



# Essex County Parks Archives

Essex County Department of Parks,  
Recreation, and Cultural Affairs

JUNE 2019

ISSUE 17

## News:

### Our Anniversary Logo!

We are excited about our new logo (see above) for promoting the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Essex County Park System. In addition to this newsletter and Facebook posts (search Archives of the Essex County Park System), big plans are underway for 2020!

## Upcoming:

### Grant Information Sessions

Information sessions on the Essex County Local History Grants (\$500-\$5000) are scheduled for Wed, June 12 at Turtle Back Zoo and Sat, Jun 15 at Branch Brook Park. History non-profits and other organizations planning a history project are welcome to attend. Grant applications are due August 5. For more details and to register call 973-735-6230.



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

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[www.essex-countynj.org](http://www.essex-countynj.org)

973-735-6231

*Putting Essex County First*

## Preliminary Commission is Named



Cyrus Peck

On June 18, 1894, as set forth in the enabling legislation, Judge David A. Depue named the five commissioners of the preliminary park commission. He wanted to select people “so favorable to this enterprise and so desirous that it should be executed” that they would be judicious and make sound recommendations. Otherwise, a park system might never come to fruition. His selections were, from the Boards of Trade committees on public parks, Frederick W. Kelsey of Orange and Cyrus Peck and Stephen J. Meeker of Newark. Feeling the need to have representation from the county at large, the judge chose his friend Edward Jackson from Belleville and George W. Bramhall from South Orange.



Stephen J. Meeker

The Daily Advertiser in an editorial that day expressed confidence that “these men will do their work faithfully and well.” The formal announcement, made a few days later, after the men had accepted, stated they were to be known as the Essex County Park Commission. After accepting the post, they met for the first time on June 23 and took up the work with interest and enthusiasm.

Commissioner Kelsey, a nurseryman, went on to write about the commission in, *The First County Park System* in 1905. Further, he set aside funds in his will to go toward the Essex County Park System in the form of the “Kelsey Park Fund”. At the Essex County South Mountain Reservation, George W. Bramhall’s legacy lives on through Bramhall Terrace. Erected in 1926, a plaque at the site reads: “A tribute to his successful efforts to secure the lands comprised in South Mountain Reservation for the healthful recreation of the people of Essex County.”



Frederick W. Kelsey