



WILTON MANORS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

"E.J. Willingham, Sr. Family History"

Compilation of publications re: his biography/genealogy and family obituaries, eulogies and curator notes

by Ron Ulm

November 2025

This compilation was inspired by the November 20, 2025 event which commemorated the centennial of the founding Wilton Manors by E.J. Willingham, Sr. This included the unveiling by WMHS of historic interpretive markers re: the Willingham Estate. This article includes selected documents from our archive not previously published on our website about the basics of Mr. Willingham's story. It is not inclusive of all our materials related to he and his family.

Below are some quick facts and notes about the Willingham family from the included documents and other documents in our archives:

- **E.J. Willingham, Sr.** was born in South Carolina in **1861**. He had 10 brothers and 3 sisters.
- The family moved to Macon, Georgia in **1870**--where his father was a cotton merchant/broker.
- All his male siblings were college graduates and, ultimately, successful businessmen. E.J. himself graduated from Mercer University and Eastman Business College. There is little or no information about E.J.'s sisters' education or accomplishments.
- In **1882**, at the age of 21, E.J. started a furniture manufacturing business in Macon. In **1883** he married Eula Felton -- a member of another prominent Macon family. Eula was a graduate of the prestigious Wesleyan Woman's College. They had a son **E.J., Jr.** in **1888** (more about him below) and two daughters (about whom we know little more than their married names).
- After years of success as a furniture manufacturer, he became interested in fruit growing. By **1911** he owned three peach orchards--with 150,000 trees. He later expanded into pecan farming. He was one of Georgia's largest produce shippers; and to ensure quality he owned his own rail cars. (He was a prominent enough shipper to be called to testify before the Interstate Commerce Commission about private railcars.)
- E.J. was also involved in other business ventures--including founding a local bank and even a gold mining venture in Alaska.
- He and Eula were also active in church and civic affairs. Among other things, E.J. was a founder of the Georgia Industrial Home orphanage, a Baptist deacon, and a Macon City Councilman. Eula was Regent of the Daughters of the American Revolution chapter and an active member of the local Baptist Women's Missionary Society. She was one of the founders of Heimath Hall--a home for working girls (later to become the Macon YWCA). She was also involved with Chautauqua of the South and other events that inspired the building of a civic auditorium in Macon.
- Eula developed an unspecified debilitating illness around **1920**. In an effort to benefit her health she had numerous changes of residence and climates--ultimately permanently residing at their summer home in Asheville, North Carolina. Eula passed **January 31, 1928** at the age of 65.
- Perhaps in looking for a more therapeutic climate for Eula, in **1920** E.J. began making small purchases of property in Pompano and Lauderdale-by-the-Sea. In **1923** he platted "Lauderdale Beach"--consisting of all the land from the ocean to one block west of A-1-A, from now Oakland Park Boulevard to the Pelican Grand Hotel (there is a Willingham Park across from the hotel). But, unlike Wilton Manors, Willingham seems to have had little personal involvement with the project. All the marketing and sales were handled by "W.F. Morang & Sons of Miami, as agents for E.J. Willingham".

