

## Bernadette Spitz

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**From:** twoosborns@suddenlink.net  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 31, 2008 5:20 PM  
**To:** Bernadette Spitz  
**Subject:** RE: Half Mile of History stone plaque language

Fine by me. Do you need a picture or anything from me.

Can hardly wait to see it in place. And, if you want some, you know, exposure in the paper, give me a call.

JD Osborn

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Bernadette Spitz [mailto:bspitz@tylertexas.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 31, 2008 11:54 AM  
**To:** twoosborns@suddenlink.net  
**Cc:** Barbara Holly  
**Subject:** Half Mile of History stone plaque language

Mr. Osborn:

I wanted to run this by you and see if you have any comments or suggestions concerning the language that will be put on the stone plaque before we order the stone plaque.

THOMAS BOOKER BUTLER  
1867-1919

Thomas Booker Butler served as Smith County Judge, and in the 7th Judicial District Court. In 1910, he founded the Tyler-Courier Times Newspaper and the Guaranty State Bank.

Thanks very much, Bernadette

Bernadette Spitz  
Senior Planner, Historic Preservation Officer  
City of Tyler  
903.531.1173  
bspitz@tylertexas.com

## HALF MILE OF HISTORY

**THOMAS BOOKER BUTLER**

1867-1919

Thomas Booker Butler served as Smith County Judge, along with serving in the 7th Judicial District Court. In 1910, he founded the Tyler-Courier Times Newspaper and the Guaranty State Bank later known as Regions Bank. He was a major contributor in many aspects of Tyler's business and government communities.



## **CITY OF TYLER COUNCIL COMMUNICATION**

**Agenda Number:** A-1

**Date:** May 28, 2008

**Subject:** Request that the City Council consider designating  
Mr. Thomas Booker Butler 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 will be 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 May 7, 2008, the Tyler Historical Preservation Board unanimously approved the recommendation of Thomas Butler Booker for inclusion in the Half Mile of History Preservation Program. A brief narrative follows.

Thomas Booker Butler was born January 14, 1867, in the Starrville community of Smith County, Texas, the son of Sallie F. Holt and James Wiley Butler. Mr. Butler attended Tyler public schools after the family moved to town and was later a student at Tyler Academy. After leaving school, he worked as a deputy sheriff under his father. He later turned to the legal profession and without college training, he prepared and was admitted to the bar in 1887 and formed a partnership with H.B. Marsh and N.W. Finley.

Mr. Butler was appointed Smith County judge in 1894. In 1902 he was appointed to fill the unexpired term as judge of the 7<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court in Smith County. In 1910, Judge Butler acquired the Tyler Courier-Times, Tyler's longtime afternoon newspaper. Under the leadership of Judge Butler, the Courier-Times set an early pattern of community leadership.

**Agenda Number: A-1**

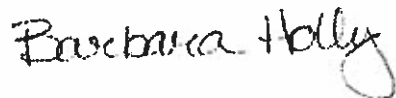
**Page: 2 of 2**

During the first four years of his ownership, the newspaper led a successful campaign to construct a modern streetcar system with seven miles of track and was highly instrumental in the abolition of the old ward system of city government. It was replaced in 1915 by the city manager form of government, making Tyler the fifth city in the state with this new form of municipal administration. Ownership of the newspaper remains in the Butler family. It is now in its 98<sup>th</sup> year of family ownership.

Judge Butler, a Tyler attorney and respected business man, has been described as a “many-sided man” who was active in banking, business, church, legal endeavors, and newspaper publishing. His contributions to the City of Tyler and Smith County are truly commendable.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

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



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

**Edited/Submitted By:**  
**City Manager**

MAR 31 2008



NOMINATION FORM  
HALF MILE OF HISTORY

**Section A: Nomination Information**

Name of Nominated person, place or event: Thomas Booker Butler

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

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Entertainment/Media	<input type="checkbox"/> Philanthropy
<input type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Government/Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion
<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Law	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community Service	<input type="checkbox"/> Medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Oil/Gas	

**Section B: Nominator's Information**

Name of person making nomination: J D Osborn

Address: 640 S. OAKLAND AVE

City: Tyler State: Texas Zip: 75701

Daytime telephone: 903-596-6260 Email: twoosborns@suddenlink.net

Relationship to nominated individual: None

Nominated Individual's year of death: April 10, 1919

**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

**THOMAS BOOKER BUTLER**  
**JANUARY 14, 1867 – APRIL 10, 1919**

Thomas Booker Butler was born January 14, 1867, in the Starrville community of Smith County, the son of Sallie F. Holt and James Wiley Butler. His father served as Smith County sheriff in the 1870s and was a deputy United States Marshal and U. S. District Court clerk in Tyler.

