

de Stolfe
Journal ★★★
Broadsheets

Thurber, Texas

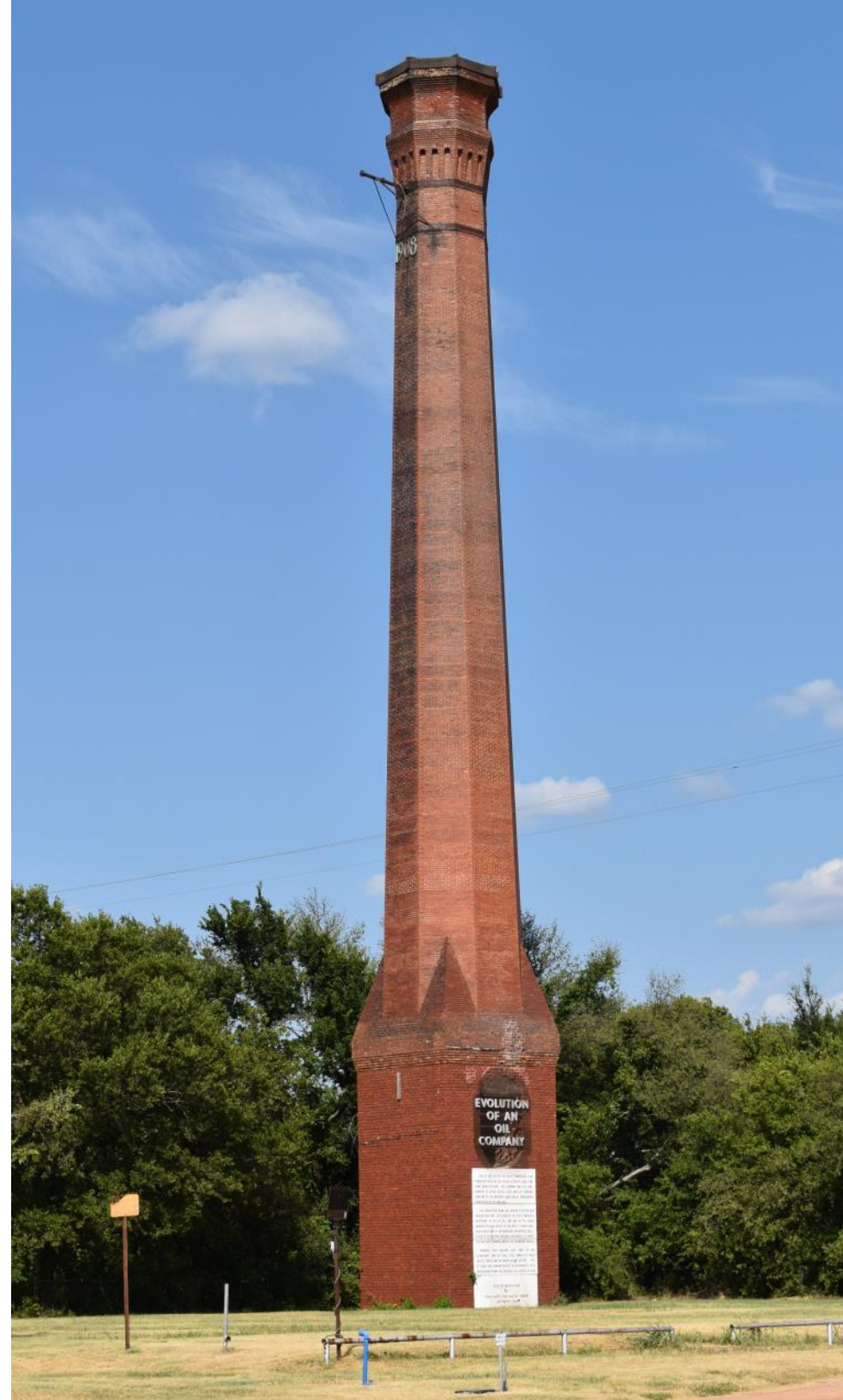
Visited on:

July 31, 2021

August 10, 2021

October 9, 2021

All photos are by RG de Stolfe, except where noted.



