

HISTORY OF THE HAMILTON COUNTY PARK POLICE

The history of the Hamilton County Park Police was written in 1980 by Rick Greer, chief of the Park Rangers. The history was the lead story in the 50th anniversary park district newsletter.

“When Sharon Woods was established in 1932 as the first park of the Hamilton County Park District, one individual was employed to handle the maintenance, security and service duties. Later, department heads were deputized by the Hamilton County Sheriff who authorized them to handle the security of the parks in addition to handling their other full time duties. As security officers, their main function was to make sure all park buildings were secure. Following acquisition of Sharon Woods in 1931 and 1932, the first night watchman or policeman was hired and deputized by the Hamilton County Sheriff, Asa Butterfield. In October of 1932, a second night watchman was hired. The two watchmen were issued leather jackets and 38 caliber pistols. In 1933, hats, badges and shirts were issued. In 1936, the Park District had a Police Captain for their park policemen. Pickup trucks were used as police cruisers and for general park maintenance. The first ranger patrol boat was purchased in 1938.

In 1940, Ohio State Examiners approved purchase of the first complete uniforms for the Park Police. In 1945, the Hamilton County Park District Commissioners ... established the Hamilton County Park District Ranger Department. In 1952, radios were purchased ...the Hamilton County Park District became the first park district in the state of Ohio to initiate twenty-four hour patrol.”

The Hamilton County Park District has only had four chiefs since formalizing the ranger department into an independent law enforcement agency in 1973. They are as follows:

- 1. Ross Lowe - 1973 to 1977**
- 2. Bob Mason - 1977 to 1979**
- 3. Clell Bakkew - 1979 to 1983**
- 4. Rick Greer - 1983 to present**