

No. 18

Affidavit of H. E. Perrine
to the fact of the
warning given to the
officers at Fort Dallas
of the intended raid
upon Indian Keys in
1840.

Perrine &
Indian Key

Affidavit of Henry E. Perrine of the City of
Buffalo, State of New York, son of the late Dr
Henry Perrine, and one of the survivors of the
Massacre at Indian Key Florida which took
place August 7th 1840 -

My mother, sisters, and self were taken on board the
United States Schooner "Hunt", Lieut. McCaughlen, Comman-
der, shortly after the massacre and were taken to
Cape Florida where we were transferred to the small
Govt Steamer "Santee". While upon this steamer it
proceeded across the Bay to Key to Fort Dallas
which was located a little above or in the mouth of
the Miami river - While there I went with one
of the officers to see a negro who was in irons
and confined in a cell as a suspected spy -
I was informed that he had been there since
some days before the attack on Indian Key, and
that he had told his captors of the intended
raid; but they had placed no reliance upon his
statement - I think he came to the fort voluntarily
but not being believed was put in irons -
It was a terrible blunder, to say the least, for had
the warning been heeded precious lives would have
been saved, and the large amount of valuable
property would not have been lost - Thus by the
negligence of Government officers who were found
to protect us, we suffered the loss of all our
household goods, and my father's life was sacrificed -
We have never received one cent of compensation

OBITUARY OF MRS. ANN F. PERRINE.

It is for the profit of the living to pause and think on departed worth. The generous child cherishes the memory, example and sentiments of a virtuous and pious parentage. Mrs. Perrine was blessed with a noble ancestry, which extended back among "the alters of God." Her maternal grandfather was the Rev. Eleazar May, for fifty years pastor of the Congregational Church in Haddam, Connecticut. He was the father of ten children. All, save one, outlived the allotted age of man. Three of his daughters married clergymen; one became the wife of Rev. David Selden, of Middle Haddam, Ct. ; another of Rev. Sylvester Sage, many years pastor of the Congregational Church in Westminister, Vt. The third daughter, Anna, married the Rev. Jesse Townsend, with whom she lived forty-eight years. Her death occurred at Palmyra in 1846. The father of Mrs. Townsend, Rev. Eleazer May, died at Haddam, Ct., in 1803, aged 71 years.

Such were some of the maternal relatives of Mrs. Ann F. Perrine, the subject of this sketch. Her father, Rev. Jesse Townsend, was forty-eight years in the ministry, and the first pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Palmyra. He was installed August 29th, 1817, and died in 1838. His last words were; "Let me go, for the day breaketh."

Mr. Townsend as a scholar, a Christian, and a true man, and possessed equal ability as teacher, preacher and author, all of which he practised during his eventful life. Mrs. Perrine his only daughter, sympathized with her parents in their struggles, conflicts and triumphs and took on a character like theirs - positive, practical, patriotic, and pious, during her girlhood her father was a preacher missionary in Illinois, where, amid the exposures and labors of that field, she shone

"a bright particular star" in the western sky. Attractive and commanding in person, intelligent, vivacious, and with a bright and cheerful disposition, she contributed not a little to make the pastor's home, far out on the prairie, a magnificent one for persons of intelligence and taste. While in Illinois she married Dr. Henry Perrine, a gentleman of talent and culture, who was appointed Consul to Campeachy by President John Quincy Adams, where he remained twelve years. Dr. Perrine was an enthusiastic and able botanist, and during his residence abroad undertook a work of great promise to our country, he made introductions and acclimation of valuable exotics into tropical Florida; and he received from Congress a township of land, well located for that purpose. In 1840, while the Doctor was residing with his family on Indian Key, a small island on the Gulf, awaiting the closing of the Seminole war, the inhabitants were surprised by the Indians, who massacred Dr. Perrine and destroyed nearly all the building on the island. The family, consisting of Mrs. Perrine, her two daughters - Mrs. C. H. Rogers, of this village, and Mrs. James E. Walker, of Albany - and son, now living in Florida, barely escaped with their lives. They returned to Palmyra, where Mrs. Perrine spent the remainder of her life with the friends of her youth, surrounded by her children, her grandchildren and her great-grand children. Mrs. Perrine was the last of a family of undoubted ability and marked characteristics, who died in the order of their birth. She was a woman of superior executive ability, and acted her part in life with signal success. Alone and almost single-handed, she encountered the difficulties and trials of her young and middle-aged life, and was strong and hopeful in them all. Impulsive and warm-hearted, she was earnest in her love for her friends, and untiring in her efforts to serve them. In her death, which occurred December 21st, 1876, at the age of 74, she was spared the pain of parting