There was once a thriving little corporate town in the middle of Texas called Thurber. Today, it is only a tiny remnant among many other tiny towns along I-20 between Fort Worth and Abilene. What was different about Thurber is that it was a company created and owned “town”. This structure was more common in the late 1800s and into the 1900s than it is today. Recently, I visited Thurber three times from late July through early October. Here are the visits I made.

Saturday, July 31, 2021

I arrived in Thurber in the afternoon on my way back to Lubbock. I planned to stop and photograph the last smokestack there. I got a good range of photos of the stack and went to a small shop and stopped in the restaurant next to it to look at some old photos on the walls.

Tuesday, August 10, 2021

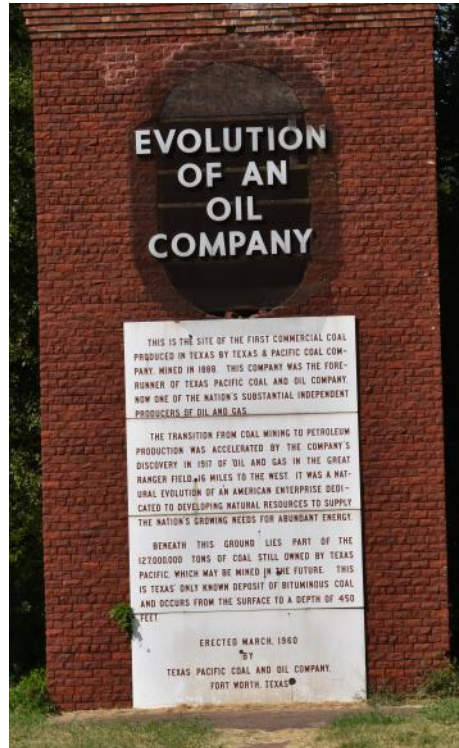
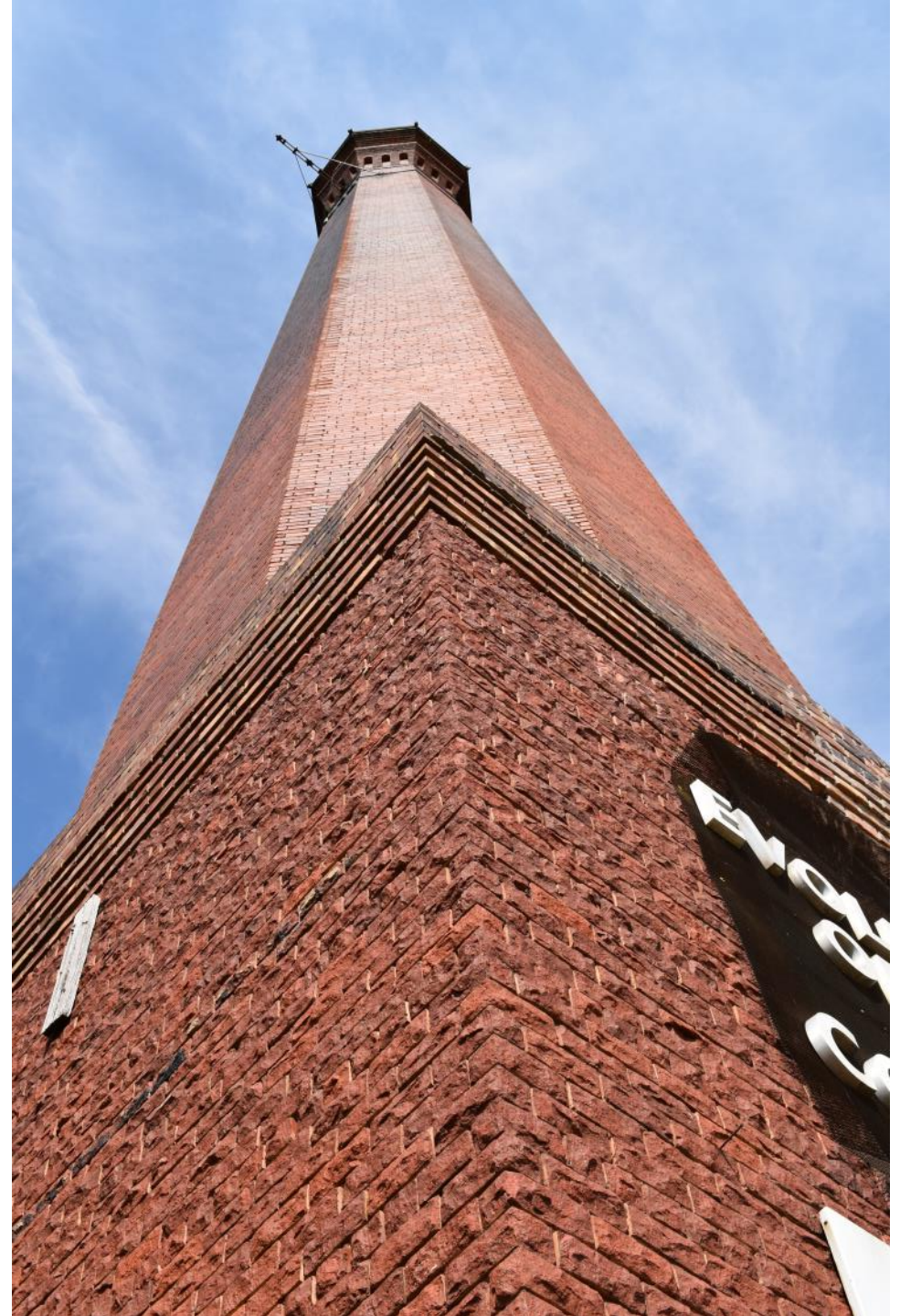
I left in the late morning from De Leon and took State Road 16 north to I-20. Once on I-20, I went east a few miles to Thurber. On the south side of the interstate in old Thurber is the W.K. Gordon Center for Industrial History of Texas, a museum that was closed by the time I

