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Letter from George Sibley to Thomas McKenney, February 2, 1819

George Champlin Sibley

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Fort Osage 2nd February 1819

Sir,

It escaped my memory to mention ~~to mention~~ to you in my late communications (of the 29.th & 31.^t ult.^o) that the Commandant of this military District has advised or intends to advise, the entire evacuation of this post in the Spring under the impression that ~~that~~ a Garrison is no longer necessary here. Col. Chambers mentioned this subject to me last summer at S.^t Louis, and I believed I told him that I did not consider a Garrison at all necessary at Fort Osage to protect the Indian establishment from Indian violence Since then the subject has been frequently discussed in my presence among the Army officers and the result is a positive Conviction in my mind that

that the removal of the Garrison from this place will be impolitic as long as a Trading House is kept here -- until our settlements shall become sufficiently strong to protect themselves. While the Gov.^t thinks proper to maintain a Trading House here this place will become yearly more and more the resort of various Indian Nations -- and experience shews that some power is requisite to restrain the wild & Lawless propensities of the Indians when they are assembled in considerable numbers -- in such cases they are ever apt to commit little thefts, robberies &c. and to insult individuals and solitary families -- Our settlers are apt to resort to violent measures of retaliation and thus produce serious difficulties. Wherever Gov.^t pretends to exert any authority it ought always be able to enforce it, otherwise an abortive attempt on the part of an agent to do what he ought creates contempt and after all the Gov.^t is obliged to use coercive means. -- this remark is particularly applicable to our relations with the Indians -- The presence of a garrison is also necessary to protect the Indians from their own brawls and quarrels, and it is in this point of view that I would most earnestly urge the policy of the Gov.^t maintaining a sufficient power to suppress riots, prevent drunkenness & keep order among the Indians at all places where they were appointed to collect for the purpose of Trade or to transact public business with the Gov.^t agents.

I thought it my duty to give you this information, and I could not avow the remarks that I have superadded.

I am very respectfully sir &c. &c. (signed)

Thomas L. McKenney Esq^r
 Sup^t. In^d. Trade
 G. Town Col.

G. C. Sibley

P. S. As Trade & Politics are ever intimately connect-

ed in Indian Affairs, it is right in my mind, that you should be kept well informed of all such matters as are any way related to either -- Therefore I enclose you copies of two letters to Gov.^r Clark, & copy of an address from the British Agency at Malden to the Missouri Tribes.

G. C. S.
