

By: Craddick

H.C.R. No. 134

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, Texas is renowned for its innovative cuisine, and
2 certain beloved dishes have become integral elements of the state's
3 culture and folklore; one such food is chicken-fried steak, and the
4 epic deliciousness of this specialty has inspired not only
5 countless satisfied diners but also an enduring Lone Star legend;
6 and

7 WHEREAS, For generations, Texans pondered the seemingly
8 eternal mystery of who invented the chicken-fried steak; then, in
9 1976, came an answer: Larry BeSaw published an article in the *Austin*
10 *American-Statesman* explaining that this wondrous combination of
11 beef, batter, and breading had first been dropped onto a well-oiled
12 skillet in 1911 by Jimmy Don Perkins, a short-order cook at Ethel's
13 Home Cooking in Lamesa, Texas; according to the published story,
14 Mr. Perkins had mistakenly combined two separate orders for chicken
15 and fried steak into a single culinary creation whose savory
16 goodness became famous far beyond West Texas; and

17 WHEREAS, The account received wider attention after being
18 picked up by a syndicated columnist and was later repeated in
19 publications that ranged from the *Washington Post* to *Texas Monthly*
20 to trivia books; cited again and again through the years and given a
21 further boost through Internet postings, the anecdote about Jimmy
22 Don's handiwork earned Lamesa the enviable status of being the home
23 of the chicken-fried steak; there was just one small problem: it was
24 not true; and

1 WHEREAS, Mr. BeSaw had created his article as a spoof, never
2 intending it to be taken as fact, but the story quickly took on a
3 life of its own; though the journalist has tried numerous times to
4 set the record straight, the yarn continues to be widely told,
5 having attained the status of a Texas tall tale; and

6 WHEREAS, Not wishing to spoil a good legend, the city of
7 Lamesa has embraced its role as an epicenter of epicurean
8 invention; it celebrates the lore of its mythical short-order cook
9 with its Chicken-fried Steak Festival, which includes a cook-off
10 competition for its namesake dish in addition to live music, a
11 classic car show, and numerous other activities; and

12 WHEREAS, While everybody knows that honesty truly is the best
13 policy, residents of the Lone Star State have long demonstrated
14 their appreciation for harmless exaggeration and some good
15 old-fashioned leg-pulling; in that same spirit, and because the
16 Jimmy Don Perkins tale is just a darn good story, it is indeed
17 appropriate that the city of Lamesa be recognized for its role in
18 this imaginative and imaginary incident in Texas history; now,
19 therefore, be it

20 RESOLVED, That the 82nd Legislature of the State of Texas
21 hereby declare Lamesa the Legendary Home of the Chicken-fried
22 Steak.