

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center  
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Engrossed

### **AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT**

Athens, Texas, boasts a strong claim to being the original home of one of the nation's favorite foods, the hamburger. 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 courthouse square, where he sold the sandwich that would become a staple of the American diet. Although it was served with slices of fresh-baked bread instead of a bun, this early version of the hamburger was then much like it is today; it 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.

Each June, residents of Athens celebrate the hamburger's origins in their community with Uncle Fletch's Burger and Bar-B-Q Cook-Off. A century after the hamburger debuted on the national stage, it has become one of the best-loved foods in America; its economic impact is no less evident than its popularity: the immense volume of the burger business helps to drive the beef and grain industries and supports the employment of a substantial workforce. The connection between Athens, Fletcher Davis, and the famed hamburger of the St. Louis World's Fair has been well documented, and it is fitting that the town's role in the history of that all-American sandwich be appropriately recognized.

### **RESOLVED**

That the 80th Legislature of the State of Texas formally designate Athens, Texas, as the Original Home of the Hamburger.