

Bernadette Spitz

From: Beverly Abell [babel@tylertexas.com]
Sent: Wednesday, May 27, 2009 12:05 PM
To: Bernadette Spitz; Heather Nick
Subject: FW: Half Mile of History

Here you go.

Beverly Abell

Director, Tyler Main Street Program
PO Box 158 / Tyler, TX / 75710
903-593-6905
www.heartoftyler.com

From: Andy Bergfeld [mailto:abergfeld@bergfeldrealty.com]
Sent: Wednesday, May 27, 2009 12:00 PM
To: 'Beverly Abell'
Subject: RE: Half Mile of History

Looks fine.

From: Beverly Abell [mailto:babel@tylertexas.com]
Sent: Wednesday, May 27, 2009 11:05 AM
To: 'Andy Bergfeld'
Subject: RE: Half Mile of History
Importance: High

Here 'tis:

RUDOLPH BERGFELD
1855 -1930

The young entrepreneur arrived in Tyler in 1878, with interests ranging from saloons, banking, and real estate. Developed city's first residential subdivision in 1897. Chamber of Commerce Director for 30 years.

Beverly Abell

Director, Tyler Main Street Program
PO Box 158 / Tyler, TX / 75710
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From: Andy Bergfeld [mailto:abergfeld@bergfeldrealty.com]
Sent: Wednesday, May 27, 2009 10:55 AM
To: 'Beverly Abell'
Subject: RE: Half Mile of History

Please send it to me and I will approve.

5/27/2009

Andy

From: Beverly Abell [mailto:babel@tylertexas.com]
Sent: Wednesday, May 27, 2009 10:42 AM
To: 'Andy Bergfeld'
Subject: Half Mile of History
Importance: High

Hi, Andy!

Have you had a chance to review and approve your family Half Mile of History marker verbiage? They can't order the marker until your approval comes in, and I am worried that there won't be enough lead time soon to get the thing back in time for June 25.

If you've already gotten back with the city, then just ignore me. Ha.

B

Beverly Abell
Director, Tyler Main Street Program
PO Box 158 / Tyler, TX / 75710
903-593-6905
www.heartoftyler.com

5/27/2009

423 W. Ferguson Street
(903) 531-1175 Office
(903) 531-1170 FAX



MAILING ADDRESS
P.O. Box 2039
Tyler, Texas 75710

CITY OF TYLER
Planning & Zoning

FILE COPY

March 27, 2009

Julius A. Bergfeld
2001 S. Donnybrook
Tyler, Texas 75701

RE: Nomination of Rudolph Bergfeld for Half Mile of History program.

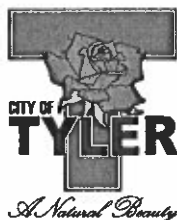
Dear Mr. Bergfeld:

The Tyler City Council, at their regular meeting on Wednesday, March 25, 2009, voted 7-0 to approve your request to designate Rudolph Bergfeld as a Half Mile of History recipient. We will contact you regarding placement of the stone.

If you have questions concerning the Council's decision, please contact the Planning and Zoning Department at (903) 531-1175.

Sincerely,

Barbara Holly, AICP
Director of Planning



**CITY OF TYLER, TEXAS
CITY COUNCIL COMMUNICATION**



Agenda Number:

Date: March 25, 2009

Subject: Request that the City Council consider designating Rudolph Bergfeld as a Half Mile of History recipient.

Page: 1 of 2

Item Reference: Half Mile of History Preservation Program

The Half Mile of History is a cultural and historic landmark program paying tribute to people, places and events that have contributed to the City of Tyler and/or Smith County. The Half Mile of History is a permanent, outdoor walk-around loop that covers an approximate one-half mile stretch of sidewalk surrounding the square in the heart of downtown Tyler. People, places and events chosen for the Half Mile of History are honored with a commemorative plaque placed in the sidewalk.

One of the responsibilities of the Tyler Historical Preservation Board is to recommend people, places and events to be included in the Half Mile of History Preservation Program. On March 4, 2009, the Tyler Historical Preservation Board voted unanimously to recommend Rudolph Bergfeld for inclusion in the Half Mile of History Preservation Program. A brief narrative follows.

