

# History Was Made Here



InfoAge's Main Visitor's Center now inhabits the former Marconi Hotel.

There's a little known thirty-seven-acre tract of land along the picturesque Shark River in Wall Township that changed the course of history and the world, yet it might be one of the Jersey Shore's best kept secrets.

The inventions, research, and discoveries made on the Camp Evans campus since the early twentieth century had a colossal impact on both the nation and the world, and today, it is home to the InfoAge Science and History Center.

In fact, the U.S. Department of Interior designated it a *National Historic Landmark* in 2012, the Clinton and Bush administrations named it a *Save America's Treasures* site, and it is a *World War II Living Memorial* for the State of New Jersey.

But what exactly happened at this serene riverside location just minutes from the ocean beaches to earn such accolades and distinctions?

For starters, radio pioneer Guglielmo Marconi chose it as one of the locations for the towers he built to receive trans-Atlantic wireless messages, and in 1914, it successfully received wireless messages from Europe. The top portion of one of the original, historic Marconi towers still stands tall along Marconi Road en route to the main campus of

Camp Evans.

The former military base, which was manned by the United States Navy during World War I and the United States Army in World War II, also played a major role in military secrecy as radar systems developed and perfected here solidified the Allied Force's WWII victory.

"It was a top-secret project, when radar was bounced off the moon and back to the Jersey Shore," said Jim Doran, docent and member of



The top portion of one of the original, historic Marconi towers.

## *The InfoAge Science and History Center at Historic Camp Evans in Wall Township*

the InfoAge Education Committee. "Before World War II officially ended in France, it ended here in Wall/Belmar because of that innovation." The classified projects at the Camp Evans site drew the curiosity of both a German American named Mangus Wehrkamp, who was arrested for loitering near the property in 1917, and Senator Joseph McCarthy, who in 1954 demanded to know more about what was going on in Camp Evans' secret radar facility.

According to Doran, Marconi operators also helped initiate the rescue of *Titanic* survivors. "They heard the ship's S-O-S call in Morse code—they heard the signal and relayed the message for help," Doran said. "That incident led to the law that wireless stations had to be manned around the clock."

Today, the property is home to 50,000 square feet of exhibits in six buildings that house over a dozen individual museums. InfoAge's Main Visitor's Center now inhabits the former Marconi Hotel, which was built to house the operators and engineers on twenty-four-hour duty at the wireless station.

"The history of the cutting edge of communications technology developed here changed New Jersey and the world," said Chris Boylan, who works part-time at InfoAge through the National Council on Aging. "InfoAge is a wonderful place, and it would be great if more people knew about it."

InfoAge's mission is to preserve, teach, and honor scientific innovation and history while inspiring new generations of thinkers, dreamers, and visionaries. It is a hub for hands-on education in science, technology, engineering, and math.

Over one hundred years of history is on display at InfoAge's various

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museums and exhibits. In the one-of-a-kind center, visitors can learn about the creation of wireless technology, hear early radio programs, listen to their voices bounce off the moon, program historic computers, discover the history of electronic warfare, see full-size military vehicles as well as items salvaged from shipwrecks and so much more. Following is a summary of InfoAge's various museums and exhibits.

The **InfoAge Space Exploration Center (ISEC)** tells the story of space exploration that led to the founding of NASA and the United States Space Program. The TIROS dish antenna on display at the center ushered in the inception of weather tracking by satellite in 1962. In fact, the antenna recorded the first image of a hurricane from space and created hurricane tracking systems that are still in use today. Also on display is the SCR271 antenna used by the former top-secret "Project Diana" in 1946 to send the first signal from the earth to the moon and back in 2.5 seconds. Other exhibits at the ISEC include models and displays about Project SCORE (Signal Communication by Orbiting Relay Equipment), which was established by President Eisenhower to develop rocket technology, and Saturn V and Apollo Program Guidance Computer Modules. ISEC hosts summer camps for children and teens and a number of lectures and public programs featuring NASA astronauts and other space dignitaries and scholars throughout the year.

The **Radio Technology Museum** is maintained by members of the New Jersey Antique Radio Club, who volunteer their time as guides and docents. Visitors will learn about the development of radio from before sparks through today's cell phones. The extensive exhibit of radio technology from the nineteenth century through today includes countless pieces of equipment still in working condition such as vintage radios, microphones, and even rotary and pay telephones.

The Radio Technology Museum is also home to the **National**

**Broadcasters Hall of Fame**, which takes visitors back to the Golden Age of Radio when a dial was the key to entertainment, information, and good old-fashioned stories. Full radio programs from the era can be heard in their entirety. The National Broadcasters Hall of Fame includes such legends as George Burns, Edward R. Morrow, Dinah Shore, Benny Goodman, Red Skelton, Milton Berle, Frank Sinatra, Ronald Reagan, Les Brown, Larry King, and Art Linkletter.



Inside the Radio Technology Museum.

The **New Jersey Shipwreck Museum** is dedicated to preserving shipwreck and maritime history and is owned and operated by the New Jersey Historical Divers Association. The museum contains a multitude of artifacts recovered from area shipwrecks and an extensive collection of research materials. Several photographs and items recovered from the *Morro Castle* wreck off Asbury Park in September 1934 are on display, as is a cannon recovered off Long Island from the 1888 wreck of the steamer *Iberia*. Other relics on exhibit include a millstone recovered from the wreck site of the *Adonis*, which sunk off Long Branch in 1859, and items recovered from the wreck of the *Mohawk*, lost in 1935 off Manasquan.