His mother was the daughter of Col. Thomas B. Holt, a well-known planter and one of Smith County's early settlers.

Following a 1910 fire that destroyed the production facility of the local newspaper, Thomas Booker Butler acquired the newspaper November 18, 1910. The company traces its roots to 1877 when two brothers, L. M. Green and J. P. Green, established the weekly Courier. The Courier was converted to a daily newspaper in 1882.

A public stock subscription in 1906 helped pave the way for the consolidation of the Daily Courier and another local newspaper, the Weekly Times, creating The Tyler Courier-Times, Tyler's longtime afternoon newspaper.

Thomas Booker Butler, a Tyler attorney and respected business man, has been described as a "many-sided man" who was active in banking, business, church, legal endeavors and newspaper publishing.

As a boy, he often spent time on the 1,100-acre farm established in 1853 in Starrville by his grandfather, Col. William Booker Butler Sr., who was known as Booker Butler.

Thomas Booker Butler attended Tyler public schools after the family moved to town and was later a student at Tyler Academy. After leaving school, he worked as a deputy sheriff under his father.

Butler later turned to the legal profession and, without college training, prepared for admission to the bar by working in the law offices of James S. Hogg and H. B. Marsh.

In 1887, Butler was admitted to the bar and formed a partnership with Marsh and N. W. Finley.

On December 26, 1889, he married Sallie Cain in the Cain home at 410 W. Erwin St., which is now the site of the newspaper offices. The Butlers had four children, Carrie Lee Butler Bothwell, Sarah Butler, Emma Eloise Butler Clyde and T. B. Butler, Jr.

Butler was appointed Smith County judge in 1894. He served one term and returned to private law practice at the law firm of Butler & Lasseter.

In 1902, Butler was appointed by Gov. Joseph Sayers to fill an unexpired term as judge of the 7<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court in Smith County. After filling the term, Butler returned to private practice, this time at Fitzgerald & Butler.

Butler later moved to Dallas to serve as president and business manager of the Baptist Standard, a publication of the Southern Baptist denomination. During his 18 months there, Butler was credited "with putting the paper on a sound financial basis, and increasing its subscription list from 20,000 to 30,000," according to an article in the Chronicles of Smith County, Texas.

After being told he was diabetic and had two years to live, Butler left the Baptist publication and returned to Tyler to get his affairs in order, family members said.

In those days, there was no medical knowledge of how to treat diabetes. Insulin was first used in 1922, three years after his death. Butler actually lived about 12 more years and achieved some of his greatest accomplishments during that time. He retired from practicing law in 1910 in order to devote more time to his business interests.

"The History of Texas and Texans" says Butler "had demonstrated his success as a dealer and trader, and had amassed, chiefly through the medium of real estate, a competency sufficient to permit him to engage in financial pursuits."

His major pursuit was organizing Guaranty State Bank which began in 1910 with a capital of \$100,000. Butler served as the bank's president until retiring October 24, 1918, due to his failing health. Over the years, the bank evolved into Citizens National Bank, Citizens First National Bank and what is now the Regions Bank in downtown Tyler.

Butler also served as president of Burks-Walker Furniture Co., was a director at the East Texas Investment Co., the Swann Wholesale Furniture Co. and the Commercial Club of Tyler. He also owned a half-interest in the Tyler Hardware Store.


"Under the leadership of Judge Butler, the Courier-Times set an early pattern of community leadership," according to an historical account in a company publication. "During the first four years of his ownership, the newspaper led a successful campaign to construct a modern streetcar system with seven miles of track and was highly instrumental in the abolition of the old ward system of city government, it being replaced in 1915 by the city manager form of government, making Tyler the fifth city in the state with this new form of municipal administration."

Ownership of the newspaper remains in the Butler family. It is now in its 98<sup>th</sup> year of family ownership.

