

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Republic of Texas Granite marker standing north of FM 31 on the Texas - Louisiana border is the only remaining demarcation post indicating the 1841 international boundary between the United States and Texas along the 32nd parallel.

On May 21, 1840 the joint commission began its demarcation of the boundary where the Sabine River meets the Gulf of Mexico. It was marked by a mound of earth measuring approximately 50 feet in diameter and 7 feet high and surmounted with a 36-foot pole with a keg at its top. This location was marked on the map as site "A".

Each mile of the survey was marked by a mound of earth five feet high and 15 feet across, and in the center a wooden post was erected eight feet high with "U.S." carved on the east side and "T" on the west side. The number of miles from the 32nd parallel was marked on the south side of the post.

In 1971, some woodmen rediscovered a granite marker while working on some land north of FM 31 on the Texas - Louisiana border. This was the marker used to indicate the 32nd parallel. The boundary commission established mile markers northward to the Red River by using the granite marker as a reference point. This boundary marker contains several inscriptions. The west side is marked "R. T." for the Republic of Texas; the east side is marked "U.S." and the south side is inscribed "Merid NT Boundary, Established A.D. 1840". The shaft was prepared in 1840 but was not erected until the spring of 1841. The marker is approximately four feet high and measures six inches square. Today, some of the five-foot high, mile markings are still in place, yet papers and other data buried in them have long since disappeared.

This area includes the three-acre park, owned by each state--Louisiana and Texas--on their respective sides.

SPECIFIC DATES                      1840  
BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Republic of Texas Granite marker north of FM 31 between Louisiana and Texas is significant because it is the only granite survey post denoting the 1841 international boundary between Louisiana (United States territory) and the Republic of Texas.

One of the most challenging feats encountered in early nineteenth-century American engineering was the establishment of state and international boundaries. The obstacles involved in these projects included not only the normal hazards of time, weather and adverse geographical conditions, but the problems inherent in international political arrangements.

The only boundary ever negotiated by the United States with three foreign nations was the boundary between the Republic of Texas and the United States. Agreements for this boundary were made with Spain (1818), Mexico (1821), and the Republic of Texas (1838).

The southern half of North America was explored extensively by France and Spain. A long standing dispute existed between these countries over what is today the Texas Louisiana border. Both had claims to the lands between the Sabine and Atchafalaya watersheds.

In 1803, when the United States purchased the Louisiana territory from France, it inherited her claims to the disputed region along the east bank of the Sabine River. The United States and Spain agreed to make this area a neutral ground between the two nations. It soon became a haven for outlaws and army deserters.

In 1819 the United States bought Florida from Spain and in this treaty they agreed that the boundary between Texas and Louisiana would be the Sabine River up to the 32nd parallel; from that point it was to extend northward from the west bank of the Sabine till it reached the Red River.

Texas gained its independence in 1836 and two years later a joint commission was created to establish a boundary between the Republic of Texas and the United States. On August 7, 1839,

the commission met in New Orleans. They reconvened on October 15th at the mouth of the Sabine River but due to poor weather and other obstacles, they agreed to reassemble in November at Green's Bluff, 35 miles upriver.

They encountered more problems when two members of the United States' party had not arrived with the astronomical apparatus and other equipment. The camp was moved 15 miles upriver to Millspaw's Bluff to wait for the tardy commissioners. By January 30, 1840, the two remaining members and the equipment reached the Sabine campsite. They immediately began making astronomical observations for determining the latitude and longitude of the Sabine's convergence with the sea. Their progress was hampered on several occasions by dense forests, heavy rains, misunderstandings, unbridged streams, boggy marshes, impenetrable lakes, poisonous snakes and lack of funds.

The question arose whether the treaty between the United States and Mexico in 1821 may have been the Neches River instead of the Sabine. By using Melish's map of the United States, improved to January 1, 1818, the commission determined that the treaty stipulated the Sabine River as the boundary.

In June 1840, the survey team adjourned because of a scarcity of funds and the unhealthiness of the seasonal weather. They were to reassemble on November 1, but Texas failed to allocate funds for the survey. It was mid February before work on the boundary resumed. By May 14, 1841 the commissioners had covered 36 miles and adjourned to attend memorial services for President William H. Harrison. Four days later they established the 46-mile post on an island in Ferry Lake (Caddo). From this point on they encountered several hazards. It was very difficult for them to traverse swampy regions and many men were reluctant to cross the water. By mid-June they had placed the 86th mile marker, and a dozen or more men came down with fever. By June 24, 1841 the commission had reached the Red River. The journal of the expedition was authenticated by the affixation of the commissioner's signatures.

The Republic of Texas granite marker stands as an historic reminder of early boundary resolutions between nations. The commission's task was an extremely difficult one, but since the creation of this firm boundary agreement, few disputes have arisen between Texas and Louisiana over the states' demarcation line.

A three-acre park developed and dedicated in 1976, owned by the states of Texas and Louisiana on their respective sides of the boundary, memorializes the boundary marker.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Mugno, Marjie. "Epic Journey". Texas Highways, April 1971, 18-21.

The Panola Watchman (Carthage, Texas). Thursday, February 11, 1971, p. 1.

The Panola Watchman (Carthage, Texas-). Sunday, April 6, 1975, p. 1A.