



MIKE W. BUTLER

1911-2001

Businessman

Austin Environmental Council 1970-1973

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Mike W. Butler was my grandfather and I remember him as the “consummate Texan.” I should not have been surprised to learn, many years after he passed away, of his early involvement with the Austin Environmental Council. I found letters in his files that fought zoning and development projects in the name of flood control, but the real goal was conserving green space and protecting Barton Creek. I was proud to learn of his involvement in the preservation of Barton Creek, among other issues of the day.

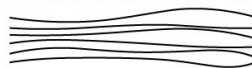
Mike was an industrialist and born into a brick manufacturing family (Elgin-Butler) founded in 1873 along the shores of the Colorado River in Austin. Butler bricks are all over Austin, even in the foundation of the Capitol. While thinking of him among environmentalists in the 1960s and 70s gives me a chuckle, I know that he valued green space and protecting Barton Creek from encroachment of development.

Another lasting contribution from my grandfather was to see that his grandfather’s wishes of the land on the south shore of the Colorado River (now Butler Metro Park, Toomey Park, Zach Scott, Long Center etc.) was acquired by the City for civic use, at no profit. This includes land where Barton Creek meets the Colorado River. Indeed, preservation was in the family as my grandmother Mary Butler served on the first Texas Historical Commission.

Although Mike was not a rabid environmentalist, far from it, he was pragmatic about economic growth, the environment, and preservation. His sense of duty, kindness, fairness, and civility seem a lost characteristic these days. I wish more folks that claimed to be “consummate Texans” exhibited more of that ethos.

-remembrance courtesy of grandson Brian Hunt

BARTON CREEK



TIME STREAM