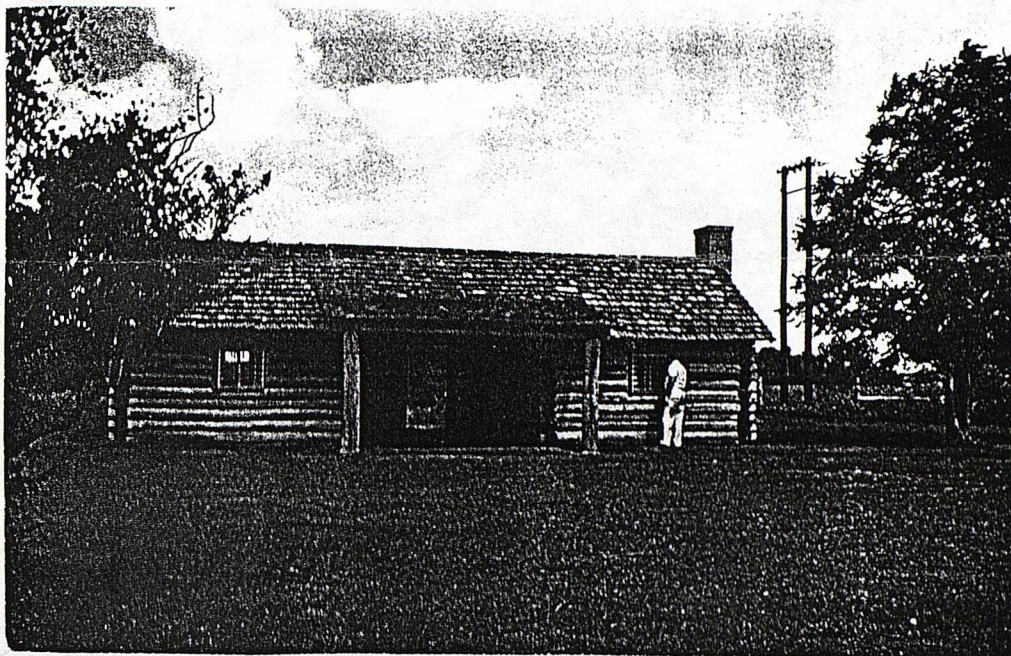


# Borden Citizen

Published by the Borden County Historical Committee  
Fall, 1998 VOL. XXX, NO. 2



DOG TROT HOUSE at STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE PARK  
at SAN FELIPE, TEXAS

See story, Page 2

## FIFTH ANNUAL LIGHTING OF THE STAR

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1998

BORDEN COUNTY COURTHOUSE

### STAR WILL LIGHT AT 7:00 P. M.

The Courthouse and Museum will be open at 5:00 P. M. Local musicians will play in play in the Museum. Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus will be in the District Courtroom and will be waiting for your visits. Refreshments will be served. Much visiting is expected and we hope that a good time will be had by all.

## LIGHTS FOR GAIL

DONATION BY \_\_\_\_\_

Your name

To have your name in the program we must have your list by Friday November 20, 1998.

Nights available will be from November 28 through December 31.

Bulbs @ \$5.00 per person per bulb  
per night.

Nights @ \$25.00 per person or couple per night.

DATE

_____	x \$5.00
_____	x \$5.00
_____	x \$5.00
_____	x \$5.00
_____	x \$5.00
_____	x \$5.00

_____	@\$25.00	_____
_____	@\$25.00	_____
_____	@\$25.00	_____
_____	@\$25.00	_____
_____	@\$25.00	_____
_____	@\$25.00	_____

Total bulbs \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total nights \$ \_\_\_\_\_

To be fair to all please limit each bulb or night to one of the following examples:

John Smith

If you want to list John, Jane, Joe & Julie Smith

Mr & Mrs John Smith

Please list them on separate lines.

John Smith Family

TOTAL INCLOSED \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Your donation is greatly appreciated.

MAIL TO:

P. O. Box 312  
Gail, Texas 79738

Please note below if you wish to have the name listed above "In Honor of..."

"In Memory of..."

For example if you listed Joe Jones for a night, note here that it is in memory of.  
or any special notation you wish.