- By **October 26, 1925** he had created the "E.J. Willingham Development Company" and filed the plat for "Unit 1 of Wilton Manors". Versus Lauderdale Beach, this seems to be where he planned a retirement home. The plat also showed the 40 acres he reserved for his personal estate and farm (including a tiny rendering of the homeplace itself). [A 1924-1925 Ft. Lauderdale City Directory had him previously living at 229 Palm Street.]
- **E.J., Jr.** and his wife **Viola** seem to have arrived here between **1926 and 1927**. He lived in a home in the upscale Idlewyld neighborhood (just west of the Las Olas bridge) purchased by E.J., Sr. There is little written about his role in the company or community. But several anecdotes from locals who knew them both indicate that E.J., Jr. lacked the skills, drive and charisma of his father—as described in the attached eulogies and obituaries. In a recorded interview Colohatchee pioneer resident Mark Mahannah characterized him as being "meek".
- The effects of the 1926 Hurricane, the early beginnings of the Great Depression and E.J., Sr.'s unexpected death would combine to bring an end to his vision for Wilton Manors. In **August 1927**, while visiting his wife at their summer home in Asheville [Candler], North Carolina, E.J., Sr. suffered a debilitating stroke. He remained in hospice-like care in Asheville for seven months until his death **March 31, 1928** at the age of 66. Sometime during that period, for reasons unspecified, Eula was moved to the home of her daughter in Macon. There she died on **January 31, 1928** at the age of 65—just three months before E.J., Sr.
- E.J., Jr. had been appointed guardian of E.J., Sr. in **December 1927**, and began selling property "for the purpose of maintenance of the ward and for the payment of his debts". In **May 1928**, as executor of E.J., Sr.'s estate, E.J., Jr. filed an amended plat for "Unit 1 of Wilton Manors". It did two somewhat odd things. First, it renamed all but two of the streets with Native American or geographic names to the numeric system we know today. It also removed all the individual lot numbers, but for those already sold—leaving just the "Block" designations. The initiator or rationale for either has not been documented. Perhaps the street renaming was to make it an extension of the Ft. Lauderdale numbering system. The latter may have been that E.J., Jr. did not wish to continue marketing individual properties, but rather to sell blocks in bulk to other developers/contractors. *[Other thoughts about these speculations would be welcome.]*
- Perry Mickel had been a sales representative for Willingham Sr.'s *Lauderdale Beach* development and described as his "right-hand-man" at *E.J. Willingham Development Company*. In an interview, Dorothea Mickel notes that around **1928** Willingham [Sr. or Jr.?] suggested that "we move to his house [at what is now the Richardson property] that had fallen into disrepair and fix it up". They indeed moved into the Willingham Estate home and lived there for eight years—while building their own home on their farm in what is now the Westside.
- By **1930** E.J., Jr. and his family had returned to Georgia; leaving Perry Mickel and E.J. Sr.'s attorney and friend Carl Hiaasen as essentially caretakers of the *E.J. Willingham Development Company* and its properties. [It remained so until 1945, when Dave Turner purchased all the remaining lots of Wilton Manors Unit 1.]
- After 1930 and until his death, newspaper accounts of E.J., Jr. and his family's activities are very limited. It appears he moved to the family pecan orchard in Byron and was content to be a farmer. He passed away in Byron **January 7, 1959** at the age of 71.



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Volume VI

A. B. Caldwell, Publisher

Atlanta, Georgia

1912



Edward J. McLaughlin.

Edward Joseph Willingham.

EDWARD JOSEPH WILLINGHAM, of Macon, who was the founder and for a number of years president of the Willingham Manufacturing Company, an extensive establishment devoted to the manufacture of furniture, the active management of which has been turned over to his brother, is a member of one of the most remarkable families of our State. He was born in Allendale, South Carolina, in 1861, son of B. L. and Elizabeth (Baynard) Willingham.

The Willinghams of South Carolina and Georgia are descended from Thomas Willingham, who came from Market Rasen, Lincolnshire, England, in 1790, and settled on Sullivan's Island, near Charleston. Judging from the record of his descendants, Thomas Willingham must have been a most remarkable man. He founded a family, not one of which has ever been a failure, and which is now getting to be comparatively numerous.

Our subject is a mixture of French, English, and Irish stock. The Willinghams have been in South Carolina for generations past. His great-grandfather was a prosperous merchant in Charleston, South Carolina. His grandfather was a successful cotton planter in the lower part of the State, and his father made a fortune there in cotton planting. However, after the Civil War he moved to Macon, Georgia, and entered into the cotton business. David Robert, who came from St. Imer, Switzerland, to Santee, South Carolina, in 1686, was accompanied by his son Pierre Robert, from Basle, Switzerland. These were Huguenots and came over at the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Pierre Robert was pastor in South Carolina, and a marble tablet stands to his memory in the Huguenot Church in Charleston at the present time. A descendant of his through several generations married Captain Joseph Lawton, of Revolutionary times, and their son, Benjamin Themistocles D'Ion Lawton, was the great-grandfather of E. J. Willingham. Mr. Lawton married Miss Jane Mosse, who was the daughter

