



**NOMINATION FORM
HALF MILE OF HISTORY**

Section A: Nomination Information

Name of Nominated person, place or event: Tyler Commercial College

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 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 type="checkbox"/> Business/Corporate Leadership	<input type="checkbox"/> Law	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input 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: Daniel A. Noteware, Jr.

Address: 141 Rowland Place

City: Tyler State: TX Zip: 75701

Daytime telephone: 903-363-2277 Email: dnoteware@gmail.com

Relationship to nominated individual: N/A

Nominated Individual's year of birth: N/A Nominated Individual's year of death: N/A

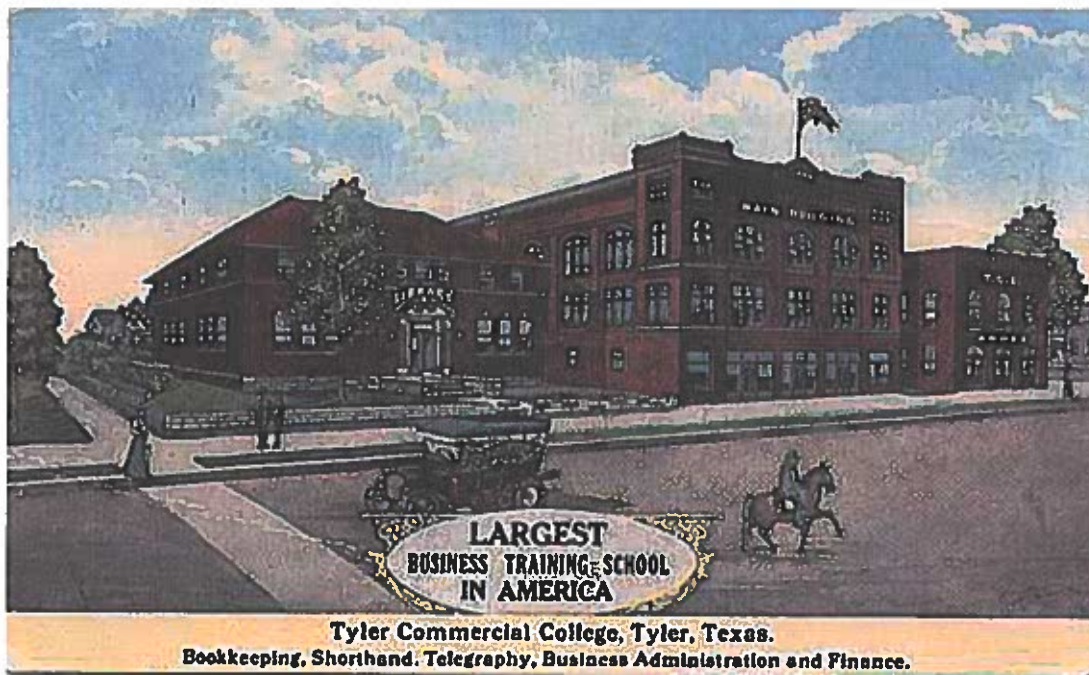
Section C: Narrative

Built 1904

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. The two-page narrative submittal must utilize size 12 Times New Roman font and be double spaced. Please include a recommended 25-30 word marker caption at the end 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



During the late 19th and early 20th century, one of the largest business training schools in the country was located right here in Tyler, Texas. In the late 1890's, brothers C.L. and Lockett Adair moved Whitesboro Teachers Normal College from Grayson County to Tyler and merged it with what was then called Tyler College. The school's original location was the Texas Fruit Palace complex located on the northwest corner of South Vine Avenue and West Front Street. When the Fruit Palace was destroyed by fire in 1903, plans began immediately for a new location. A three-story, 50,000-square foot brick building was built at 115 South College Avenue in 1904, right next to the newly-constructed Carnegie Public Library. The top two floors were used by the Tyler Commercial College, the school's new name, while Alexander Golenternek operated a furniture store on the ground level. An attached expansion was built in 1913 on the north side, in effect mirroring the first building's appearance and doubling its size.

According to a 1914 postcard featuring TCC, the college was "The Largest School of Bookkeeping, Business Training, Shorthand, Steno-typewriting, Typewriting, Cotton Classing, Telegraphy, Business Administration, and Finance in America." It had 2,000 students and 20 teachers. "Positions secured...Prepare to raise your own salary," the advertising piece offered.

A key figure associated with TCC was college president Henry Edward Byrne. Originally from Mississippi, Byrne developed his own system of shorthand, soon known in print ads as “the famous Byrne Simplified Shorthand.” Byrne claimed a graduate of his shorthand course would be able to take down words at 150 words a minute or the class would be free. Byrne also operated the Byrne Publishing Company in a building next door to the college, which printed all of TCC’s textbooks.