## LOG CABIN

A replica of the only home of his own that Stephen F. Austin ever knew in Texas. A few of the chimney brick were from Austin's original cabin. Located in Stephen F. Austin State Park at San Felipe, Texas, two miles off highway 90 on Spur 99. Six miles from Sealy and 48 miles from Houston.

Inside the Stephen F. Austin State Park is the J. J. Posey General Store which was established in 1841. Inside this store, which is mostly a museum now, are many things of the 1830's era.

These include a desk used by Stephen F. Austin that was returned to San Felipe after 128 years. It was returned through the wishes of Mr. Thomas W. Streeter of Morris-

town, New Jersey. Mr. Streeter had purchased and collected a number of papers of Stephen F. Austin and in doing so also acquired the desk. After he sold the letters and papers to Yale University, he offered to return the desk to San Felipe to be placed on display in the Stephen F. Austin Museum.

## STEPHEN F. AUSTIN (FATHER OF TEXAS) STATUE

Placed in this park at a cost of \$14,000 from Texas Centennial funds, on November 3, 1938.

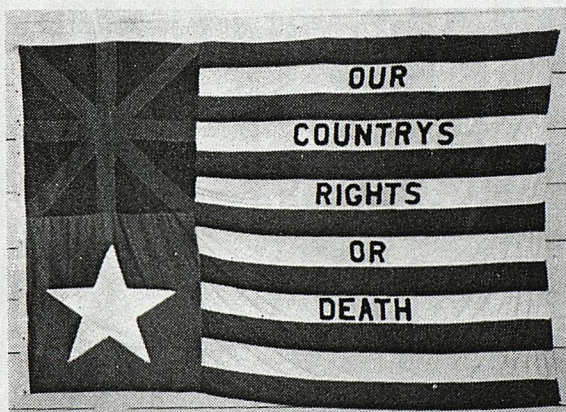
Mr. Streeter had purchased and collected a number of papers of Stephen F. Austin and in doing so also acquired the desk. After he sold the letters and papers to Yale University, he offered to return the desk to San Felipe to be placed on display in the Stephen F. Austin Museum.

Also in the J. J. Posey General Store Museum is a scale model of the town and nearby area of San Felipe as it was at the time of the Texas Revolution. Indicated on this model is the place of the BLACKSMITH SHOP of Gail Borden, Jr. Until your Editor of this Newsletter saw this scale model, she did not know that Gail Borden, for whom our town and County were named, owned a Blacksmith Shop. The scale model shows that this shop was to the right and about a half mile behind the Stephen F. Austin Log Cabin in the Stephen F. Austin State Park in San Felipe, Texas. This is where Gail Borden, also known as Gail Borden, Jr., was living at the time of the Declaration of Independence from Mexico.

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*The San Felipe Flag of 1836*

THE SAN FELIPE FLAG  
OF 1836

About a week before the fall of the Alamo, the Militia of San Felipe elected the following officers: Mosely Baker, Captain; John P. Borden, First lieutenant.

On Monday, February 13, 1836 the company being ready to march, Gail Borden, Jr., in the name of ten ladies of this jurisdiction, presented the company with a stand of colors accompanied with the earnest prayers that under it they might be protected from the merciless invaders of their homes. In behalf of the company, Captain Baker made an eloquent address, in which he alluded to the

flag as "this banner of independence" and said to the citizen soldiers:

"First in your hand is placed the Texas Flag: let you be the last to see it strike to the invading foe! Let no other feeling glow in your bosom than that expressed in the motto on your banner, 'The Texas Flag shall wave triumphant or we will sleep in death'."

The following description of this flag is given in the TELEGRAPH on Saturday, March 5, 1836 published at San Felipe: "The Flag presented to the San Felipe Company was made according to the pattern proposed in the Flag of Texas and Independence. The English Jack showing the origin of the Anglo-Americans; thirteen stripes representing that most colonists in Texas are from the United States; the Star (white on a field of green) is Texas; the only state in Mexico showing the least spark of liberty; Tricolon is Mexico showing that we once belonged to that Confederacy; the whole Flag is historic."

