

The Bandera PROPHECY

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Today in Texas History

By Bandera Spirits of Texas

On this day in 1801, Gail Borden, Jr., inventor, publisher, surveyor, and founder of the Borden Company, was born in Norwich, New York. He came to Texas in 1829 and became surveyor for Austin's Colony in 1830.

In 1835-37, the ubiquitous Borden published the *Telegraph and Texas Register*, prepared the first topographical map of Texas, and helped lay out the site of Houston. In the middle 1840s he began inventing. He is supposed to have experimented with large-scale refrigeration as a means of preventing yellow fever and with a terraqueous machine, a sort of prairie schooner that would go on land or water.

In 1849, he perfected a meat biscuit, made of dehydrated meat compounded with flour, which he tried to market on a worldwide scale in partnership with Ashbel Smith.

In 1853, he sought a patent for his most famous invention, a process for condensing milk in vacuum. After several unsuccessful attempts, he opened a condensed milk factory in Connecticut in 1858. When the Civil War brought intensified demand for condensed milk, sales grew so much that Borden's success was assured.

After the war he returned to Texas and founded the community of Borden, where he established a meat-packing plant. He died in Borden on Jan. 11, 1874.