The Vintage Computer Federation is at the helm of the **Vintage Computer Museum**, which spotlights computer history from the 1940s through modern

*Before there was wireless (radio) communications, the Morse telegraph, which used wires between locations, was common. On display at the Radio Technology Museum.*

times. Many of the computers on display are in operational condition, including 1940s-1960s mainframes, 1960s-1970s minicomputers, and 1970s-1990s microcomputers.

The **World War II Tactical Communications Museum** highlights army field radio, wire line, radio relay, and tactical message encryption equipment used in the Second World War. Visitors are encouraged to find the secret radio hidden in a canteen within the exhibit.

The **Association of Old Crows' Exhibit** focuses upon electronic warfare and demonstrates how devices can be used to prevent an enemy from utilizing their own electronics in an attack while educating about the importance of electronic warfare on the modern battlefield used to protect United States troops.

The **Military Technology Museum of New Jersey** is the largest exhibit at the InfoAge Science and History Center. It features a vast array of vintage, historic military artifacts, combat artwork, and memorabilia, many of which were donated by local residents. The museum also houses full-size jeeps, tanks, amphibious and other military vehicles, while detailed models and dioramas of equipment and battles, including miniature tanks, jeeps, and aircraft, almost come alive in the **World War II Miniatures Museum**.

The **African-Americans and Camp Evans Exhibit**, located inside the Marconi Hotel, celebrates the



groundbreaking achievements of both military and civilian African American men and women who answered the call to serve their country during the World War II and Korean War eras in the laboratories of both Camp Evans and Fort Monmouth.

Also located within the Marconi Hotel is a detailed replica exhibit of Marconi's wireless jump across the Atlantic, which shows how wireless telegraph works along with Morse code.

The InfoAge Science and History Center offers school groups the opportunity to supplement what is being taught in today's classroom by visiting the campus and the museums. One of InfoAge's visions is a parking lot filled with yellow school buses brimming with students of the generation that's going to develop the next phase of technology. "The founders of the next Silicon Valley will hopefully have visited InfoAge and been inspired by what they saw," said Doran. A host of experts in a wide range of topics are available to present at events held by local groups, businesses, conferences, and community organizations through **InfoAge's Speakers Bureau.**

With plans for more museums, exhibits, and displays in the works, the InfoAge Science and History Center continues to evolve with the present while preserving the past for future generations.

—Jill Ocone

*The InfoAge Science and History Center at Historic Camp Evans is located at 2201 Marconi Road in Wall Township. It is open Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays from 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM. Admission: \$7. (ages 13 and up); \$4. (ages 12 and younger). Visitors are encouraged to dress for weather as you will be outside as you travel to the various buildings. Parking is free. Special events and group/school tours are available by appointment.*

*In order to continue honoring veterans and providing a place of learning for all, InfoAge offers yearly memberships and accepts tax-deductible donations. To learn more, volunteer, or donate, visit [www.infoage.org](http://www.infoage.org) or call (732) 280-3000.*

# Jersey Shore BBQ

*Smoking the Shore One Rack at a Time*



**Doug Walsh, owner of Jersey Shore BBQ in Belmar.**

The intoxicating smell as you walk into Belmar's Jersey Shore BBQ (JSBBQ) is so full of smoky richness, you can almost taste your meal before you've even ordered it. That tantalizing aroma and the non-stop cycle of customers is evidence that owner Doug Walsh knows BBQ like nobody else.

Walsh spent a few years living in Texas, and after helping a buddy with a BBQ catering gig on a ranch, he fell in love with the process of preparing BBQ and began cooking it himself. "Texas BBQ has such a unique, smoky flavor. My passion is creating that taste, and after cooking for friends and family, I launched my own business called Jersey Shore BBQ Catering," Walsh said.

After catering out of his Point Pleasant home for three years, Walsh looked for a commercial kitchen to house the catering business. The Belmar location fell into his lap, and he opened the restaurant in 2010.

"We took a leap and my passion turned into a career," Walsh said. During JSBBQ's first four years, Walsh also worked full-time as an information technology consultant during the day until he decided to focus full-time

on the restaurant. JSBBQ is a family business, with Walsh's wife, Dana (who serves as their coordinator of donations and outreach), and his children, Grace (seventh grade) and Douglas (sixth grade) helping with catering events and in the store.

In March 2017, the Walsh family, along with Denis Barnao, opened a second location in East Brunswick.

JSBBQ promises a consistent, savory, slow-cooked, artisanal experience. Everything on the menu, except for the rolls and beverages, are made in-house from scratch, including the sauces. Their casual Belmar atmosphere combines a down-home Texas feel with a laid back beach vibe typical of the shore.

It takes JSBBQ between sixteen and forty-eight hours to prepare one meal, which is why top-selling items like the brisket and ribs often sell out quickly, especially on Fridays and Saturdays. Service Manager Dan Serpi said, "Our attention to traditional BBQ detail is what sets us apart from other places. If we run out of brisket, which we often do, we don't sacrifice quality by rushing another batch."

Walsh explained the process to cre-

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