# MEMORANDUM

Planning and Zoning  
423 W. Ferguson  
Tyler, TX. 75702  
(903) 531- 1175 (Office)  
(903) 531-1170 (Fax)

**To:** Historic Preservation Board Members

**From:** Bernadette Spitz, Historic Preservation Officer   
City of Tyler

**Date:** April 29, 2008

**RE:** May meeting

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**Board Members:**

We have received the first application for the Half Mile of History. Mr. J. D. Osborn, the person making the nomination, will be at the meeting to answer any questions.

Thank you and if you need anything else feel free to call me at 903-531-1173.



MAR 31 2008



**NOMINATION FORM  
HALF MILE OF HISTORY**

**Section A: Nomination Information**

Name of Nominated person, place or event: Thomas Booker Butler

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

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Entertainment/Media	<input type="checkbox"/> Philanthropy
<input type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Government/Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion
<input 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
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**Section B: Nominator's Information**

Name of person making nomination: J D Osborn

Address: 640 S. Oakland Ave

City: Tyler State: Texas Zip: 75701

Daytime telephone: 903-596-6260 Email: twoosborns@suddenlink.net

Relationship to nominated individual:  
None

Nominated Individual's year of death: April 10, 1919

**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.

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**Please submit nominations to:**  
City of Tyler Historical Preservation Board  
Attention: Half Mile of History  
P.O. Box 2039  
Tyler, Texas 75710

**City of Tyler  
Council Communication**



**Agenda Number:**

**Date: May 28, 2008**

**Subject: Consider designating Mr. Thomas Butler Booker 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 will be honored with a commemorative plaque placed in the sidewalk.

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Thomas Booker Butler was born January 14, 1867, in the Starrville community of Smith County, Texas, the son of Sallie F. Holt and James Wiley Butler. Mr. Butler attended Tyler public schools after the family moved to town and was later a student at Tyler Academy. After leaving school, he worked as a deputy sheriff under his father. He later turned to the legal profession and without college training, he prepared and was admitted to the bar in 1887 and formed a partnership with H.B. Marsh and N.W. Finley.

Mr. Butler was appointed Smith County judge in 1894. In 1902 he was appointed to fill the unexpired term as judge of the 7<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court in Smith County. In 1910,

**Agenda Number:**

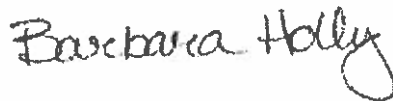
**Page: 2 of 2**

Judge Butler acquired the Tyler Courier-Times, Tyler's longtime afternoon newspaper. Under the leadership of Judge Butler, the Courier-Times set an early pattern of community leadership. During the first four years of his ownership, the newspaper led a successful campaign to construct a modern streetcar system with seven miles of track and was highly instrumental in the abolition of the old ward system of city government. It was replaced in 1915 by the city manager form of government, making Tyler the fifth city in the state with this new form of municipal administration. Ownership of the newspaper remains in the Butler family. It is now in its 98<sup>th</sup> year of family ownership.

Judge Butler, a Tyler attorney and respected business man, has been described as a "many-sided man" who was active in banking, business, church, legal endeavors, and newspaper publishing. His contributions to the City of Tyler and Smith County are truly commendable.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

The Tyler Historical Preservation Board recommends by a vote of 7-0 that the City Council designates Mr. Thomas Booker Butler as a Half Mile of History recipient.



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

**Edited/Submitted By:**  
**City Manager**

## HALF-MILE OF HISTORY

## Tyler Courier-Times Founder Butler Honored

By CINDY MALLETT  
Staff Writer

Thomas Booker Butler, founder of the *Tyler Courier-Times* and former judge of the 7th Judicial District Court in Smith County, is the second honoree in the city of Tyler's Half-Mile of History program.

Tyler City Council members unanimously approved adding Butler to the recently launched program, a permanent, outdoor half-mile loop that surrounds Tyler's downtown square. Stone plaques are placed in the sidewalk along the loop to commemorate significant people, places and events that have



**BUTLER**

impacted Tyler's history.

"This is a man who, although he only lived 52 years, was very influential in Tyler," said Planning Director Barbara Holly.