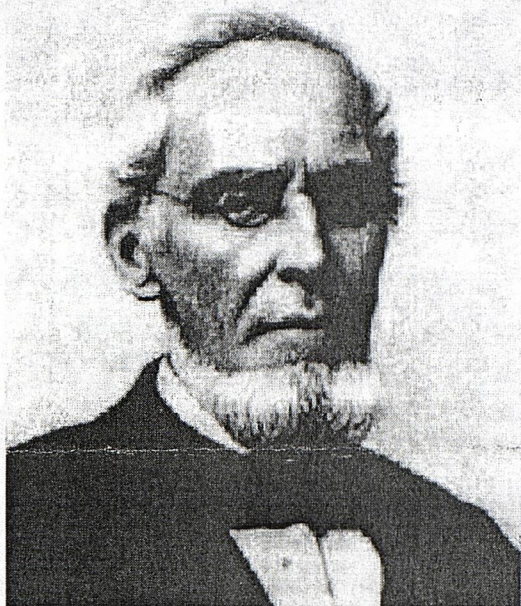
The names of the ladies making the flag have not been preserved.

NOTE: Dorothy Browne has purchased a Tray that has a picture on the front of this Flag and the story on the back. She has presented it to the Museum for display. Come see it and some new displays.



## GAIL BORDEN

1801 - 1871



Gail Borden, also known as Gail Borden, Jr. was born November 9, 1801 in New York State, spent parts of his childhood in New York, Kentucky and Indiana. In his twenties, he moved to Mississippi and worked as a surveyor, a skill taught him by his father.

After a long string of business failures, Gail Borden in mid-life was left virtually penniless and abandoned by his second wife. His recovery and the magnitude of his ultimate success, however, would inspire any Texas.

He came to Texas in late 1829. After spending some time farming and raising stock, Borden replaced his brother as official surveyor in Austin's colony, headquartered at San Felipe. He then represented San Felipe at the Convention of 1833.

With Joseph Baker and his brother Thomas as partners, Borden launched the Telegraph and Texas Register, a newspaper that would serve as the voice of the government of the Republic of Texas after the revolution. Borden, however, sold his interest in the paper in June of 1837.

After serving as collector of customs at the port of Galveston in the early days of the Republic, he turned his energies to Galveston Real Estate. As agent for the Galveston City Company throughout the 1840's he helped sell 2500 lots that developed into the largest city in Texas during the later part of the nineteenth century. The records in Galveston state that he surveyed most of the Island and at one time owned a Plantation there.

It was Borden's inventions that resulted in his greatest failures, and ultimately in his greatest achievement. With assets worth some \$100,000 in 1850 (a small fortune at that time), he risked and lost most everything on his "meat biscuit" a dehydrated meat mixed with flour. He moved to New York to be closer to trade centers and promote the product. After many years of effort, he abandoned the project so that he could spend full time on another of his inventions - the process to condense milk. He first saw the need of a process to condense and can milk while on a ship returning from England, when he saw many babies die because there was no milk of any kind on board ship.

Successive failures of two milk condensing plants in Connecticut in 1856 and 1857 exhausted his already dwindled reserves. The backing of a New York financier, however, allowed him to continue for a few more years. It was not until the outbreak of the Civil War, and the resulting demand for longer lasting condensed milk by the Union Army, that Borden's success was finally assured. The present day Borden Milk Company is the company he founded.

After the war, a much wealthier Borden returned to Texas. There, he established a meat-packing plant in the town of Borden, which he founded in Colorado County. He also established a sawmill and copperware factory at Bastrop some fifty miles up the Colorado River. In addition to these ventures, he supported a number of schools, churches and other charities.

Gail Borden, sometimes called Gail Borden, Jr., died on January 11, 1874 in Borden, Texas. His body was transported to New York for burial. Two years later, Borden County was formed and named in his honor.

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## TEXAS POSTAL SYSTEM BEGAN AT SAN FELIPE

Mail to the Austin Colony in San Felipe in the early 1820's came by occasional traveler. Official communications to Stephen F. Austin were entrusted to associates and friends. The mode of distribution of mail under the Mexican Government is not entirely clear. Not only were there the regular letters and communications with San Antonio and Mexico, but there was the distribution of the early Newspapers. The publication of the TELEGRAPH AND TEXAS REGISTER (Gail Borden's Paper) at San Felipe beginning October 10, 1835, was the first determined and continued effort to publish a newspaper in Texas. The establishment of THE TELEGRAPH AND TEXAS REGISTER coincided closely with the establishment of the Provisional Government. The Provisional Government set up the first organized postal system.

