

Cicely "Reynolds" Bailey Jordan Farrar (or Cecily, Cecely, Cicily, or even Sislye) is commonly found listed under the name Cicely Reynolds or Cicely Reynolds Bailey. She was born in England about 1600, immigrated to Jamestown on the Swan in 1610, and died in Virginia, presumably in the mid- to late 1600s. As such, she was one of the first European-born women to reach the New World. It is not known with any certainty why she left England, nor with whom she traveled. Further, her maiden name cannot be said, with much confidence, to have been "Reynolds", although that name is usually applied to her. The earliest mention of her is in The muster of the inhabitants the Colledge land in Virginia taken the 23rd January 1624/25 in which she is listed as "Sisley Jordan".

Her first husband, a man named Bailey, fathered Cicely's first child, Temperance Bailey, but died soon thereafter. By the time she was 20, she had remarried, to Samuel Jordan, who had founded a settlement on the James River, "Jordan's Journey". She had at least one, and perhaps several children with Samuel Jordan. During the course of that second marriage, Cicely encountered two men who were soon to compete to become her third spouse.

A major Indian attack occurred against the Europeans in 1622, and Jordan's Journey, being well-fortified, was one of the few local plantations to survive. Samuel Jordan died the next year, 1623.

Cicely, in her early 20s, again found herself the object of male devotion. In fact, there were rivals. Mr. or Rev. Greville Pooley, often characterized as a local parson, apparently soon declared his interest in her. So fervent was his courtship that he believed he had succeeded in winning Cicely's somewhat worn hand. Shortly, though, it became obvious that Cicely preferred William Farrar, and intended to choose him. During the Indian attack of 1622, the young Farrar had taken refuge at Jordan's Journey, had somehow failed to leave, and so was very well known to her.

Mr. Pooley took his case to the authorities. According to The Records of the Virginia Company of London (vol. 4, p. 218):

" Captain Isack Maddeson sworne and examined saith that (as near as he remenbeth) the first motion to him by Mr. Grivell, touching a match with Mrs. Jordan was about three or four days after the Mr. Jordan's death, who entreating this examinant to move the matter to her, he answered he was unwilling to meddle in any such business; but being urged by him he did move it. Mrs. Jordan replied that she would as willingly have him as any other, but she would not marry any man until she delivered. After this Mr. Pooley (having had some private talk with Mrs. Jordan) told this examinant that he had contracted himself unto her, and desired him and his wife to be witnesses of it, whereupon Mr. Pooley desiring a dram of Mrs. Jordan, and she bidding her servant fitch it said he would have it of her fetching or not at all. Then she went into a room, and the examinant and Mr. Pooley went to her, but whether she were privy to his intent this examinant knoweth not; when Mr. Pooley was come of her, he told her he would contract himself unto her and spake these words. I Grivell Pooley take thee Sysley to my wedded wife, to have and to hold till death us depart and there to I plight thee my troth. Then (holding her by the hand) he spake these words I Sysley take thee Grivell to my wedded husband, to have and to hold till death us depart; but this examinant heard not her say any of those words, neither doth he remember that Mr. Pooley asked her whether she did consent to those words or that she did answer ant things which he understood. then Mr. Pooley and she drank each to other and he kissed her and spake these words, I am thine and thou art mine till death us separate. Mrs. Jordan then desired that it might not be revealed that she did so soon bestow her love, after her husbands death; whereupon Mr. Pooley promised before God that he would not reveal it, till she thought the time fitting.

Mary Maddeson sworne and examined saith, that she was not present at the making of the supposed contract between Mr. Pooley and Mrs. Jordan say if Mr. Pooley had not revealed it he might have fared better and saith

further that her husband told her that night, that Mrs. Jordan had made her self sure to Mr. Pooley, but what words passed her husband did not particularly repeat, but spake of their drinking to the other and of Mr. Pooley saluting her.

John Harris sworne and examined saith that he heard Mrs. Jordan say tha Mr. Pooley maught thank himself for he might fared the better but for his own words.

Historic marker from the Virginia Dept. Historic Resources, at the site of "Jordan's Journey", on the south shore of the James River near Hopewell, Virginia, mentioning Cicely Jordan in the closing sentence.

Mr. Pooley apparently had the ingenious idea of marrying Cicely as both groom and parson, and greatly speeding up the whole process by combining proposal with ceremony. His argument was, essentially, the New World's first breach-of-promise suit. He continued the suit for years, but, meanwhile, Cicely married William Farrar, an attorney himself. The legal problems with Mr. Pooley ended with his death during an Indian battle in about 1629. Farrar, it is believed, died a few years later, in about 1635, after Cicely had had two Farrar children.

Cicely is often credited with two further marriages after the death of William Farrar: to Peter Montague and to Thomas Parker. These marriages, though, are not well-documented, and may merely be the consequence of several different women named "Cicely" being combined in various records.

Her date of death is unknown.

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"Cecily (b. 1600, d. Abt. 1662)" in *From Virginia Through the Southwest*