of Doctor George Mosse, who moved from Dublin, Ireland, and was a physician on the coast of South Carolina and in Savannah, Georgia. Miss Mosse was a descendant of Jonathan Norton, who came from England and married Miss Ann Chaplin. Mr. Willingham's mother came from the Baynard family of the coast of South Carolina, and was a splendid woman. She belonged to the old English family of Baynards. Mrs. B. L. Willingham, the father of Mr. E. J. Willingham, was a most remarkable man. He was for thirty-five years a Baptist deacon, and was a strong friend of the education of young men. He was genial, courteous and overflowing with hospitality—an old type of the South Carolina gentleman. His son takes much after his father in his cheerful whole-hearted disposition. A remarkable thing about the Willingham family is that there were ten brothers—seven of whom are still living,—and five of them have been Baptist deacons; the father and six of his brothers were deacons, their grandfather was a deacon, the great-grandfather Lawton was a deacon, and the great-great-grandfather Mosse was a deacon—showing that this line of people have been highly esteemed in church and public life. The family through generations has stood out for the best in church and educational affairs, as well as building up the communities in which they have lived. Doctor R. J. Willingham, corresponding secretary of the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, is one of the brothers referred to above.

In 1870, when a boy of ten, Mr. E. J. Willingham's father moved to Macon, and the boy was educated in the schools of that town, completing his school training in Mercer University, with a business course in Eastman's Business College.

From early manhood he has been an important factor in the progress and development of Macon. In 1882 he entered the manufacturing business in the furniture line, clearing the woods where the splendid plant now stands. After years of success as a furniture manufacturer, he became interested in fruit growing, a prominent industry in South Middle Georgia, and is now the proprietor of the Riverdale Orchard at Oglethorpe, Georgia; the Southland Orchard at Marshallville, Georgia; and the Willingham Fruit Company at Byron, Geor-

gia, having one hundred and fifty thousand trees and is increasing the number twenty-five thousand a year. He is one of Georgia's largest shippers of fruit and attributes his success largely to the fact that he makes it a rule to handle the business through his own representatives in New York.

He was one of the founders of the Georgia Industrial Home in Macon, commonly known as the Mumford Home, one of the most successful orphanages in the South, and is now president of its board of trustees. This institution dates back to February 22, 1899. The founders were W. E. Mumford, E. J. Willingham, C. M. Wiley, P. D. Pollock (president of Mercer University), and W. A. Davis. Of the five founders Mr. Willingham and Mr. Wiley only survive. If Mr. Willingham had done nothing more than assist in the founding of this great benevolent institution, he would have abundantly paid his footing to the community. But he has done much more. When a young man he was an active member of the Macon Volunteers and is now an honorary member of that association. Like all of his people, he is strenuous in the work of the Baptist Church of which he is a deacon. He was for years director of The American National Bank and Home Savings Bank, trustee Mercer University and president of the Young Men's Christian Association.

On April 25, 1883, Mr. Willingham was married to Miss Eula Felton, sister of Judge W. H. Felton and daughter of Colonel L. M. and Mary J. (Lowe) Felton. They have three children: Mrs. Charles M. Council, of Americus, Georgia; E. J. Willingham, Junior, and Miss Mary Willingham, of Macon. Mrs. Willingham is a graduate of Wesleyan Female College.

Politically Mr. Willingham is a supporter of the Democratic party. A thoroughly patriotic citizen, Mr. Willingham is impressed that, as a rule, the young men of the South are not giving their best time and talents to the upbuilding of our country. He believes that we have the best country in the world if our young men would but grasp the situation and give to its betterment the best that is in them. He is undoubtedly right in this; but we can not hope for more rapid advancement as long as the minds of the younger generation are more pro-

foundly impressed with the importance of football and baseball than they are with the needs of their country.

No sketch of Mr. Willingham would be at all adequate without some mention of his interest in municipal and community affairs. Again and again he has been urged to allow his name to be presented to the people for Mayor; but he has preferred to work in the ranks. In the City Council he led the fight for the paving and improvement of Macon's streets. His energy and integrity bring him to the front in every movement looking to the social, economic, religious or educational development of his people.