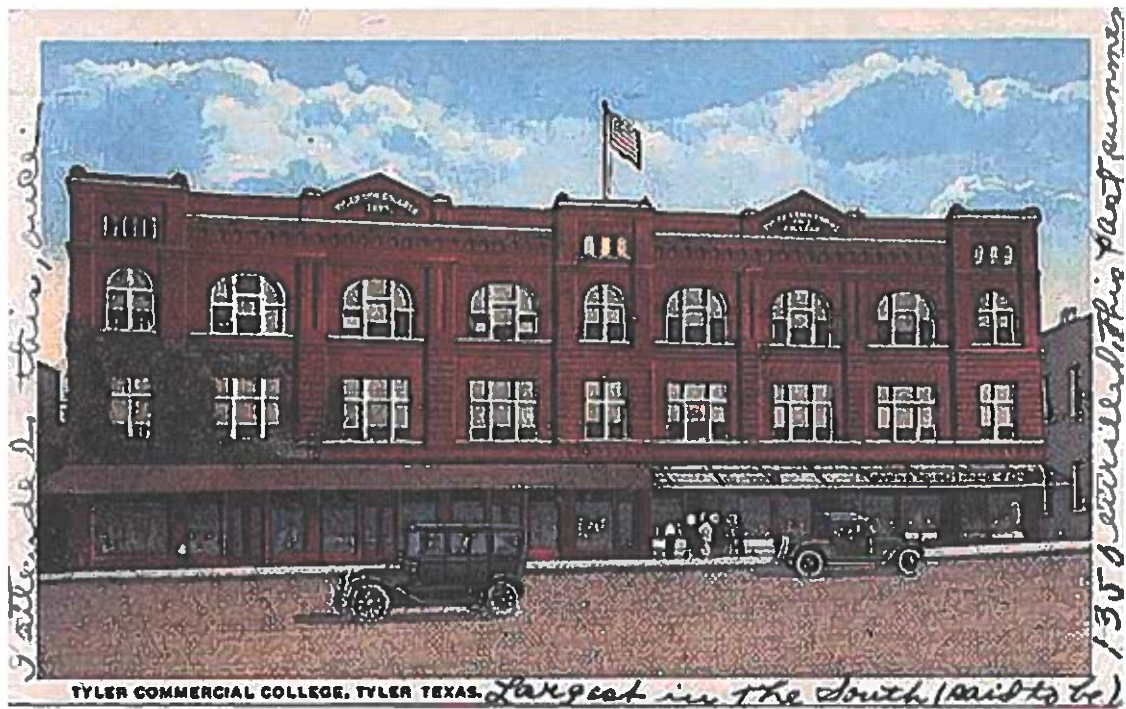
The college developed a well-respected petroleum geology department, world-renowned cotton grading department, and a radio station so students could learn about broadcasting. The college kept churning out students during the East Texas oil boom of the early 1930’s and saw even more students when it offered defense-related instruction during World War II.

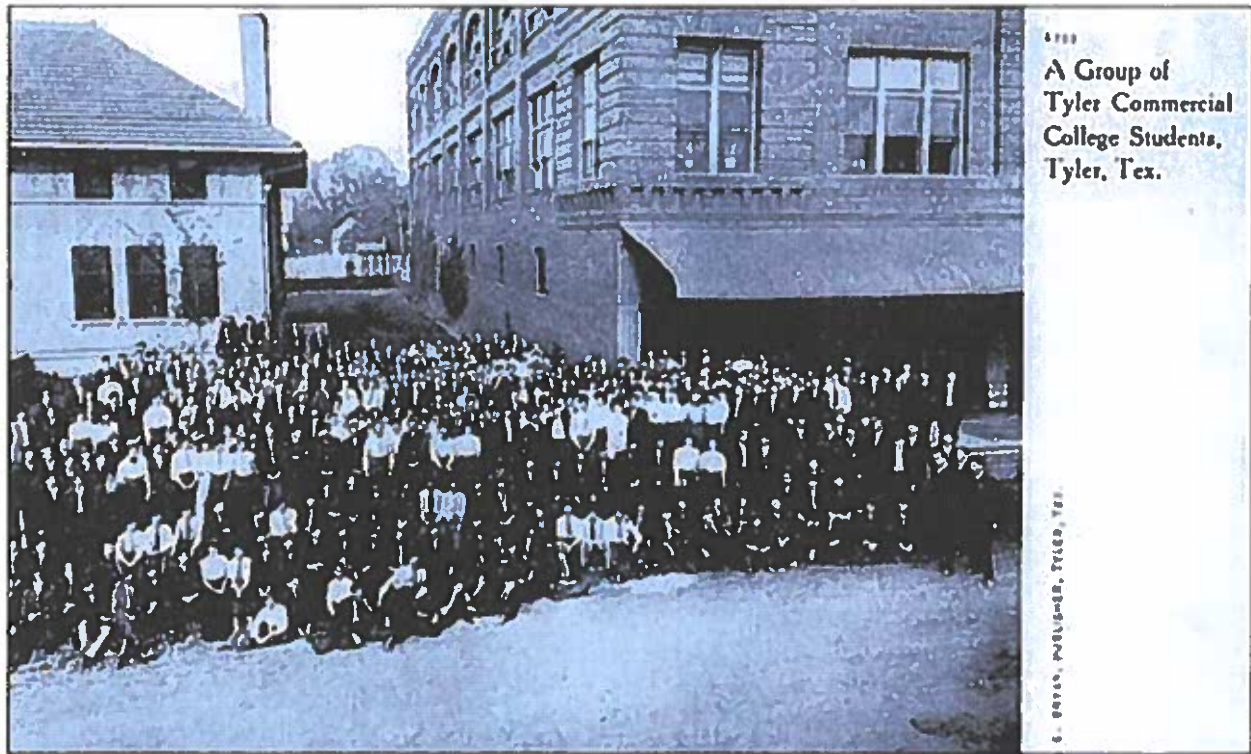
TCC remained downtown until 1956, when the Rutherford Metropolitan School of Dallas bought it. New owner Tracy Rutherford moved the college from its 1904-vintage building to a facility at 235 South Broadway, where it operated for nearly another decade before finally closing for good, a victim of the growth of junior colleges and four-year universities. The old downtown building on College Avenue was razed in 1963 to make way for a drive-thru bank built on the site.

