Wilton Manors Era of "NO TAXATION"

When Wilton Manors incorporated in May 1947, and for nearly a decade thereafter, municipal services were provided to residents without taxing real estate. This was a point of pride to the young community—as reflected by the sign at the south end of Wilton Drive. It was affirmed when a referendum to levy property tax was soundly defeated by its citizens in November 1949.

According to the *Ft. Lauderdale News*, the Village's 1950 budget was as follows:

- Revenue for the sale of occupational and beverage licenses and power company franchise fees were estimated at $1,200 and $1,400 annually—to be used for street lights, bus benches, and to support the volunteer fire department.

- No revenue was needed for garbage collection. Residents would continue to pay directly for that service. The Village Hall, then more than half completed, had used proceeds from barbecues staged by the Civic Association and volunteer construction labor. That practice would continue.

- The remaining revenue, and by far the largest contributor, was to be an estimated $6,000 - $9,000 from a 5 cents per pack tax on cigarettes. [According to the *Wilton-Oakland Sun*, taxes from this source were in fact a large contributor to the tax base of all Broward County municipalities. 1,629,000 packs of cigarettes were sold in Broward County in the 31 days in December 1952.]

In February 1950 Wilton Manors hired its first police officer to protect the town's 250 homes and 883 residents. By 1955 the City had tripled in size to more than two square miles. Some 1,500 homes were occupied, with many more under construction. The result was an anticipated deficit in the Village budget. Property owners knew the time had come.

With only minor objections, residents approved the first ad valorem property tax of seven mills in November 1956. The era of boasting "NO TAXATION" had come to a close.