BERNARD SUTTLE.



E.J. "Ned" Willingham (standing, third from left) in a picture with his father (seated, in center) and his eight brothers.

- Middle Georgia Genealogical Library

Clipped from "The Island City" by Stuart McIver

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E. J. WILLINGHAM

ILL IN ASHEVILLE

Macon, Ga., August 10.—(AP)—E. J. Willingham, capitalist, peach and pecan grower and who figured in a real estate development at Fort Lauderdale, Fla., is critically ill at a hospital in Asheville, N. C., according to reports received here today. Members of his family have gone to his bedside.

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Aug 11, 1927, Macon News

E. J. Willingham Is Critically Ill

The condition of E. J. Willingham, who is ill in a hospital in Asheville, N. C., was unfavorable, according to messages received by relatives in Macon Wednesday night. A. Ross Chambers, son-in-law of Mr. Willingham left early Thursday morning to be with other members of the family at his bedside.

Mr. Willingham went to his summer home in Candler, N. C., two weeks ago, having stopped in Macon a few days en route from Fort Lauderdale, his winter home, to North Carolina. He suffered a hemorrhage a few days ago and later paralysis, it was said. He is not expected to recover.

He has been active in the Baptist denomination here for a number of years. He is a brother of O. P. Willingham, P. D. Willingham, Broadus E. Willingham, B. P. Willingham and E. P. Willingham.

Mrs. Willingham and their three children, Mrs. Chambers, E. J. Willingham, Jr., and Mrs. Charles Council, the latter of Americus, are in Asheville with the husband and father.

Aug 17, 1927, Atlanta Journal

E. J. Willingham III

MACON, Ga., Aug. 17.—Relatives and friends here of E. J. Willingham, a member of the Willingham family here, one of the best-known in the state, have hopes of his recovery at a hospital in Asheville, N. C., where he was carried after suffering a stroke of paralysis recently, while at his summer home near Asheville. His condition is reported to be a little improved, although it is very critical.

For many years he was engaged in the furniture business here, and later he assumed the management of his farm here, one of the largest in this section of the state. The family is one of the best-known in Georgia.

Dec 12, 1927, Macon News

GUARDIAN'S SALE**GEORGIA—Bibb County,****Court of Ordinary.**

The undersigned as guardian of E. J. Willingham, Sr., under and by virtue of an order of the court of ordinary of said county, will sell at public outcry to the highest bidder for cash, before the court-house door of said county, during the legal hours of sale on the first Tuesday in January, 1928, the following described real estate belonging to E. J. Willingham, Sr.

All that lot fronting thirty-three (33) feet, more or less, on Second street and sixty-eight and one half ($68\frac{1}{2}$) feet, more or less, on Cherry street, in the city of Macon Bibb county, Georgia, and formerly known as the First National bank building and lot, and being described in the plan of said city as part of lot No. 1 in square No. 21, and having a continuous width of thirty-three (33) feet, more or less, and being sixty-eight and one half ($68\frac{1}{2}$) feet, more or less, in length.

Said property to be sold for the purpose of maintenance and support of ward and for the payment of his debts. Terms of sale cash.

E. J. WILLINGHAM, JR.,

Guardian of E. J. Willingham, Sr.

DEATH CLAIMS MACON WOMAN

Mrs. E. J. Willingham Passes at Home of Daughter; Fu- neral on Wednesday

Friends of Mrs. Eula Felton Willingham wife of E. J. Willingham, formerly of Macon, will be grieved to learn of her death which occurred at the home of her daughter, Mrs. Ross Chambers, 172 North Avenue, North Highlands, at an early hour this morning. Mrs. Willingham's death was not unexpected, as it followed an illness extending over a period of ten years. Many changes of climate and residence were made during her illness, in an effort to benefit her health.