Postcard image of Tyler Commercial College, circa 1912

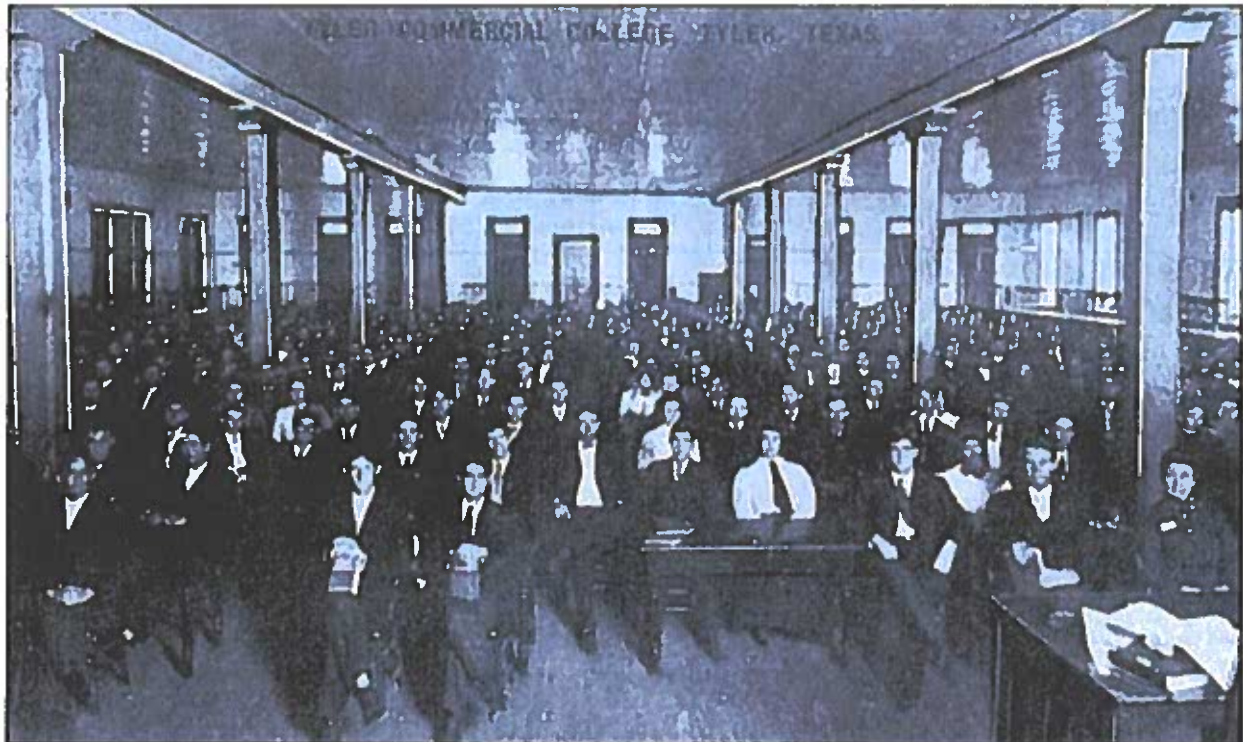


An attached expansion was built in 1913 on the north side of the school, in effect cloning the first building's appearance, as shown below.