with those she loved, and a conscious encounter with the King of

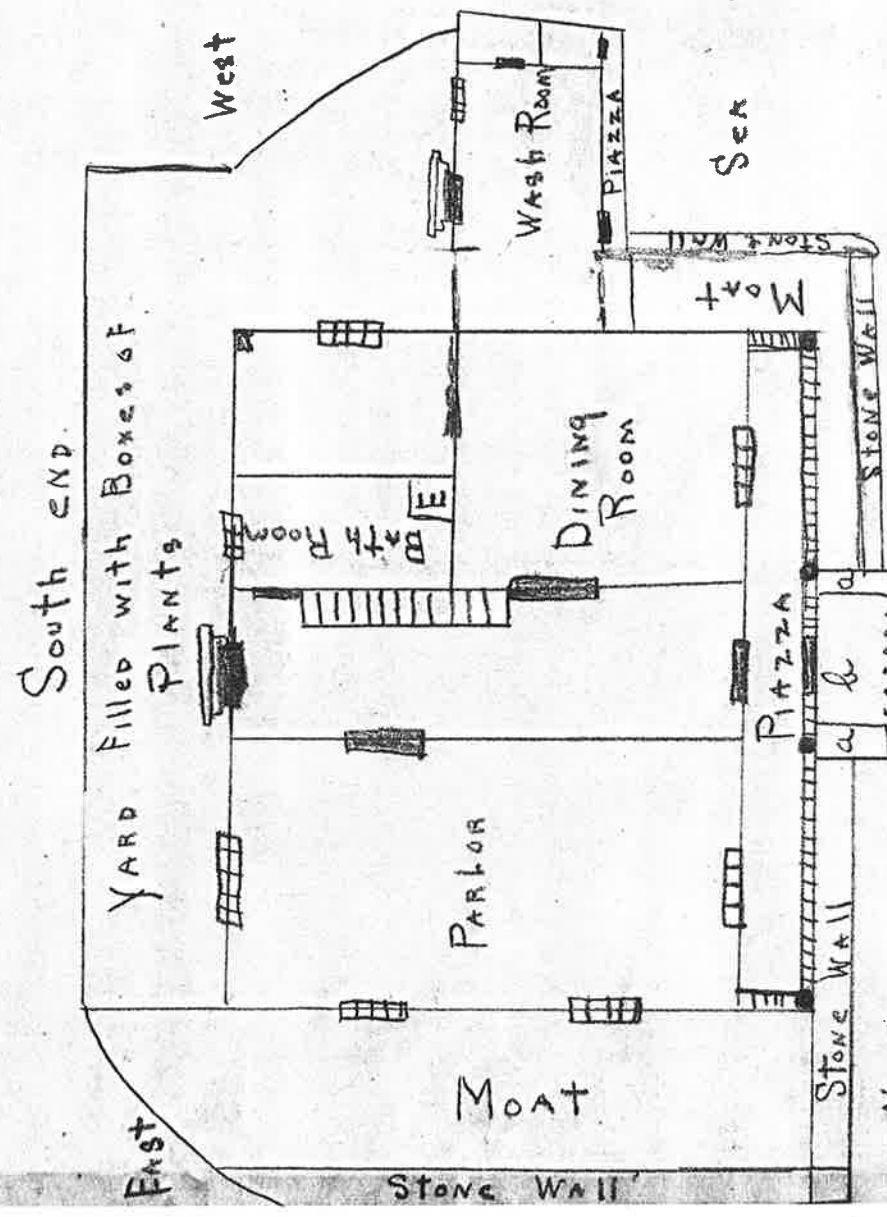
Terrors.

Her remains garnered by the side of her honored parents, await
the morn to come.

Vol. by S. R. M. D.
This particular account-
ing never been read
by anyone outside of
my immediate family.

Prayer you see the Editor
of the Character must use
his judgment of course
and his Lib. by G. and
will I trust - My friends
will preserve my substance
in the quaint style
as far as possible.