Mrs. Willingham was the daughter of Leroy Monroe and Mollie Lowe Felton, of Marshallville, and was a sister of the late Judge William H. Felton. As a girl, as well as in later life, Mrs. Willingham was noted for her great intellectual attainments. She was a first honor graduate of Wesleyan College, also receiving the coveted medal for general excellence. She was most talented in music and art having received many diplomas in each.

Until her illness, she was in-

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DEATH CLAIMS MACON WOMAN

Continued from Page One

tensely interested in the work of the First Baptist church, and was particularly interested in the Woman's Missionary work. For many years she contributed to the support of a special missionary in China. At one time Mrs. Willingham was most active in club work and was regent of the Mary Hammond Washington chapter of the D. A. R. for years. She worked tirelessly in the organizing of Heimath Hall, a home for working girls, which later was changed into the present Y. W. C. A. It was through her efforts that the Chautauqua of the South was brought to Macon.

Surviving are her husband, two daughters, Mrs. Charles M. Council of Americus, and Mrs. William Ross Chambers, of Macon; one son, E. J. Willingham, Jr. of Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.; four grandchildren, Charles Council, Jr., Eula Felton Council, Mary Chambers, and Viola Willingham; one brother L. Monroe Felton, of Marshallville.

Funeral services will be held from the residence of her daughter, Mrs. Ross Chambers, 172 North Avenue Wednesday at 12 o'clock, noon, Dr. C. E. Burts, pastor of the First Baptist church, officiating. Interment will take place in Riverside cemetery.

MRS. WILLINGHAM EXPIRES AT HOME

Prominent Macon Woman Had
Been Ill for Ten Years

FUNERAL BE HELD TODAY

Mrs. Eula Felton Willingham, wife of E. J. Willingham, died at an early hour yesterday morning at the home of her daughter, Mrs. Ross Chambers, 172 North avenue, North Highlands. She had been in poor health for 10 years, during which time there had been many changes in her residence, to obtain a climate that would benefit her.

Her husband is critically ill in a hospital in Asheville, N. C., where he has been for some time.

Mrs. Willingham was a sister of the late Judge William H. Felton, and was a daughter of LeRoy Monroe and Mollie Lowe Felton, of Marshallville. She was a first honor graduate of Wesleyan college where she also received the medal for general excellence. She was talented in music and art, having received many diplomas in each.

Active in Church

Up to the time that Mrs. Willingham became ill she had been especially active in the work of the First Baptist church, of which she was a member. She was especially interested in the work of the Woman's Missionary society, and for many years contributed personally to the support of a special missionary in China.

Mrs. Willingham was at one time active in club work, having been regent of the Mary Hammond Washington chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, for several years.

Before the Young Woman's Christian association got on such a solid foundation in Macon, Mrs. Willingham was one of the group of women who organized Heimath hall, a home for working girls, the operation of which was later taken over by the Y. W. C. A.

Mrs. Willingham had been interested in many other civic enterprises, notably among which being the Chantauqua of the South and the Music Festival, several years ago, through the success of which the idea originated to have a big city auditorium where lectures, concerts, operas and the like could be held.

Her Survivors

Besides her husband, Mrs. Willingham is survived by two daughters, Mrs. Charles Council, of Americus, and Mrs. William Ross Chambers, of Macon; one son, E. J. Willingham, of Fort Lauderdale, Fla.; four grandchildren, Charles Council, Jr., Eula Felton Council, Mary Chambers and Viola Willingham, and one brother, L. Monroe Felton, of Marshallville.

The funeral will be held from the residence of Mr. Chambers, 172 North avenue, at 12 o'clock noon today. Dr. C. E. Burts, pastor of the First Baptist church, will conduct the services. Interment will be in Riverside cemetery.

Mr. E. J. Willingham

The whole community feels a keen sense of loss in the death of Mr. Edward J. Willingham, who passed away at his summer home near Asheville on Friday night, following an illness of seven months.

Mr. Willingham was a native of Macon, where he had spent his life until within comparatively recent years and here he won those golden opinions from all sorts of people which are an abiding and sustaining influence among the friends and relatives who feel his death as a sore affliction.

