

Recalling the *Pearce 5&10* on Wilton Drive



2181 Wilton Drive—1954

©WMHS-Pearce Collection

Ask any long-time Wilton Manors resident what they remember about their early years here and they almost always mention the *Pearce 5&10*. So here's the rest of the story ...

In 1950 a *Broward 5&10* opened at 2181 Wilton Drive [now the defunct Sushi Rock]. They had several stores; and were one of the first to offer “self-service” shopping. The Wilton Manors store was sold around 1953. (Perhaps coincidentally, a nationally-franchised *Ben Franklin 5&10* had just opened directly across the street.) It briefly operated as *Stone's 5&10*, then was purchased in 1954 by Bob Pearce and re-branded *Pearce 5&10*.

Pearce served in the Army Air Corps during WWII and through the early 1950s. After leaving the service, his brother convinced him to consider relocating to warm, sunny Florida and starting a business. The decision was made to locate in Wilton Manors because of the friendliness of the business people and residents.

Pearce successfully competed with the larger *Ben Franklin* through his friendly, personal service. Around 1960, when the *Ben Franklin* moved to the new Dixie Shopping Center (see last issue) Pearce moved across the street to their larger, vacated location at 2176 Wilton Drive [now Gables Wilton Park]. *Pearce 5&10* remained open at that location until 1977—when, after 23 years, it succumbed to competition from big-box discount stores like K-Mart and Zayre.

Wilton Manors pioneer residents fondly recall how “you could find anything at Pearce, from shoelaces to lampshades” (...or, from the sign in the window, even pet turtles); and how “kids would ride their bikes to the store to spend their allowances”. And don't forget about the coin-operated pony ride and horoscope scale out-front!



2176 Wilton Drive—ca 1960

©WMHS-Pearce Collection