

Towns fail to agree on who is oldest

Age recognition causes dispute

United Press International
BETWEEN SAN AUGUSTINE and NACOGDOCHES — for more than a century, residents of these two East Texas towns have feuded over which is Texas' oldest town, ignoring a mist of geography 800 miles away that clouds both claims.

Both sides have documents and details to prove their claim to being the oldest city in Texas.

"I don't know where they come up with that Nacogdoches is the oldest. It just isn't so," said Sam Malone, publisher of San Augustine's newspaper, The Rambler. "Our mission was established first in 1717. We have the site of our mission and plenty of artifacts. They don't even know where their mission was."

But Carolyn Ericson of Nacogdoches, an historian who has authored two dozen publications about history in East Texas, said her community clearly can be documented as the oldest.

She said the missions in both Nacogdoches and San Augustine were established the same year, possibly 1717, but both also were abandoned a few years later.

After a while, Anglo and Mexican people moved back to the piney woods of East Texas and resettled the area, and since 1779 there has been a continuous settlement in Nacogdoches. She says San Augustine cannot make the same claim.

A census in 1790 showed Nacogdoches had a population of several hundred people, many of

them of Mexican origin. Both cities were part of Mexico until Texas gained its independence in 1836.

"I can't understand how anyone can dispute these records. If the people in San Augustine are basing their history on Indian (mission) towns, well, no one can put a date on them. That's just whistling in the wind," Ericson said.

"San Augustine is the oldest Anglo town in the state (she traces it from the 1790s), but Nacogdoches has had a continuing settlement since 1779 and that makes us older."

About 800 miles to the west, near El Paso, Ysleta traces its origins to 1682 when its mission was established and the town began to form. El Paso officials say Ysleta is

the "oldest permanent settlement in the present limits of Texas."

But they are playing with words.

Librarian Danny Escontrias said that, at the time it was established, Ysleta was on the Mexican side of the Rio Grande. During the floods of 1829, the river changed its course and Ysleta became a part of Texas.

The tiny town which is now part of El Paso is having a 400th birthday celebration this year.

East Texans are unmoved by Ysleta's change of nationality and claim to fame.

Nacogdoches, which is still a quaint little town with brick roads encircling the old-fashioned town square, even erected a sign be-

tween it and San Augustine on Texas 21 welcoming motorists "to the oldest city in Texas."

"They declared it to the whole world and that really got to some of our people, although it shouldn't," said Willie Earl Tindall, one of the local historians in San Augustine.

Tindall said she thinks her rival city may be older, despite San Augustine's collection of age-old artifacts.

"The legal documents that formed the two towns were actually in the same paragraph of the same law," she said.

"But common sense tells you if people came from Mexico to settle East Texas, they had to walk through Nacogdoches before they came to San Augustine."

Today's Almanac

Today is Wednesday, Aug. 26, the 238th day of 1981 with 127 to follow.

The moon is moving toward its new phase.

The morning star is Mars.

The evening stars are Mercury, Venus, Jupiter and Saturn.

Those born on this date are under the sign of Virgo. Scottish statesman and novelist John Buchan was born Aug. 26, 1875.

On this date in history:

In 1883, the volcano of Krakatoa in the Dutch East Indies began erupting. Before it subsided the following day, two-thirds of the island had been devastated and 36,000 people were killed.

In 1920, American women were given the right to vote as the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution went into effect.

In 1964, President Lyndon Johnson and Sen. Hubert Humphrey were selected to head the Democratic ticket. They won in November.



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Credit cards may soon be improved

United Press International
SAN FRANCISCO — The narrow brown stripe on the plastic card that holds the secret key to your credit may soon carry all your secrets as well.

Drexler Technology Corp., of Mountain View, Calif., has developed a strip, one-half inch by three inches, that can carry 5 million bits of information or the equivalent of 100,000 words.

That's a good-sized book.

"There are a number of applications," said Jerry Drexler, head of the company. "The obvious ones are financial transactions of all types. You see, a card could last for 10 years and could be used to accumulate information such as you have in your passbook."

Thus, when you flash your card to pay the dinner bill or buy a pair of shoes, the readout might show

those embarrassing overdrafts five years ago.

But, on the positive side:

"In the medical field, for example, we can visualize carrying a card with your entire medical history, including a digital recording of electrocardiograms and all your medical records. If you are brought into the hospital, they could take out your card and have your entire record. It could perhaps save lives," said Drexler.

The card might well survive the automobile and be sent back to General Motors for research purposes when the vehicle is junked.

Can you record a whole book on it?

"Yes. In fact, if you covered both sides of the card — and we have such a product — the London Times calculated you could put 16 novels on it."

This quantum leap in card technology is well beyond the development stage.

"We are now selling the systems," said Drexler. "We have received more than 300 corporate inquiries and we are beginning to negotiate with companies. Five companies have bought sample quantities."

The secret of the new card stripe is Drexon, a patented product made of gelatin and two kinds of silver particles that are sensitive to light.

SRI International, on assignment from Drexon, has produced a small laser device which makes "holes" five microns wide in the strip of Drexon.

A micron is a fifth of a thousandth of an inch. A human hair is 75 microns in diameter.

"We make holes one-fifteenth

the size of a human hair. We can record approximately five million holes on a strip the same size as the magnetic strip on a credit card. We read the information on the strip with the same tiny laser," said Drexler.

The Drexon systems are now available for testing by potential customers, said Drexler. He anticipates that Drexon will become the major product of his company, which is publicly owned and has annual sales of \$15 million in

photochemicals and other products for the semiconductor industry.

But they will have to think of another name for this card.

After all, you will be walking around with a piece of plastic that contains not only your bank statements and balances, but possibly a history of your traffic violations, college grades, library fines, medical visits and other data.

It would be lack of reverence to call it a mere "credit card."



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