He was a member of the extensive Willingham family whose activities have been closely interwoven with all that is most helpful and wholesome in the progress and upbuilding of Macon.

Mr. E. J. Willingham himself was recognized as possessing, in a special degree, that business ability which commands success. Vision coupled with industry and the highest order of integrity blended to make his business ventures profitable to himself and a contribution to the general development of the community.

While he retained many of his interests in Macon, he was one of the first to see the possibilities of development in Florida and hastened to take advantage of the opportunities which unfolded themselves in that state, long before speculative activity brought about a temporary reaction. His investments there, as always, were predicted on sound principle and naturally enhanced in value. While still spending much of this time in Macon, Mr. Willingham had a winter home in Florida and a summer home in, or near, Asheville, North Carolina. It was at the latter residence that he passed away.

The sudden stroke which made him an invalid for the past seven months came as a shock to his many friends in Macon and elsewhere, since he had apparently been, previous to that time, in the best of health. Anxious inquiries poured into his home from every hand and for many weeks his condition varied almost from week to week. At one time the hope of his ultimate recovery was strongly entertained.

Throughout all the weary weeks of his suffering he displayed the cheerfulness and Christian resignation which his many friends had learned to associate with him while in the fullness of health. The end came peacefully and quietly as a release from long suffering.

Mr. Willingham was a man of magnetic personality and genial disposition. A warm clasp of his hand and the kindly humor that shone in his eyes won for him not only esteem but cordial affection from all those who came within the circle of his influence. While his benefactions were unostentatious, it is known that

"He had a tear for pity and a hand Open as day to melting charity."

In his domestic relations he was the ideal husband and father; in civic and social affairs he was a citizen of whom the whole community was proud and his epitaph might well be:

"None knew him but to love him:
None named him but to praise."

Apr 4, 1928, Atlanta Journal

Mr. E. J. Willingham Formerly of Macon, Is Claimed by Death

MACON, Ga., March 31.—Mr. Edward J. Willingham, 66, former resident of Macon and member of one of the best known and most prominent families in Georgia, died Friday night at his summer home in Asheville, N. C. The body will be brought to Macon where the funeral will be held Monday at noon.

Until five years ago Mr. Willingham made his home here. He first went to Florida on leaving Macon and later to Asheville. His wife, who was Miss Eula Felton, sister of the late Judge W. H. Felton, died some weeks ago. For many years Mr. Willingham was in the furniture business here but he retired some years ago on

account of his health. Until recent months Mr. Willingham operated a large peach and pecan orchard near Byron, Ga.

He was a former city councilman and a prominent church worker. He leaves three children, E. J. Willingham, Jr., Fort Lauderdale, Fla.; Mrs. C. M. Council, Americus, and Mrs. W. Ross Chambers, of Macon. He is also survived by five brothers, O. P., Broadus E., P. D., and B. B. Willingham, all of Macon, and two sisters, Mrs. Walter Johnstone and Mrs. W. S. Payne, of Macon.

E. J. WILLINGHAM VICTIM OF DEATH

Illness of Many Months Proves Fatal to Macon Man

FUNERAL TO BE MONDAY

Edward J. Willingham, retired Macon capitalist and former peach grower, died during Friday night in Asheville, N. C., where his summer home is located, after an illness which extended through several months. He was 68 years of age.

Funeral services will be held at noon Monday from the residence of his daughter, Mrs. W. Ross Chambers, in North Highlands. Interment will be in Riverside cemetery, it is announced. The body will arrive in Macon at 10 o'clock this morning.

Mr. Willingham was a native of Macon and resided here until five years ago, when he went to Florida. Seven months ago he was stricken with a cerebral hemorrhage and since that time his death has been expected at any time.

Mrs. Willingham, formerly Miss Eula Felton, of Marshallville, died several weeks ago. She was a sister of the late Judge William H. Felton.

In Business Here

Mr. Willingham was in business here for several years prior to his removal to Florida. While in that state he promoted several large real estate developments in the Fort Lauderdale section. In Macon Mr. Willingham took a major interest in the affairs of the First Baptist church, serving on the board of deacons there for more than 40 years. He taught a Sunday school class here for a number of years.