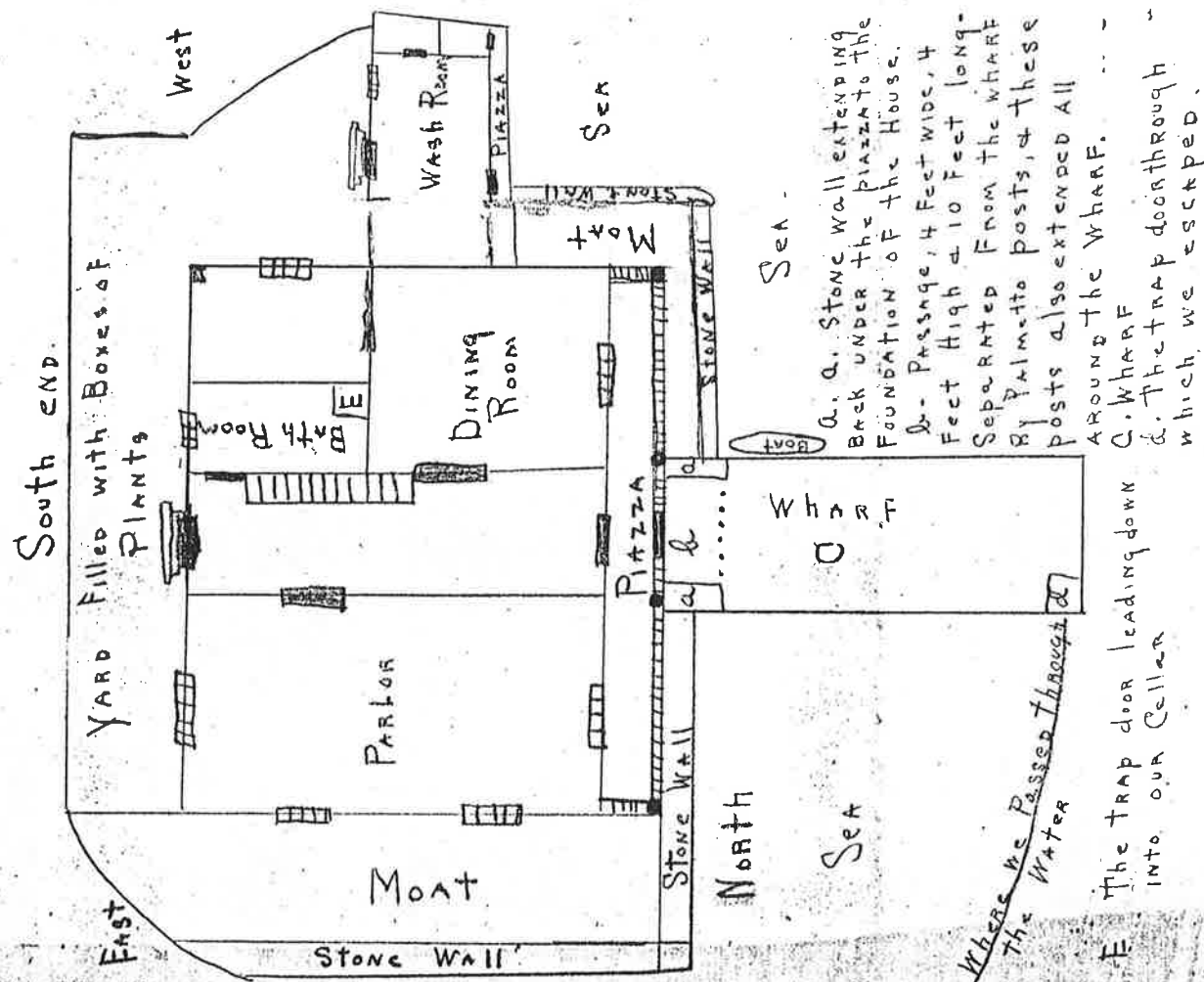
Dr. Perrine
Hester Perrine
attach



a. a. Stone wall extending back under the piazza to the foundation of the house.
b. Passage, 4 feet wide, 4 feet high & 10 feet long, separated from the wharf by palmetto posts, & these posts also extended all around the wharf.
c. Wharf
d. The trap door through which we escaped.

Where we passed through the water
E. The trap door leading down into our cellar

Dr. Heinrich
Heisterbach
attach



have been cognizant of the facts in the case, He was also on board of the vessel of War that came to our assistance & carried us to Cape Florida.

It is needless to say that we have done all that we could. It is also to be remembered that the Florida of 40 years ago was not the Florida of to day. Access to it was almost impossible - we were eleven days by the most direct line of travel in reaching New York after our escape from the Indians; Our father's fortune lost by the burning of all his papers,

none but a moneyed corporation could carry out the conditions of the "Grant", we have done what we could, I am not acquainted with Parliamentary ^{usage} and therefore send copies of my petition to yourself & Hon Charles Dougherty - Will you not pick one sorrow & do what you can for our relief?

From the Land Office I am advised to apply to Congress for relief - As it is impossible for us to do more than we have done, without large pecuniary resources, we prefer to release the Land & take remuneration for our losses - or Government price for the Land.

With much respect, I am very truly yours &c

Wesley Perine Walker.

