

Florida, Washington County, Orange Hill - March 11, 1876

*Louisa, I seat myself to let you hear from me. We are all so as to be up, but not well. I was taken the middle of November with abscess of the liver. I labored under it two months and then went to see doctor. I took medicine six weeks, but is not well though. I keep up and do my work. I would like to come and see you all, but I have nobody to come with me and I can't come by myself you know. We have preaching here every Sunday. Mr. Dew preaches two Sundays in the month and William Tiller one Sunday in the month and William Owens one Sunday. Well I don't know what more to say, I make such a bad out, I will close for this time. **Selimea Slay***

*Dear Brother and Sister, I seat myself to write you a few lines, which leaves my family not very well. The children is sick with a throwing up and running off of the bowels, the rest is all well as common. I hope these lines may find you all well. I, no news to write of importance. Times is hard here; money, and previsions scares, but with the help of God I hope there will be previsions made here this year. People is in generally a putting in for large crops and greedy for corn and rice. I want to plant 25 acres in corn and 4 acres in rice. We are getting along as well as usual. I want you to write to us. We are all very busy now a planting. John, I want you to come this summer or fall to see us. Do look over bad writing and spelling, for I in a hurry. Write soon. **Jas. C. Jordan***

PAGE ONE - BACK OF SHEET

*I would like to see you all
but it is so I don't no that
I ever shall get the chance to come
any more or not. John, I got one
of the prettiest and smartest boys you
ever saw. He is just began to walk
2 weeks ago. So tell your children
all howdy for me, also all inquiring
friends. Write soon. **Jas. C. Jordan***

*State of Florida, Washington County, Orange Hill
May the 3rd, 1876 : Dear children I received your letter
April the 11th, but I had no stamps to mail a
letter nor no money to buy one. It is hard times here
and war a coming, there is no money in the
country. I have nothing yet, but I will go and do
the best I can. Well this leaves us all on foot
and at work. My health is not very good, but I
keep up all the time. I have nothing very particular
to write you. David Slay's daughter, Mary, died
on Friday night the tenth of March. Jordan and family
is all well and doing well. Our crop is as
good as we could expect, we had so much cold and
hard beating rains. When you write again tell me
if you know anything about Robinson and if you
know anything about Arnold Cooper and what
become of his wife. Well, I don't know what more to say
to you now. We have preaching every Sunday. Kiss
Susannah for me for I shall never see her unless I
can get somebody to come with me. I will kiss
little Lizzie Dew for you. I will close my letter by signing
my name **Selimea Slay***

*Dear Brother & Sister, I set myself to write
you a few lines, which leaves me and family
all well as usual. Hoping these lines may
find you all well and doing well. I say
to you that times is hard here. Money is so
scarce it is impossible to get any money and
corn is scarce and worth \$7.00 to 10.25 cents per
bushel. Dry goods is cheap and if there
was any money to buy them; flour 8.80 to 12 dollars,
syrup 50 cents. Crops is as good as could be
expected. I have about 28 or 30 acres in corn
this year, me and my cropper. I have pick me around
of 3 1/2 or 4 acres and I am planting it in rice and
corn and if everything works right, I want to put*

me up a rice machine this fall and a mill, but everything is upon a have as and with me now. So I want you to write to me. Write how the times is out in that part of the country. Give my respects to all and take the same for yourself. John, I want you to come this summer or fall, if I don't come out there, so write soon. So I will close
Jas. C. Jordan

*William, I say to you that I received your letter some time ago and would of wrote to you before now, but I have been so busy, I neglected writing. I say I have no news of importance to write to you. You said you wanted me to pick you out a girl by the time you come so come on there is plenty of girls here that wants sweet hearts so you won't be disappointed in finding one. When you come, you and James come, be sure to come out here this Fall and see me and the girls in Washington. So I will close by saying write soon. Tell all of the boys I would be glad to see them and for them to write to me and come if they can. Write what is the chance to make money out there. So I will close. When this you see remember me, though many miles apart we be.
To William Cooper **Jas. C. Jordan***

REFERENCE:

Louisa - Louisa Slay Cooper, daughter of Selimea Thompson Slay

Selimea Slay - Mother of Louisa Slay Cooper, wife of William Slay

John - John Jordan Cooper, husband of Louisa Slay, son-in-law of Selimea Slay

Susannah - Susannah Demerah Cooper, ninth child of John and Louisa

David - David Slay, brother of William Slay; uncle of Louisa.

Robinson - James Robinson Slay, son of Selimea, brother of Louisa

Arnold - Washington Arnold Cooper II, believed to be son of our Washington Arnold Cooper and brother or step-brother of John Jordan Cooper

Lizzie Dew - Elizabeth Caroline Dew, daughter of Caroline Slay Dew and Thomas Dew (the preacher). Niece to Louisa Slay Cooper & John Jordan Cooper.

William - William Erasmus Cooper, second child of John and Louisa

James - James Fountain Cooper, fourth child of John and Louisa

Jas. C. Jordan - husband of Nancy Slay, brother-in-law to Louisa Slay Cooper and John

The War that Selimea is referring to may have been the Sioux Indian battle with General George A. Custer at the battle of the Little Big Horn. The battle took place on June 25, 1876, less than a month after this letter was written.

The original of this historical letter is in the care of James August Cooper, grandson of Michael Raleigh (Ike) Cooper

This Interpretation of the original letter was by Miles Davis Cooper in 1996. Updated 05-03-2004.