

Menger's family vital to S.A. past

The family of Rudolph W. Menger played a vital role in the history of San Antonio.

His maternal grandfather, William Menger, founded the Menger Hotel and his paternal grandfather, Simon Menger, founded the Menger Soap Factory. The two Menger forebearers were not related.

Rudolph Menger died Thursday at age 93. He was in charge of advertising for the H & H Coffee Co. for more than 50 years. In 1962 he retired.

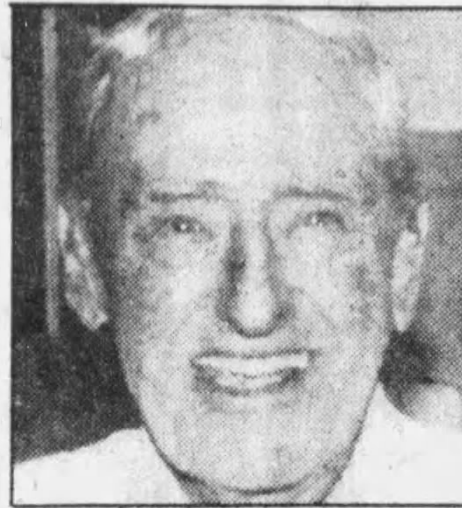
"He was a very lovable man," said his nephew, Albert Menger. "He was one of the four Menger 'boys' who attended the gala centennial celebration of the Menger Hotel in 1959. I attended the dinner, too, as a great-grandson of the hotel's founder.

"Rudolph's mother, Catherine Barbara Menger, was born in the Menger Hotel," he said. She rode horseback to attend school at Ursuline Academy and kept her horse in the hotel's stables."

The Menger Hotel, which opened Feb. 1, 1859, was host to Teddy Roosevelt, Sidney Lanier, Sarah Bernhardt, Robert E. Lee, Sam Houston, Oscar Wilde, O. Henry and Lillian Russell. People portraying those famous guests attended the centennial.

The Menger Soap Factory, built in 1851 at Laredo and Martin streets, is likely the oldest surviving industrial building in Texas, according to some historians.

Rudolph Menger's father, Dr. Rudolph Menger, was city physician of San Antonio in the 1890s. He also was a surgeon. Their home was at the corner of Santa Rosa



RUDOLPH MENGER
... family founded hotel

and Produce Row where Karam's Kantina is located now.

"Rudolph was born in that building," his nephew said. "The family lived upstairs and rented out the downstairs for a grocery store."

Rudolph married Charlotte Malone in 1925. She died in 1935.

His hobbies were hunting and fishing and Indian lore. He dug for arrowheads and other artifacts in Bexar and Medina counties and was a member of the Texas Archeological Society.

Survivors, all of San Antonio, include one daughter, Charlotte Belcher; a son, Steve G. Menger; a brother, Theodore J. Menger; four granddaughters and four great-grandchildren.

Services will be at 9 a.m. Saturday in Zizik-Kearns Riebe-Saunders Funeral Home Chapel with the Rev. Conor McGrath officiating. Burial will be in Mission Burial Park South.