The above c. 1905 view shows a group of students in front of the Carnegie Public Library (left) and Tyler Commercial College. The below mid-1910's postcard shows a student assembly on the second floor of the original college building, with the view looking west toward the rear of the building. This may have been what was called a Saturday Program, when the students would gather on each Saturday morning for examinations, lectures, or to listen to an occasional minister.



The below late-1910s view shows Tyler Commercial College's cotton classing training. The school was the only one with a special class for women, which filled a real need when the men were away fighting in World War I. Classes in radio telegraphy and telephony started in the 1920s, and the college actually provide radio-operation training as a Signal Corps school during World War II, teaching 2,000 army staff from April 1942 to July 1943.



Young ladies realizing their opportunity of preparing to take the place of their brothers who are fighting, by learning Cotton Classing in the Tyler Commercial College, the only school having a special Cotton Classing Department for ladies

LARGEST BUSINESS TRAINING SCHOOL IN AMERICA.

POSITIONS SECURED, ENTER ANY TIME.

MORE THAN 17,000 FORMER STUDENTS.

OUR SCHOOLROOMS COVER 88,000 SQUARE FEET OF FLOOR SPACE.

The below view shows a social gathering in the third-floor "auditorium" in the newer half of the building. When Tyler permitted 3.2-percent beer and wine sales in the 1930s, this space was rented for public dances with live bands.



Sources: Reed Jr., Robert E. *Postcard History: Tyler.* Arcadia Publishing (2009); Cox, Mike. *Typing in Tyler: The Business School Model in East Texas* Accessed Nov. 28, 2012. <<http://www.texasescapes.com/MikeCoxTexasTales/Typing-in-Tyler-Business-School-Model-in-East-Texas.htm>>; Worchel, Dayna. *College Helped Birth Tyler's First Licensed Radio Station.* Tyler Morning Telegraph / TylerPaper.com. 10 Oct. 2011. <<http://www.tylerpaper.com/article/20111010/NEWS08/111019998/-1/RSS01>>.

Suggested Marker Caption

Tyler Commercial College educated students in subjects ranging from business training to petroleum geology and cotton classing from the late 1890's until the 1960's. Located at 115 South College Avenue, at one time it was considered the largest business training school in America.



Narrative for THC Subject Marker: Tyler Commercial College

Context:

A skilled workforce is critical to a growing economy. The problem Tyler, Texas faced toward the end of the nineteenth century was finding this skilled workforce. After incorporation on January 29, 1850, Tyler which had always been a hub of agricultural activity in Smith County soon transformed into a center for shipping and commerce.¹ Combined with an increase of new construction, the establishment of business, and improvement of infrastructure, Tyler found itself as the center of business activity in Smith County. The Tyler public school system was established in 1882 but there remained a need for a facility capable of imparting a practical business education.² In 1899 Tyler College, later known as Tyler Commercial College was created. The center for business training offered bookkeeping, shorthand, and general business instruction.³

Tyler Commercial College established itself at a time when Tyler was transitioning from an economy based on the primary level of agricultural production to the secondary and tertiary levels of transportation, refining, and business management of those fruits of the soil. T.C.C. played an integral part of Tyler's growth by providing graduates with a practical business education in a relatively short amount of time, in many cases six months.⁴ As Tyler grew T.C.C.'s role in the community expanded to include the role of civic center. Finally the most distinguished contribution not only to Tyler but to the country occurred during T.C.C.'s service as the Army Signal Corps School Detachment where two thousand men were trained as radio operators.⁵

Overview:

December 5, 1899, Austin, Texas, the charter of incorporation is filed with the Secretary of State's office for Tyler College of Tyler, Texas. Without capital stock, incorporators included C.L. Adair, A. Harris, and R.B. Hubbard.⁶ C.L. Adair came to Tyler from Whitesboro, Texas in Grayson County. In 1894 he and his brother Noah opened the Adair Normal School the aim of which was to provide university level education. Due to a lack of enrollment and subsequent financial distress the school closed two years later in 1896.⁷

Coincidentally, another Texas enterprise to fail in 1896 was the Texas Fruit Palace. This three-story frame building located at the northwest corner of Front and Vine Streets was used as a horticultural center where local farmers could showcase prize winning produce and discuss agricultural matters with the public.⁸ The vacant structure provided ample classroom space as well as living quarters for instructors and students alike.⁹

