



# WILTON MANORS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## HISTORICAL NOTES

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### WILTON BOULEVARD GREAT WHITE WAY?

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Wilton Manors Historical Society

Wilton Manors Great “White Way?” Like Broadway in New York? Edward J. “Ned” Willingham’s 1925 marketing brochure for his new development of Wilton Manors promised 15 miles of “white-way” lights for his upscale new development. Wilton Boulevard was to be 90 feet wide.

But, it didn’t happen. Willingham’s vision for Wilton Manors collapsed with the housing and economic crashes of 1926. By the 1930’s, Wilton Drive (renamed in 1928) was an eerie ghost, a broad boulevard, some light poles, and nothing else. The Wilton Manors Historical Society’s earliest pictures of Five Points show Wilton Drive vanishing off to the south, with nothing but trees and the Towers. Norman Malcolm in an article on the history of Wilton Manors in the May 7, 1955 *Wilton Sunrise* newspaper says that folks were curious about the broad expanse of Wilton Drive and the lamp posts. The lamp posts seem to have been gone by the 1950’s. The Society’s picture collection shows that commercial development was well underway on Wilton Drive by then. The lamp posts would have been in the way.

What happened to the “white way?” The Historical Society knows where three of the lamp posts went. And they are being used!

Two of them are holding up the second story of the 1925 Willingham Carriage House at Richardson Historic Park and Nature Preserve. These appear to be original fixtures. Having done a good job for 89 years, they were removed as part of the Carriage House Renovation



*Ted Arpin and Son, Josh, reinstalling one of the lamp posts.*

and Repurposing project, currently being undertaken by the Historical Society and Leisure Services. They have been refinished and reinforced and are now not only holding the second floor up, they are holding the second floor down. Brackets attached at the tops will counteract the upward forces of hurricane winds. The stripping and refinishing is courtesy of Gulf Plating Co. and John “The Greek” Painting Specialists.



The third lamp post, which is clearly marked with the Westinghouse logo, holds the sign next to the Carriage House marking the location of Willingham’s house. These lamp posts may be found on Page 867 of the *Westinghouse Ornamental Street Lighting Equipment Catalogue 8-B, June 1925*. Ours are Model “Continental 9” and would have been about 12 feet tall.

But, where did the others go? Wilton Drive is about three quarters of a mile long. How many were actually installed? Were they harvested to support the war effort? Are there any supporting bird feeders in yards near The Drive?

The Historical Society is collaborating with the City to renovate and re-purpose the Carriage House, the City’s oldest remaining building of historic significance. We want to preserve the structure’s functionality and usability for the enjoyment of residents by converting the ground floor into a catering preparation area, servicing an

exterior bar on the south side. The remainder of the interior space would be a gathering area that leads to a covered exterior canopy on the north side of the building. Watch for more information on this, and check out the lamp posts.

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