His first business connection in Macon was with the firm of Payne and Willingham, forming a partnership with W. S. Payne, Sr., in the furniture business. That establishment was for many years located on the corner of Cherry and Second streets, where the Macon National bank is now located. Mr. Willingham later sold his interest to P. D. Willingham.

Organizer of Bank

Mr. Willingham was one of the organizers of the old Bibb National Bank, now consolidated with the Macon National, and was for many years chairman of the board of directors of the Georgia Industrial home. He had a keen interest in the welfare of the children at the home. He served for some time as a member of the city council here, and it was through his efforts that many of Macon's streets were paved. He worked in the interest of a bond issue which was floated for paving purposes. His pecan orchard, near Byron was said to be the most beautiful in Middle Georgia. He also had been an extensive peach grower.

The following relatives survive him: Three children: E. J. Willingham, Jr., of Fort Lauderdale; Mrs. C. M. Council, of Americus, and Mrs. Chambers here; five brothers, O. P., B. E., P. D., E. P., and B. R. Willingham, all of Macon, and three sisters, Mrs. Walter Johnstone, Sr., Mrs. W. S. Payne, of Macon, and Mrs. P. W. Malone, of Albany, Ala.

Apr 3, 1928, Macon News

TRIBUTE TO E. J. WILLINGHAM

Editor The Macon News:

I am just an in-law but these truths coming from one who was a business partner for seventeen and a half years should be of some value. Ned Willingham was a wonderful Christian character. Every inch a man, therefore a gentleman, generous to a fault, brave as Julius Caesar, ever ready to lend a helping hand. Meeting everybody with that wondrous smile, and cordial greeting that was simply unsurpassed. He was ever foremost in good works. If a name is written up yonder Ned Willingham's name will be there. His constant devotion to his loving wife who was sick for nine years before he was taken ill was an example almost unparalleled, as nothing could induce him to leave her. He was always the loving, tender husband thinking of sweet ways to make his sick wife happy. What I say may seem extravagant, but through all these years of business with him he never had a harsh or unkind word. Those who knew him well will say with me that he deserves every word of praise that could be given him. Everywhere he went his love of God and men shown abroad. He brought sunshine and dispelled the shadows. His good and generous deeds are countless, and would take pages to enumerate. If this earth was peopled with such beings as he, it would be a wonder if any one of us would want to leave it. Some one has said of another, and it may well be said of him. He was a man who had

"A blow for the bad.

A smile for the glad.

And a tear for the sad."

Pessimism was unknown to him, his was the heart of youth. These are the thoughts of one who loved him dearly.

W. S. PAYNE, SR.

Apr 3, 1928, Atlanta Journal

Mr. E. J. Willingham Is Buried at Macon

MACON. Ga., April 3.—With scores of friends in attendance, the funeral of Mr. Edward J. Willingham, former resident and prominent in business circles here, were held Monday at noon and the body was interred in Riverside cemetery. Mr. Willingham died Saturday in Asheville, N. C., at his summer residence.

Mr. Willingham belonged to the Willingham family in Macon which has been prominent in Georgia for half a century. His wife, who died some weeks ago, was Miss Eula Felton, of Marshallville, sister of the late Judge W. H. Felton, of Macon.

He leaves three children, Mrs. C. M. Council, of Americus; E. J. Willingham, Jr., of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., and Mrs. W. Ross Chambers, of Macon; besides the following brothers, all prominent in Macon's business life: O. P., Broadus, P. D., E. P., and B. B. Willingham, and three sisters, Mrs. Walter Johnstone, Mrs. W. S. Payne, of Macon, and Mrs. P. W. Malone, of Albany, Ga.

Apr 3, 1928, Macon Telegraph

E. J. WILLINGHAM IS BURIED HERE

Former Well-Known Macon Citizen Interred at Riverside

Funeral services for E. J. Willingham were held yesterday at noon from the residence of his daughter, Mrs. Ross Chambers, on North avenue. Dr. C. E. Burts, pastor of the First Baptist church, conducted the services. Burial was in the Riverside cemetery.

