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Letter from George Sibley to Paul Baillio, May 16, 1830

George Champlin Sibley
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Mr. Paul Baillio
St. Louis, Mo.

G. C. Sibley
May 16, 1830

Linden Wood, near St. Charles, May 16, 1830

To Mr. Paul Baillio

St. Louis

Dr. Sir,

I duly Received your Letter of the 8th Inst. and Shall Request Mr. Gamble to take Steps in conformity with your Suggestions in the business with Mr. Pratte and I Shall wait, as of necessity I must, till the proofs can be obtained from N. Mexico to Substantiate the claim that you assure me P. B. & Co have against Mr. Pratte, arising out of transactions of which you had the management and controul, and of which you of course Should possess the best information.

You say you had come to the determination previously to your interview with Mr. Pratte, to leave this business for me to attend to- which determination you intimate had been produced by feelings of Resentment against me for my conduct in the Chancery Suit that I have ordered against you and Mr. Boggs= This Remark of yours as well as the whole temper of your letter, has given me much pain, notwithstanding I know how to make allowances for the effect of the painful and protracted afflictions your health has Suffered= And I confess that for a moment I felt offended, that you Should have addressed me in Such irritated language- but it was but for a moment, I assure you= You cannot have forgotten, that I consulted with you on the Subject of the Suit, and that you agreed with me that the measure was necessary (all other means having failed) to compel Mr. Boggs to a Settlement, which was to you a far more desirable object than to me, tho' I also much desired it= I told you that it was to me a matter of perfect indifference whether you or I brought the Suit the only question was, whether it was most likely to be Soonest decided in the St. Louis or St. Charles Circuits, and this was Settled by the opinion of Mr. Gamble, Mr. Geyer and Mr. Easton, who all thought it best to commence the proceedings in St. Louis Court, and of course obliged me to be the complainant against and Boggs= had the Suit been here, you would have appeared as complainant against Mr. Boggs & myself- In either case, the object must have been, to coerce Boggs to a Settlement= As to the manner and form in which the Suit was brought, I am entirely ignorant- The process that was Served on you, may perhaps have contained a "long list of grievances" Such as you Seem to have taken offence at me for= I know nothing about it= Any Lawyer will Satisfy you in a moment, that Such things are mere legal forms ,and that they never indicate any improper or unfriendly feeling on the part of the complainant= When you have had this

explained, you will laugh heartily at your mistake, which by the by, is precisely Such a one as every one falls into on his first introduction into a Chancery Court= So the Lawyers tell me.

You do me great injustice my dear Sir, if you imagine that I entertain an unfriendly feeling toward you= I am not one of those who make a parade of professions= If I thought however, that you Really doubted my Regard for you, I might Refer you to many persons who are our mutual friends, to prove the friendly interest I have uniformly expressed for you, and more than once proven the truth of by acts= Had you been my brother the Same forms must have been used (in the Suit) as were= Or, if you had been the complainant instead of me, the Same Sort of process with the Same forms must have been Served on me= and if I had been as unused to Such things ye you were, it is highly probable I Should have felt offended with you at first for the language the forms of the Law Seem to Require in Such cases= As it Regards your labour, your exertions and Sacrifices Since "The unfortunate connection which (your) unlucky Star led (you) into with me"- I have never for a moment doubted the Sincerity of them and I have on many occasions expressed to yourself and to others the sincere Regret I felt that you were thus circumstanced= And one of the strongest motives I had for urging the Settlement with Boggs, was to Release you from that unlucky connection, which you know cannot otherwise be done while we all live= If this unlucky connection has afforded you Reasons for Repentance- it has not surely been productive to me of any other feeling than those of Regret and Sore Repentance= But I have never blamed you- on the contrary I have always been convinced that my losses great as they have been, would have been much greater, but for your care and exertions= For myself, I am well aware that I have committed errors in the business, for which I have Suffered Severely=

[In the previous paragraph, the word rendered as "ye" is difficult to make out. At least one of the letters on the typescript has been altered. Judging from context, the word "as" would seem to logically go in this place, but the letters on the typescript simply do not lend themselves to this interpretation.]

It was a capital error to have confided So much in the prudence and direction of Mr. Boggs= that error which has brought Ruin upon me & my family, I have always considered as the Remote and certainly the innocent cause of your involvement= It may not be So, but I have been under the impression that you may have been governed in Some degree, by my opinion of the business qualification of Mr. Boggs- which I Should have known better than you= I think however, we all Set out with good intentions, and each flattered himself with good Success= I know that we have been deceived= that whatever our motives & exertions, we have met losses instead of gains, misfortune instead of Fortune, and I am now persuaded that it is our proper business to gather up all the fragments

of the wreck, pay our Debts as far as possible, Settle up the business, & dissolve the Copartnership= Thinking it probable that you would feel particularly anxious to be Released from the concern, as far as I can Release you; and believeing that I could Set you free at least as to my individual claim against the company I made you the proposition contained in my last letter to you

My claim on the Co. Does not Rest upon the Loss of the business as you Seem to Suppose- it Rests on the fact of my having furnished nearly the whole capital, and there being a very large balance still unpaid for= I thought the offer a fair one and think so yet- and that I might with propriety make it= Even if there Should turn out to have been a gain in the business; that cannot Reduce the amount of my claim against you & Boggs for the Capital I furnished; tho' if Such were the case the Amount of that claim would be increased as much as one third of the gain that may be proven= If there is any gain, I claim a third of it in addition to what is due me for the Goods, &.= But there has been no gain; and whatever loss there is, I must bear my equal Share, to be deducted from my Acct. against the Co. for the Capital furnished=

I hope you will take proper measures to have the Books and Papers brought from N. Mexico as Soon as possible= from the nature of the claim on Mr. Pratte you alone can cause the proof to be collected, and I trust you will, if your health admits it give it your attention= So large a Sum of Money Should not be Sacrificed for want of a little trouble and attention=

In conclusion, I Sincerely wish you Restoration to good health and Spirits, and with them more just feelings towards your friend

G. C. Sibley