

# August Meyer

Parks and Boulevards Leader  
1851-1905

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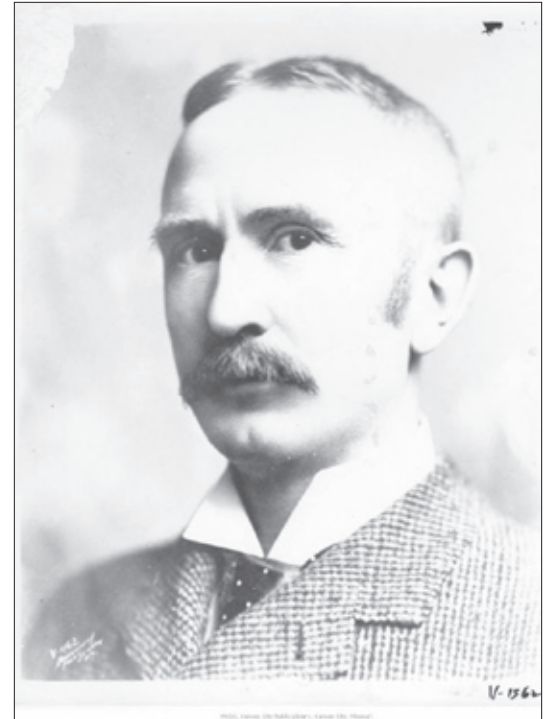
by Janice Lee

August Meyer was born to German parents in St. Louis in 1851. He studied mining and metallurgy in Europe and then made a fortune as a mining engineer in Colorado, before coming to this area in 1882. Once here, he helped turn a small smelting plant in the Argentine area of Kansas City, Kansas, into one of the major metal treatment plants in the country.

Meyer's driving enthusiasm, however, was for the improvement of Kansas City's aesthetics and quality of life. He believed that the city's early stone and brick urban neighborhoods were physically and morally unhealthy. The wave of urban revitalization projects of the City Beautiful Movement that swept the country in 1890s piqued his interest. He traveled throughout the United States and Europe to study parks and boulevard systems.

Meyer served as president of the city's first board of park commissioners, from the time it was established in 1892 until 1900. He worked closely with city improvement pioneers, such as *Kansas City Star* owner William Rockhill Nelson and the noted landscape architect George Kessler, to plan and promote the current parks and boulevards system. Meyer and Kessler drafted an 1893 plan that envisioned boulevards and parks working together to not only create a green refuge for the city, but also to enhance real estate values and attract fine residences and businesses. By using his engineering training to help transform bleak urban areas into green spaces of parks and park-lined boulevards, Meyer influenced the residential character of Kansas City for decades to come.

August Meyer died at age 54 on December 1, 1905. His estate at 4415 Warwick is now part of the Kansas City Art Institute campus; his 26-room mansion is known as Vanderslice Hall, the Institute's administration building. Kansas City's major thoroughfare of Meyer Boulevard bears his name.



## Sources

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