

HISTORY TALK

FROM THE UPPER FLORIDA KEYS

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Islamorada's Volunteer Fire Department first fire truck. See page 582.

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THE PERRINE LAND GRANT: HOW AND WHY

Dr. Joe Knetsch

As promised in the last issue, Dr. Joe Knetsch of the Florida Division of State Lands contributed his input to the saga of following the Perrine Land Grant from its initial grant in 1838. Dr. Knetsch is an

eminent historian and holds a Doctorate of History from the University of Florida. This is his contribution for our quest to document the result of Dr. Perrine's 1838 grant made while at Indian Key of one township below the 26th parallel - JW.

The Perrine Land Grant and its history continue to fascinate historians and lay people alike. In Jerry Wilkinson's recent edition of *History Talk of the Upper Keys* many of the basic points of agreement were admirably covered. What we will attempt in this article is to cover some of the surveying information and the confirmation hearings that were behind the final acquisition of the grant and its subsequent history as the Perrine Land Grant Company. The surveying information was not just drawing the lines but receiving powers of attorney from the representative of the Perrine heirs, a verbal

description of the lands in the "Hunting Grounds" and notations as to the crops already in place on the land in 1845 and again in 1847. The testimony given by some of the early settlers indicate that Perrine's heirs and assigns did attempt to settle the land in the 1840s but were stymied by the Indian Scare of 1849. This testimony given at the hearings on the Perrine Grant in 1897 was important for the final confirmation of the grant. That the Florida East Coast Railway was interested in and instrumental in the confirmation of the grant and the creation of the land grant company is well known but worthy of some further investigation.

The grant was made to Dr. Perrine in 1838 by an Act of Congress passed on July 7th of that year is acknowledged by everyone. Also agreed upon is the follow-up act of 18 February 1841 which extended the time that the heirs of Dr. Perrine had to meet the obligations of the grant. The major stipulation in these grants was the settlement in each section of the grant of one township (36 sections) of at least one family who were required to grow and propagate some type of tropical plant. The time extension of the grant was to begin eight years after the grant had been located. Not until 1847 was the grant ordered to be surveyed and that was after George MacKay, a U. S. Deputy Surveyor, had laid out the lines of the public surveys in the area as per instructions given by Surveyor General Valentine Conway. At the end of those eight years one family was to be settled on each of the thirty-six sections of the grant and each engaged in growing at least some form of tropical plant. The eight years were to expire toward the end of 1855, the beginning year of the Third Seminole War, which was quickly followed by the Civil War in 1861. Attempts at any earlier settlement on the land had to be seen in the light of these events.

George MacKay was sent to southern Florida to survey the lands along the coast and prepare the way for the public sale of these lands. As the sale of public lands was one of the two most important sources of revenue for the general government it was highly important for good, cultivatable lands to put on the market as rapidly as possible. The Deputy had some highly unusual instructions to follow which held up payment for the work by two years but, as subsequent investigation revealed, his work was very good and accurate. A part of his work was in Township 55 South, Range 40 East, where the Perrine Grant would soon be located. However, since the order for that

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survey had not been given and the lands for it unknown, MacKay surveyed the area as if it were public lands. The Field Notes of this survey, with the appropriate sections 'Xed' out give us some details of great importance to the later settlement of the grant. On page 115 of Field Note Book 84 we find the surveyor noting: "320 acres of the foregoing sec. 26 good framed houses - and several - about 6 or 7 thousand plants of the pulka plant - in perfection - is claimed by pre-emption - having two acres cultivated corn & Oranges - with sisal hemp. ..." Exactly 320 acres in planting of a tropical plant with other acreage in sisal hemp makes for some interesting reading regarding the earlier settlement of the grant lands. MacKay's plat also indicated that a wharf had been constructed adjacent to the property on the bay.

The explanation of MacKay's observation is relatively easy in that four settlers on the "Hunting Grounds" were there via the Armed Occupation Act of 1842 which allowed heads of families and single men to improve and own up to 160 acres of land for free ahead of the public land surveys provided they had a house fit for habitation, cleared and farmed the land and planted crops, owned no other lands and were willing to bear arms against all enemies (i.e. the Seminoles and Miccosukees). This was the model for subsequent acts in Oregon, Washington and Arizona and, as many will recognize, the great Homestead Act. Two of the men, of Minorcan descent, Francis Mabrity and Antonio Giraldo were natives of St. Augustine and it was on their permitted lands that the tropical plants observed by MacKay were planted. As the Armed Occupation permit allowed up to 160 acres it is easy to see from where the 320 planted acreage comes. Although it is speculation at this time to state it both men had close ties to Key West and were probably sent to the area by Charles Howe and friends to secure some of the acreage desired by the company in which Perrine and he were partners. Bluntly stated the partners were hedging their bets on acquiring the land.

On 16 January 1847 Deputy Surveyor John Jackson sent forward his contract and bond to survey the lands along the southeastern coast, the reservation for the Cape Florida Light House and the Perrine Grant. Arriving in Miami in late February he wrote to Charles Howe, "in order that you may point out to me the location of the claim of the

Widow and Heirs of the late Dr. Henry Perrine, if you fail to do so my instructions are to locate it as an indefinite claim." Because of the slow communications from Biscayne Bay to St. Augustine it was not until 5 April 1847 that Jackson reported the progress of his surveys to Surveyor General Robert Butler. Jackson stated: "I have this day received the power of Atty. (Which I enclose to you) from J. P. Baldwin Esq. of Key West, who is authorized by C. Howe Esq. to locate the Claim of the Widow and Heirs of the late Dr. H. Perrine -He says that he will be here in the course of a few weeks to make the Selection." By 12 June 1847 Jackson had finished his work and was preparing the rough plat of the surveys and finishing his returns. This work was completed and sent to Butler by mid-August, part of it having already past its first inspection by the Draftsman, A. A. Nunes.

With the boundaries now set and the grant located on the plats, it was time to settle the grant according to the provisions of Congress. Getting thirty-six families onto this land would be difficult. Many of the more famous land grants to notable Spaniards also had conditions of settlement that had to be met before the final title was passed to the owners or their heirs. The famous Arredondo Grant (most of today's Alachua County, Florida) had such a provision which demanded two-hundred families settle on the land within three years. This condition was never met by the proprietors, however, the Supreme Court of the United States gave its final approval because the attempt to put settlers on the lands had been made and proven in court. The circumstances of the day prevented the Arredondos and their associates from fulfilling the condition at that time. According to some of the testimony given to Congress there allegedly was an attempt made using Bahamian families to take up the grant to Perrine's heirs and their associates. Unfortunately for the heirs the Indian Scare of 1849 denuded the population of most of the eastern coast of Florida from Indian River southward. The occupants of public lands under the Armed Occupation Act fled the area in droves with only a few hearty souls remaining in South Florida. Not only did the "Armed Occupants" flee the vicinity but so did all of the Bahamian families brought over by the heirs. The intervention of the Third Seminole War (1855-58) and the Civil War (1861-65) prevented any further

attempts to enlist settlers for the grant. In the hearings before Congress in 1896-97 these claims were contradicted by a host of witnesses.