On October 16, 1835 Texas was made a State in the Mexican Nation. On October 23, 1835 John Rice Jones was named Postmaster General and mail routes were established. A Post Office was established at San Felipe by order and decree of the Mexican Government. THE TELEGRAPH AND TEXAS REGISTER that came from the press at San Felipe October 31, 1835 carried a notice that bids would be received for carrying the mail over various parts of Texas. Jones, the organizer of the Texas Postal System, followed the United States System. The first routes established were from San Felipe de Austin to Bexarm to Velasco and to Cantonment Jessup in in what is now Louisiana, same being 379 miles from New Orleans.



Mrs. Mary Austin Holley in a book, TEXAS, published by J. Clarke & Co., Lexington, Kentucky in 1836 refers to "Route No. 1 from San Felipe de Austin by Whitesides in Cole's Settlement, Washington, Fantrop's and Sim's to Robbin's pm the Trinity River 118 miles weekly. This mail left San Felipe de Austin every Sunday at 7:00 A. M. and arrived Robbin's every Tuesday at 7:00 P. M., leaving Robbin's Wednesday at 9:00 A. M. and arriving at San Felipe de Austin every Friday at 7:00 o'clock P. M." By the latter part of 1836 there were contracts for ten routes covering 988 miles.

The first Texas rates established were 61/4 cents for twenty miles; 121/2 for the second zone up to fifty miles; 183/4 cents for the third zone up to one hundred miles and 25 cents for up to 200 miles and 371/2 cents for further distances. As Spanish money was used, the fractions created no difficulty for the service. These rates were for single letters, meaning one page - a sheet folded over with the address on the front, known as stampless covers. Envelopes did not come into use until about 1845.

During the time Texas was a Republic, mail continued to be brought in and dispatched by boats, stage coach and pony express. An excerpt from an old newspaper states: "The mail from Houston due to arrive at Austin on July 15, 1840, was lost. The mule on which it was being transported ran away near San Felipe."

I have found no records of the cost for Borden's Newspapers to be delivered or mailed.

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WALDINE MARTIN, born June 6, 1917 passed away in May, 1998 at her home in the Mesquite Community of Borden County. She had lived in Borden County for 48 years and was an asset to her community, her Church and her family. She will be remembered by her friends as a friendly, caring, God Loving person. She was buried in Gail Cemetery beside her husband, Ralph, who died in 1992. Among her survivors are her three daughters, Brenda, Gloria and Joan, nine grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

#### LETTERS FROM THE PENS OF OUR READERS

June 13, 1998 We just received another copy of the Borden Citizen. My Mother, Lola Barrier Bishop is in a Senior Care Home in Albuquerque. My dad, Riss Bishop passed away in 1986. I enjoy reading the paper. Some of the people I remember, such as Agnes von Roeder Sorrells. We lived in the Bison Community. I attended School at Bison before moving to New Mexico in 1940. I am enclosing a check to help continue your publication. Sincerely,  
Roberta Bishop Oney, Mountainair, N. M.

June 10, 1998 Please send me a subscription to the Borden County Historical Newsletter. Also send one to my mother in Florida. I need a copy of the one that was just published of the Berry Family, sent in my George W. Smith. Maggie Wood Berry was my Grandmother, so we need this issue. My mother is 89. I have been to you Museum and I was really impress  
Thank you, Elizabeth Webb, Humble, Texas.

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FOUND AMONG THE PAPERS OF THE NEWSLETTER:

Mr. Knowlton was the only man that ever made bits and spurs in Borden County.

Do you know who Mr. Knowlton was? Do you know where any bits and spurs are that he may have made? Do you know of any one else who has EVER made bits and spurs in the County Please write us if you know of anyone or any bits or spurs.

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Send your life stories, your family histories, memories to the Newsletter. We need your letters and your subscriptions. It is still the same price, \$3.00 per year. Send these to THE BORDEN CITIZEN, GAIL, TEXAS 79738. Thank you very much.

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The Borden Historical Society  
Gail, Texas 79738  
Address Correction Requested

Nonprofit Organization U. S. Postage PAID Permit # 2 Gail, Texas
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