

# WILDWOOD by-the-sea: Nostalgia & Recipes *The History of Acme in the Wildwoods*

BY ANITA HIRSCH Author of  
"Wildwood-By-The-Sea: Nostalgia and Recipes"



The American Store at 1st and Central in North Wildwood was built in 1903  
It later belonged to the Melchiorre family.

The coming of the railroads to the Wildwoods and the building of the railroad stations brought businesses to the area of the stations. One of the businesses that grew around the railroad stations were the small corner grocery stores that sold fresh produce, baked goods and breads, meats and cold cuts, sandwiches, newspapers and cleaning supplies.

The first American grocery store was built in North Wildwood in 1903 at First and Central Avenues. By 1928, there were six more American stores in the Wildwoods: 17<sup>th</sup> and New Jersey Avenues, 3403 Pacific, 3921 Pacific, 4616 Pacific at Andrews, Park Boulevard at Montgomery and one at the corner of New Jersey and Sweet Briar Road in Wildwood Crest.

As the population grew, the American stores expanded throughout New Jersey and the towns in Cape May County. They changed their name to Acme. There was an Acme store where Fireside Pizza is now at 4101 Pacific at Youngs, and one at 3011 Pacific at Maple which had a huge neon sign that lit up the night. That Acme closed in the Sixties. It is now the site of Atilis Gym.

On June 14, 1956, a new Acme opened at Park Boulevard between Hildreth and Bennett Avenues. This store was state-of-the-art at that time. It was air-conditioned and had Magic Carpet doors which opened by themselves as someone approached! There were conveyor belt checkouts, a Rotis-o-Mat for roasting chickens, fresh fish and poultry, a live lobster tank, drugs and cosmetics, self service produce and meat cases.

Since traveling by car was heavily promoted in the Fifties, the store was built so patrons could drive up to load packages and also with a black top surfaced lot that held 107 cars.

By 2005, this Acme, the only one remaining in the Wildwoods, was no longer adequate. So this Acme was demolished and rebuilt and opened on May 25, 2006, with a Doo Wop theme. The light blue paint, the original style signage, the neon sign and the art deco waves were included to give it the genuine look. The new Acme is double the size of the old one to accommodate the summer visitors as well as provide the residents with all the services they requested.

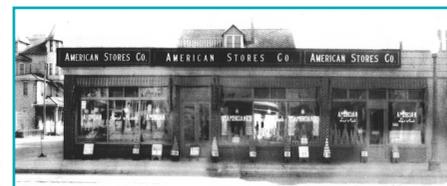
Thank you to Theresa and David Williams and the Wildwood Historical Museum for help with this article.



In 2006, the Doo Wop style Acme on Park and Hildreth Aves., below, replaced the one above, originally built in 1956.



The American Store at 4400 Park Blvd at Montgomery Avenue as it looked recently when it was M. Zimmerman & Sons, Inc.



The American Store at 4101 Pacific Avenue in Wildwood opened in 1924.



Acme Market at Maple & Pacific Aves. where Atlis Gym is today



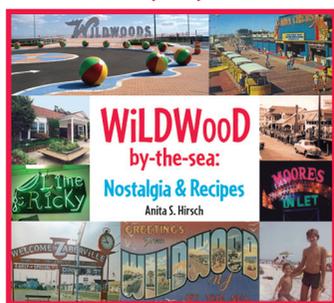
c. 1935, Inside the American Store at 17th and New Jersey Avenue in North Wildwood. All employees wore aprons and white shirts and ties.

## Save the Date!

September 26-29, 2012  
The Society for Commercial Archeology will be presenting "Wildwood Daze" at the Shalimar Motel in Wildwood Crest.

For more information visit  
[www.sca-roadside.org](http://www.sca-roadside.org)

Anita Hirsch will giving a presentation as well as signing her book.



This photo taken in 1943 shows employees l-r, unidentified, Anne Iaconangelo Zook, Slim Norton, center, unidentified, and Marian Shivers Mouklas on far right.