David "Dad" Pent swore, in his testimony, that the Perrines never did settle anyone on the grant lands from the Bahamas or anywhere else. He noted that from his first-hand knowledge only two families lived on the grant during this early era and they were the Duke and DeBoise families. Drusilla G. Williams, the daughter of Reason Duke who had settled on the lands as noted by David Pent, claimed that the only sisal planted on the grant was done by her father who was there on his own volition and was not associated with Dr. Perrine in any way. James W. Ewan took the testimony of Azariah Pinder, of the famed Keys/Bahamian family, who declared that he took soldiers to and from Miami during the Third Seminole War and before that delivered mail between Key West and Miami and never saw any settlers on the land. Not until John Addison arrived in the 1870s was there a permanent inhabitant upon the land. Addison himself gave an affidavit stating that he arrived on the land in 1865 and was not recruited by anyone associated with the Perrines. He further stated that he had hunted all over the grant and had never seen any sisal or hemp plants anywhere but in Section 26 which he believed were planted by Reason Duke. No other settlements were ever seen on any part of the grant by its acknowledged oldest inhabitant. Everyone, it seems, was attempting to contradict the testimony of Mrs. James Walker (Hester Perrine).

What is notable about the intervening years were the numerous attempts to secure the lands of the grant for others. In 1873 the selecting agents for the State of Florida chose the Perrine Grant lands for State ownership under the Swamp and Overflowed Lands Act of 1850. Much of the land in the western portion of the grant probably met the criteria of being swampy or too wet from overflow to sustain a cultivatable crop however the General Land Office refused to give title to the State because these lands were part of the Perrine Grant, thus already in private ownership. An 1889 attempt to secure the lands for the propagation of tropical plants was likewise refused for the same reason. This opinion issued on behalf of the Secretary of the Interior who had the final say in all such matters, gives credence to the claims of the heirs. The fact

that Perrine's son, Henry attempted to settle the land and spent approximately eight months on the property may have been some of the reasoning behind the maintaining of the grant. Young Henry's attempt was thwarted by his personal lack of knowledge about frontier living on the sparse soil of the grant lands and the fact that a hurricane wiped out his small wharf and probably whatever "improvements" he had constructed. What few "prospectors" Henry attracted to his project spread out over the grant but most left about the same time and we have been unable to discover the names of these potential settlers.

Momentous for the future of the grant was the board meeting for the Jacksonville, St. Augustine and Indian River Railway held on April 19, 1893. In this meeting Henry M. Flagler announced his intentions of building a railroad to Key West via Miami. As he had done elsewhere, Mr. Flagler recruited some local residents to purchase lands along the proposed route in their names with the understanding that they would turn over to the railroad the lands when construction began. John Anderson of Ormand Hotel fame had done this in his area and Julia Tuttle was one of those who probably did the same in today's Broward and Dade Counties. (She owned nearly 20,000 acres at the time of her death - she was land rich and money poor.) There is little doubt that the Perrines were contacted, most likely by James E. Ingraham, on behalf of the railroad soon after this decision. The amassing of four hundred affidavits as proof of settlement and of fulfilling the grant's conditions was surely the work of this talented land manager who would later become the president of the Perrine Land Grant Company, as he was of the Fort Dallas Land Grant Company and the famed Model Land Company. No doubt the grant would never have been patented without the work of the Flagler lawyers and land agents.

J. R. Richmond wrote an interesting, if somewhat slanted article in the *Tropic Magazine* in 1915 which tells his part in the affair of the grant. According to Richmond, he was in charge of locating, "one or more permanent settlers on each section, and in order to aid in the perfecting of the title to the land, the settlers were required to experiment with such trees and plants as were given them and as many as they could procure for themselves otherwise." Tropical

plants such as kola nuts, cinnamon, camphor, rubber, tea, vanilla, guava, lemons and other citrus crops were distributed among the new "permanent settlers" on the grant. Richmond also noted a few sisal and hemp plants growing wild on parts of the grant, the holdovers of the first plants abandoned in the 1840s.

It is very interesting and important to understand why, at this late date, such settlement was allowed to make the grant valid. According to the Majority Report filed in Senate Report No. 1574, 54th Congress, 2d Session, 1897, "The Department held, and properly so as the committee believe, that the grant was one *in presenti* [my italics], and that at any time before the formal declaration of forfeiture by Congress for failure to comply with the conditions subsequent, the grantees had the right to comply with the conditions of the grant and to submit proof of compliance, and that upon filing of such proof of compliance, in good faith, with the terms and conditions of the grant, and the approval thereof by the Commissioner of the General Land Office, the grantees became entitled to a patent." Like the Swamp and Overflowed Lands Act, also an *in presenti* grant to the State, the conditions of the grant were determined at the time the grant was made and if they were met at any later date the patent could and should be issued. The interference with the compliance caused by the Indian Wars and the Civil War played its part in convincing the Congressional Committee's majority to favor the issuing of the patent. More telling however, is the acknowledgment of the role of the Florida East Coast Railway in agreeing to assist the heirs in obtaining the patent.

Joseph Parrott, James Ingraham and S. H. Richmond all did their part in assisting the heirs. As the Vice-President of the FEC, Parrott was very instrumental in getting the legal aspects of the case in front of the committee. A well respected railroad attorney even before joining the Flagler system, Parrott was very familiar with the workings of railroad grants. In getting the committee's legal staff and others to see that the grant was *in presenti* Parrott, W. W. Dewhurst and the Flagler lobbyists in Washington put the grant on a legal status par with other railroad grants and the Swamp and Overflowed Lands grants to the States. This step eliminated any requirement that the heirs may have had to get settlers on the lands within a specified time period and

opened up, as stated above, to any time prior to a move to forfeit the grant made by Congress. It will be recalled from Jerry Wilkinson's article in the last issue, that the Perrine heirs had eight years after the ending of the Indian Wars in Florida to get the settlers on the land. If the grant were to fall under this language in all cases, the settlers would have had to been placed by no later than 1865, of even extending the time to include the Civil War, 1873. As Henry Perrine Junior did not return to the land until after this date the grant could have been subject to forfeiture had not the committee bought the legal argument that the grant was *in presenti*. This legal change in the status of the grant made it possible for the heirs, and their railroad partners, to obtain the patent.

