

# Burger controversy?

## It's well done

### Texas House members vote to name Athens 'Official Home of the Hamburger'

By Jayson Larson  
EDITOR

The good folks in the Texas House of Representatives have spoken: Athens is the "Original Home of the Hamburger."

Is there need for any more debate? Well, folks in New Haven, Conn., and Seymour, Wisc., may have something to say about it, but within the confines of the Lone Star State, the debate ended



Brown

Thursday when the Texas House of Representatives designated Athens the "Original Home of the Hamburger."

"The connection between Athens, Fletcher Davis and the famed hamburger of the St. Louis World's Fair has been well documented," states the resolution, filed by State Rep. Betty Brown, "and it is fitting that the town's role in the history of that all-American sandwich be appropriately recognized."

"I am very pleased that my colleagues supported this effort to give added and well-deserved distinction to

Athens," Brown said in a statement released by her office after the vote on the House floor.

The resolution explains the history of how Athens came to claim itself as birthplace of the burger:

"Although accounts differ as to the origins of this American classic, the staff at McDonald's management training center has traced its beginnings back to the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair, where it was sold by a vendor on the midway; a reporter for the New York Tribune, writing about the fair, made note of the new sandwich in an

article and commented that it was the vendor's own creation.

"The vendor, Fletcher Davis, had moved from Missouri to Athens in the 1880s to take a job at the Miller pottery works. Mr. Davis had a flair for preparing food and usually served as chef at his employer's picnics. When the business slowed down in the late 1800s, he opened a lunch counter on the (Henderson County) courthouse square, where he sold the sandwich that would become such a staple of the U.S. diet.

"Although it was served with slices of

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fresh-baked bread instead of a bun, this early version of the hamburger was then much like it is today and contained ground beef, ground mustard mixed with mayonnaise, a large slice of Bermuda onion and sliced cucumber pickles. Customers could also enjoy fried potatoes, served with a thick tomato sauce. When the journalist from the Tribune was told that Mr. Davis had learned to fix potatoes in that manner from a friend in Paris, Texas, he misunderstood and described the item to his readers as french-fried potatoes.

"According to a nephew of Mr. Davis's, the new sandwich acquired its name during the potter's sojourn in St. Louis. One theory holds that local residents of German descent may have named the sandwich after the city of Hamburg, whose citizens had a special affinity for ground meat."

The resolution goes on to explain that each June, residents of Athens celebrate the hamburger's origins in their community with Uncle Fletcher's Burger and Bar-B-Q Cook-Off.