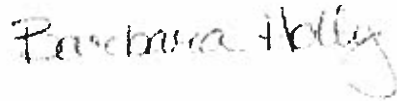
Mr. Rudolph Bergfeld was born in Tyler on August 1, 1855, to immigrants from Bremen, Germany. The family business was jewelry making, however that did not suit Rudolph, and at the age of 23, in 1878, he left his parent's home in St. Louis and arrived in Tyler, Texas. He opened a saloon in Tyler's downtown square. This was the beginning of many entrepreneurial successes. In addition to owning several saloons, he began amassing real estate in Tyler, Dallas, Houston, and Wichita Falls. Much of the property was primarily city lots; one of the first subdivisions was the Durst and Bergfeld Addition in 1897. This subdivision was the beginning of the Azalea Residential District.

Rudolph was instrumental in the creation of the second opera house for Tyler, the Grande Opera House in 1887. In another entrepreneurial endeavor, Rudolph turned his interests to banking, in the 1890's Bergfeld Loan & Trust was started. The Bergfeld Loan & Trust merged with City National Bank in the early 1900's to become Citizens National Bank. Rudolph served as director of the Tyler Chamber of Commerce for 30 years. As growth continued for Tyler, Rudolph continued to plat subdivisions that stretched the city proper.

Rudolph was known as a humble man and treated men equally without regard to wealth or class. Upon his death on May 31, 1930, the citizens turned out in full support of this generous and talented man in what is recalled as the largest funeral in Tyler. Every business was reported to have closed and the service at Christ Episcopal Church was attended by record numbers. He is buried at Oakwood Cemetery and maintains the distinction of having been the largest property owner in Smith County.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Tyler Historical Preservation Board recommends by a vote of 7-0 that the City Council designate Rudolph Bergfeld as a Half Mile of History recipient.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barbara Holly".

Drafted/Recommended By: **Barbara Holly**
Department Leader

Edited/Submitted By:
City Manager



**NOMINATION FORM
HALF MILE OF HISTORY**

Section A: Nomination Information

Name of Nominated person, place or event: Rudolph Bergfeld

The nominee is being honored for outstanding contributions in the area(s) of (please check all that apply):

<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment/Media	<input type="checkbox"/> Philanthropy
<input type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Government/Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Arts and Culture	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science
<input type="checkbox"/> Aviation	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention/Innovation	<input type="checkbox"/> Sports
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Business/Corporate Leadership	<input type="checkbox"/> Law	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community Service	<input type="checkbox"/> Medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Oil/Gas	

Section B: Nominator's Information

Name of person making nomination: Julius A. Bergfeld

Address: 2001 S. Donnybrook

City: Tyler State: TX Zip: 75701

Daytime telephone: 903-592-1032 Email: abergfeld@bergfeldrealty.com

Relationship to nominated individual:

GG Grandson

Nominated Individual's year of death: 1930

Section C: Narrative

The narrative section of the application is the most important. It is the primary source of information judges use to make their selection of new inductees. Two (2) typed pages of 12-point type is the maximum acceptable length of the narrative. Any additional material will be referred to only for verification of accuracy of the nomination. No submitted materials will be returned.

The narrative section must contain an explanation of the nominee's enduring contribution that make this person/place/event worthy of the honor. Please describe the impact the nominee has had on the community, county, region, nation and/or world. For Individuals, please include any honors earned by the nominee as well as a list of organizations in which the nominee has been involved. Also, please indicate their educational background as well as the length of time the individual has lived in Smith County. Inclusion of photos is preferred but optional. Do not send original photos. All submitted materials will become property of the City of Tyler and its Historical Preservation Board.

Please submit nominations to:

City of Tyler Historical Preservation Board
Attention: Half Mile of History
P.O. Box 2039
Tyler, Texas 75710

Legal rev. 2/18/08

RECEIVED
FEB 13 2009
PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Rudolph Bergfeld (1855-1930)

Upon Rudolph Bergfeld's death, the newspaper article described him as, "identified with every forward movement and possibly was responsible for the growth of this city [Tyler, Texas] and section more than any other one man who had ever lived here..."⁽¹⁾ Born August 01, 1855 to immigrants from Bremen, Germany, he was raised in St. Louis, Missouri. At age 14, Rudolph was sent to Germany to apprentice with his uncle at the family jewelry business. Krous-Bergfeld Company was a well-known maker of the crown jewels and minter of German coins⁽²⁾. The jewelry business, however, did not suit young Rudolph and in 1874 at 19, he returned to his parents' home in St. Louis to work for Budweiser Brewery as a bookkeeper. Four years later in 1878 Rudolph Bergfeld traveled to Tyler, Texas where he opened a saloon on Tyler's downtown square. At age 23, Bergfeld's Saloon was the first of a long history of entrepreneurial successes.. On June 28, 1880 Rudolph Bergfeld married Carolina "Lena" Pabst. They moved into the home he built for her on East Line Street and stayed at that residence until they moved into their final residence at what is now 320 S. Broadway⁽³⁾.