### Milestones

- Born: 1867 in Smith County
- 1870s: Served as Smith County Sheriff, Deputy U.S. Marshal and U.S. District Court Clerk
- 1894: Appointed Smith County judge
- 1902: Serves unexpired term as

- 7th Judicial District Court Judge
- 1910: Organized Guaranty State Bank, President until 1918
- 1910: Took over Daily Courier-Times
- 1914: Promoted modern street car system and helped bring about a city manager form of government
- Died: April 10, 1919

Butler was born in Smith County in 1867 to Sallie F. Holt and James Wiley Butler. The

See **BUTLER**, Page 6A

## BUTLER Continued From 1A

elder Butler served as Smith County Sheriff in the 1870s and went on to be a deputy U.S. Marshal and U.S. District court clerk in Tyler.

Butler attended Tyler public schools and Tyler Academy. After completing his education, he became a deputy sheriff under his father. Later he entered the legal field, passing the state bar exam without any college training. He'd learned the ropes by working in the law offices of H.B. Marsh and James S. Hogg, who eventually became the Texas attorney general and Texas governor.

In 1894, Butler was appointed to serve as Smith County judge. He served one term before returning to private practice.

In 1902, Gov. Joseph Sayers appointed Butler to fill an unexpired term as the 7th Judicial District Court judge. He served the remainder of that term and again returned to private practice.

Later, Butler moved to Dallas to serve as president and business manager for the Baptist Standard, a publica-

tion of the Southern Baptist denomination in Texas. He worked there for 18 months before learning he had diabetes — at the time, an untreatable disease.

In 1907, Butler returned to Tyler to get his affairs in order. He was given two years to live, but lived 12 more years. Local historians have said that in those 12 years, he made his greatest contributions to the city.

In 1910, Butler organized Guaranty State Bank and served as the bank's president until 1918. Over the years, the bank evolved into Citizens National Bank, Citizens First National Bank, and now Regions Bank in downtown Tyler.

He also took over the failing *Daily Courier-Times*, which began in 1877 and had suffered severe losses after a fire destroyed its production facility.

In 1914, four years after Butler bought the newspaper, he was credited with helping promote a successful modern street car system with seven miles of track in the city and with helping to replace an old ward system of city government with a newer city manager

form of government.

Butler died on April 10, 1919, and ownership of the newspaper passed to his wife and four children. The company has been under continuous family ownership and management since Butler's acquisition in 1910.

The *Tyler Morning Telegraph*, which featured expanded coverage of East Texas cities, debuted on Nov. 14, 1929. The *Courier-Times* continued to offer Tyler-focused news to subscribers within the city limits. The Sunday edition has since been re-named the *Tyler Courier-Times-Telegraph* while the daily edition keeps the original name, *Tyler Morning Telegraph*.

JD Osborn, who serves as vice president of administration for the T.B. Butler Publishing Co., which owns the newspaper, said he decided to nominate the founder as soon as he heard about the Half-Mile of History program at the annual Heart of Tyler Brick Award banquet.

"Immediately, T.B. Butler came to my mind because of what he did during

his time for our community," Osborn said. "The establishment of the newspaper continues to make a profound impact on our community today."

Although he works for the company that bears Butler's name, Osborn said he nominated the founder as a private citizen, and he encourages other Tyler residents to do the same.

