

Kissimmee, Fla., March 22, 1916.

Mr. Joseph K. Griffith,
Cleveland, Ohio.

Dear Sir:

I have not heard from you since my last letter? I am hoping that nothing will prevent you from meeting with the Secretary of the Interior on March 29th, as you suggested.

I am writing today to ask you to make a special effort to secure the Report of the Secretary of the Interior for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1898. In it you will find -- if you have not already done so -- an exhaustive study of the Seminole Indians under Exhibit "B", with the Secretary's instructions, and many other points. This report came out one year previous to the Seminole Land Bill of the Florida Legislature, which gave to the Indians such a splendid area; but the "loker" in it, with President McKinley's untimely death, put a quietus on affairs.

The land-grabbers took from the Indians lands which were not "overflowed" nor "swamp" land, and in this way, of course, violated the Swamp Land Act.

I have a splendid editorial from the Tampa Times -- the one fearless and independent paper in Florida, regarding the drainage, and referring to certain "powerful politicians in Washington, some of whom undoubtedly were in the Everglade 'rake off'".

When you have thoroughly read this report, you will understand why those who secured these lands are feeling uneasy.

Florida and America needs your help at this unfortunate and crucial time. Our papers, I am sorry to say, are subsized, with the exception of the Tampa Times. If I can secure the editorial I will mail it to you. In the mean time, I wish you much success, and will be glad to hear from you.

I am,

Very sincerely,

P. S. I am just in receipt of your letter of March 20th, in which you refer to having called upon Mr. E. B. Merritt. With reference to the 25,000 acres of land, I wish to say that the land is low, flat, water-covered, with small, worthless, cypress trees scattered over it. The Indians have never lived upon it, and it has been estimated by those who are not even friends to the Indians that only about 5% could ever be made available.

MW-RP

M. M. W.