The 1900 Federal Census taken in June 16, lists C.L., 37, and Noah Adair, 30, F.A. Glenn, 39, and H.E. Byrne, 29, as principals and instructors. Maggie Ogden, 27, from Iowa and E.H. Byrne, 27, from Mississippi were listed as instructors while Sadie Adair, 27, was marked as the school matron. Sadie and C.L. Adair were joined at the Fruit Palace by their two-month old daughter Lucille. Also living on campus were twenty-seven pupils whose ages ranged from sixteen to forty-three, hailing from Massachusetts to Detroit, Michigan and all parts of Texas.¹⁰ On April 1, 1904, Tyler Commercial College was incorporated by C.L. and Noah Adair, H.E. Byrne, and F.A. Glenn whom were named directors of the college. The document filed states that the corporation "shall exist for the period of Fifty years from the date of the filing of these

articles.”¹¹ Frank A. Glenn, born in Georgia found his way to Tyler after leaving the Whitesboro Teachers Normal School in Grayson County.¹² Henry Edward Byrne, born in Mississippi came to Tyler as the creator of an exciting new form of shorthand.¹³ The “famous Byrne Shorthand” was advertised in the Dallas Morning News next to ads for The University of Texas, Texas Christian University, Hardin College and Conservatory, and North Texas Female College. Byrne proclaimed that a graduate of his seven to twelve week course was guaranteed a word transcribing speed of one-hundred and fifty words a minute or there would be no charge. Byrne claimed his system required half the time and cost to learn with half of the time to execute over competitor’s systems.¹⁴ Byrne Shorthand was a boon for T.C.C., enticing ambitious students, eager to enter the workplace.

In addition to creating his patented system of shorthand Byrne also established publishing facilities in Tyler which produced the majority of textbooks as well as blank books and other supplies used at T.C.C.¹⁵ Byrne Publishing Company published Byrne Duplex English Punctuation and Correspondence by Frank A. Glenn, Byrne Practical Bookkeeping and Business Training by Henry Edward Byrne, and Self Instruction for Byrne Simplified Shorthand by Henry Edward Byrne.¹⁶ In addition to the Tyler facility Byrne expanded to Chicago and Dallas. In 1914 Byrne was appointed by President Wilson to the educational committee sent to Europe to investigate civic conditions in leading cities there.¹⁷ In 1924 Byrne sold his share of T.C.C. and moved to Dallas where he continued his publishing company. He authored seven textbooks for commercial college use, founded Byrne Commercial College of Dallas and opened commercial schools in Houston, San Antonio, Fort Worth, and Oklahoma City.¹⁸

On March 2, 1901 senator Stafford's bill was passed, placing Tyler College on the list of colleges whose diploma entitled holders to teacher certification.¹⁹ This occurrence expanded the T.C.C.'s graduates' horizons' beyond the prospects of business work to teaching as well.

Fire destroyed the Fruit Palace building on December 13, 1903. "The first alarm came at 8:00 A.M. and the building collapsed thirty-five minutes later as a total loss. At this time, over four-hundred students were enrolled and many were housed, along with some faculty members, on the second floor." Classes were held in the Armory Building until permanent facilities were found.²⁰ That permanent facility was created by the effort and generosity of the citizens of Tyler. On April 6, 1904, Eliza Weir, a feme sole conveyed to S.H. Cox, J.W. Wright and A.E. Judge acting as trustees of the citizens of the City of Tyler property located on the West side of South College. Weir was paid one-thousand five-hundred dollars raised by contributions for the land that was a part of block eight of the plat of the City of Tyler found in book F page four-hundred and ten of Smith County Deed Records.²¹ The property was then conveyed to the Tyler Commercial College on the conditions that the school would maintain classes for ten-years with "at least 250 bona fide matriculations or students during each of said years."²² On September 14, 1914, having maintained their obligations T.C.C. received ownership of the property conveyed to the trustees of Tyler on April 6, 1904. With the execution of these instruments Tyler exhibited their confidence in T.C.C. and appreciation for the service the college provided.

In 1918 T.C.C. claimed three-thousand and five-hundred enrollments for the previous year with twenty-five-thousand former students.²³ Academic offerings had

expanded from classes on bookkeeping and shorthand to retail work, insurance, freight, real estate, banking cost accounting, farm accounting, commercial law, rapid calculation, business arithmetic, salesmanship, business grammar, spelling, letter writing, business penmanship, telegraphy, and cotton classing and handling.²⁴ To prepare students for the real business world a mock bank was constructed on campus where “play money” was tendered and accounted for.²⁵

W.M. Roberts came to T.C.C. in 1908 as a vice-president and instructor.²⁶ He made it his life’s work to elevate the school from a specified business and bookkeeping school to a true institution of higher learning.²⁷ In 1925 Roberts proclaimed that the school was prepared to accommodate four-thousand students yearly or two-thousand students each six-month term.²⁸ President Roberts, a member on the board of directors of the Tyler Hotel Company, exclaimed that, “we are the largest in the number of students we can care for efficiently, largest in the standpoint of buildings and floor space, largest in brains and largest in number of students that we have placed in good positions. We excel in brains as well as bricks.”²⁹ During this time W.M. Roberts acted as president, P.A. Botts as principal, and Dr. W.F. Andrews as Dean of Faculty.³⁰ Roberts was elected president of the Southwest Private Commercial Schools Association in 1927, which naturally T.C.C. belonged.³¹

