WILTON MANORS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

HISTORICAL NOTES
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WHAT IS IN A NAME?
WHERE DO YOU LIVE?

By Benjamin Little with Ron and Mary Ulm
Wilton Manors Historical Society

What is in a name? You were named for a relative or some name your parents liked. If they were hippies, they picked a name guaranteed to annoy their parents. They may have picked a public figure they liked, something that sounded good, or a very distant cousin who happened to share the name of a former parental love interest.
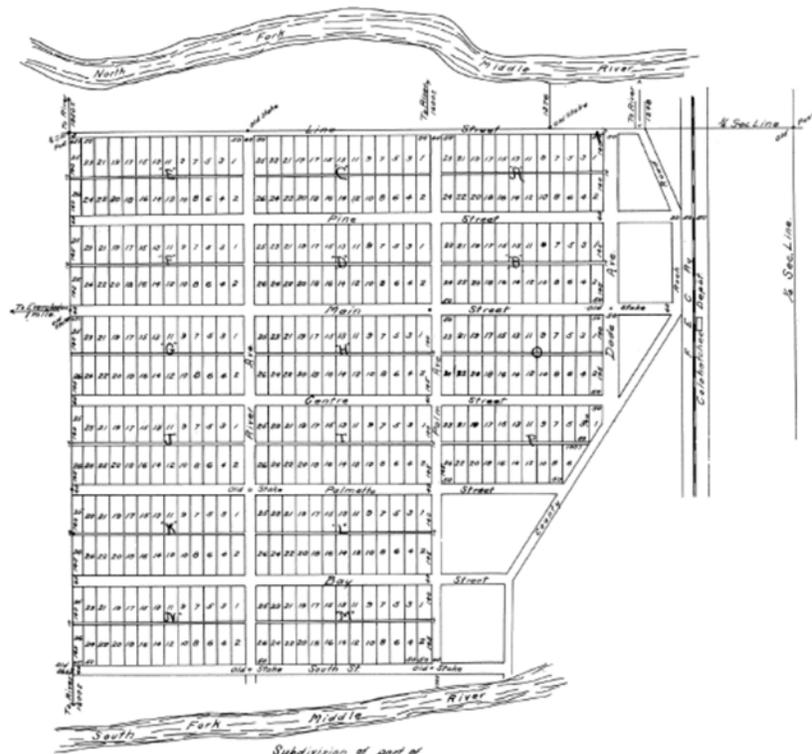
Places are harder to nail down. Fort Lauderdale is easy. It is named after a fort built on the north bank of the New River in 1838 in response to the Second Seminole War. The fort was commanded by Major William Lauderdale and it was common to name forts after the officer charged with building them and commanding them.

Broward County is named after Napoleon Bonaparte Broward, whose parents were pretty clear what their inspiration was. It took a couple tries to carve an independent county out of Dade and Palm Beach. The first effort in 1913, which failed, was for the creation of Everglades County. Broward County was formed in 1915.

Edward J. Willingham named Wilton Manors in 1925. There are a number of stories. One story has it that Wilton was an ancient British branch of the Willinghams, of Macon, Georgia. Another story has it that Wilton was Willingham's wife's maiden name. It was, in fact, Felton. Most probably, Wilton is the concatenation of Willingham and Felton. "Manors" means "landed estates," but there has been long term confusion about "Manor" versus "Manors." In 1956, Police Chief Beaney got very exercised in the *Fort Lauderdale News* railing about the Boy Scouts sporting shoulder stripes without the "S." There is a U.S. Census report leaving off the "S."

Before Wilton Manors, we were Colohatchee. Colohatchee was the area generally described as being from the Fort Lauderdale High School on NE 16th Street to Commercial Boulevard, and from the FEC railroad west to Powerline Road. Two plats were filed for Colahatchee (with an "A") in 1910, one covering a portion of the same area as Willingham's 1925 plat, and the second, even smaller, on the east side of the FEC tracks at NE 24th Street. There was a train stop on the Florida East Coast Rail Road (about NE 24th Street) showing up on maps as "Colohatchee."

Where did Colohatchee come from? We have lots of choices. Seminole language scholars suggest that a likely explanation is "Kala Hatchee" meaning "White Oak River." What is now Oakland Park landed on its name because of the grove of oaks along the river. The Oakland Park Historical Society has evidence from the Reverend Sam Tommie, whose mother was the last of the great Seminole medicine women, that the South Fork was Colohatchee which means "Shell River" because it had a bed of glistening shells. Most accepted is that the Seminole Indians provided the name as "Colo," for William C. Collier and "hatchee" for "river." We have another story that it is the concatenation of Collier and Hatch, who was also an early settler.

But if "Colohatchee" is Collier's River, or whatever, why don't we have a river named Collohatchee? Maps back into the mid 19th century show the North and South Forks of the Middle River or Creek, never Colohatchee. There is reference to Snook Creek, from the Reverend Tommie, that the North Fork was Salooppee Hatchee, or Snook River. Snook is a kind of fish, found in the rivers.

Over the years, what is now Wilton Manors was developed by a number of different developers who filed their intentions as a series of "plats," defining their sub-divisions, which were given names. The plat for Beulaland (NW 24th and 25th Streets between Andrews and NW 3rd Ave, or Smith and Neel Streets between County Blvd and Palm Ave) was filed by H. C. Jelks and his wife Beulah S. Jelks in March 1925. How do you get to "Babco Heights?" Heights? Many of the early plats had street names, like Choctaw, Prospect, and Palmetto. The Historical Society has not yet seriously researched the names

of the various sub-divisions.

It was November 1956 when Wilton Manors convinced the Florida Turnpike Authority that it should be included on their map.

Until the 1990's, it was common, particularly for businesses, to give their address as "Fort Lauderdale," as having more cache outside Broward County. Wilton Manors shares four Zip Codes with Fort Lauderdale and Oakland Park, which adds to the confusion. Numerous efforts for a dedicated Zip Code have failed.

When you tell people that you live in Colohatchee, Everglades County, Florida, be sure to tell them that your telephone exchange is LOgan 5, not 565.