No one disputed the railroad's involvement in the obtaining of the patent or its role in front of the Congressional Committee on Public Lands. Indeed, it was this involvement that spurred the protest against the granting of the patent. Many of the "squatters" or earlier inhabitants were afraid that the land prices asked for by the railroad, should it obtain all of the grant (which it did not) would be beyond their means. It was acknowledged in front of the committee that the agreement between the heirs and the railroad was simple: "The said Perrines to receive one-half, the said railroad company one-half less the interest to be given to certain settlers as hereafter stated." The railroad was fairly open about what it wanted and that was mostly the right-of-way through the grant for their railroad. As with most of the previous contracts with the State and other entities, most railroads, to avoid complications, offered "squatters" the land for the government price of \$1.25 per acre (usually up to forty acres). Any lands in addition to those would have the price determined by the going market rate. With the rapid influx of immigrants to southern Florida as a result of the completion of the railroad and the Intra-coastal Waterway to Miami in 1896, the price of land was beginning to rapidly rise. Flagler's real-estate men, headed by Ingraham and Frederick Morse, were quick to sell whatever lands they could but even by 1911 had not sold what the railroad held within the grant. By that time, Mr. Flagler was running out of patience with the movement of this land. He insisted that Morse and Ingraham ask \$12.50 per acre which, "is not too high considering the location, character

and conditions.” By April of that year, Flagler began to ask for an even higher rate of return on his investment believing that he had carried the land along for too many years at low prices and now wanted more for his time and efforts. When it is remembered that it was his legal staff and lobbyists that won the patent for the Perrine heirs and it was his railroad that added so much to the value of the land one can easily see the magnate’s point.

The history of the Perrine Land Grant is long and fascinating. Much more could and should be written about this vital link in the development of South Florida. Beginning with the incredible life and work of Henry Perrine, his untimely death during the Indian raid on Indian Key and the subsequent escape of the family the story of the grant has all the human drama one could wish. The grant’s life and exploitation is likewise an incredible story as we have seen in the outline given above. Whenever you involve Henry Flagler, James Ingraham, Joseph Parrott, Fred Morse and the whole host of the Flagler system in South Florida it is going to be a fantastic story. With the summation above, however, the more mundane portion of the story is fleshed out and hopefully better understood. The change in the nature of the grant, the role of the railroad and the protests all make for interesting reading. This is one time where the documents are as exciting as the story itself and they should be read in their entirety to get the flavor of the protest and the confirmation. Copies of all the documents used in this article have been sent to the Historical Preservations Society of the Upper Keys for your perusal. We trust that you will enjoy them as much as the story we have related.

[Dr. Knetsch also has previously provided many documents related to Indian Key, the Florida Indian Wars and articles regarding many early surveyors of Florida all of which are on file – JW.]

1808

Vincent Nolte’s Narrative of Rafting to Key Largo from a Wrecked Ship

Contributed by Gail Swanson

Vincent Nolte was born in Italy in 1779 and therefore about 29 at the time of being shipwrecked off the Upper Keys. He was a well-traveled merchant and cotton buyer who spent time in Hamburg, Paris

(1804) and New Orleans (1806). He died some time after 1852. The following is from the 1934 edition of his book, *Fifty Years in Both Hemispheres* which was first published in English in 1854.

G.S.

I might have waited a better season of the year for my voyage back to the States, yet, however much my sojourn in Havana pleased me, I still felt an inward anxiety for more agreeable circumstances than those which there surrounded me. Yankee supercargoes and ship-captains did not satisfy my need of daily conversation, and my heart too was not altogether an uninterested party to the desire I felt for an early return to Philadelphia. One vessel bound for Charleston, and two for Baltimore, offered me the chance of passage home. One of the latter was the schooner *Independence*, a real “clipper,” and the other was a strong-built schooner called the “*Merchant*.” I bespoke my passage in the latter, with a young Englishman called Creighton, an agent for the New York house of Murray & Sons. We were to sail on the 18th of January, 1808, and our baggage was on board, but we were detained, by contrary winds, until January 25th, on which day several good ships, that had arrived in the meanwhile, and had already taken in cargo, put to sea with us. We should not believe in omens; and to allow ourselves to be governed by them I have ever regarded as great folly; yet, that at certain moments of our lives a dark foreshadowing of some misfortune, or some great annoyance that is impending, rises within us, I experienced twice in the same year. At the moment when I went on board of the clipper *Merchant* an inner-voice spoke to me, as if to say that I had done wrong in not selecting the schooner *Independence*.

It was noon when we made sail. Violent northeast winds had hindered our departure. Even upon the occurrence of these northern storms, when the sea breaks over the lofty Moro Castle, perched as it is upon rocks, the waters inside of the fortress in the bay that forms the harbor of Havana are but slightly agitated. The sudden change from the latter to the towering billows of the Gulf Stream often upsets even seamen, as frequently happens likewise in the British Channel when sailing out of Dover. My traveling companions and I were attacked with violent seasickness, and driven to our beds, when we had hardly turned our backs upon the fort. On the next

day, it blew a gale from the south-east, which tossed us to and fro: our seasickness was past, but partly for want of appetite or any desire to move, and partly through sheer indolence, we lay dozing on our mattresses. That night, about eleven o’clock, I was awakened by a dreadfully severe concussion, and almost thrown out of my berth. The sudden cessation of the ship’s motion and a still more violent jolt left me no further doubt that we had struck. I shouted to my traveling comrade, Creighton, and my faithful negro, Celestin, to come on deck. Now followed three concussions, so violent that I could scarcely keep my feet, and at the same moment, the ship lay over on her beam ends. “Where is the captain?” I asked of the man at the helm. “He is asleep!” was the answer. I shouted into the cabin which was already filling with water: “Captain Murphy! Captain Murphy!” No reply! “Where is the mate, then?” was my next question. “Up there by the forecastle!” was the reply. I now felt an arm, which I seized. It was the captain, who stumbled out of his cabin, yawning, and as I afterwards learned, had been drinking all the evening with the mate. I had scarcely made the captain understand the full extent of our danger, when, still laboring under the effects of his carouse and sudden alarm, he began, as if totally deprived of his senses, to bellow forth an incoherent jumble of commands. We had been five minutes in this situation, before a single sail was taken in. The schooner was careening over more and more, and was already half under water. A couple of sailors had been lucky enough, in this general confusion, to find the axe, and we hoped, that by cutting away the masts, we should be able to right the ship again; but the axe proved useless, and the wind extinguished our only lantern.