Some new classes offered for the 1925-1926 school years include a private secretarial course which lasted six months and cost three-hundred and eighty-five dollars total, including tuition, books and supplies, and room and board. Required classes included Advertising, Parliamentary Law, Credit and Collections, and Salesmanship. A six month General Railroad Course could be had for a total of two-hundred and seventy

dollars. Required classes include Station Work, Manipulation of Switchboard, Care of Batteries and Instruments, Cablegrams, and Railroad Rules and Regulation. A course that would become a standard of T.C.C. was Radio Telegraphy.³²

Since its inception T.C.C. was a coeducational institution, something rare in the post Victorian moral climate.³³ This open mindedness is extolled in a quote from the 1925-1926 course catalog:

“Knowledge of business makes a woman independent because it insures her of steady employment and places her in a pleasant environment where she can earn promotion rapidly and regularly. A business training course is a stepping stone to all the professions open to women as well as to men. Women entering the professions or the business world for a livelihood evidently do not sacrifice any of their womanliness. It broadens their sphere and vision of life and makes them more efficient.”³⁴

T.C.C. employed female instructors since its opening in 1899.³⁵ One graduate, Julia Shamburger, went on to found her own business college in Dallas, Texas where she taught her own method of shorthand.³⁶

W.M. Roberts recognized that the aim of his students was acquire employment and he adjusted T.C.C. class offerings accordingly. This included offering courses targeted for work at specific companies. Courses in Western Union procedure and equipment were available, later General Motors Accounting along with Civil Service and Federal and State Accounting courses were offered.³⁷ Preparation for the modern business world included training on new office place technology. Instruction on the Dalton adding machine, Electric Burroughs's Posting Machine, Mechanical Accounting Register, all sorts of typewriters, mimeographs, and Gammeter Multigraph were all

available at T.C.C. Add to this list the radio department, and T.C.C. stands proudly at the head of technological instruction in East Texas.³⁸

On April 18, 1931 KGKB, powered up and broadcasted a five-hour special presentation from its studio in the T.C.C. building. The presence of the 100-watt station set T.C.C. apart as “the only school in the country with a general broadcasting station.”³⁹ Radio operators were needed not only at commercial stations like KGKB but also in aviation and the merchant marines, “which hundreds of young Tyler graduates have gone.”⁴⁰

While most of the country suffered the ravages of the Great Depression Tyler carried on by virtue of the East Texas oilfields.⁴¹ Many oil companies opened offices in Tyler and naturally T.C.C. graduates found their way onto the payrolls. In addition to T.C.C. graduates finding employment in the oil industry, the T.C.C. auditorium was rented out on the weekends and was host to many dances.⁴² Dances were not the only form of entertainment offered on college grounds. The Tyler Symphony Orchestra presented its first concert on March 16, 1936 at the “College Roof,” top floor of the T.C.C., with a whopping seven-hundred and fifty in attendance.⁴³ On January 20, 1938 T.C.C. welcomed visitors to a “newly remodeled and modernized” school. W.M. Roberts who celebrated his thirtieth year of employment exclaimed that more than fifty-thousand students had graduated from the school during its existence.⁴⁴

In August of 1941 W.M. Roberts served as chairman of a committee selected by the National Association of Private Commercial Schools. This Committee worked with the Coordinator of Defense Training Activities of the United States to discuss the possibilities of training needed personnel in the case of war. Roberts is quoted as saying:

“There are already well-established schools that are responsible institutions. They are able and ready to do their part to help train young people along useful lines either for war or for peace. There is a dire shortage of properly trained young men and women to meet the need of both government and business. Young people can show their patriotism by training themselves to help meet this emergency.”⁴⁵

April 1942, the first class of the Army Signal Corps School Detachment arrived in Tyler. Major Virgil E. Caldwell was commanding officer of the program while John B. Sheppard, a highly skilled radio operator was head instructor and superintendent. Major Caldwell had been instructed to enter the 8th Corps into a contract with T.C.C. to train three-hundred enlisted personnel in high-speed radio code work.⁴⁶ The absence of military barracks required servicemen to bunk at local hotels. The Blackstone allotted 400 beds, Bluebonnet Courts 140 beds, and the Alamo Plaza 160 beds.⁴⁷ Aided by three administrative Sergeants, Offer, Giraud, and Hatfield, as well as the T.C.C. radio department civilian faculty the first group of one-hundred men completed their thirteen week course followed by the second group on April 18 and the third on May 2. This training was vital to “radio communication between troops, the establishment of message centers in combat areas and the deploying of soldiers on various missions were badly needed in every theater of war.”⁴⁸ When the T.C.C. was chosen for service “Roberts immediately made an entire floor available and rows of desks fitted with headphones and telegraph keys were installed.”⁴⁹ Servicemen were responsible for a minimum code speed of fifteen words per minute sending and receiving. Those that showed high competency were allowed to train on “the bug,” “an extremely high speed and sensitive telegraph key where the operator would send and receive whole phrases and sentences at a time.”⁵⁰

