

The “Old Smith House”—recalling a missed opportunity

In **1910**, Louis H. Smith, his wife Maude, and two sons George and Kenneth, left Echols County, Georgia for Florida, the land of opportunity. Three weeks later, traveling by horse and wagon, they arrived at Colohatchee. Mr. Smith was a farmer. His first property was 15 acres in in the area we now call North Andrews Gardens—where he built his first home. That same year Mrs. Smith became a founding member of the Colohatchee Woman’s Club. Son Guy was born in **1915**—likely the first white child birthed in the little hamlet. Guy provided details of the family’s history in his mother’s 1959 obituary. From that, and other documents we learn ...

Their first home was destroyed by the “**1926 Hurricane**” (the family had taken shelter in the FEC RR depot with a number of other local residents). That same year they built a new home on Mahannah Road (now 1209 NE 24th St.), east of the FEC RR tracks and adjacent to the Colohatchee depot.. Willingham’s 1926 Wilton Manors sales brochure included a photo of that house (see below). It was labeled “*A newly built home in Wilton Manors*”—even though it was technically “across-the-tracks”. By 1945 Maude, Kenneth, Guy and his wife and two children were all living in the home. Guy and family remained until his death in **1981**. Three generations of a pioneer family living in their original Colohatchee/Wilton Manors home for some 55 years!

Around **1989** Horton/Jones Electrical Contractors purchased the property—needing the land to expand the business. The house was then in disrepair, but recognizing it was probably the oldest historic residence in town, Horton/Jones offered to donate it to the City (possibly as headquarters for the Historical Society), if the City would agree to move it. Accounts vary as to what happened next. Ultimately the City failed to take further action, and the house was demolished—another vintage/historic structure lost.

For more information download our Mini-Archive at <https://tinyurl.com/2023smithfamily>



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