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6-18-1817

## Letter from George Sibley to Samuel Sibley, June 18 to July 10, 1817

George Champlin Sibley

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Samuel Hopkins Sibley

George C. Sibley  
(June 18 to July 10, 18-)

My dear Brother,- I write you at intervals (on board of my Barge on the Voyage from St. Louis to Ft. Osage- Your letter of the 12<sup>th</sup> Feb<sup>y</sup> reached me on the 12<sup>th</sup> of May, the day before I left Ft. Osage for St. Louis- during my very Short Stay at St. Louis, I was So much engaged making preparations to Start back again to Ft. Osage, that I could not write you fully as I felt a wish to do, and I therefore purposely deferred it 'till now- I left St. Louis on the 10<sup>th</sup> of June (this is the 18<sup>th</sup>) with my wife, for Ft. Osage, where I propose to Stay 'till next May, at which time, I hope Such arrangements will have been made to enable me to quit my present Situation without Regret, and in exchange for a much more desirable one-

I regret very much your inability to join Col. Easton and myself in business at St. Louis, but I flatter myself that you will yet be able to do So, by the time we are Ready; Say next year- On that Subject I have latterly had a good deal of talk with him, and find he is Still desirous of forming a Mercantile establishment in this Country on a pretty large Scale; and he wishes, in that event to have you and myself as partners.-

The plan which he and I have discussed is this; to lay in and bring to St. Louis about \$30,000 worth of Goods- \$10,000 of this to be operated at St. Louis- \$10,000 at a Seat of Col. E's in Illinois Territory, and \$10,000 at another Seat of his on the Missouri- The Goods to be procured in Phil<sup>a</sup>. and Baltimore on the usual Credit, and to be disposed of in exchange for the produce of the Country, and for Cash.

As far as I understand this plan, I think it a good one, and



feel a good deal inclined to embark in it- tho' I must confess the country appears to be Sufficiently Stocked with Merchants and Merchandise already- The immense flood of British Goods with which the U. States has been inundated Since the Peace, has afforded Such facility to disbanded officers & other Retainers of the late Army, to become Merchants and Traders; that the whole of our Settlements in this Territory (as well as the neighboring Territories) are literally Swarming with petty dealers in Merchandise- It is not at all likely however that this State of things can last longer than this year, or the year following- Matters will Settle down to their natural and proper level, and Some regularity be established in Mercantile affairs, of which there Seems to be not any at present.

I wish you to take this matter again into consideration, and to write me fully- my great wish to have you near me in this country, where I Shall without doubt Settle myself for life, makes me the more particular in giving you notice of any opening or prospect which I think may offer any inducements for you to come here.

I am quite Sure you would be well pleased with the country, and content to Settle in it for life, if you were once fairly Removed here- But I am well aware that you Should not by any means think of moving 'till every necessary arrangement is made to Secure you a comfortable Residence, and independent maintenance; 'till the business you embark in Shall become productive, and yield a Certain Revenue- You often mention to me in your letters, the expected Sale of the Grand Ecore place, and that a part of the proceeds of the Sale is intended for your use- I do not pretend to know anything at all about your affairs at Natchitoches, but really it appears to me that you all get along very Slowly with your business- If Grand Ecore is Really for Sale, and many offers are made for it as you Say, why not Sell it at once



and be done with it- Father has an immense quantity of Land on Red River; Cannot you prevail on him to Sell Some of it and let you have the proceeds- perhaps he would be willing to turn a part of his landed property into Cash and to embark a Capital in business with you and I; or perhaps he would lend us a few thousand Dollars to begin with.- these are matters you can best ascertain.

The increase of population, wealth and improvements of all kinds in this Territory within the last year is immense; perhaps it exceeds any former example- Our Settlements on this River alone are now becoming of very great consequence- I believe there are at least five Towns laid off on the Missouri; where there was Scarcely a White Man's Track Seven years ago- The effective organized Militia of Howard County (which embraces only the Settlements commonly called "Boone's Lick) amounts now to Somewhere about 1100 Men- Col: Cooper told me this morning (the 2<sup>d</sup> of July) that he had Returns already for 900- during the late War this county mustered only about 250 Men- It is very probable that the present limits of Howard County, will embrace two years hence a greater population than any other county in the Territory; but within that time it will form at the least, three counties- Merchants, Lawyers and doctors abound here- In the new Town of Franklin (which was a Corn field a year ago) there is more Merchandise and better assorted than St<sup>t</sup>. Louis contained when I first arrived there in 1805. Town Lots Sell for about 200 Dollars each, or about 700 Dollars an Acre- St<sup>t</sup>. Louis has increased in Size, population and Wealth in a due proportion; indeed its consequence is daily becoming more and more Striking; & I believe it is not Saying too much of it to aver that in a few Years it will Rival any town west of the Mountains except N. Orleans alone- but I will not tire you with a Repetition of what 'tis more than likely I may have Said on



this Subject in former Letters- you will take it for granted what I Say is fact and I assure you the facts above stated may very fairly be taken as proofs of the growing importance of the County.

July 3<sup>d</sup>.- We are now dining just below the Charaton, a Small River which empties into this on the Right hand Side- So far we have come very Safe and Comfortably; but very Slowly, owing to the great June flood meeting us; the River has now nearly Retired into its usual limits, and affords a much easier navigation; we count on getting to Ft. Osage by the 10<sup>th</sup> of this month-

Just before I left St. Louis a Mr. Matthias McGirk put a Memorandum into my hands (of which the following is a Copy) requesting it to be forwarded to you-

"Wm. B. Obannon left Saint Louis in August 1815, he has 5 or 6 likely negroes with him- He is about 5 feet 10 Inches high, Spare made, thin visage- about 42 years of age; a great Gambler- I am told he is in Louisiana on Red River near Natchitoches, keeping a public House- There is a Judgment at St. Louis against him for \$408- I wish Mr. Sibley to give information if Obannon is there or elsewhere, and let me know if he will attend to the collection of Said Judgment- If he will, I will cause the Record to be Sent him, and will pay Costs and Attorney's fees for collection Write me by mail to Saint Louis immediately on Rec<sup>t</sup>. of this."-

(Signed) Matthias Mc Girk

In addition to what is Stated above, I will State to you for your information, that O'bannon is a worthless Scoundrel who was driven out of St. Louis County in August 1815 by the Regulators, for passing counterfeit Bank Notes- Mr. McGirk is a member of the St. Louis Bar, and is a Gentleman of much Respectability, and enjoys a

very handsome practice. if you can Serve him in the affair above Stated, I will be glad you would do it.

(July 9<sup>th</sup>) We are now 11 o'clock 12 miles below Ft. Osage, we Shall get up early tomorrow; or if the wind Serves, which is probable, we may get up tonight perhaps-

I will thank you to give my Love to Father, and tell him I Shall write him before long; I would write him now if I knew what to write about, having already Said in this Letter everything (that would be likely to interest any of you) that occurs to me

I hope you will not fail to write me Soon

Mary Sends love to Margaret and your little ones with a kiss apiece for them She desires also to be affectionately mentioned to Ann E. and to Father-

You will of course mention me affectionately to them all and kiss the Little ones all round- Father's & Ann E's & all, for me over and over again

Yrs with true affection

G. C. S.

S. H. S.

July 10<sup>th</sup> We have arrived Safe, and find all our affairs as well as could reasonably have expected. we are in great bustle.