It was time to take to the boat, and, after great exertions, we managed to get it loose from the tackle that secured it to the deck, and launch it. The constant cracking of our craft made us fear that it was going to pieces. How we succeeded in getting a keg of ship’s biscuit, the compass and the Captain’s quadrant into the long boat, is now incomprehensible to me. Four sailors leaped into the boat and went to work bailing out the water that dashing in furiously over the breakers. My colored man had, with great effort, worked his way into the cabin which was half under water, and heaven only knows how, seized my wearing apparel (for I was in little more than my

shirt), my watch and my writing-desk, in which, as he well knew, I kept papers of great value and importance. I could not open this secretary, for where was the key? So it threw it into the long-boat where my traveling-friend had managed to put his also, and then laid hold of a rope to swing himself down after it, when suddenly the tackle that held the boat to our vessel parted, and the little craft, with the four sailors in it, was swept away from us. A couple of minutes afterwards, we heard the words: “We are aground! we shall perish!” and then the howling of the tempest and the roar of the sea was the only sound in our ears. The jolly-boat [a work boat] was still left hanging from the stern davits, over the rudder. That might save us! It took us but an instant to lower it; but it had hardly touched the water before the waves had dashed it to pieces against the stern. We had now but one hope of escape left - the construction of a serviceable raft. Desperate as the attempt seemed, we still managed to get together a couple of spare spars and oars, and tackle to fasten them, when suddenly the foremast went crashing over the side, carrying away our half-completed work with it in its fall. The ship now sank deeper than before, and in such a position that the starboard side was perpendicularly above the larboard. Little more than the iron railings of the quarter deck and the mainmast was still visible above the raging breakers. In this helpless condition, all we could do was to lash ourselves fast on the iron railings to which we had been clinging, and there await the worst with resignation. It is easy to comprehend that we looked forward to nothing but a watery grave. To think of rescue was but folly. And yet, how plainly the consoling voice of hope spoke within me! The feeling to which I allude, surpasses all attempt at description! It lasted scarcely for seconds - yet what seconds! My traveling companions, the drunken sot [Captain] Murphy, and even most of the sailors, seemed to be completely prostrated under the burthen of our hard fate. I too, was, after all, not in much better plight; yet when I put every thing together, I can ascribe my greater fortitude only to the idea which would not leave me, that we should be saved. The billows broke continuously over us; and we were expecting, from minute to minute, that we should be torn from our hold and hurled into the raging sea. We had already been clinging to the railings for four mortal hours, when the storm began to subside a little, and

we suddenly heard the voice of one of our sailors who had been carried off in the long-boat. An instant afterwards, we heard the voices of the other two. A ray of hope now revived our half lifeless frames. Nothing could seem more certain to us than that the four seamen were returning to rescue us from our dreadful situation; but this alas! was not the case. The longboat had not held out but a little while against the fury of the breakers. It had sunk, carrying down with it one of the sailors, a negro, who could not swim. The others had saved themselves, partly by swimming and partly by clinging to some protruding ledges of the rocks, until they, at length, succeeded in getting hold of the foremast, and by means of it and the broken cordage, had finally reached a last desperate shelter on our wreck. Eleven men were now clinging to one frail railing, buried under the rushing onset of the billows, and looking forward, from moment to moment, to their doom. At this time there was, indeed, but little further room for hope, and the few minutes we could command from our stunned and breathless condition, were given up to gloom reflections. Now and then a star gleamed, for an instant, through the masses of black clouds, and how gladly we hailed in it the harbinger of morning.

At length, about seven o'clock, after we had been hanging for almost eight hours to the railings, the storm-clouds parted and we could descry, away at the distance of some nine miles, a narrow black streak on the horizon; this we instantly knew to be land. A nameless feeling of delight ran through every vein, but immediately the thought, how impossible it was to reach the shore, made us again despond. The fierce billows still beat over us, and although the wind moderated, the sea continued in the most violent agitation. It may have been about eight o'clock in the morning, when we, all at once, detected a sail in the Gulf Stream. It seemed to be approaching us, until we at length recognized it to be the brig which had left Havana in company with our own vessel. Our sensations, as it came nearer and nearer, then suddenly tacked, and completely withdrew from our sight, may be imagined. That our schooner had not gone to pieces long ere this, and that the feeble railing still withstood the weight of twelve human beings, was a wonder upon whose prolongation we could not count for any great while to come, so we resolved to renew our attempt to make a raft, and

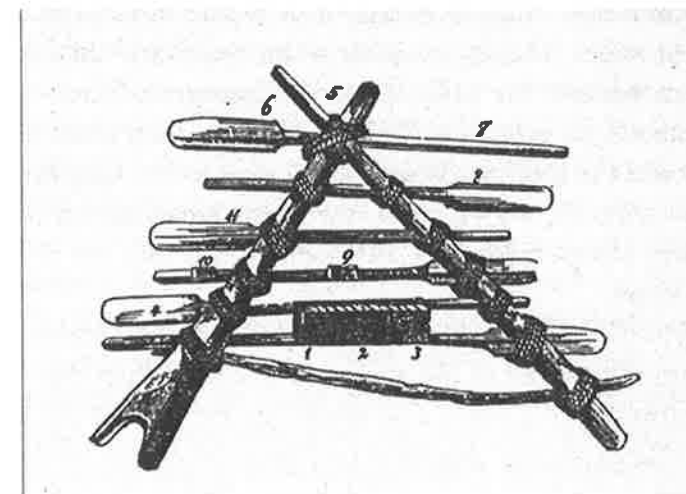
actually succeeded in constructing one in about an hour and a-half. It was composed of nine pieces, viz: the fore-gaff, two spars, and six larger and smaller oars, as represented in the drawing:

No.s 1,2,3, represent the chicken-coop, to which the captain, Mr. Creighton, and I, were lashed.

No. 4, the place where my colored man had fastened himself.

No. 5, the place where the sailor, Jack, stood with his legs stretched apart, for foothold.

No.s 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11, the places where the sailors fixed themselves, most of them in a standing posture.