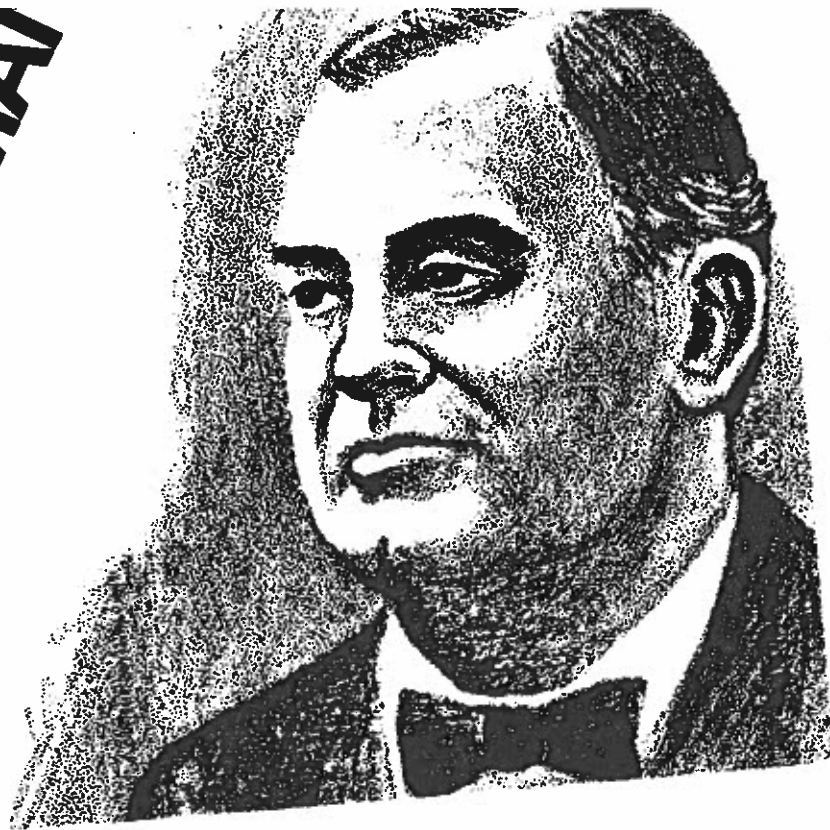
"It's an honor for me to have nominated him and to work for the family that is descended from him. I knew what I had to do as John Q. Citizen," Osborn said. "I encourage all citizens to step up and nominate those who they feel made an impact on our community."

The city's Historic Preservation Board manages the Half-Mile of History program, and nominating information can be found on the city's Web site, [www.cityoftyler.org](http://www.cityoftyler.org).

On the page for Planning and Zoning, there is a "Half-Mile of History" link that gives information on how to nominate a person to be included in the program.

# A MANY-SIDED MAJ

Thomas Booker Butle



Judge T. B. Butler's name remains familiar to Tyler and East Texas residents more than half a century after his death.

Thomas Booker Butler was born in the Starrville community of Smith County, 7 miles east of Tyler, on January 14, 1867. He died April 10, 1919, at the age of 52.

A multi-talented man, Judge Butler was recognized in his own time as demonstrating "a many-sidedness in business and professional channels that marked his peculiarly successful career." That assessment of Judge Butler was offered in the 1914 edition of "A History of Texas and Texans," published by the American Historical Society.

But it is not so much a successful career in law, in banking, or the business world, that has kept his name before the public. It is a publishing company, an acquisition of Judge Butler and associates in 1910 now known as T. B. Butler Publishing Co., Inc. The Butler firm today produces East Texas' leading daily newspapers - the Tyler Morning Telegraph, Tyler Courier-Times and Sunday Tyler Courier-Times-Telegraph.

There is much more to the Thomas B. Butler life story before that significant transaction. He spent his early years on the Starrville community farm where his pioneer ancestors had settled in 1853, coming to East Texas from Chambers County, Alabama, according to the Historical Society publication.

His grandfather was Colonel William Booker Butler, Sr., with whom Judge Butler shared his middle name. It was Colonel Butler, a Georgia native, who came from Alabama to spend a year establishing his farm before bringing his family in 1854 to a new home, three and one-half miles south of Starrville. This move is detailed in Sid S. Johnson's "Some Biographies of Old Settlers, Historical, Personal and Reminiscent," republished by the Smith County Historical Society in 1964.

His father was James Wiley Butler, who served as Smith County Sheriff in the 1870's, and later was a Deputy United States Marshal and then U. S. District Court Clerk in Tyler. His mother was the former Miss Sallie F. Holt, a daughter of Thomas B. Holt, one of the early settlers of Smith County.

Young Thomas spent his early years on the farm, but he attended Tyler public schools after the family moved to the city. He later was a student at the Tyler Academy. After leaving school he became a deputy sheriff under his father.

Not satisfied with being a deputy sheriff, Butler turned to the law profession and, without college training, prepared himself for his admission to the Bar in the offices of Hogg & Marsh. He was their student when those attorneys went to Austin, James S. Hogg as Attorney General and H. B. Marsh as his assistant. Hogg later served as Texas governor for two terms. Judge Butler was formally admitted to the Bar in 1887, and formed a partnership with Marsh and N. W. Finley.

