Small general stores (as they were often called) were in the Charlotte area from the earliest days. In the 1850s general merchandise businesses were established along Ridge Road West. Henry C. Phelps built his store on the North Greece Road in about 1870. The area was then known as Jenkins Corner at Latta Rd. By 1900 it had the name, North Greece, as it’s known today. Henry carried a varied lot of merchandise: Just about anything that would fit in the store and would sell found a place on the floor or a shelf. He catered to the farmer and his family. It helped that the local U.S. Post Office was also in the building. The opening of the Manitou (seasonal) Trolley in the 1890s expanded the number of cottages along the lake and bays. Several times a week Phelps would send out his horse and wagon filled with fresh vegetables, fruit and sundries. Going door to door, the “huckster” (an old term for a peddler) would often empty his wagon by the end of his route. After Mr. Phelps retired the store continued under several owners and name changes well into the 20th century. The post office moved to its own quarters and other business enterprises took over the site until we arrive at the 21st century. Except for the loss of the front porch and several horse hitching posts, the building remains much as it was built over 145 years ago. An insurance office is now the proud caretaker.

Wagg’s Grocery and Provisions store could hardly be called a general store in the same sense as Henry Phelps business. Gilbert (Burt) J. Wagg started in business in the early 1900s with several small grocery stores in Rochester. Since he was a natural salesman and “go-getter” (a favorite saying of the day), he decided to open yet another store on the north-western edge of the city. Streets along Lake Avenue were developed because of the expansion of the Eastman Kodak Company, Kodak Park Works. An ideal place for Burt’s new store was on the east side of Lake Avenue near Kodak. The business grew, with departments added almost yearly. A bakery, a meat department, groceries and produce were sold there from the start. Furniture, china, yard goods, clothing, shoes, phonographs and records all became integrated into Wagg’s, especially after the business was moved nearby to a building with ample floor space about 1912. The business eventually took a building on Lake Avenue as well as a number down Pullman Avenue.

One photo (1920) shows the business with a bus at the corner of Lake and Pullman. Most people referred to it as Wagg’s Corner. The mini-department store then employed 28 clerks and drivers to cover the departments and five delivery wagons. Burt is at the telephone in one of the photos and his sister Grace is at the adding machine to his right. Grace was as astute about the business as her brother. Burt passed on in 1944. Grace took over and ran it until it became clear newer and more modern stores had opened on West Ridge Road. The business closed in 1964 and the building was torn down in 1988. Pullman Ave. is now re-routed and no longer exits on Lake Ave. All trace of Wagg’s Corner has vanished....
Do you remember (September issue)..... ? Here are the Answers!

Some of the many buildings we have lost in the Town of Greece since the year 2000...

Streb’s Steak House

Rainbow Garage, Elmgrove Rd

St Charles Convent

Island Cottage Hotel

RG&E Russell Station

Odenbach’s, Dewey Ave

999 Long Pond at Mill Rd

Bank at Mt Read Wegmans

Maiden Lanes Bowling Hall

Our Lady of Mercy Rectory

Bauman Barns, 3289 Latta Rd.

Grace seated at center table and Burt at right standing by the phone in Wagg’s.

Wagg’s meat dept..

Wagg’s on Lake at Pullman.

Wagg’s grocery dept.

From the Albert R. Stone Negative Collection, Rochester Museum & Science Center, Rochester, N.Y.