got there on July 31, and which is closed on Sundays and Mondays. I spent a good two hours going through the museum and seeing what there was to see. (I had been to the museum once before about 15 minutes before closing sometime about ten years ago.) After the visit, I wanted to get some food. So, I went to the next street over by the museum and up the hill to the nearby restaurant called New York Hill restaurant (because it is on New York Hill). This was the other restaurant in Thurber, not the one by the smokestack I visited before on the north side of the interstate. The food was good and there were some historical markers a short distance from the restaurant since the hill overlooked the old town.

Saturday, October 9, 2021

I drove over to Ranger the night before to get ahead of the driving. I had a symposium at the museum the next day that I decided to attend. Besides the symposium, I got some more photos and details of the museum and of parts of the town. We had lunch at the Iron Hill Restaurant where I ate before. I also stopped back on the other side to go to the trading post again before leaving.







THURBER

MOST IMPORTANT MINE SITE IN TEXAS FOR 30 YEARS. COAL HERE, PROBABLY KNOWN TO INDIANS, WAS "DISCOVERED" IN 1886 BY W. W. JOHNSON, WHO WITH HIS BROTHER HARVEY SOLD OUT TO TEXAS & PACIFIC COAL COMPANY IN 1888. (T. & P. COAL COMPANY PROVIDED FUEL FOR THE TEXAS & PACIFIC RAILROAD, BUT WAS INDEPENDENTLY OWNED.)

TOWN WAS NAMED FOR H. K. THURBER, FRIEND OF T. & P. COAL COMPANY FOUNDERS. MOST DYNAMIC FIRM MEMBER WAS ROBERT D. HUNTER (1833-1902), DEVELOPER OF 7 OF 15 MINES. NEXT PRESIDENT WAS E. L. MARSTON, HUNTER'S SON-IN-LAW, WHO LEFT MINING LARGELY TO WILLIAM K. GORDON (1862-1949), AN ENGINEER WHO BROUGHT DAILY OUTPUT TO 3,000 TONS.

THEN IN 1917, GORDON (BACKED BY MANAGEMENT OF COAL COMPANY) WAS PRIMARILY RESPONSIBLE FOR DISCOVERY OF RANGER OIL FIELD, 20 MILES WEST. ADOPTION OF OIL-BURNING RAILWAY LOCOMOTIVES CUT DEMAND FOR COAL. LAST MINE HERE CLOSED IN 1921, AND THE 10,000 OR MORE INHABITANTS OF THURBER BEGAN TO MOVE AWAY.

