

# Edward Buehler Delk

Architect

1885-1956

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by Susan Jezak Ford

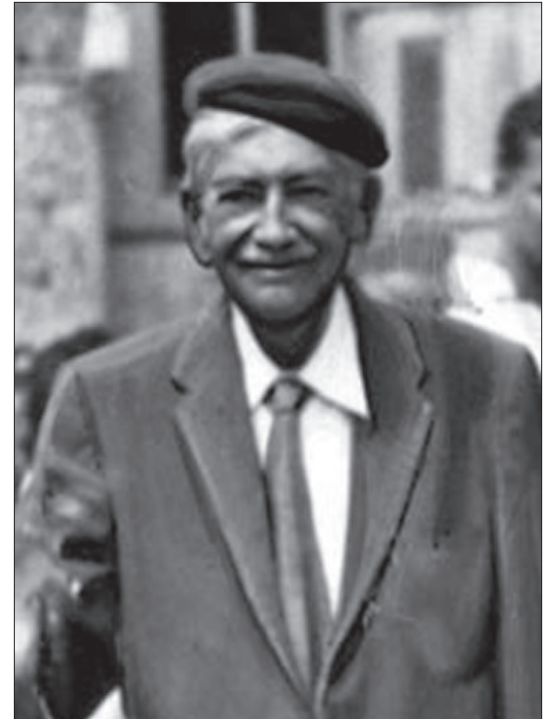
If you have ever admired the towers, tiles, and colors of the Country Club Plaza, you have appreciated the early work of Edward Buehler Delk, an architect who came to Kansas City in 1920 to help design the Plaza.

Delk was born in Schoharie, New York, in 1885 and attended college at the University of Pennsylvania, where he graduated in 1907. In 1908 he toured Italy and Greece for four months with nine other young men to study Greek and Roman architecture. After serving in the Air Force during World War I, he stayed in Europe to study city planning at the University of London.

Delk accepted an invitation to serve as Consulting Architect for the J. C. Nichols Company in 1920. To plan the Plaza, he traveled to South America, Mexico, and Spain with design team members George E. Kessler and the Hare & Hare Company. Two of Delk's first Plaza buildings were the Tower and the Mill Creek Building at 47<sup>th</sup> Street and J. C. Nichols Parkway. The details on these buildings reflect Spanish and Mexican architecture. This style was continued by later Plaza architects. The Plaza is the first shopping district in the country designed especially for automobiles.

In 1940 Delk worked with famous architect Frank Lloyd Wright on two Kansas City buildings. The first was a small home for the Clarence Sondern family near Roanoke Park. The second, and more well known, was the Community Christian Church at 46<sup>th</sup> and Main. Wright wanted to use a design and materials that the Kansas City building inspection department refused to approve. Wright eventually resigned from the project and Delk modified the design so that it could meet city codes and be completed.

During his long career as an architect, Delk designed many large homes, churches, and other types of buildings in Kansas City and Oklahoma, including the open-air Starlight Theater in 1950-51, located in Swope Park.



**Sources**

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