In room 62 of the Land Office, under the care of Henry & Smith will be found all papers relating to the "Perine Grant".

627	RECEIVED
	JAN 25 1887

Bernandina, Fla, Jan 5th 1887

Hon C. C. Call -

Dear Sir,

I had the honor of addressing you two years ago this winter upon the subject of the "Perine Grant", Hon ~~Chas~~ ^{Chas} Perine acknowledged its receipt. As a Floridian you must be acquainted with my father's enterprise and his labors for the benefit not only of Florida but our common Country. To refresh your memory upon the subject & that you may know the light ⁱⁿ which the 2nd Session of the 25th Congress of the United States regarded this enterprise I will refer you to the printed records of that Congress. I have the honor to send you the petition of my brother & myself; that Congress will restore to the "Public Domain" all of the Grant excepting Secs 26 & 27 - (the proof of which settlement has long been on record in the Land Office) & in place of it; remunerate us

for our losses by the Seminoles, My Father was a public servant acting under the direction of the President of the United States. He lost his life by the culpable negligence of the Officers of the U.S.A. neglecting to heed the warnings of a negro that "the Indians were going to make an attack on Indian Key" & instead of warning us, or sending us protection, put him in irons as a spy! Then, when the Army & Navy had combined to go into the Everglades & did catch these Indians with the plunder taken from the defenceless inhabitants - instead of returning the goods to the almost-mad inhabitants, they appropriated them to their own use, making an auction and dividing the proceeds among themselves. In proof of which I will quote from a letter of Mr Charles ^{to my mother} Howe, written Jan 13th 1841. "Genl Harney arrived here about three weeks since from an expedition into the Everglades, with almost unparalleled success. He captured about 140 Indians including women & children,

and also a quantity of plunder which was taken from this Island - consisting of Clothing, Bedding, Carpeting, Jewels, Boats &c & among the clothing, he observed that one of the Coats had your Husband's name on it in full; and many articles marked with Captain Houseman's & my name, but he informed us, that to encourage his men he promised them all the plunder they took, and had every thing sold at auction in the Everglades & divided the proceeds among themselves, therefore nothing could be returned to the owners without their paying for it; he had one of my boats & Capt Houseman's, which he himself bought at the sale. Capt H bought his by paying \$100 - but mine I could not purchase and consequently he took it with him to Cape Florida, where he was bound with his captives and plunder" In another letter Mr Howe refers again to "the capture & sale of the plunder to the amount of \$2000, which was probably not one eighth of their value". The true history of the Seminole War has never been written. I believe that Rear Admiral C. P. A. Rodgers - who was then only a Lieutenant - was with Genl Harney, but if not he must

in the morning of the 7th of August 1840 a Mr Glass who resided alone in a small cottage on the South side of the Island, being restless & unable to sleep, arose & thought he would go out, on opening his door what was surprise to see Canoes drawn up before his house on the Rocks, He had the temerity to go down & count them, there were 17!! He immediately went to the house next him in which a ship carpenter by the name of Biglett, resided, Having awakened him Biglett took his shot-gun, ^{which he had} loaded. He afternoon before with black shot & they started across the garden behind their houses to give the alarm. They had not proceeded far, before they saw that which caused them to stop short, & which was calculated to appal any even the bravest heart. Right before them lay a long line of Indians by the side of the fence, waiting for the going down of the Moon to make an attack upon the sleeping inhabitants. The Indians discovered the two men at the same time & one of them raised his rifle to shoot, but Providentially it flashed in the pan, He gave their terrific War Whoop. But at the same moment Biglett discharged his shot-gun in their midst & gave an answering yell of defiance, for the purpose of alarming the inhabitants. Glass thinking Biglett was shot back to his heels, while Biglett started off in the opposite direction, Glass succeeded in reaching one of the wharves under which he concealed himself.

Biglett in the mean time, had reached the Eastern end of the Island & went down on the wharf where he concealed his gun

under a mast which was lying there, He was here joined by a sailor & a lad of 13 years of age. The sailor was from a sloop which was being repaired at the end of the wharf. They then went to the large warehouse, which was built of wood & three stories in height; surmounted by a cupola, also three stories high. There was also a piazza on two sides of the building on each story. Directly in front of the door, in the first piazza, was a trap door which opened into a large cistern underneath the building. The three descended into the cistern, the water was breast-deep, but they found that they could see out; a crevice being between the stone foundation & the building above & being under the platform, allowed them to look out with impunity. They had not remained here long, before they saw a company of Indians pass by, yelling, whistling, & shouting. & to Biglett's surprise one of them had the gun he had supposed so safely hidden, upon his shoulder!

