There is not less than 5 or 6 applications for the superintendency among them Doughertys friends (not himself) on his behalf. That I don't believe Majr Sibley ought to count much on getting the appointment, the Departments know they made some bad appointments at the outset, that they now are more particular and like to have as their authority

numerous and strong written recommendations (to file) made by persons whom they know, or that are known by some of the Whig members of Congress.

You may expect me to write you news, other than what he papers contain, but I could not write you much that would be very pleasing or satisfactory. Indeed I have almost come to doubt, whether the country has gained much by the late political revolution. The Whigs & conservatives fail in uniting, and indeed the Whigs alone do not all unite in any of the great measures of reform, or relief which the country expects. With the few thus detached from the Whig party the Loco's can defeat each measure one by one. The Bank bill reported by Mr. Clay cannot pass the Senate, without the amendment of Mr. Reves, reinstating Mr. Ewings plan permitting no Branch to be established in any State without the consent of the State, and if it did pass without the provision it would probably be vetoed. It must be made to suit the Conservatives & State rights parties, or it cannot pass, and even then, it can only carry such Conservatives as claim to be sort of Whigs (not the locos or opposition. President Tyler is not in favour of a charter establishing branches without consent of the States where they are located. It is a Cabinet measure, preferred by a pact & acquiesced in by all, for any opposing it, might have found a chance to retire. The whole party that elected Genl Harrison, will not unite in any of the great leading measures, and the majority of that party must submit to the minority, or the Loco's joining that minority can defeat any measure that the Majority of the Whigs want

The only time I ever was here until now, when Congress were in session was in 1823-4 under the smooth but firm administration of Mr. Monroe- there is no likeness between the State of things then and now. then all the departments of Government seemed to work smooth & firmly. Now almost everything appears to me to be in a snarl & confusion, and the shameless beggaries & importunities of Office seekers and their friends, is absolutely disgusting. I had never until now believed that there ever had been or would be, such scramble for office, as this place now exhibits. There is not less than 5 or 6 applications for the Post-office at S Louis (the appointment not yet made) and for other offices in other States of far less value the applications are still more numerous. Members of Congress (and others) teased almost to death for their influence, that some of them avoid as much as they can being found at home.

My daughter is here with me, in good health and spirits, and well pleased with our travel this far. we stoped about a week in Pittsburg a few days in Harrisburgh- nearly three weeks in Phila and have been nearly three weeks here & will leave in 2 or 3 days for N. York &.

PS. Since writing the above the debate (near a row) between Rives & Archer on the Bank bill, shewing the strength of parties (particularly the conservative & State rights weakness) seems to leave a little more ground to hope that Mr. Clays Bank bill may pass the Senate, yet I cannot entertain that hope. Yet the proceedings today is a great bother with some of the Loco's which party to go with on Rives amendment to Clays Bank bill they will have a caucus tonight, and may decide.

In speaking of parties here, besides the heretofore divisions, of Whigs and Locofoco, they are beginning to use other names and distinctions and that each under their new names have their representatives in each house The Clay party, main body of the Whigs, represented by Mr Clay himself in the Senate, and in the House by Marshall of Ky. The Webster party represented in Senate by Choate & in the House by Cushing. The Tyler party represented in Senate by Rives & in the House by Wise. But some believe that the Webster & Tyler parties are uniting & if the Loco's were out of the way (or if they

could be gained over to themselves would bring their strength to bear against Mr. Clay but whether all or any of this be true I would not assert.-----

So my friend Sibley you see what is likely to be the result of the great struggle against political corruption, and what is to be the fate of the great Whig Party. I do not believe Mr. Webster capable of a lofty & disinterested patriotism. He has the Yankee principle of self operating so strongly that in a covert way he will defeat all the great Whig measures rather than Clay should have the reputation of carrying them through- Patronage is now dispensed in reference to Webster's future views and Geyer says that neither you nor Dougherty will receive the appmt because your support comes from the wrong side of the house. If Clays Bank Bill embracing the feature that gives Nationality to the Bank should fail I hope sincerely that we may have no Bank- Rives amendment breaks down the Whig party effectually

Yours truly

Archibald Gamble

Sibley Mss. V. II
Missouri Historical Society