

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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