



Essex County Parks Archives

Essex County Department of Parks,
Recreation, and Cultural Affairs

JANUARY 2016

ISSUE 5

Upcoming Events:

Adult School of Montclair March 23, 2016 7:00-8:30

Bellevue Branch Library,
185 Bellevue Ave., Montclair, NJ.
*Progressive Parks in a Progressive
Age – the Essex County Park
System in the 1910s, presented in a
fun format by Phil Napoli of the
Archives staff. For registration
details visit www.adultschool.org.*

News:

A grant from the New Jersey Historical Trust License Plate Fund has been awarded to fund four interpretive signs in South Mountain Reservation. The signs will provide historic information to park visitors on site. We'll let you know when they are installed.

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Essex County Executive
Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr.
and the Board of Chosen Freeholders

100 Years Supporting Essex County Parks

In 1914, \$100,000 was set aside for a new administration building for the Essex County Park System. From the establishment of the Park Commission in 1895 until 1916, the administrative offices were in an old wooden building at 60 Clifton Avenue. That building, a former saloon and dance hall, was entirely inadequate to meet the needs of the growing park system. The lack of any fire protection was a threat to the valuable maps and plans generated by park architects Bogart & Barrett, Carrere & Hastings, the Olmsted Brothers, F.W. Wright, and others.

The new administrative offices of the first ever county park system were built just east of Branch Brook Park. Designed by New Jersey native Harold Van Buren Magonigle in the Second Renaissance Revival style, the building includes many fine decorative elements. Built in 1915 and 1916, it provided offices for the superintendent, engineer, forester, and playground superintendent; drafting, map and blueprint development rooms; space for the Park Police; as well as a caretaker apartment.

The structure was added to the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places in 1977. An anniversary exhibit, prepared by the Parks Archives staff, will be on display in the building lobby at 115 Clifton Avenue in Newark throughout 2016.



Putting Essex County First