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Letter from Thomas McKenney to George Sibley, September 20, 1820

Thomas McKenney

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Geo. C. Sibley Esq
Fort Osage

Office Indian Trade
St. Louis, Sept. 20 1820

Sir,

Your letter of July 28th with your accounts up to the 20th June, and enclosing copies of letters from you to Gov. Clark, had been received: A reference has been made to the President of the scene of hostility which you have described - I regret that Gov. Clark was not at St. Louis when you wrote to him. I think the course you took a very proper one - and no injury could have resulted had you acted in Gov. Clark's absence more definitely.

On the subject of removing the Factory buildings, or repairing them, I have to remark that until the Congress shall act definitely in relation to the system, I can authorize no expenditures except such as shall be essential to the preservation of the property. The making or of boards, & propping to keep the buildings from falling down, must of course, be attended to. This is one of the evils of keeping the system but partially alive; and then only from year to year.

I have submitted the propriety of issuing an order by the War Department, to Gov. Clark, to receive any goods from the Factory that can be used in the way of presents &c.; and should it be recognized, you will add to the original cost 16 per cent, on all that may be taken by the Governor for such purposes.

I hope to hear that a more pacific temper has succeeded to the present turbulent one; and that not so much evil had been done as was anticipated. Write me from time to time, as circumstances may make it

it proper to do so.

The Government has recognized the wishes of the Osages to have a branch of a Factory located at the Grand Bar on the Osage River, or, on any other point that the agent who may go to select the spot may choose, that will combine the convenience of the Indians, and the readiest means of access to it by water. I have written to a young man who has been some time with Mr. Rawlings to accept the appointment of Factor, and if he accepts the offer he will be off. I trust, so as to get his buildings up by the next spring. I shall send a plan of them.

This establishment being a branch of the one in your charge, all its operations will pass thro' you, as the one at the main posts did thro' Mr. Johnson, till it was constituted independent of him. I shall send copies of my doances to you, and shall expect to hear thro' you of all the proceedings &c. and that the factor will report by duplicate to you.

I believe this will be usefull, at least to the Osages. Their annuities will be paid to them out of this factory, but on directions from me through you. I will write you more fully when the thing is about to be put into motion. — (L.M.K.)