This, as is plainly to be seen, was a miserably frail concern, to bear the weight of twelve men, but we could get no more wooden material, and the beating of the sea prevented us from perfecting even this weak raft. It was loosely put together, and when we got on it, sank instantly, some two feet or more. Most of us fastened ourselves firmly to our seats, for the rocking motion and the violence of the billows that tossed us rudely to and from, as they rose and fell, would assuredly have thrown us off. It was ten o'clock, when we finally left the wreck upon this raft. The wind, fortunately, blew towards the land, or all hope of reaching the latter would have abandoned us. Our raft did not keep in its horizontal position one single moment. It sank sometimes to the right, sometimes to the left; the mounting sea frequently covered us entirely, and we often enough prepared ourselves with a murmured - Now! now! for our last moment. We could not steer the raft, at all, but went as wind and wave drove us. The sailor who stood at the point No. 5, was the only one who

could do anything for us. He had taken a blanket and spread it out between his extended arms, in such a way as to catch the wind, with a remark that made me smile at the time.

"This," said he, "is the first sail that would need no reef!"

The aid this rendered us was scarcely perceptible, and the reader may judge how slow our progress was, when he learns that at four o'clock in the afternoon, we were only half way between the shore and our wreck, which still held together. About five o'clock we saw three small sail coming towards us from the extreme point of the land. The distance at which they were from us rendered it impossible for us to attract their attention, and if we shouted to them, it was more from despair than for any reason. It was with the greatest risk that we loosened the oar, No. 8, attached the red neckcloth of a sailor to it, and held it aloft; but all this was of no more use than our shouting. We were neither heard nor seen. By this time, our raft was nearly three feet under water. Meanwhile the sea had become less agitated, and although we were up to our breasts in water, our heads were not so often washed by the billows. By sundown, that is to say about six o'clock, we reckoned that we were yet some three miles and a half from the land. We supposed the latter to be the coast of East Florida, off which lies a small island. The ebb tide was now altogether against us, and the wind, too, suddenly shifted and blew directly from the land. We all expected to be driven out again to sea; and with heavy hearts took our last look at the setting sun. The small sails which we had seen about five o'clock, seemed to have approached near to our abandoned wreck, then just visible to us by the mast sticking out of the water, and to have cast anchor in its close neighborhood. It was, at this moment, difficult indeed to hold fast to the doctrine of "all is for the best!"

The heavy swell which again began to rise made every attempt to steer our raft with the loosened oar utterly useless, and the outspread blanket was of no farther use to us as the wind was blowing off the land. Night came on; some of our company had cramps in their limbs, and others were completely exhausted by the exertions their perilous position on the raft required. It is truly impossible to form a correct idea of our situation. An hour later, we were about three musket shots distant from the little island,

which, as we afterwards learned, was called Tavernier Key. Here, we saw through the twilight, a wreck, and, as we thought, a brigantine and a large sloop both at anchor, but without a human being on board. The island appeared to be uninhabited. We made several attempts to reach it, but they were all fruitless, for the swell continually drove us back, and at length forced us down along the land, which we had at first taken for the coast of Florida, but which proved to be another island called Large Key [Key Largo]. Fortunately, the western point of this larger island turned, the nearer we came to it, almost like a half moon, southward, and received the flood of the sea in a sort of bay, so that about ten o'clock in the evening, we were pretty near to the land. We measured with our steering oar, and found the depth of water not over four feet. Upon this, the sailor Jack, who had stood at No. 5, left his place and leaped into the sea; another, a German by birth, followed him, and these two men, the strongest, and consequently, the least exhausted among us, drew our shattered raft to the shore, which, we, God be thanked! at length reached in safety, a little after eleven o'clock. Some of the sailors, and my faithful negro Celestin, were so exhausted that they could not leave the raft, and had to be carried ashore, one after the other. The mate and a couple of sailors scarcely reached it, ere they fell almost lifeless on the beach. My colored man seized my hand, and had just breath enough left to stammer out, as he kissed it: "Oh, master, if I had lost you!" when he dropped to the ground, stiff with cold. I took him up in my arms and strove to warm him, for I had already learned from experience, that the colored race are unfitted to encounter the severities of cold. A sailor had tinder in his pocket, but it had got completely wet, and what we, at this moment, would have preferred to all the splendors of the world, a real good fire, we could not procure. The shore was sandy or rocky, here and there covered with some dry thistles, and formed but a hard, uninviting bed. Yet it was land - FIRM LAND - upon which we stood. This thought overcame every other in the minds of both Creighton and myself, and unable to resist the weight of our fatigue and desire to sleep, we sank down, utterly worn out. We all lay in a heap together, and tried to warm each other. I had kept hold of my faithful negro, and succeeded in restoring him to consciousness

within a couple of hours. During the night, we were refreshed in another way. Some heavy rain clouds burst above us, and would have dispensed a most delightful coolness to our prostrate frames, had we needed it. The sun had scarcely risen, when, to our inexpressible delight, we saw three small wrecker boats at anchor between Large Key and Tavernier Key. The distance was great, yet these craft by no means seemed to be beyond our reach. There was yet another trial before us. We were just rising from the beach to try whether we could not get nearer to these boats, when they suddenly weighed anchor and put to sea. Two of them returned about an hour afterwards, and ranged up near the sloop which we had seen on the previous evening. We now resolved to lose no time, but push on until we could get opposite to these boats, at a point from which we thought we could hail them. We commenced our journey, but were so completely exhausted by hunger, but more especially thirst, and the many fatigues we had undergone, that we had to rest every five minutes. Some of us had our legs swollen, and I, like most of the party, was barefooted. We found ourselves without any nourishment, as we had saved only two bottles of wine, as a restorative for eleven persons, and there was not a dry stitch on one of us. Mr. Creighton and I were worse off than the rest, for it was the fourth day since we had taken any food, and our tramp of three miles, along the shore, contributed no little to our greater exhaustion. We had, at length, reached a point opposite to the wrecker-boats. On the strand lay a ten foot pole. To this we fastened a red flannel sailor's shirt, and hoisted it, in the hope that the people on board of the boats would see us and hasten to our relief. We could distinguish them plainly - even hear our shouts! and yet they did not appear to get a glimpse of us nor to pay the least attention to our repeated hallowing. Three of our companions in misfortune had traversed the island in all directions, in search of fresh water and bananas. They found neither one nor the other, and came back utterly dispirited. Hunger was gnawing our vitals, and the fear of dying by starvation increased in proportion as our appetites grew keener; for our complete exhaustion had deadened every other feeling within us. We all felt that it would be a physical impossibility for us to survive another day in our present condition.

