

LYDIA D. BUDER PARK

PARK HISTORY

The original tract of 139 or 140 acres was given to the City of St. Louis in 1917 and 1918 by Gustavus A. Buder and his wife Lydia for use as a bathing beach and other park purposes. Because the City never developed the property as required, G. A. Buder provided in his will that his executors reclaim it. He died in April 1954, and that December, G. A. Buder, Jr. was able to deed it to St. Louis County. The deed stipulates that the park is “to be named and at all times known as Lydia D. Buder Park.”

The area is located on the south bank of the Meramec River across from Valley Park. (Meramec may be is an Indian word meaning “catfish.”) Part of the original land was lost with the construction of Interstate 44, and the park was split into the upper area on the hill, now called Buder South, and lower area close to the river. In the early 1960's, the radio controlled model plane flying field and polo field were constructed.

Using funds from the 1969 Bond Issue, Buder South was developed (shelters, playground, tennis courts) and lower Buder facilities were upgraded. These new facilities were completed and dedicated in 1972.

1977 Bond Issue funds were used to purchase the property immediately adjacent to highway 141 and the Meramec River that is now used, in part, for an archery range. In 1982 in-holding lots and flood damaged cottages were acquired through 1362 FEMA Flood Buyout Program. Land acquisitions from 1979 to 1985 totaled about 61 acres. Condemnation proceedings at that time convey to county “a fee simple interest for public park purposes.” More land has also been acquired west of the original park.

In the 1993 and 1994 floods, part of Larkin Williams Road was washed out and has never reopened. A trail is being developed to link Buder to Unger Park and the Fenton trail system. The Buder South Master Plan has been completed by Parsons HBA in 2003 and the playground rebuilt.

Buder Park is included in the Meramec River Greenway.

GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS BUDER

Gustavis A. Buder was a lawyer, newspaper publisher, and philanthropist. He was born in Cairo, Illinois in 1871, attended Central High School, and earned a law degree from Washington University. He married Lydia D. Feurbacher in 1899. Gustavus Buder served as president of the *St. Louis Times*, and was one of the founders of the Municipal Opera. He was on the board of the St. Louis Public Library Association and was a president of the St. Louis Park and Playground Association. He gave several park and playground sites to the city of St. Louis. In 1912 Buder and his wife gave land at the corner of Ewing and Rutger to the city for the establishment of Buder Playground, in memory of his mother, Susan R. Buder, who died in 1909. In 1917, he donated seventy acres of land fronting on the Meramec River opposite Valley Park. The following year he added another 70 acres to this tract. Today the land is Buder Park.