



Portrait of Louis V. Hinchliffe, Courtesy of the Passaic County Historical Society.

Louis V. Hinchliffe

Born on November 25, 1887, in Paterson, NJ Louis V. Hinchliffe came from an illustrious family which gave Paterson two mayors, his uncle, John Hinchliffe, who also served as state senator, and John V. Hinchliffe, his brother. His father, James C. Hinchliffe, is active in the civic, cultural, and business life of Paterson.

The young Hinchliffe was educated in the Paterson public schools and then went to Fordham Preparatory School, and then entered Fordham University. Later, he would study law at the New York Law School. He opened an office for himself in the United Bank Building and took an active interest in politics early on. He was a candidate for the Assembly on the Democratic ticket, and in 1916 he was elected a Delegate to the Democratic National Convention. He organized the Passaic Democratic Club in 1916 and was unanimously elected president.

Hinchliffe was appointed by Justice Charles C. Black to the preliminary Passaic County Parks Commission. The commission was empowered to hire the most prestigious landscape architects and planners in the United States – the Olmsted Brothers firm. This Commission had the authorization to spend up to \$10,000 in the creation of a survey. Following the lead of Essex and Union Counties, the commission petitioned the firm to prepare a master plan to certify the public need for a park system, evaluate potential sites to be acquired for parkland, and prepare a report that could be used to generate public support. The firm's report was submitted to the commissioners on July 9,

1927. In the report, they identified the purpose for the investment of public funds in the creation of Passaic County's Park system was "to provide for the happiness and well-being of people..." and that "no other public expenditure tends to appreciate in value with the passage of time, as do other public works."

The preliminary commission filed their report advocating for a county parks system with Justice Charles Black on September 10, 1927. Justice Black issued an order directing the question of a permanent commission with the authority to establish a county parks system to a referendum vote at the next General Election on November 8, 1927. The referendum was passed, and the preliminary commission issued their final report to the Supreme Court and submitted their resignations.

On November 18, 1927, Justice Black appointed Robert D. Benson, Garret A. Hobart, Louis V. Hinchliffe, LeGrand Parish, and William B. Gourley to serve without compensation as a permanent Passaic County Park Commission. At their reorganization meeting on September 3, 1927, Hinchliffe was elected treasurer of the permanent Passaic County Parks Commission.

Hinchliffe served as a Judge of the District Court and Passaic County Court for 23 years. He practiced law in Paterson about 48 years. During his third term, Judge Joseph A. Delaney retired from the County Court and Hinchliffe was appointed as Delaney's successor in 1947. He was given another five-year term in 1952 and remained on the bench until 1957 when he retired.