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4-16-1811

Letter from Office of Indian Trade to George Sibley, et al., April 16, 1811

Office of Indian Trade

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George B. Sibley at Fort Osage

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Office of Indian Trade

April 16, 1811

There is reason to apprehend that in consequence of the operation of the late law prohibiting the importation into the United States of British Goods. The British agents and traders with the Indians, may attempt to execute in their minds prejudices and hostile dispositions towards the United States, insinuating that as the British goods intended for their trade will not be permitted to enter and pass the American posts on the western frontier, this act which has been dictated as a measure of general policy in relation to Great Britain was intended as an act of hostility against the Indians. It is particularly expected of you under such circumstances that you will redouble your efforts to satisfy the wants and conciliate the minds of the Indians within your reach that you will avail yourself of every opportunity to explain to their chiefs and influential men, how the measure in question has been brought about, that so far from being intended to exclude British Goods from their country only, or to do them mischief, it is general and pervades the whole of the United States after repealed remonstrance from year to year, against the injustices and violations of their rights on the part of Great Britain and without redress have at length been compelled to shut their ports against their trade, or to go to war; that their love of peace has induced them to prefer the former, altho such a step must be productive of great inconvenience to all their own people; that the President expects that the Red people when they come to understand the true cause of this state of things, well cheerfully submit it, since it has been intended to avert – a still greater evil war, which would distress them, the Indians by closing still more the avenues of trade – that is the fault of the British and not of the American Government that their goods cannot be admitted, and they the British have it in their power by healing us as friends and returning to a course of justice. –

It may happen that the agents of the war department may have occasion during the ensuing...