Mr. Willingham died in Asheville, N. C., Friday night, after an illness of about seven months.

Five years ago, Mr. Willingham left Macon and went to Florida, where he developed several successful real estate subdivisions. He was engaged in the furniture business here for a number of years.

His death was preceded several week by that of his wife, formerly Miss Eula Felton of Marshallville, a sister of the late Judge William H. Felton.

Surviving Mr. Willingham are three children: E. J. Willingham, Jr., of Fort Lauderdale, Fla.; Mrs. C. M. Council, of Americus; Mrs. W. Ross Chambers, of Macon; five brothers, O. P. Broadus, E. P. D., E. P., and B. B. Willingham, all of Macon, and three sisters, Mrs. Walter Johnstone, Mrs. W. S. Payne, of Macon, and Mrs. P. W. Malone, of Albany, Ala.

The pallbearers were W. S. Payne, Jr., O. P. Willingham, Jr., A. R. Willingham, B. E. Willingham, Jr., Winburn Willingham, W. B. Williams, E. Wayne Butler and C. Y. Alexander.

Jan 7, 1959, Macon News

Willingham Rites Today

E. J. Willingham, 70, retired pecan grower and farmer of Byron, died in Macon at 4:30 a.m. yesterday after a lengthy illness.

Funeral services will be held in St. Paul's Episcopal Church at 11 a.m. today. The Rev. T. Stewart Matthews and the Rev. A. L. White of Byron will officiate. Burial will be in Riverside Cemetery.

Mr. Willingham, member of a prominent Middle Georgia family, was born in Bibb County, the son of E. J. Willingham Sr. and Mrs. Eula Lowe Felton Willingham, and had lived at Byron most of his life. He received his education at Gordon Military Institute and Mercer University and was a member of Phi Delta Theta fraternity for 50 years. He was a veteran of World War I.

Surviving are his wife, the former Miss Viola Plant, Macon; a daughter, Mrs. Joel Hightower, Macon; two grandchildren, Sue Flewellyn Hightower and Edward Joel Hightower, Macon; a sister, Mrs. Ross Chambers, Macon, and several nieces and nephews.

Pallbearers will be Walter Williams Jr., Donald Dickey, Flew Murphey, Alfred Willingham, Steve Solomon III, W. E. Greene, John L. Brown and Felton Hatcher.

Honorary pallbearers will be Broadus Willingham, Ray Willis, C. B. McClamrock, Walter Williams Sr., W. C. Kilpatrick, Cathey Alexander, Felton Green, William Bateman, Dr. J. B. Kay, Wallace Peavy, J. W. Vinson, Henry Williams, M. C. Moseley Sr., Harry Chisholm, R. E. Dunbar, W. D. Aultman, Client Jackson and William Vinson.

Hart's Mortuary is in charge of arrangements.

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Interment Record

Interment:

Name: Willingham, Edward John Sr.

Date of Birth: 8/18/1861

Date of Death: 3/31/1928

Date of Interment: 4/2/1928

Spouse/Parent: Willingham, Eula Felton

Survivors: Children: E. J. Willingham, Jr., Mrs. C. M. Councilm Mrs. Ross Chambers Brothers: O. P. Willingham, B. E. Willingham, P. D. Willingham, E. P. Willingham, B. B. Willingham Sisters: Mrs. Walter Johnstone, Sr., Mrs. W. S. Payne, Mrs. P. W. Malone

[View Obituary](#)

Picture: [Click to Enlarge](#)



Plot:

Magnolia Row: R Lot: 8 Diagram #: 6

Family Memorials: [Click to Enlarge](#)



Located on Same Lot: [Click to View](#)

Hightower, Emily Suzanne	9/9/1997
Hightower, Joel Amos	10/24/1987
Hightower, Sue Flewellyn	6/24/1992
Hightower, Viola Willingham	4/2/1994
Willingham, Edward John Jr.	1/7/1959
Willingham, Edward John Sr.	3/31/1928
Willingham, Eula Felton	1/31/1928
Willingham, Viola Plant	5/3/1979