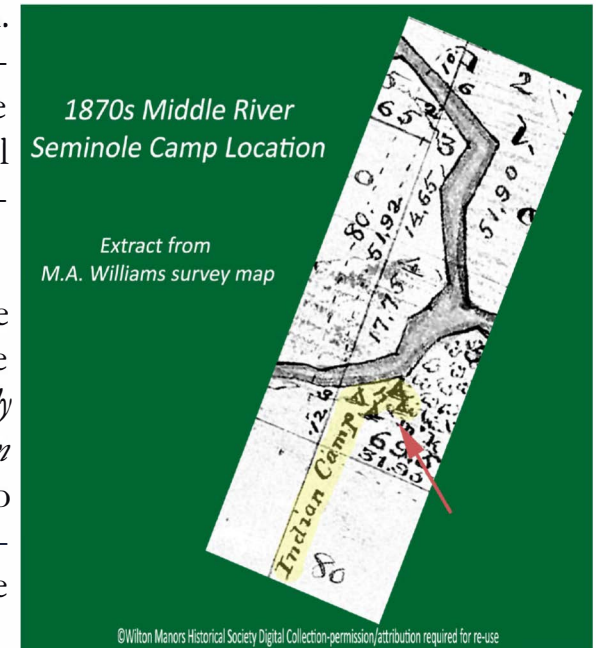


The Seminoles and the Stranahans in Wilton Manors?

WMHS recently received separate queries about a Seminole camp in Wilton Manors and a farm owned by the Stranahans. The two ended-up converging; and the following is it what we know as of this issue's press deadline:

Today's Seminoles did not arrive in Southeast Florida until the mid-1800's. In 1870 M.A. Williams surveyed what is now the Broward County area. That map documents a permanent "Indian Camp" on the South Fork of the Middle River; as well as several extensive trails through the area. A 1993 archaeological study of that camp site places it on Federal Highway, south of 26th St.—where Starbucks and Krispy Crème are today. On the opposite bank of the South Fork is Wilton Manors' Coral Point subdivision.

In 1902 Will Stranahan, Frank's half-brother, bought 40 acres on the north side of the South Fork.. That land would have been directly across the river from that Seminole camp. A coincidence? Well, the *Miami News* of the time reported that Will was *"the only white man in the state who is allowed by the Seminoles to mingle with them ... and they looked upon him as sort of a 'Big Pale-faced Chief' ... and named him Istabatka Hillishawah"*. Will's intent was to grow citrus and vegetables. Unfortunately Will was more "dreamer/schemer" than entrepreneur and had to sell the land to Frank and Ivy Stranahan in 1905 to cover debts on the property. Will disappeared shortly thereafter—never to be heard from again.



Information about the scope and operations of the Stranahan farm are limited at this point in our research. In 1902, Will wrote: *"My farm is 2 1/2 miles from the store and I walk out on Tuesday and Friday in the afternoon"*. By 1907, the *Miami News* reports Frank Stranahan having 4 1/2 acres of "exceptionally fine" vegetables and strawberries growing under irrigation. A 1911 *Florida Homeseeker* article notes the farm has a superintendent and is *"a half-mile south and slightly east of the river bridge"*; then invites farmers to *"walk out and see the irrigated farm ... and the value of dry land"*. An irrigated farm seems to have been unique at the time.

In 1952 Ivy Stranahan sold the farm—to be developed into today's "Coral Point" subdivision. In a 1953 *Miami Herald* interview, she reminisces about life on the farm: *"We'd go out to the farm in a buggy or a canoe ... Alligators sunned themselves in the front yard and wildcats and bears roamed the neighborhood ... I frequently made trips at night along the paths [carrying a lantern to scare the animals] ... Seminoles were a common sight around the farm, digging for coontie—a form of wild potato."*

And as a fitting close, we note Ivy Stranahan was not only a long-time advocate for the Seminoles; but also an early resident of Coral Point!

Questions or comments? Contact Ron and Mary Ulm at wmhs@WMHistory.org

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