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George Sibley's Political Platform as a Candidate for the Whig Nomination for Congress, June 1840

George Champlin Sibley

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(June 1840)

To The
FREE & INDEPENDENT VOTERS OF MISSOURI

Gentlemen- The Public announcement of my name as a candidate for Congress on the Whig ticket, lays me under an obligation, while I respectfully solicit your suffrages, to set before you so much of my political creed as will enable you to vote for or against me understandingly. As a representative in Congress ought to serve as a faithful medium between his constituents and the Federal Government, and may have very important duties to perform in that relation, I will first let you know how I stand politically affected toward the present Administration at Washington. I claim affinity with the great Republican Whig family, and profess to be a Whig in the most comprehensive meaning of the term; consequently, I am opposed to any increase of Executive power and patronage, beyond what the Constitution clearly allows; and to any measures tending, directly or indirectly, to such increase; and to any men who advocate such measures.

I am, therefore, politically opposed to the men who now conduct our national affairs, and who have conducted them for the last ten years, because I believe they have assumed and exercised powers not allowed by the Constitution, and which are dangerous to our liberties; because some of their favorite measures have a decided tendency to increase their power to an extent still more dangerous and alarming; aiming, as I believe, at the possession and control, not only of the National Purse, under the deceitful guise of their Sub-Treasury scheme, but also of the National Sword, under the pretence of drilling two hundred thousand militia men, as a National Guard; because they have greatly increased the expenses of Government unnecessarily, and have wasted and lost, by negligence, many millions of the peoples's money/ because they employ

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many dishonest, unqualified and disqualified men in the public pay, who render no other than party services, and dismiss and refuse to employ faithful and efficient men, confessedly because they will not make it their first and principal duty to render servile party service and obedience; and because they have, in many other things, abused the confidence of the honest voters who contributed to place them in office, and have utterly failed so to administer the government as to promote the prosperity, security, and happiness of the people. Such errors and abuses I will assuredly use all lawful means in my power to correct and counteract, whether in or out of Congress, whether sanctioned by Mr. Van Buren or Mr. Harrison, or by any other person. But, since the present Administration will not abandon their Anti-Democratic, Anti-Whig measures, I am decidedly in favor of abandoning them; and to that end I mean to exert all fair and honorable means that I am able to use, to promote the election of our old friend, William Henry Harrison, of Ohio, to the next Presidency, in the full belief that his well tried Republican principles, ability and integrity, do well entitle him to our confidence and cordial support; and that the interests of the West, especially the protection of the frontier settlements of Missouri, call loudly and emphatically upon us for this change.

As it is my intention, personally, to pay my respects to as many of you as I possibly can before the election, and shall be happy to avail myself of every fit occasion that may offer, to explain and justify the Republican Whig principles upon which I mainly base my hopes and expectations of your support, I need not, in this address, enter so minutely into my views, and opinions of public measures, as I should feel bound to do under other circumstances. There are some

subjects, however, that I cannot properly omit to notice at this time, but I shall do it very briefly.

The Public Lands- My wish has ever been to see these lands so disposed of as to facilitate and accomplish their actual settlement--- so that every citizen desiring it may occupy and cultivate his own land. To effect this, with me a favorite subject, I care not how low the price, or how easy the terms, especially on our own frontiers.

Internal Improvements.- I have always been in favor of a liberal and well directed system to be executed at the National expense, limited, however, to objects strictly of a National character, in which light I consider great leading roads, (including, of course, the great Cumberland road,) and all our great rivers.

The Currency.- If by any vote or agency of mine, I can ever aid in restoring to the community a specie and paper currency, such as we enjoyed under the influence of our late National Bank, I shall surely do it.

Our Indian and Frontier Affairs.- Seven years ago, in my published address to the People of Missouri, I expressed myself on this important subject in the following language:

"That there are very great defects in the system that has for many years been pursued in this branch of the public service, I am well convinced--- defects, that in my apprehension, are rapidly producing a train of evils, that if not soon counteracted by an intelligent course of legislation must, at no distant period, involve the Union in an immense expense of money, and the frontiers in destructive wars, of which, those of Missouri must ultimately suffer the greater share. It is incumbent on those who may represent you in Congress, to look well to this interesting subject; to acquaint themselves with

all its details and bearings, that they may be qualified to act, thereon in your behalf, with the promptitude, influence and efficiency that can result from a clear intelligence only."

Such were my views seven years ago on this subject, and they have been confirmed and strengthened by subsequent experience.

Let us, then, fellow-citizens, seize this golden opportunity to call to our assistance, in this critical condition of our frontier affairs, the venerable patriot, who, by his great experience as well as his western feelings, is of all men living, best qualified to manage our Indian relations for our safety, and the permanent good of all concerned. The name of Harrison is itself as a tower of strength throughout the Indian tribes; whilst that of Martin Van Buren, as you must be aware, is unknown and unheeded.

The Post-Office.-- This department evidently needs a thorough overhauling and reform. It is now openly and avowedly used by the Administration as a party engine; and as thus used, is far more dangerous to the public liberty, in my view, than a hundred National Banks, under the control of Congress, could be.

I solemnly promise you, gentlemen, that if elected, I will exert myself perseveringly to effect this most necessary reform; and also to obtain a reduction of the present rates on letters and newspapers; so that a more free, more secure, and less expensive intercourse among the people, may be enjoyed through the agency of this department.

Salt.-- Whatever can and ought to be done to ensure a plentiful and cheap supply of good pure salt throughout the State, especially if produced from our own abundant resources, shall always have my hearty aid and support- and although the revenue arising from the present duty on imported salt (only six cents per 56 pounds.) cannot be

spared at this time, as Mr. Van Buren's financial advisers have told us, we may confidently expect its repeal under the more economical Administration of General Harrison.

Abolitionism.- This silly, though mischievous humbug, never has received, nor ever can receive, the least support or countenance from me.

A residence of thirty-five years in Missouri, of which twenty were employed on the frontiers in the public service, have identified my worldly interest with hers, inseparably. And should you think proper, gentlemen, to honor me on this occasion by accepting my services, I think I may venture the assurance that you shall have them; the best that I am capable of rendering; undivided with, and uninfluenced by any of the little, intriguing, selfish, party politics of the day.

I am respectfully,

Your obed't serv't,

G. C. Sibley

Linden Wood, St. Charles Co., June, 1840