It might have been about two o'clock in the

afternoon, when Mr. Creighton and I offered a sailor fifty dollars and a new outfit, if he would swim to one or the other of the two boats, and inform their people of our situation. Jack, the same man, who had on the previous day, held the blanket for ten hours on his outstretched arms, undertook the desperate task. The distance was not full three sea-miles. I need hardly describe the longing anxiety with which our gaze followed him. We despaired more and more of his success, the farther he got from us, for we observed that the swell incessantly beat him back, and that he seemed to be tired out. His head was scarcely any longer visible above the water - only now and then we could just see a little speck on the surface of the billows, for an instant at a time. At length, this too suddenly disappeared. "Poor Jack!" thought we, "he is gone!" But no! look! - There was Jack on board of the sloop, shouting to the people of the boats. We next saw a couple of men going to him, and taking him on board of their craft in a small skiff. They then rowed towards the spot where we were. What we all felt could not be described by the most experienced pen, and only they could realize it who have been placed in a similar situation. The skiff, small as it was, took us all and conveyed us to one of the two vessels - a craft of about eighteen tons. We there got some nourishment, and learned that we were on board of a wrecker-boat belonging to New Providence, one of the English Bahama Islands, that it was manned by four seamen and was lying off the Florida coast, in this direction to catch sea turtle. They partly lived on this and partly on the provisions found in the vessels that stranded there from time to time. These were English West-India mariners. The skipper who owned the craft confessed that he had seen us on shore quite distinctly, the whole morning, but had pretended that he did not, and under the persuasion that we were shipwrecked Spaniards, who after having been rescued, would lay violent hands on his craft and carry her away to Cuba, as had occurred not long before to some of their comrades, would assuredly have turned a deaf ear to our cries, had not Jack's arrival given him a different idea of what we were. The rocks on which our vessel had been cast away, was the Carysfort Reef....

The remainder of this narrative is soon told. We distributed ourselves on three small craft and after we had (owing to contrary winds which detained

us) cruised in and out along the Florida coast, and among the islands, catching turtles occasionally, we made for Nassau, the seaport of New Providence, where we arrived on the 6th of February, the eleventh day after our shipwreck. I landed barefooted, and attired in a pair of pantaloons manufactured out of sail-cloth for me by our deliverers. The Solicitor-General, a Mr. Armstrong, who recollected my name from the circumstance, that a ship, bound from New Orleans to Liverpool, on board of which were 30,000 piastres, sent by me to England, had stopped and been examined at New Providence, and who had, moreover, known Creighton's family in England at an earlier period, provided us with money. We had to wait a fortnight for an opportunity to embark for the United States, since the embargo in American ports had broken off the usual frequency of communications with the West Indies. At length, on the 22d of February, we got on board a vessel for Charleston, whither a favorable wind brought us in four days. We took Jack along with us, after giving him the new outfit and the fifty dollars we had promised him. Before we left the Florida coast we had employed the delay occasioned us by contrary winds to look about among the rocks for some of our lost effects, and had found the long boat that was swept away; it still contained the body of the drowned sailor, who, fastened to his seat, had there found his death, and breathed out his last on a sack containing about six hundred dollars. We also got some twenty casks of coffee, forty boxes of sugar, and \$1,600 in silver coin, from the wreck of the schooner; my trunk was there too, but everything had been washed out of it excepting a few shirts and my copying-book. My writing-desk, with \$2,000 in silver, and all my papers, were irrevocably lost. From Charleston, my companions and I went overland to Philadelphia, where we arrived on the 11th of March.

.....
1829

The Raft of the *Correrro* Gail Swanson

Vincent Nolte and his companions were not the only people to ever survive shipwreck at the Keys by rafting ashore in 1808. In 1733 rafts were made to get the survivors of the Spanish treasure fleet that had wrecked by hurricane ashore. (See *History Talk*,

Fall, 1998)

There is a painting by Theodore Gericault that hangs in the Louvre depicting the horrors of the raft of the French ship *Medusa*. In 1816 off the coast of West Africa the *Medusa* ran aground in shallow water, and after trying to lighten her, it was determined she couldn't be gotten off and all but a handful aboard tried to reach shore four miles away in six lifeboats and a raft made of the masts & crossbeams. The boats tried to tow this raft with 150 people aboard, unsuccessfully so. The lines were cut. It became a most horrid situation aboard the raft, and 13 days later there were only 15 men still alive.

The Keys have their own mini-version of the raft of the *Medusa*, related by Dr. B. B. Strobel in his "Sketches of Florida" articles that appeared in the *Charleston Courier* in May, 1837:

The Spanish brig *Correrro* was wrecked on the night of the 2d April, 1829, on Carrysford Reef; she very soon became half full of water. On the following morning her situation was so perilous that it was deemed advisable to put off for the land, which was about twelve miles distant. A raft was constructed, upon which twenty-three persons were placed. Two boats, manned with eighteen men attempted to tow the raft ashore. The attempt was [in] vain, and they were compelled "to cut adrift." The raft floated off with the current of the gulf stream; the boats in their progress to the shore were met by the wrecking schr. *Native*, Capt. Grover, and sloop *Splendid*, Captain Charles M. Johnson. The persons in the boats were taken on board of the *Native*, and the *Splendid* proceeded immediately in search of the raft, which had by this time drifted out of sight. It was found, and the persons saved, after being exposed for *fourteen hours*. In this case, the conduct of the wreckers was highly meritorious....

The following is extracted from the decree of Judge Webb in that case:

This is unquestionably a strong and meritorious claim for salvage, one in which merit is much enhanced, by the fact of the wreckers declining to go in search of property, until they performed the more benevolent act, of saving the lives of those who were exposed on the

raft, and who were floating out to sea, beyond the reach of ordinary succour. Had the salvors proceeded immediately to the wreck, they might have saved more property, than the delay occasioned by the search for the raft, afterwards permitted, and consequently their compensation would have been greater. But to their credit, they showed a disregard to their interest, while the lives of their fellow beings were in danger."

I have some information on the two heroes of 1829. Capt. Grover is probably Capt. Charles Grover, whose vessel was hijacked by slave traders in 1827, when he was attending to the wreck of the *Guerrero* also on Carysfort Reef.

The late Nancy O. Jameson of Key West gave me information on the other captain involved. Capt. Charles M. Johnson Jr. was the son of the notorious wrecker Charles M. Johnson Sr. (who died in 1828) and Hannah Quereau. He was the second of their five children, brother of Emeline Johnson Watlington, who lived in Key West's Oldest House, now a tourist attraction on DuVal Street. From writings of the late Tom Taylor I find that Johnson was the last keeper of the Carysfort Reef Lightship and became the first keeper of the new Carysfort Reef Lighthouse in 1852. Neil E. Hurley wrote in his *Keepers of Florida Lighthouses 1820-1839* (third edition) that Johnson became the lightship captain October 22, 1846. A keeper that Charles M. Brookfield met in 1927 claimed that Johnson had died on the light, and that the groaning sounds Brookfield heard at night there were from Johnson's ghost. Keeper Jenks said to Brookfield "He must have been a great sinner. Sometimes he rattles his chains."