In addition to owning several saloons, Bergfeld began amassing real estate in Tyler, Dallas, Houston and Wichita Falls. Between 1882 and 1900, Rudolph Bergfeld's name appears more than eighty times in county deed records as the "grantee of property, primarily city lots"⁽⁵⁾. The Durst and Bergfeld Addition was established in 1897 and marked the beginning of the Azalea Residential Historic District. In the National Register of Historic Places Nomination for the Azalea District, it states that, "The extended Bergfeld family platted more property in the district than any other individual or group

and is arguable the most important of the individuals contributing to the district.”

Property acquisition, however, was not his sole focus and in 1887 Tyler’s second opera house, the Grande Opera House, was built with the assistance of business partner John Durst. Bergfeld continued his commitment to developing the city of Tyler and contributed time and money to the railroad industry. As a result the Alexandria, Tyler, & Northwestern Railroad was incorporated in 1889.

Ever the intrepid entrepreneur, Rudolph then turned his interest to banking. In the mid 1890s Bergfeld Loan & Trust was realized. Bergfeld Loan & Trust continued to be successful and in 1900 merged with City National Bank to create Citizens National Bank. The bank was purported to be “one of the strongest [banking] institutions in the state” ⁽⁷⁾ and had Bergfeld acting as Vice President and Cashier. The same year as the opening of Citizens National Bank, the Tyler Chamber of Commerce was formed and Rudolph Bergfeld was appointed director. He served in this capacity for the next thirty years.

In 1901, Rudolph retired his post as Vice President and Cashier from the Citizens National Bank to open a second building and loan company. This company was opened downtown, on the southeast corner of Spring and Ferguson. Architecturally, this building was one of Tyler’s gems. The next several years saw continued success for Bergfeld and in 1905 his second Bergfeld Loan & Trust Company consolidated with Farmers & Merchants National Bank. This was later consolidated by Citizens National Bank in 1908. Rudolph Bergfeld was again nominated Vice President of the Board of Directors and served until 1930.

The Durst and Bergfeld Addition of 1897 was re-platted to form the South Park Heights subdivision in 1906 and continued Rudolph’s development of land south of

downtown. This year also marked the beginning of Rudolph Bergfeld's term as a member of the Board of Education of Tyler Public Schools which continued until 1924 ⁽⁸⁾. Three years later, Bergfeld sold 8.32 acres of land along South Broadway Avenue to the City of Tyler for \$1 under the conditions that the land be turned into a public park and that the "improvements begin no later than six months from the date of the contract" ⁽¹⁰⁾. The land reverted back to Bergfeld's ownership after the city failed to take action to improve the land as a public park. In 1913 the city once again purchased the land for a nominal fee and named it Bergfeld Park in Rudolph's honor.

The 1920s and 1930s in Tyler were marked by large growth in both population and in wealth as the oil industry boomed in East Texas. Subdivisions south of downtown were in high demand and Rudolph Bergfeld continued his development of the historic Azalea District. From 1924 to 1930, Bergfeld platted and re-platted subdivisions to accommodate the increased demand for homes and property outside of the city proper. The homes sold quickly and increased the Bergfeld wealth substantially. Noted for his "honesty and his desire for anything that was an improvement for Tyler," ⁽¹¹⁾ Rudolph Bergfeld remained humble and treated men equally without regard to wealth or class.

During May of 1930, Bergfeld caught ill and was never able to fully recover. Upon his death on May 31, 1930, the citizens turned out in full support of this generous and talented man in what is recalled as the largest funeral in Tyler. Every business was reported to have closed and the service at Christ Episcopal Church was attended by record numbers. He is buried at Oakwood Cemetery and maintains the distinction of having been the largest property owner in Smith County.

