

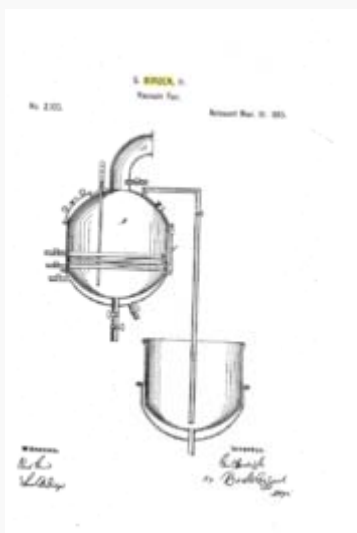
Gail Borden

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Gail Borden (1801-1874)



Patent RE2103 for Improvements in Condensing Milk

Gail Borden, Jr. (9 November 1801 – 11 January 1874) 19th century inventor, surveyor, publisher and was the U.S. inventor of condensed milk 1856.

[edit] Early years

Gail Borden, Jr. was born in Norwich, New York on 9 November 1801 to Gail Borden Sr, and Philadelphia Wheeler. He later moved at an early age to New London, Indiana. It was in Indiana where Borden would have his only formal schooling, which lasted for only one year in 1816. In 1828 he moved to Amite County, Mississippi, where he married his first wife Penelope Mercer, daughter of Eli Mercer. They would have seven children. Subsequently, he and the Mercers moved to Texas in 1829. As a surveyor, he plotted the towns of Houston and Galveston, and was

also involved with creating the first topographical map of Texas in 1835. He created Texas' first permanent newspaper in October 1835, the "Telegraph and Texas Register". His paper was the first to report the fall of the Alamo on 17 March 1836. He would sell his interest in the paper by 1837 to become the Republic of Texas first collector at the port of Galveston.

[\[edit\]](#) Career

[Sam Houston](#) appointed Borden as Collector of Customs at [Galveston](#) in June 1837. He was very well liked and performed his job well, raising half of the government income during this period through his collection on importations. Houston's successor to the presidency, [Mirabeau B. Lamar](#), removed Borden from office in December 1838 and replaced Borden with a lifelong friend from [Mobile, Alabama](#), the honorable Dr. Willis Roberts, a new arrival to the Republic. Roberts' son later was appointed Secretary of State of the Republic. Lamar was said to have known Roberts for 25 years. However, Borden had been so well liked that the newcomer was resented. The Galveston newspaper frequently criticized the new regime about malfeasance.

When a shortage of funds came to light, Roberts offered to put up several personal houses and nine slaves as collateral until the matter could be settled. It was later determined that two resentful desk clerks had been embezzling funds, but this came too late for the hapless doctor, who lasted in the job only until December [1839](#). Any hopes Borden had of reinstatement were dashed when Lamar appointed someone else. Houston later re-appointed Borden to the post and he served December [1841](#) to April [1843](#), resigning over a dispute with President Houston. Borden had since turned his attention to real estate matters.

[\[edit\]](#) Inventor

Borden turned to inventing in the [1840s](#). He spent six years perfecting his "meat biscuit," which was a condensed-beef-broth-and-flour concoction which Borden hoped would revolutionize the world by allowing for the transport of meat over great distances without it spoiling. In this, Borden worked with noted physician and former Secretary of State of the [Republic of Texas](#), [Ashbel Smith](#). While working on his meat biscuit Borden also discovered ways of condensing other products, including milk. He moved to [New York](#) to secure [patents](#) for his condensed milk vacuum in 1851, and there a financier, [Jeremiah Milbank](#), helped bankroll him in the venture of condensed milk, where he was ultimately successful. The invention led to the establishment of the company known as [Borden Milk Products](#). However, even with the help of Milbank, it was not until the [Civil War](#) when troops needed milk products that did not spoil, that he was successful in promoting his [condensed milk](#).

[\[edit\]](#) Later years

In 1845 Borden married Augusta Stearns; he would marry a third time in 1860 when he married Emeline E. Church. After the Civil War Borden opened several smaller business ventures in post-war Texas and supported many charities and institutions.

Borden died in [1874](#) in Borden, [Colorado County, Texas](#). [Borden County](#), which he never set foot in, was named for him posthumously, as was its county seat, [Gail](#). He was buried in [White Plains, New York](#). His body was shipped by private car to New York to be buried in Woodlawn Cemetery.

In 1892 Samuel and Alfred Church, stepsons of Borden and residents of Elgin, Illinois purchased and donated the Scofield Mansion at 50 N. Spring Street to house a new library for the residents of Elgin. Samuel and Alfred's only request was that the library be forever and always known and called the [Gail Borden Public Library](#).

[\[edit\]](#) Patents

[U.S. Patent RE2,103](#) ; [November 14, 1865](#); Improvements in Condensing Milk

[\[edit\]](#) References

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[Handbook of Texas Online](#), s.v. "BORDEN, GAIL, JR," (accessed November 27, 2005).

[Brief biography of Borden](#)

[Longer biographical account of Borden](#)

[Gail Borden Public Library : History of the library \(or: "Gail Borden : A condensed history"\)](#)