But then, keeper Jenks didn't know of the heroics of Johnson in 1829.

Authors note: For information on Charles M. Johnson Sr. see my article "Carysfort Reef Grounding & the Key West Bubbas" in History Talk, Fall, 2002. Brookfield's account is in History Talk, Fall, 1997.

1955

Florida Keys Section of the *Homestead News* By Jerry Wilkinson

Unincorporated Monroe County began an accelerated growth after World War II. The Upper Keys had an census population of about 600 in 1930, 352 in 1940 after the 1935 Hurricane, 1,025 in 1950 and 3,127 in 1960.

Unfortunately the weekly *Homestead News* did not publish a Keys Sections until late 1954. The end of WW-II, an improved highway, public electricity and water, mosquito control and the Coral Shores High School were contributing factors to the increased growth. Individual air conditioners also were beginning to appear. For example, in the January 20, 1955 issue, W.G. Tyson advertised "Keys Air Conditioning and Refrigeration, 24 hour service on all makes, No mileage charge, Free inspection, Sales and Service, W.G. Tyson, Phone 3294, Islamorada, Fla." The following are more selected articles that appeared in the Keys section of the *Homestead News* used herein as filler articles to complete each issue of *History Talk*:

Photos used herein are copied from the archives of the *Homestead News* and were faded; therefore, are of poor quality. Another reason that quality suffers is that older newspapers used a coarse "halftone" printing screen.

Homestead News, Keys Section.

March 10, 1955

Methodists Meeting the Challenge On the Florida Keys

Seventy four years ago in the year of 1881, scattered residents of the upper Keys greeted their first Methodist ministers, Rev. Somelin and Rev. Giddons. The two men had sailed from Key West on a two masted schooner to cover widely separated settlements on the Keys.

Early Keys settlers had not been without Spiritual Guidance. The first place for services was built by a small membership at Newport. The next place for a church to be erected was Tavernier [actually it was named 'Planter' at that time- JW], under the leadership of Rev. Barnett, then pastor of the First Methodist Church in Key West, Florida.

In the year of 1886, the Florida Conference sent a minister to the Keys to form a circuit, this being formed in Northern Key Largo and extending through Matecumbe south.

In 1899, Methodism was again triumphant, with a church built on Plantation Key [incorrect, it was Planter -JW]. Rock Harbor residents also started a congregation in this same year.

In 1909, a hurricane destroyed many homes and some of the Planters. The sincere Christian people, under extreme difficulties rebuilt the churches as they did their homes.

Communication between the islands of the Florida Keys was improved by the erection of a railroad in 1912, by the Florida East Coast Railroad Company from Homestead to Key West.

On September 2, 1935, disaster struck again. A hurricane of terrific force destroyed hundreds of homes and residents, including the Rev. R. E. Carlson and his wife in the parsonage in Matecumbe. Both churches at Matecumbe and in Tavernier were destroyed. Again, through faith in God, the people of Methodism met the challenge on the Florida Keys. The Matecumbe and Tavernier churches were rebuilt.

In 1946, the charge was divided into two-appointments, Matecumbe and Marathon were one charge and Tavernier, Rock Harbor and Plantation Key were another charge. In 1952, Plantation Key merged with Tavernier which meant that Tavernier and Rock Harbor were left as the only circuit on the Florida Keys.

Today, with modern highways and more facilities available, the progress marches through bright islands, it is reflected in the greater attendance to the churches. Again today, "Methodism is Meeting the Challenge on the Florida Keys." [This was the slogan to raise \$60,000 to build the new Tavernier Church-JW] Through the efforts of the combined official board members of both Rock Harbor and Tavernier churches, it was agreed to unite these together, combining the talents and efforts to the glory of God. Where there is unity, there is strength. The location of the above proposed edifice will be one mile north of Tavernier, on the ocean side of the Overseas Highway. The building, being very modern in design will be refreshing to a person whose tastes incline to a departure from the conventional styles that have been used so long. With the Nave and Fellowship room being equipped with reo-stat [adjustable-JW] lighting and the tall slender spire-like structure reaching heavenward, they offer a place of peace for troubled souls. They will have a seating capacity of 300. Through a section

of plate glass 12 ft. by 24 ft. in the rear of the church, each person will have a full view of the natural beauty as one only finds in the Florida Keys.

Contributions are invited to be sent the pastor, Rev. Damon Scott, Rodney Albury, Tavernier, Fla. or G.W. Sawyer, Key Largo, Fla. Remember, "Methodism is Meeting the Challenge on the Florida Keys."

[The new church was opened in 1957 and presently is the Burton Memorial United Methodist Church at MM 93. The old wooden Tavernier Methodist Church building was built from 1935 Hurricane debris and is now part of the 'Free Press' complex at about MM 91.7. The Rock Harbor Methodist Church Building, which was formerly the Rock Harbor School, is the coral rock portion of the Moose Lodge building at about MM 98. The school closed in 1951 when Coral Shores School opened. The following year, Coral Shores was accredited as a high school - JW.]

----- *Homestead News, Keys Section.*

March 10, 1955

Collins Endorses Idea Of Key Biscayne- Key Largo Causeway

Governor Leroy Collins went on record this week as favoring the proposed \$37,000,000 toll cause-way linking Miami Beach and Key Biscayne with Key Largo. How-ever, Collins flatly stated that he would back the project only if it was carried out by a public service board and not by private enterprise.

Collins suggested that the Dade legislative delegation prepare legislation that would create a special causeway authority to work out the details.

He said that there is a good possibility that State Road Department funds might be made available for early engineering studies of the 30 mile route. Collins said the money could later be repaid to the state out of proceeds from the tolls.

There has been increased interest in the proposed causeway ever since the reports last week of a \$200,000,000 development on upper Key Largo.

Some South Dade residents immediately expressed the desire that this area be consulted and included in the tentative plans involving the feasibility of running the proposed road down the bayside, connecting with the Keys, rather than funneling all the traffic through already congested Miami Beach.

It is expected that the Redland District Chamber of Commerce will take a hand in the matter and make a request for a part in decisions involving ultimate plans for the project.

