



Student Name:
Class Period:
Date:

Meet the Originals

Texas Originals is a radio series about people who made an impact on Texas. You can hear it online and on radio stations around the state. Read or listen to the episode on Gail Borden Jr. Then, answer questions about it.

Gail Borden Jr. 1801–1874

Gail Borden Jr. was undaunted by failure. In the 1840s he built a wagon meant to travel on land and water but did neither successfully. His nutritional biscuits made from dehydrated meat and flour were unpalatable. Yet Borden kept at it. In the 1850s, he developed a way to condense milk—and this time, succeeded on a grand scale.

Born in New York in 1801, Borden moved to Texas in his late twenties. He became the official surveyor for Stephen F. Austin's colony and prepared the first topographical map of Texas.

In 1835, he began publishing a newspaper. He also served as the first customs collector for the port of Galveston. For several years, he sold lots on Galveston Island.

In the 1840s, Borden turned to inventing. He returned to New York to promote his meat biscuits. But it was his patented process for condensing milk that won the day. He opened several factories in the Northeast. Increased demand during the Civil War boosted sales. Borden's invention soon turned the localized dairy business into a national industry.

Borden returned to Texas after the Civil War and became a generous benefactor of local schools and churches. He died in 1874 in the small Central Texas town that now bears his name.

Check for Understanding: Answer the questions below based on evidence from the episode on Gail Borden Jr. Refer to the text included above if needed.

1. As a young man, Gail Borden Jr. pursued many different careers. What were three of the jobs he held before becoming an inventor?
2. Borden's first two "inventions" were failures. What invention eventually led to his success?

Going Further: Write or discuss your answer to the question below, supporting your answer with evidence from the episode or additional information you have learned in class.

3. **Taking a Position.** Some people say failure shapes success. Do you think Borden was successful despite his failures or because of them? Explain.