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Letter from George Sibley to William Clark, January 21, 1811

George Champlin Clark

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Fort Osage January 21^t. 1811.

Dear Sir,

I have your letter of the 14th. Novem^r. now before me.- From the manner in which you Speak of the Houses and Improvement made at this place by D^r. Robinson, I am fearful that I have not had the good fortune to make myself properly understood, by you in my Letter by Lorr of the 31^t. of October wherein I informed you of the circumstances which brought these Houses and improvement into my hands, and used the freedom to Request the favor of you to enquire of His Excellency Gov^r. Howard at Some convenient opportunity how the Osage Treaty will effect those Houses &c. and what control the Gov^t. would think fit to exercise over them?- I have no idea that the ground was transferable by D^r. Robinson or any other individual- All that the Doctor has transfered to me is the Hourse and fences, and that is ^{all} I pretend to claim under him- The 10 Acre field adjoining and enclosing the Houses, I think I have Some claim to the use of while I Reside here in a public capacity, to Raise corn vegetables &c. for domestic purposes. but however Reasonable Such a claim may be, I Shall certainly never press it as a Right, tho' I Shall expect it to be allowed me as an indulgence that I am as much entitled to at least as private Individuals who occupy land at this place- As to the Houses, fences &c. they were made by D^r. Robinson at his own expence, by Special permission of the Governor, under Such circumstances too as gave him a peculiar claim to all the advantages to be derived from them.- And if he was not entitled to Sell them when and to whom he thought proper, I am much in error.- If not too near the Garrison, I think this Improvement would be useful to the Indian Dep^t. for the accomodation of ~~Black~~-- Blacksmith, Miller &c. if Such persons are necessary at this place under the Treaty.- If however they are not wanted for these purposes or for any other, I presume there can be no objection to my Cultivating the ground.- Having accidentally and

much against my inclination acquired and interest in these Buildings, &c.
(to the tune of \$500 which they ~~intrinsic~~ intrinsically worth) I hope you
you will have the goodness to excuse my making Some ^{enquiry} ~~enquiry~~ of you Respect
ing the interference and control which the Gov^t. may think proper to
exercise over them under the provisions of the Osage Treaty.- Not wish-
ing tho' by any means to give you the least trouble in the matter.-

Provided no unforeseen occurrences intervene to prevent it, I Shall
take a little excursion in the Spring to the Kansas, Pawnees, Arkansas
Osages and Great Osages, and probably to the Ottos and Missouri. The
principal object of this excursion will be to form Some commercial
arrangement with those Tribes and to extend to them if possible Some
of the advantages designed for them by the Gov^t. in this establishment.
This being the object, I can with much confidence Request your assist-
ance to effect it provided the thing has your approbation.- I am led
to believe that Some Such Step is necessary to remove the jealousies
and Suspicions excited among these Indians by a few interested and un-
principled Traders; and that by a personal interview with them attended
with Such ceremonies as are customary among Indians on Such occasions,
with a few trifling presents &c. a more frequent intercourse may be
effected which would be mutually beneficial to them and our Gov^t.- To
them it would afford Regular Supplies of Merchandise, and to us it [^]would
afford the best opportunities of becoming well acquainted with their
habits, dispositions &c. and present the best means of conciliating
their friendship and good will towards the U. States.- As it will be
necessary to procure and preserve Such an understanding among the differ-
ent Tribes, especially the Kansas, Pawnees & Ottos, as will prevent
their interrupting each other when on their way here to trade, your
influence will be the more necessary- Therefore if you think fit to
promote this object, I will with the utmost cheerfulness make Such
communications to the Kansas, Pawnees, Ottos and Missouri as you may
be [^]pleas'd to direct; and any other aid you may think proper to give, wi

will be gladly Rec^d.— I Should be glad if you would furnish me with an American Flag to be left at each of the Towns of the Kansas, Pawnees, Ottos ~~and~~ & Missouri, in the hands of the principal Chiefs, which ought to be delivered in your Name as tokens of the genuineness of your Messages.— I propose to ^Set out on this jaunt early in April, and Shall be extremely glad to hear from you on the Subject as Soon as possible Say by the Return of ~~Mr. Hunt~~ Audrain.—

I have Some Reasons to believe that the Kansas and Missouri will Remove their villages and Settle near this place with the Little Osages if they Receive any encouragement from this quarter. I have been Several times consulted about it, but have declined giving them any positive encouragement, not knowing if it would be proper, tho' I am very clearly of opinion that they ought to be encouraged and invited— Will you be good enough to inform me if there is any objection to their being encouraged to come here to Reside that I may act accordingly. It^{is} my interest as Agent of Indian Trade to bring as many Indians to this neighborhood as I can Supply with goods— but I wish to be very cautious how I interfere in other people's concerns.— I am persuaded that with proper exertions this Factory may be made a place of great Resort for the Indians, and I am determined to omit no exertions on my part to promote its Success.—

I will thank you to forward the enclosed dispatches by the very first mail.— and if you have any Commands for me, please Send them by the bearer, who ^Apromises to call on you before he ^aStarts— Please tender my most Respectful Comp^{ts}. to Mrs. C. and believe me

Sir to be very truly yours

G. C. Sibley

Gen^l W^m. Clark

Saint Louis.

P. Mr. F. Audrain.