After two months of successful operation, assistant chief of staff General Donovan made his first official inspection. The result of the inspection was the Air Corps and Anti-Aircraft Artillery headquarters request for permission to enlist their personnel in the school. The positive attention prompted a new contract to be drawn up for the training of an additional one-thousand and seven-hundred radio operators, "Major Caldwell was promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel and his assignment was made permanent."⁵¹ The final group trained at the T.C.C. facility was the Third Company B on July 31, 1943. Two-thousand radio operators had received training on T.C.C. grounds. Not only was this service important for the logistic capability of our Armed Forces it also brought funds into the Tyler economy and paved the way for the Camp Fannin Troop Replacement Center.⁵²

In April of 1957 the Rutherford Metropolitan school of Business in Dallas purchased Tyler Commercial College. The school was moved from South College to the Manziel Building on South Broadway where it continued to served the community for a decade or so until increased competition between area junior colleges and four year universities became too much.⁵³ Old furniture from the South College campus was sold as souvenirs and in 1965 the vacant building was demolished to make way for a motor-bank.⁵⁴

Historical Significance:

Tyler Commercial College served Tyler and Smith County from the turn of the century, through Great Depression and two world wars. In a time where Tyler needed skilled business professionals Tyler Commercial College was there. Through the prompt

training of business professionals and teachers Tyler Commercial College was able to supply Tyler with the workforce needed to bring Tyler into the modern age which simultaneously increased the prosperity of Smith County. Tyler Commercial College brought cutting edge office technology to the students of Tyler giving them a competitive edge on other job searchers. Tyler Commercial College served as a center of academic inquiry during the week and hearty entertainment and fellowship on the week ends. Finally and most importantly Tyler Commercial College provided the facilities needed to train two-thousand radio operators needed by the Armed Forces during a time of war. The efficacy of those soldiers' training singled out Tyler Commercial College as a competent center of learning and Tyler as a hospitable location for further military installations. Through this fortuitous arrangement Tyler stood in good graces to receive the Camp Fannin Troop Replacement Center which injected millions into the Smith County Economy and trained hundreds of thousands of troops.

¹ Long, Christopher, "Tyler, Texas," Handbook of Texas Online.

² Ibid.

³ *Dallas Morning News*, 12/06/1899, p.4.

⁴ Tyler Commercial College Course Catalog: 1925-1926, p.59.

⁵ Dibert, Philip L., *Smith County Chronicles*, "World War II Come to Tyler", Smith County Historical Society: Tyler, Texas, Vol.2, #2, p.6.

⁶ *DMN*, 12/06/1899, p.4.

⁷ Minor, David, "Adair Normal School," Handbook of Texas Online.

⁸ *Smith County Chronicles*, Smith County Historical Society: Tyler Texas, Vol. IV, #2, p.23.

⁹ Burton, Morris, S., *Smith County Chronicles*, "America's Largest Business Training University", Smith County Historical Society: Tyler, Texas, Vol.10, #2, p.33-39.

¹⁰ 1900 U.S. Federal Census, Heritage Quest Online.

¹¹ Tyler Commercial College Charter, File#13247, Box #184.

¹² *Dallas Morning News*, 04/09/1957, p.15.

¹³ 1900 Census.

¹⁴ *Dallas Morning News*, 8/05/1902, p.5.

¹⁵ Tyler Commercial College Course Catalog: 1914-1915.

¹⁶ Smith County Historical Society Archives.

¹⁷ *Dallas Morning News*, 1/30/1948, p.21.

¹⁸ *DMN*, 1/30/1948, p.21.

