

Jacksonville East Florida  
March 31<sup>st</sup>  
1839

[Missing text]

It has been some time since I wrote you. I got a letter from you while I was at Abbeville & immediately sat down and answered it. Gave it to a friend to put in the office for me & I believe he afterwards told me that he entirely forgot it and did not even remember where he left it, but that he would look for it and mail it as soon as he found it, so if in time to come you get a letter from Abbeville about two or three years old you will know its history, so you must not think I neglected you. I was glad to hear from you and also glad to answer a letter from you. Now Jim you must not think I forget my old friends, for I never do, and the only fault that I have in that respect is that sometimes I am too confounded lazy to write to anybody. No I shall not soon forget the good old times of Willington, the many pleasant hours I have spent there. Some people say that Willington is a dull place &c [etcetera] for instance John Norwood, Hiram Tilman & Nick Merriwether are good hands at running it down, a dull place, nobody there, &c, but I'll be blessed if there ain't some fine fellows there and some good times to be seen there & Jim I like you about as well as any except some of the girls, and you'll [?] forgive me for that for you are a good hand at it yourself. By the by how comes on you and your "guardian flame?" You cursed fellow you never would tell me who she was. But never mind, I know it is someone & a she too, but being unacquainted with her name I cannot judge of her beauty, accomplishments, &c, &c, but I know you have some taste about such things and consequently I know that whoever you do cho[o]se is a worthy one. Now Jim if you are really in love, love with all your might for I know by hard experience that it is the life and soul of a man. What we eat and drink is all that we get in this world, and ~~therefore~~ as the right kind of love is the only source of pleasure we have- go it the whole hog and seventy five cents for the shout.

I am now at home enjoying myself finely- plenty of pretty girls, and amusements in abundance. We hear Indian news every day. A few days ago they killed a U.S. Sergeant as he was surveying a piece of land for a military post within three or four miles of Fort Heilaman [Fort Heilman] on Black Creek, twenty five miles from this place, about the same a party of Indians killed three men in Middle Florida right in the migst [midst] of a thick settlement, near the Ocilla River. I will relate to you the exact way so that you may see how much more cunning the Red Skins are than the Whites with all their learning, &c. Two Indians walked up to a Negro hoeing [hoeing] in the field. The Negro began to talk pretty saucy to them & they pulled out their knives and began to cut him on the face & claw him. He ran to the Fort within sight where there was fifteen men stationed. They all immediately ran out to attack them. Saw the two in the field. On the appearance of the Whites the Indians got up on the fence til the soldiers got kept on at that until they had the Whites in a swamp near at hand, & then near at hand a hundred Ind. [Indians] got up on the fence, till the [missing text] nearly in gun site, then got down & went a little farther still in sight, & kept on at that until they led the whites into a swamp near at hand & then near a hundred Indians fired their Sharp rifles and made then tremendous yells vibrating through the woods so that the whole neighborhood was in alarm & then White men dropt dead [missing text] rest fired off their guns, killed one Indian and set out for the fort as fas[t] as quarter horses. So

you see what a dreadful situation our Territory is in. Its inhabitants subject to be killed by  
[missing text] murderous savages every day.

Write me often & I will to you. Give my best respects to all inquiring friends & accept the same  
yourself from your friend-

Ossian B. Hart