Biglett in the dusk of the morning had the hardihood to leave his place of concealment and go up into the warehouse & from thence into the cupola! He there unfastened one of the blinds & partially opening it, he saw the savages roaming all over the Island, saw them throwing books from our library window into the water. Many of them were hideously painted half black & half red. After taking a hasty glance he retreated to his hiding place, closing the door behind him. John Mott, with his wife, an aged

infant; concealed themselves in an out-house, an indian came along & struck his tomahawk in the door, but went away; he came back with others & the fired through the door & shot Mott through the body - the door was then burst open & they seized Mrs Mott, as they were dragging her out, she cried "Oh, John save me" he immediately clasped his arms around her neck & they were dragged out together - in this state they were found, scalped & dead the infant was tossed into the sea. The murderers came back once more & looked in where the old lady & child still were, they saw her & made an effort to seize her but she drew back into the door & they seized the child, she saw them take the child & dash its brains out with a club, she fled & hid under the house & when driven from there by the flames, succeeded in reaching a fishing house on the end of one of the shores the approach of vessels coming to the rescue drove the Indians from the island before this place was set on fire, and thus she was saved. By a strange Providence, the young and robust were stricken down & this aged woman, over seventy years of age & who had been wasting with consumption for more than a year, alone escaped to tell the horrid tale. Mr Charles Howe, the Inspector of the Port, with his wife & five little children, at the first alarm retreated into their garden & concealed themselves among some Mulberry bushes, becoming convinced that the Indians were still on the other side of the Island, they broke off a paling from the fence & creeping through the opening made their way to the beach & wading out to a ^{small boat} ~~small boat~~ which was anchored in front of

Indian Key is an ^{small} point southeast from Cape Sable at the extreme point of the peninsula of Florida, & contains but about 12 acres of land at low water mark. At the time of the massacre, it consisted of some 30 or 40 dwelling houses, one store & one large ^{ware} ~~dwelling~~ house, together with a few shops, it being situated in Lat. 24° 44' & possessed a purely tropical climate in which frost was unknown & where the fruits of the tropics could be easily raised, there were many lofty Palm Trees, as well as Guait-trees of smaller growth, so large a number of buildings being clustered upon so small a spot, it presented a beautiful appearance & it was, not inaptly styled by the sailors on those waters, "The Gem of the Ocean". Including the Slaves, the population barely numbered - A mile & a half to the North East, there was a small island called "Sea Table Key", deriving its name from a peculiarly formed tree upon the point. This was occupied as a ~~Moral~~ depot by the Government, Lower Matacumbe was the nearest Island in a westerly direction, besides these, there were some thirty others to be counted from the cupola of the warehouse. Indian Key being so far from the main land the inhabitants did not dream of danger although a mighty watch had in the early part of the War been kept; but as time sped on & no attack was made, & the boat making ^{near} ~~to~~ Island a Naval station, they were lulled into a fatal security and on guard was kept. After several years of fancied safety their dream was suddenly broken. At about two o'clock

Affidavit of Henry E. Perrine of the City of Buffalo, State of New York, son of the late Dr. Henry Perrine, and one of the survivors of the massacre at Indian Key, Florida which took place August 7th, 1840. My mother, sisters, and self were taken on board the United States Schr. Flirt, Lieut. McLaughlin, Commander, shortly after the massacre and were taken to Cape Florida where we were transferred to the small Govt. steamer Santee. While upon this steamer it proceeded across the Biscayne Bay to Fort Dallas which was located a little above or in the mouth of the Miami River. While there I went with one of the officers to see a negro who was in irons and confined in a cell as a suspected spy. I was informed that he had been there since some days before the attack on Indian Key, and that he had told his captors of the intended raid; but they had placed no reliance upon his statement. I think he came to the fort voluntarily but not being believed was put in irons. It was a terrible blunder to say the least, for had the warning been heeded, precious lives would have been saved, and the large amount of the valuable property would not have been lost. Thus by the negligence of Government officers who were bound to protect us, we suffered the loss of all our household goods, and my father's life was sacrificed. We have never received one cent of compensation for our losses - losses which would never have occurred had not my supposed that, with a Government station at Tea Table Key only one mile and a half away from Indian Key, we were in fact, as well in name, under the protecting care of the Government.

(Signed)

Henry E. Perrine.

On this 12th day of January 1887 personally appeared before me Henry E. Perrine, known to me to be the person whose signature is affixed to the foregoing affidavit, and being by one duly sworn deposes and says that the statements set forth in the foregoing affidavit to be true to the best of his knowledge and belief.

G. B. Rich, Notary Public, Erie County, NY.