THE COAL FIRM CHANGED ITS NAME TO TEXAS PACIFIC COAL AND OIL COMPANY AND WAS SOLD IN 1963 TO JOSEPH E. SEAGRAM & SONS, INC., FOR \$277,000,000.00. RENAMED TEXAS PACIFIC OIL COMPANY, IT IS NOW ONE OF THE LARGEST INDEPENDENT DOMESTIC ENERGY SUPPLIERS. MUCH COAL (BY ESTIMATE 127,000,000 TONS) REMAINS UNDERGROUND.

(1969)

THIS IS THE SITE OF THE FIRST COMMERCIAL COAL PRODUCED IN TEXAS BY TEXAS & PACIFIC COAL COMPANY. MINED IN 1888. THIS COMPANY WAS THE FORE-RUNNER OF TEXAS PACIFIC COAL AND OIL COMPANY, NOW ONE OF THE NATION'S SUBSTANTIAL INDEPENDENT PRODUCERS OF OIL AND GAS.

THE TRANSITION FROM COAL MINING TO PETROLEUM PRODUCTION WAS ACCELERATED BY THE COMPANY'S DISCOVERY IN 1917 OF OIL AND GAS IN THE GREAT RANGER FIELD, 16 MILES TO THE WEST. IT WAS A NATURAL EVOLUTION OF AN AMERICAN ENTERPRISE DEDICATED TO DEVELOPING NATURAL RESOURCES TO SUPPLY THE NATION'S GROWING NEEDS FOR ABUNDANT ENERGY.

BENEATH THIS GROUND LIES PART OF THE 127,000,000 TONS OF COAL STILL OWNED BY TEXAS PACIFIC, WHICH MAY BE MINED IN THE FUTURE. THIS IS TEXAS' ONLY KNOWN DEPOSIT OF BITUMINOUS COAL AND OCCURS FROM THE SURFACE TO A DEPTH OF 450 FEET.

ERECTED MARCH, 1960

BY

TEXAS PACIFIC COAL AND OIL COMPANY,

FORT WORTH, TEXAS

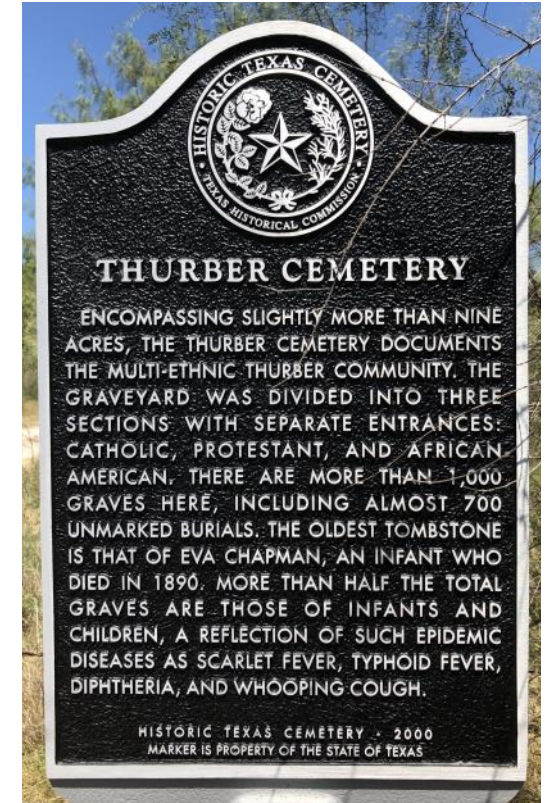


Some of the only buildings left are shown here. The larger building is a restaurant (obviously!) and the smaller building is a trading post.



Another original building is this fire station very close to the smokestack and across from the restaurant.

A few blocks down a small road is this marker by an entrance to a cemetery. The cemetery was further down a side road, but it was gated and locked.





A fence painted with a mural spanned between the restaurant and the trading post. The mural was obviously painted a while ago as evidenced by the fading and degraded nature of the paint and of the wood itself.

