

MORRO CASTLE 75TH ANNIVERSARY PLANNED

For Immediate Release

September 2, 2008

ASBURY PARK - The Asbury Park Historical Society- in association with Monmouth University in West Long Branch, the Monmouth County Department of Economic Development and Tourism, and other organizations and historic preservation groups- is preparing to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the famous S.S. Morro Castle disaster.

The Morro Castle disaster, which resulted in the death of 137 passengers and crew members, occurred on September 8, 1934. A major commemoration of this historic event is being planned for September 8- 13, 2009 both in Asbury Park and at other sites along the Jersey Shore.

The devastating and mysterious fire on the Morro Castle, poor judgment by commanding officers and crew, and the unexplained death of its captain just prior to the inferno make this event one of the most memorable in American maritime history.

Today's use of fire retardant materials in ships, automatic fire doors, ship-wide fire alarms, and mandatory fire and lifeboat drills are all a direct result of the Morro Castle disaster.

Many first responders to the fiery disaster lived in southern Monmouth County but others in the county also responded to the disaster. The Morro Castle eventually beached just north of Convention Hall in Asbury Park and became a major news and tourist attraction.

Many relatives of victims and those of first-responders now live throughout the United States and media help is being sought to help locate these individuals and their related stories and memories

Proposed events scheduled for next year are: dedication of a memorial in Asbury Park to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the event; a Monmouth County-wide maritime tour of the Jersey Shore featuring various historic sites and museums; various special films, seminars, displays, publications and exhibits pertaining to the Morro Castle; and a memorial dinner featuring fare from an original Morro Castle menu.

Refreshments will be served. There is a fee for parking on the streets but a free parking lot is available at the intersection of Ocean and Fourth avenues. Telephone Eileen Chapman (732-571-3512) or Don Stine (732-774-4590) for more information.