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- ¹⁹ *Dallas Morning News*, 3/02/1901, p.3.
- ²⁰ Burton, p.34.
- ²¹ Smith County Deed Records, Vol.79, p.350.
- ²² Smith County Deed Records, Vol. 120, p.68.
- ²³ Tyler Commercial College Course Catalog: 1918-1919.
- ²⁴ Ibid.
- ²⁵ *Smith County Chronicles*, Smith County Historical Society: Tyler, Texas, Vol.7, #1, ob cover.
- ²⁶ *Dallas Morning News*, 01/21/1938, p.10.
- ²⁷ Ibid.
- ²⁸ *Dallas Morning News*, 9/20/1925, p.3.
- ²⁹ Ibid.
- ³⁰ Tyler Commercial College Course Catalog: 1925-1926.
- ³¹ *Dallas Morning News*, 8/21/1927, p.7.
- ³² T.C.C. Course Catalog:1925-1926, p.59-72.
- ³³ Burton, p.36.
- ³⁴ T.C.C. Course Catalog: 1925-1926, p.62.
- ³⁵ 1900 Census.
- ³⁶ *Dallas Morning News*, 3/28/1952, p.9.
- ³⁷ Tyler Commercial College Course Catalog: 1946-1947, p.27-30.
- ³⁸ Tyler Commercial College Course Catalog: 1927-1928, p.72-110.
- ³⁹ *Dallas Morning News*, 4/19/1931, p.20.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid.
- ⁴¹ Reed, Robert, *Images of America: Tyler*, Robert E. Reed Jr., 2008, p.55.
- ⁴² Ibid.
- ⁴³ *Tyler Courier Times*, 3/17/1936, p.2.
- ⁴⁴ *DMN*, 1/21/1938, p.10.
- ⁴⁵ *Dallas Morning News*, 8/10/1941, p.10.
- ⁴⁶ Dibert, p.3-12.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid.
- ⁵⁰ Ibid.
- ⁵¹ Ibid.
- ⁵² Ibid.
- ⁵³ *Dallas Morning News*, 04/09/1957, p.15.
- ⁵⁴ *Dallas Morning News*, 1/15/1963, p.12.

About the

Half Mile of History

The City of Tyler's historic preservation program, the Half Mile of History, resulted from a recommendation that came out of the Tyler 21 planning process. The fifth goal of the Historic Preservation Chapter is:

"Promote and display diverse aspects of Tyler's history to enhance resident and visitor awareness of its importance."

The goal of the Half Mile of History is to pay tribute to people, places and events that have contributed to the rich history of Tyler and Smith County.

The Half Mile of History is a permanent, outdoor, half-mile loop that surrounds the square in the heart of downtown Tyler. Stone plaques are placed in the sidewalk along the Half Mile of History to commemorate significant people, places or events.



A Natural Beauty

Half Mile of History Marker Unveiling

in honor of

Tyler Commercial College

Brady Preston Gentry

Hampson Baren Gary

Thursday, May 30, 2013

Tyler Commercial College was one of the largest business training schools in the country in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The school's original location was the Texas Fruit Palace until a brick building was built at 115 S. College Ave. in 1904, right next to the newly constructed Carnegie Public Library.

TCC remained downtown until 1956, when the Rutherford Metropolitan School of Dallas bought it. The new owner, Tracy Rutherford, moved the college from its 1904-vintage building to a facility at 235 S. Broadway Ave. The old downtown building on College Avenue was razed in 1963 to make way for a drive-thru bank.

Brady Preston Gentry was born on March 25, 1896 on his family's farm near Colfax in Van Zandt County. Career highlights include serving as Smith County Attorney, Smith County Judge, chairman of the Texas Highway Commission, and U.S. Congressman for the Third Congressional District from 1953 to 1957.

In the 1930s, Gentry became interested in Tyler Junior College athletics. During Coach Floyd Wagstaff's successful tenure as basketball coach, Gentry served as an avid supporter of Tyler Junior College athletics.

After leaving Congress, he practiced law until his death on Nov. 9, 1966 at the age of 70. He is buried in the Rose Hill Cemetery in Tyler.

Hampson Boren Gary, soldier, public servant, and diplomat, was born in Tyler on April 23, 1873. After graduation from the University of Virginia in 1894, he practiced law in Tyler. During the Spanish-American War, Gary was captain of Company K, Fourth Texas Volunteer Infantry Regiment. After the war, he served in the Texas National Guard as colonel of the Third Texas Infantry Regiment. Gary was a member of the Texas House of Representatives and the board of regents of the University of Texas.

In 1914, he was appointed special counsel to the State Department to assist in matters arising out of the war situation in Europe. A year later, he was appointed assistant solicitor for the State Department. By 1917 he was appointed by President Woodrow Wilson as diplomatic agent and consul general to Egypt in charge of American interests in Palestine, Syria and Arabia. Later, he was appointed minister to Switzerland by President Wilson. Gary attended the First Assembly of the League of Nations in Geneva as an observer for the United States.

He resigned from diplomatic service and practiced law in New York and Washington, D.C., from 1921 to 1934. He died in Palm Beach, Florida on April 18, 1952, and was buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

Half Mile of History Marker Unveiling

in honor of

*Tyler Commercial College
Brady Preston Gentry
Hampson Boren Gary*

Thursday, May 30, 2013

Opening Remarks: Mayor Barbara Bass

Half Mile of History honoree histories by:

*Historical Preservation Board Member Danny Noteware
Historical Preservation Board Chair Mike Patterson
Historical Preservation Board Member Brooke Drobotini*

*Unveiling of Markers and Certificate Presentation
Responses*

Special Announcements

Adjourn; reception following