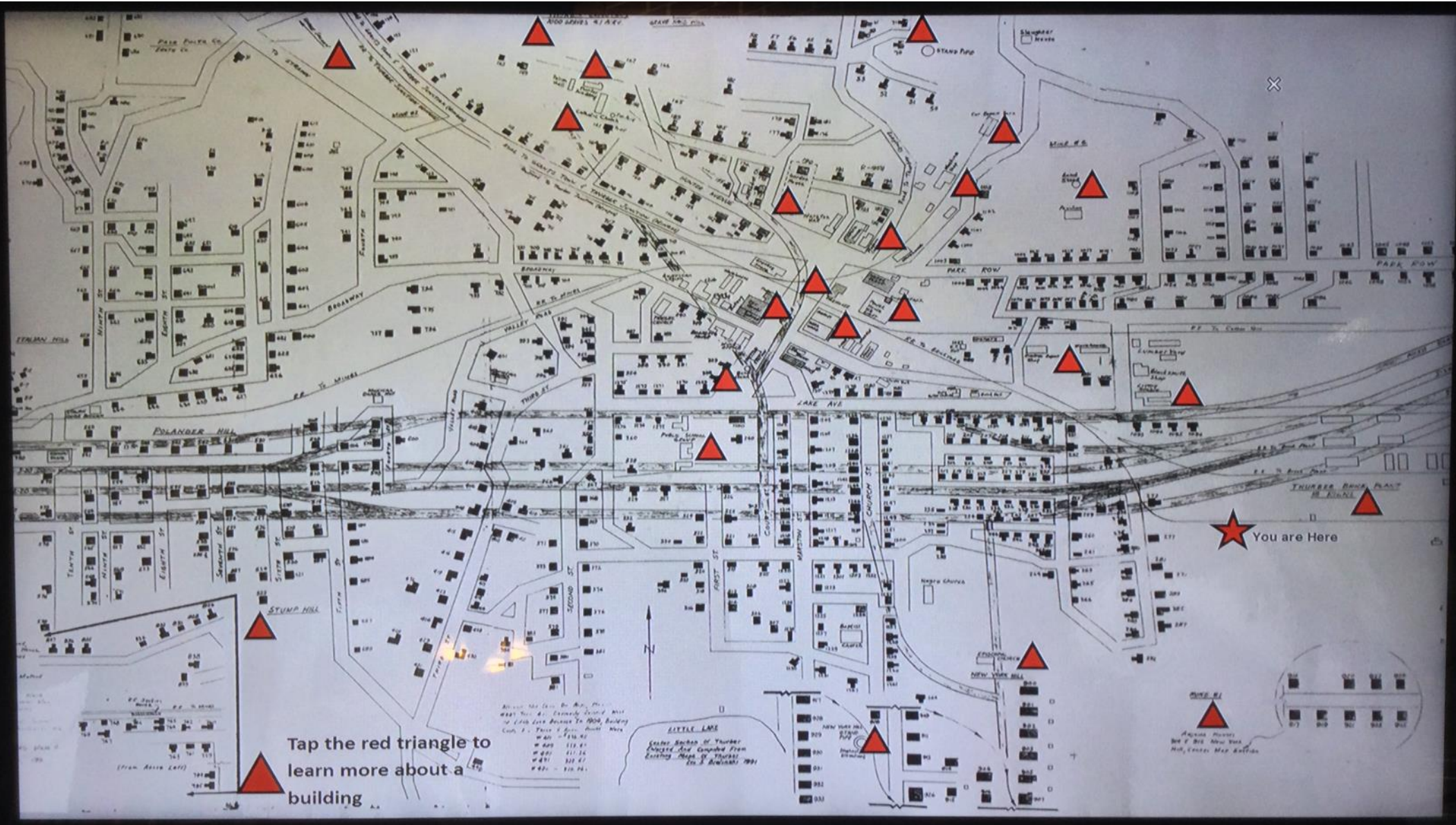




This building is the W.K. Gordon Center for Industrial History of Texas. It is basically the museum dedicated to the history of Thurber and is located on the south side of I-20.

Next to the museum is a road up New York Hill to a restaurant, New York Hill Restaurant. Part of the museum is also on New York Hill.





On a large touch screen in the museum, this map shows what Thurber looked like in its heyday. Today, I-20 runs right through the middle of what is left of the town.

Thurber Rabbits

During times of slow work, Thurber brick makers poured excess red clay into a candy mold, creating small clay rabbits. Several of these rabbits were discovered during the construction of the W.K. Gordon Center in 2001.

One rabbit named Clay, found a new life in the Gordon Center and spends his days exploring the museum. You can follow his adventures on our Facebook page, Pinterest, and Instagram.

