



Reference Spotlight

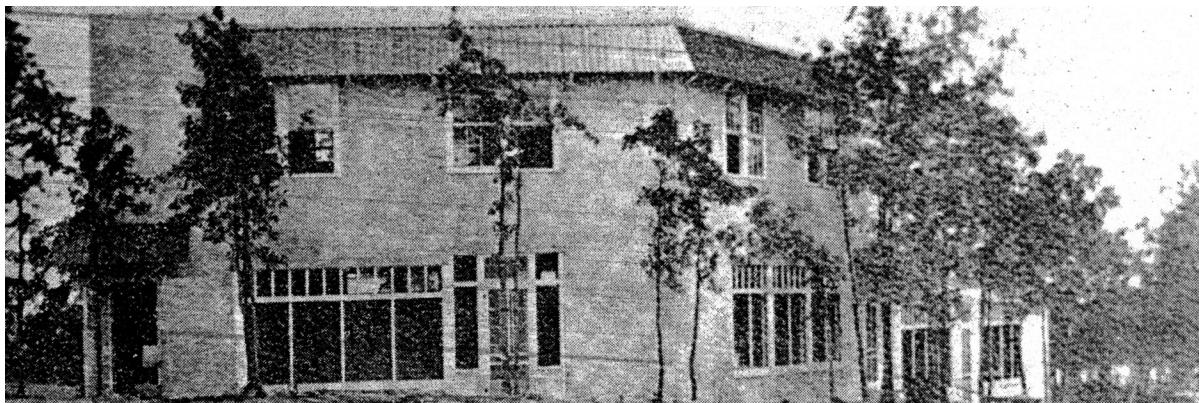
Atlantic County Library System

Reference Center, 40 Farragut Ave., 2nd Floor, Mays Landing, NJ 08330

January - March 2013 eNewsletter

Amatol: An Interesting Piece of Local History

The story of Amatol began with the construction of a munitions loading complex on a then-vacant tract of land near Hammonton, NJ, by the United States Government during the closing years of the First World War. Along with the plant itself, the government also began construction on a town to house the numerous employees of the munitions facility, and it was the town that was given the name Amatol.



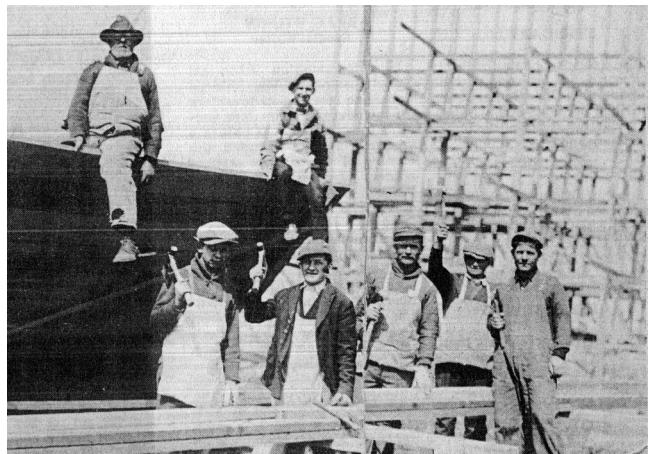
The post office and bank building at Amatol is shown above.

The name Amatol was derived from a mixture of ammonium nitrate and TNT used at the time. During its brief lifetime, the facility was considered one of the world's largest munitions plants. However, the town of Amatol never reached its intended size since the war ended while it was still being built. Both the town and the munitions plant were quickly dismantled once the conflict ended.

Amatol Speedway

Amatol's second moment in the spotlight came in 1926, when it became the site of an all-wood racetrack to rival the famous track at Indianapolis. Since the racetrack never became very popular, it was closed and dismantled after only a few short years.

The caption from the photo shown at right reads: seven workers from Hammonton are seen taking a break from their labors during the construction of the auto speedway at Amatol. The speedway, when completed, was the largest wooden racing oval in the world. It was located behind what is now the headquarters of Troop A New Jersey State Police on the White Horse Pike just south of the Hammonton line.



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Shown above is a racing scene at the completed racetrack at Amatol.

Photo courtesy of Atlantic Cape Community College.

During the following decades, Amatol was also proposed to become a large residential and commercial development, as well as a landfill site. However, the tract of land is still deserted at the present time, and the only remaining building houses the barracks of the New Jersey State Police.

About the Amatol Collection

Housed at the Reference Center on the second floor of the Mays Landing Branch is an extensive collection of historical items about the Amatol site. The collection includes:

- Extensive collection of newspaper articles from 1918 through the 1980's
- Historical images
- Letters and documents
- Research about Amatol including book references, research papers and research notes.
- Copy of a souvenir program from the racetrack
- Copy of the lease granted to the U.S. Government from the Atlantic City Suburban Realty Co. for the tract of land Amatol was built on
- Inventory book of the items and buildings on the Amatol complex

Stop by the Reference Center on the second floor of the Mays Landing branch of the Atlantic County Library System and ask at the desk to see items from the Amatol collection.

For questions about items featured in eNewsletter, call the Reference Center at (609) 625-2776, ext. 6310.

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