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Letter from John W. Johnson to George Sibley, March 1, 1819

John W. Johnson

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George C. Sibley

Jno. W. Johnson

Prarie du Chien, 1 March 1819

D Sibley

Yours of 3^d Dec. reached me a few days Since- I am a little pleased to witness the effects of scolding- as it produced a letter containing only Ninety Seven lines from you- It is to be regretted we have no certainty for the conveyance of our letters, though I think you might venture a few more or in other words, oftener. My visiting on Salt River is as yet uncertain, & to come to the Point, I have decided on no particular place as yet for my future residence- in order to be doing a little in that way I have bought a Section of Land on the waters of Salt River & I should have no objection to own three or four hundred acres of land situated as you speak of, adjoining your mill seat- though do not know how to arrange it; so as to have me a farm located there.

It will be time enough to talk about building a merchant mill, & & on your situation, when you have neighbors sufficient to support them, as for the Situation of the Missouri, & Mississippi Rivers- I must give the preference to the former as it respects land & Salt Spring- Though the difficulty in ascending the current will I fear be Such an objection that the Scales will preponder in favour of Mississippi- Mark the fate of the first steamboat that attempts to ascent the Missouri- Those rapids you speak of will in some future day, prove in point of Value- as the Brandewine Stream does now- covered now with valueable mills, & &. The lead & copper mines will be much in favour of this River, Iron Ore & Cole, I am informed, is in great abundance not far from this- but what is all this when compared to the wealth of China which you say is to float by your farm or mills- No sir, if there was a good society here

& Troops stationed at this post- I know of no Situation better calculated to make money at, by Farming. \$2500 was made here last year on one farm by Mr. Bollette only in the article of flour. Pork can be sold here now for cash 100¢ barrel- beef is never less than 11 cents lb- eggs, butter & chickings are cash articles and in proportion to the above prices- The want of Genteel Society levels all those advantages to Salt River prices- as it respects Indian Trade- I am doing very little- Astor & his opposition Party fills this river with Teaders from Fort Edwards to the River St. Peters- If I clear my expenses I shall do well, Mr. Bott situation is better, though I fear he is not well calculated to be alone- Time will prove this- I cannot think the Factory will be discontinued. Rawlings Situation I expect is a good one- I have got the young man that acted as his assistant, he is expected immediately on the River Opening- so soon as I can put him on way to understand the manner & disposition of Indian Trading here, I intend going to St. Louis to arrange my public & private accts and what may be determined on then as to resigning I cannot say.- I shall not be disappointed if I am asked to take charge of an establishment at River St. Peters, if one is to be there- The Terms & will depend on my going, certainly the present Salary is not an object for persons who can do better or live without it- You dont say anything about your resignation.- I do expect you will turn out a second Coln. Boon. spend a life in trying to obtain Beaver Fur- it would have added something to my pleasures, to know how Mrs. S. likes her Situation & if you have yet been able between you, to count one- Simpson says its damned hard, he should have to furnish you & Quarles with children. Try & extricate yourself from such obligations- as I know you have too much independence to labour under such a charge We are destitute of news,

Mrs. Bott had a fine daughter lately- uncommonly strange, - give my respects to Mrs. Sibley and Ealy- the latter I expect has grown an Osage by this time- excuse this scribble, too long to copy.

Jno. W. Johnson