It was during this period, on December 26, 1889, that Judge Butler was married to Miss Sallie Cain, a daughter of Robert M. and Carrie Cain, early settlers from Alabama. They were married in the Cain home which was located at the site of the present Tyler newspaper building, 410 West Erwin.

When Finley was appointed to the bench, Judge Butler continued as a member of the firm of Marsh & Butler until he received an appointment as Smith County Judge in 1894. He served in that post one term, and then returned to private practice. He then became associated with Elbert Lasseter in the firm of Butler & Lasseter, which later was joined by his brother, Lee, and the firm name became Butler, Lasseter & Butler.

In 1902, then Texas Governor Joseph Sayers appointed him Judge of the Seventh Judicial District. He served out an unexpired term, and then resumed his law practice, entering into partnership with Judge J. W. Fitzgerald, under the firm name of Fitzgerald & Butler. J. A. Bulloch later joined this association.

This firm went on for several years, but Judge Butler's association with it was interrupted when he moved to Dallas to become president and business manager of the Baptist Standard, publication of the Southern Baptist denomination. Judge Butler was credited with putting the paper on a sound financial basis, and increasing its subscription list from 20,000 to 30,000.

"A History of the Baptists of Texas," published in 1907, stated that "For a period of about 18 months, he (Judge Butler) was the president and business manager of the Baptist Standard. His connection with the paper was eminently satisfactory, and his retirement was voluntary, and for reasons purely personal."



*Mrs. Butler (Sallie Cain) in her wedding gown, 1889.*

Doctors had told him he was diabetic and had two years to live. So, he returned to Tyler to get his affairs in order and to make a will, his daughters recall.

He returned to private practice of law in Tyler once more, but in February 1910, according to the "History of Texas and Texans," he retired from active law practice to devote full time to his business interests. "He had demonstrated his success as a dealer and trader, and had amassed, chiefly through the medium of real estate, a competency sufficient to permit him to engage in financial pursuits," the 1914 publication said.

His major business involvement at this time was the organization of the Guaranty State Bank. Judge Butler organized the bank early in 1910 with a capital of \$100,000 and was elected president of the bank. W. D. Swann and A. P. Moore were vice-presidents and J. D. Shelton was cashier. Judge Butler was president of the bank until retiring October 24, 1918, due to ill health.

Guaranty State Bank merged on April 30, 1920 with the Citizens National Bank, later to become the Citizens First National Bank of Tyler.

In addition to banking interests, Judge Butler served as president of Burks-Walker Furniture Company. He also was a director at the East Texas Investment Company, the Swann Wholesale Furniture Company and the Commercial Club of Tyler.

"Actually, Papa's love was the bank," his third daughter, Emma (Mrs. Calvin Clyde, Sr.), said. He began his work day by walking from his home on East Reeves Street to the bank which was in the 100 block of West Ferguson, just west of the present Tyler Bank & Trust Co.

Shortly after noon he went to the newspaper offices for one hour and also spent an hour each afternoon at the Tyler Hardware Store on North Broadway (called Broad Street originally), in which he owned half interest.

He would ride home often in a horse-drawn surrey and later in automobiles which he never learned to drive. "He tried to learn to drive a few times," Mrs. Clyde said, "but everyone who went out with him said he had his mind on business too much."

He did buy motor vehicles, the first being a Cadillac, the 476th auto registered in Smith County, his middle daughter Sarah remembered. Hired help and his daughters, first including Carrie Lee (Bothwell), often drove Judge Butler.

Another of his new interests was the publishing company. A page one notice to the public in the Daily Courier-Times of November 18, 1910, told of the transaction. That notice reported that the Courier-Times Publishing Company, which had suffered severe losses from a fire, had made an offer to sell, received bids and effected a sale with Judge T. B. Butler and associates.

"By this transfer, it will enable Judge Butler and his associates to give to the reading public a better paper, and the advertisers a larger circulation than has been heretofore given them," the notice said. A subscription list was the sole asset remaining from the fire.

A brief history of the publishing company included in a Butler Co. publication traces the start of the firm back to 1877 when two brothers, L. M. and J. P. Green established the weekly Courier.

The Courier was converted to a daily newspaper in 1882. A public stock subscription in 1906 helped pave the way for a consolidation of the Daily Courier with the Weekly Times, providing the present-day name of the company's afternoon daily. The 100th anniversary of that paper was observed by the company in 1977.

