



# Essex County Parks Archives

Essex County Department of Parks,  
Recreation, and Cultural Affairs

MAY 2017

ISSUE 8

## Upcoming Events:

**Riker Hill Arts Open House**  
**June 3 & 4, 11 am – 5 pm**  
284 Beaufort Ave., Livingston, NJ

*Essex County Riker Hill Art Park celebrates its 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Five years after acquisition of the former Nike missile base, the idea of an art park came to fruition. The semi-annual open house highlights the fine and decorative works by the various artists with studios in the Art Park.*

## News:

Professional archivists toured the archives during MARAC's spring conference in Newark, and an open house was held recently for members of the park conservancies. To see the archives, contact us at:

115 Clifton Avenue  
Newark, NJ 07104  
973-268-3500

[archives@parks.essexcountynj.org](mailto:archives@parks.essexcountynj.org)  
[www.essex-countynj.org](http://www.essex-countynj.org)



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

*Putting Essex County First*

## Essex County Park Police Donation

The Essex County Park Police began with the hire of a young guard named Thomas Gilhooly to keep watch on the newly-acquired Branch Brook Park. He went on to become Chief and was still on the Essex County Parks' beat at his death 45 years later. The Parks Archives contain material on him and the Park Police.

The collection benefits from employees finding documents of historical interest. When the archives were first set up over a decade ago, Rich Kirchgessner of the police unit brought us some items. Current Sheriff's Department Officer George Sona, who works out of the historic Parks Administration Building, occasionally comes to the Archives asking about the building, old features in the parks, or park road names. Through his efforts, John Longo and Paul Stahl, retired officers who both began their careers with the Park Police, have become aware there is a safe location for the police history.

John started policing in 1964 and was attracted to the equestrian unit throughout his career. Paul, hired in 1974, took an interest in the stories of the old-timers on the force. Then, he contacted every living Park Police retiree. Together, they have collected materials documenting the history of the Park Police and the successor organizations within the County Police and Sheriff's Department. Recently, they shared their photos and papers with the Archives.



Here, John Longo shows Officer Sona and archivist Kathy Kauhl the antique medal he purchased on eBay. Longo has donated the medal, won by patrolman Oscar Schuman during the 1911 Park Police swimming trials, to the Essex County Parks Archives.