[This is one of the first manifestations of a new community named "Islandia," which would have been all the Keys between Ocean Reef and Key Biscayne. The project lingered until 1968 when the Federal Government created Biscayne National Monument. It is pronounced as "Eye-landia" - JW.]

Homestead News, Keys Section.

March 31, 1955

(See photo on page 584)

TOGETHER AGAIN - The five Krome sisters of the prominent South Florida family had a reunion in the Florida Keys last week for the first time in 30 years. Their brother, W. J. Krome, was chief engineer of Henry M. Flagler's F. E. C. Railroad over the Keys. Homestead's Krome Avenue was named for him. The sisters, shown here in front of the fish they caught while fishing with Captain Cliff Carpenter, are left to right Mrs. R. J. George of Edwardsville, Ill.; Mrs. Walter Greene of Mt. Vernon, Maine; Mrs. F. W. Jones of Tavernier; Mrs. P. L. Wilson of Miami Beach; and Mrs. Norah K. Smiley of Key West. Mrs. Smiley is also known for her famous novel, "Hurricane Road." Mrs. Smiley and Mrs. Wilson both married civil engineers who worked on the Keys railroad. The same two ladies are responsible for naming Islamorada, as they picked "Island Home" for the name. This was translated into Spanish as "Islamorada." Photo by Mrs. Cliff Carpenter.

Homestead News, Keys Section.

April 7, 1955

Volunteer Fire Dept. Is Organized In Islamorada

The Islamorada Volunteer Fire Department was organized Monday night and Donald Payne was chosen as president. Some 40 men attended the organizational meeting and a charter and by laws were drawn up. Following the two serious fires in the Keys during the past three weeks, the men of Islamorada felt that another fire department was needed.

Other officers chosen were Jack Davis, vice president; Joe Buzard, secretary treasurer. The

directors are Donald Payne, Bernard Russell, Charles Robel, Joe Buzard, Richard Gaskin, and Jack Davis. John Sandhammer was chosen as Fire Chief with Bernard Russell as Assistant Chief. Svend Nielson is foreman and Olin Pinder, assistant foreman.

The meeting was held in Islamorada at the Old School House, which adjoins a piece of property the Department hopes to secure from the County as a site for a fire house. Payne has contacted County Commissioner Harry Harris to make a request that the County donate this tract to the new fire department.

They have set a goal of \$5,000 for erecting a fire house on this piece of property. Anyone wishing to make donations, may send them to the Volunteer Fire Department, Box 366, Islamorada. Membership dues will be \$2 annually with meetings to be held every Wednesday night at the Old School House at 7:30.

Fire Chief R. O. Bushea of Marathon spoke to the group on fire fighting methods.

The fire truck is now stationed at John Sandhammer's Keys Garage. The telephone number is Matecumbe 9081. Night numbers are Matecumbe 2051 or 2182. The territory to be covered is from Sportsman's Motel on Plantation Key to Long Key.

Saturday afternoon at 5 o'clock, there will be a demonstration using the fire truck at Jack Davis' place in Lower Matecumbe. The demonstration will help the men get acquainted with the truck and its use.

Homestead News, Keys Section.

April 21, 1955

(See photo on cover page 569)

MONEY FOR FIREMEN - Islamorada residents are shown presenting checks for the new Islamorada Volunteer Fire Department. The checks started off a Fund Drive for a fire house. In front of the fire truck are (left to right): first row, Mrs. Clara May Downey, Buck Grundy, W. J. Dyer, Norman McCullough, Bob Kauffman, Alonzo Cothron, Sid Sederas, Dick Wood, and Mrs. Jack Harte; second row, Jack Davis, George Pinder, Joe Buzard, Bernard Russell, Fire Chief John Sandhammer, Fire Department President Don Payne. Photo by Four Winds.

- Addendum to the Perrine Grant articles -

By Jerry Wilkinson

I wish to add to the great summary provided by Dr. Knetsch on page 574. First is an abbreviated genealogy of the Perrine family gleaned from boxes of material.

Reading key: These eldest family member is shown to the extreme left and each younger generation is indented one tab to the right. Brothers and sisters are therefore aligned vertically; however, siblings of each brother or sister are shown directly below their parents and are numbered 1, 2, 3, etc., but are not necessarily arranged by age. Underlined names indicate the surnames of sibling due to marriage of their parents. Multiple spouses are shown in ().

GENEALOGY of Henry Perrine (Indian Key)

-Daniel Perrine

-Peter m Sarah Rozengrant

-Henry Edward Perrine m. Ann Fuller Townsend

1. Sarah Ann m. Carlton Rogers

1. Clara H. m. Robert Dunbar Radcliffe

2. Hester Maria S. m. James W. Walker

1. Henry Perrine m. Jeanette Sloat

2. Sarah R. m. John Denham Palmer

3. James Townsend m. Floretta Wells

3. Henry Edward Jr. m. (1) Cordelia Hall

1. Henry H. m. Harriet M.

2. Carlton R. m. Mary ?

3. Mrs. G. Barrett Riche m. Barrett Riche

m. (2) Emma Folsom.

Second and below are two of my interpretations made from an incomplete copy of the "Opinion-as-to-Title" of the W.C. Cannons property within the Perrine Grant.

When the Perrine Grant consisting of 23,008.59 acres began to be distributed in 1897, it was owned by the following Perrine heirs (See above genealogy):

1) Henry E. and Emma Perrine, undivided 1/6th interest.

2) Clara H. and Robert Radcliffe, undivided 1/6th interest.

The remaining undivided 2/3rd interest stood in:

1) J. Denham Palmer, as executer

2) Jeanette Sloat Walker

3) Sarah M. Palmer

4) James T. and Floretta W. Walker

After securing a patent (02-14-1897), in consideration of the assistance given them, the above Perrine heirs conveyed an undivided one-half interest in the grant to Henry R. and Nanie G. Duval, the F.E.C. Railway Co., and Curtis W. and Elizabeth A. Holcomb.

The above three then divided their interest so that:

1) The F.E.C. Rwy. had an undivided one-fourth interest

2) Henry R. Duval had an undivided one-eighth interest

3) Curtis W. Holcomb had an undivided one-eighth interest, but Holcomb conveyed an undivided 1/16th of his interest to Wm. C. Keegin.

By using power of attorneys some how they conveyed sufficient land to all the settlers to comply with their agreement. I have not discovered a list of these conveyances, but it was accomplished.

Note: The above stated undivided fractions of interest cannot be stated in terms of a specific number of acres until other agreements and applicable deeds are executed.