The disastrous fire came in 1910, destroying the newspaper plant and tem-



Judge and Mrs. Butler, with their eldest daughter, Carrie Lee (Mrs. S.H. Bothwell of Tyler).



Judge Butler and Sunday School class of young ladies at the First Baptist Church in Tyler.

porarily the Courier-Times was forced to print in a job shop on sheets of paper not much larger than letterhead stationery. This was the point in history where T. B. Butler and associates came into the publishing picture.

"Under the leadership of Judge Butler, the Courier-Times set an early pattern of community leadership," the historical account in a company publication says. "During the first four years of his ownership, the newspaper led a successful campaign to construct a 'modern' streetcar system with seven miles of track and was highly instrumental in the abolition of the old ward system of city government, it being replaced in 1915 by the city manager form of government, making Tyler the fifth city in the state with this new form of municipal administration."

About this time, the newspaper began publishing in a building at 215 North College, presently occupied by Story-Wright. The Tyler newspapers were published at that location until 1950, when the move to the present location at 410 West Erwin was made.

By 1969, growth of the newspapers brought about an extensive addition to

the building, and continued growth since then has brought other expansion and equipment changes, the most significant being a switch from the "hot type" method to photo composition and offset printing in the early and mid-1970's. This was climaxed by installation of a new, 64-page Harris-Cottrell offset press in 1975.

The Morning Telegraph was founded on November 14, 1929 and it now is the larger of the two newspapers, due primarily to its extensive news coverage and circulation in East Texas while the Courier-Times is devoted to strong local news coverage and distribution limited to Tyler itself.

The newspapers are now owned by the three daughters of Judge Butler, Mrs. S. H. Bothwell, Mrs. Sarah Butler, and Mrs. Calvin Clyde, Sr. A grandson of Judge Butler, Calvin Clyde, Jr., is president and general manager of the T. B. Butler Publishing Co., Inc.

Judge Butler was a member of the Baptist church, and a "Short History of Tyler's First Baptist Church" chronicles that there was a five months period in 1904 when the church was without a pastor and visiting ministers



conducted Sunday services. "One Sunday afternoon in an evangelistic service led by T. B. Butler (editor and owner of the Tyler Courier-Times), eight were received by letter and 13 by baptism," that account reports.

Judge Butler was a deacon of First Baptist Church, superintendent of the Sunday School and taught a class for young women.

In January of 1966, Smith County paid tribute to the memory of Judge T. B. Butler by dedicating the county's new courthouse fountain plaza in his honor. Texas Governor John Connally was among those taking part in the dedication ceremony.

Then County Judge R. S. (Dick) Burruss, in dedicating the plaza, called Judge Butler "one of the giants of East Texas."

"Besides being an astute business man, he (Judge Butler) was a man of high ideals and integrity," Burruss said in his dedication talk. "He was a devoted family man, and had the love and respect of his associates and felt a personal responsibility for the well being of his employees."

Burruss noted in his talk that Judge Butler's only son, Tom Butler, Jr., was killed in an automobile accident in 1931. He was manager of the newspaper at the time.

The character of Judge Butler as seen by his peers is reflected in "The History of Texas Baptists of 1907" in which the following description is given: "Quiet and unobtrusive, gentle and yet solid, his character is worthy of study...In their combination, the qualities which enter into his character are exceptional. While a man of pronounced conviction, he is, at the same time, unusually conservative. Deliberate, he never hastens to a conclusion, but amply reviews every question in advance of an expression of judgment.

"The daily life of Judge Butler is one of uniform consistency, his conduct carrying with it its own transparent explanation. After he has followed a course of conduct, and has reached a conclusion, no explanation is ever necessary. Quietly working out his thought to a logical conclusion, it is done in such a way as never to awaken a doubt of the sincerity of Judge Butler.

"While thus quiet and sedate in his general bearing, which qualities lend gentleness to his tone of life, he is not wanting in aggressiveness, and yet his aggressiveness is tempered by such coolness and judicial deliberation, as always to awaken the respect of his opponents.

"Still, he is unconcessive in principle, and so coolly and pleasantly uncompromising, that he wins, without effort, the respect of all."



Mrs.  
Thomas  
Booker  
Butler

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