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: 17th 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 Atlis 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 Roto-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.

Save the Date!
September 26-29, 2012
The Society for Commercial Archeology will be presenting “Wildwood Doze” at the Shalimar Motel in Wildwood Crest. For more information visit www.sca-roadside.org
Anita Hirsch will give 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.