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Letter from George Sibley to Elisha Whittlesey, November 30, 1830

George Champlin Sibley

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Hon. Elisha Whittlesey
Rep. from Ohio, in Congress
Washington City

G. C. Sibley
Linden-Wood near St. Charles, Mo.
Nov. 30th, 1830.

To The Hon. Elisha Whittlesey
Rep. from Ohio, in Congress
Washington City.

Sir,

In the proceedings of the last Session of Congress, I observe that a claim for \$1504.54 was Referred to the Committee of Claims of which you are the Chairman, but as nothing further has been communicated to the persons concerned, I presume the matter has not been finally acted on, but suspended among other innumerable cares of "unfinished business"= The claim I allude to was presented to the Government Rather more than three years ago- it is founded on a most Solemnly attested account of the disbursements of Messrs. Reeves, Sibley & Mather, the Commissioners who carried into effect the Act of Congress of 1825, authorizing the President to cause a Road to be marked out to New Mexico= The Account sets forth, that the Commissioners expended \$1504.54 in the public Service, more than was appropriated by the Act of Congress, for the object they were charged with; and explains the causes that induced them thus to exceed the appropriation= The Solemn manner, in which the Commissioners attested this fact forbids them to entertain for one single moment a thought that its truth can be doubted, although they are aware that they have not complied with Some of the forms which it Seems are established by the Accounting offices at Washington.

The Comm^{rs}. were governed in this Respect, by the instructions they Received from the Secretary of War, who was probably well aware that from the nature of the Service, much of the disbursement could

not be avouched in the usual office forms= This actually turned out to be true to Some extent, and it must be obvious to any one who will Reflect a moment on the Subject, that it could not possibly be otherwise= The Comm^{rs}. could have added to the Solemn attestation they appended to their Account, the obligation of an Oath, and probably would have done So, if they had not been furnished with Special instructions on that point, from the Sec^y. of War, which they deemed it Sufficient to comply with- I can scarcely believe however, that the difficulty in the Settlement of this Acct. lies here- Tho' I confess I cannot account for it in any other way= If the Government is Satisfied that the Sum claimed has been actually expended in their Service, and that it was taken from the private means of their Agents- it is difficult to conceive any Reasonable objection that can be urged against the prompt reimbursement of the money advanced for them= Common justice demands it,- and the common usage of the Gov^t. Sanctions the expectations that the demand will be Satisfied- The past delay that has already taken place, has been, and is still, Severely felt by those to whom the money is due= If not already convinced of this justness of the claim, the late Comm^{rs}. are Ready to convince you, so far as their Oaths can do it, if Required= I would beg leave to Suggest the propriety of making an appropriation to meet the demand, Subject to the disposal of the Sec^y. of War, to be by him paid over upon Satisfactory proofs of its truth & fairness=

You will very much oblige me Sir, as well as Cols. Reeves and Mather, if you write me a word of information on this Subject- Three years have elapsed since our Accounts were laid before the proper officer at Washington. We know to our Serious inconvenience, that the balance due us has not been paid, or provided for- but we are entirely ignorant of the Reasons that have induced this injurious delay= knowing the justness and Rightfulness of our demand, we continue to expect

its discharge, and Reasonably enough, bottom matters of business on that expectation- If however, the Gov^t. means to deny the claim, for courtesy's sake let us know why we are Refused= If we must make a Sacrifice of our Money to the U. States, it will afford us Some Satisfaction to know the grounds upon which we are Required to make it= That we have made the extra expenditure we are ready to prove even in a Court of Justice (and the proof would there be admitted Sufficient without doubt)= And we are well convinced that if it had pleased Congress to enquire, how their order was executed by us, and what benefits our labour produced, or might have produced had our Report not been so Strongly Suppressed, that in our case they would have been well Satisfied that the labourer is worthy of his hire- At all events we discharged our extremely hard duties faithfully, & with great Regard to economy- Whether our labours were or were not of any great benefit to the Government, is of no Such consequence to the matter in hand- on that point the Comm^{rs}. were not to judge; Congress had decreed the measure; we could do no more than faithfully execute the decree; which I aver was done= I cannot Refrain from the Remark, that if the Comm^{rs}. Report were made Public, as I believe it ought to have been, three years ago, Congress and the Public would be convinced that the measure was wise and expedient, and that in its execution the Comm^{rs}. were governed in a great degree by an anxious desire to promote the great interest contemplated by the Act of Congress.

I do myself the honour to enclose you herein, a Copy of a Letter from The Hon. Mr. Benton to me, (the original now lies before me) and an extract from Mr. Secretary Barbour's instructions to the Comm^{rs}.

It is proper to observe, that altho' the Comm^{rs}. were not at all governed in their expenditures by Mr. Benton's assurances in his letter

(all their arrangements having been calculated Rigidly upon the funds appropriated) they were nevertheless encouraged thereby, to expect immediate Remuneration of any Reasonable Sum they might find it important to advance in executing the Law= I am sir, with great Respect,

Your Mo. Obt. Svt.

G. C. Sibley

that the movement will be pretty extensive unless it is immediately checked by the Government- I give you this information thus early to Save you an increase of trouble in the discharge of an unpleasant duty, and to Save from great loss & Ruin many of those poor and indiscreet People, who in despite of every friendly warning, appear to be determined on Settling with their families in the Kansas Territory.

I am very Respectfully Sir

Yr. MO: Obt.: Svt:

Br: Gen: H. Atkinson
St. Louis

G. C. Sibley

Nursery

- March 2d. Right hand border, big walk, 1^t Section left Side Vizt. 1^t. Some Service & Currant Seeds- 2^d. Some Morello Cherry Stones same section Right side, a row of Morello Cherry Stones. Second Section left Side- 1^t. Pear Seeds- 2^d. Quincy Seeds to end of the Row- Same Section R^t. Side- Apple, Grapes & Wild Cherry Seeds-
- March 3^d. In the Nursery Quarter Vizt.
Half Row of Seedling Apples (next after Peach Row) from the Walk. the other half of the Row planted with Nectarine stones from D. Simpson. Next, part of a Row of Peach Stones from D.S. Next is a long Row Vizt.- 1^t. flat Peach St: from D. S. 2^d a few choice P. St: from Mr. Gamble- 3^d. 2 fine cling P. St: from Gamble.
4th filled out the Row with Peach Stones from Joan,
Next long Row- 1^t. P. St: from Joan- Row filled out with Plums &c. from D.
- March 12th Next, 2 long Rows of Blk: Locust Seeds, planted 12th March.

Note appended to copy of Benton's letter

The above Letter was Recd. by me at Ft. Osage, after the Comm^{rs}. had completed their Outfit, and collected their Men, Tools, & & on the western frontier of Missouri, from whence they commenced their operations in July 1825.

G. C. Sibley