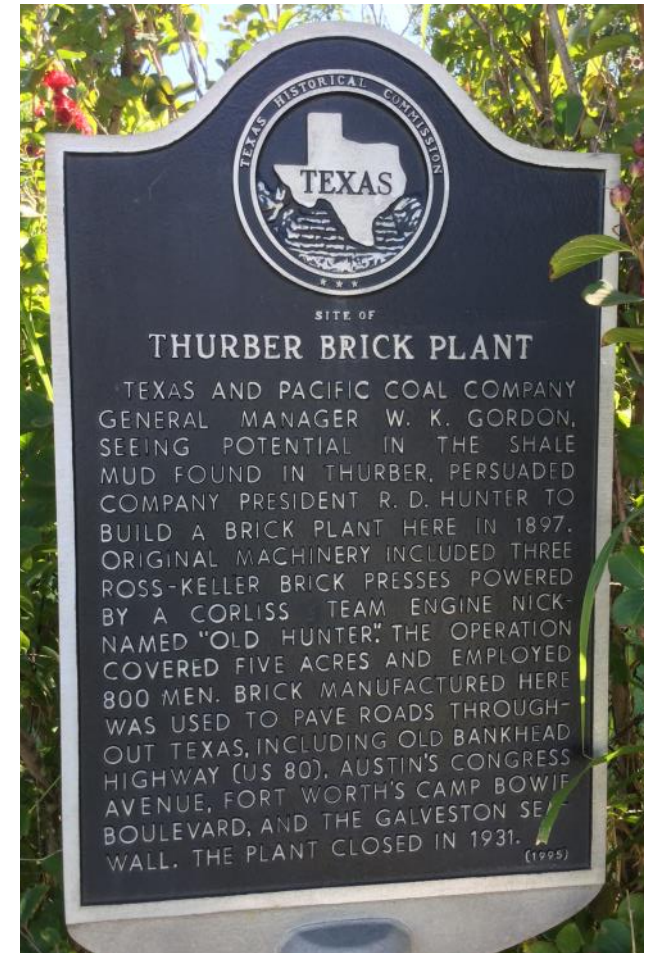
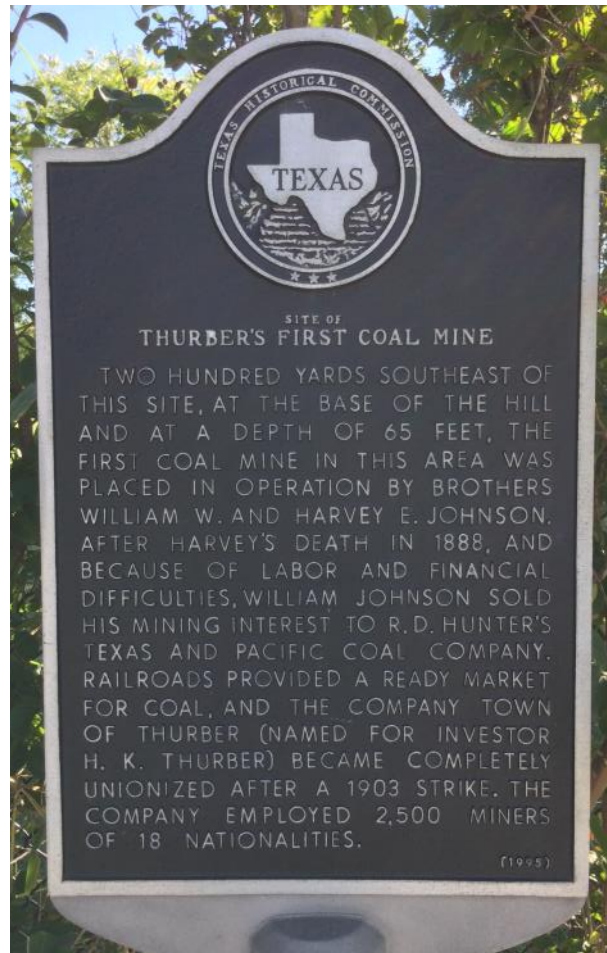
Share your rabbit's adventures with us on Instagram with #thurberbunnies or by email to wkgordoncenter@gmail.com



This is a modern replica intentionally made to look different from the original ones that are available for purchase at the museum gift shop. I thought the idea of it was way too cool not to buy one! The museum staff bought generic candy molds in the shape of rabbits from Amazon to create these clay rabbit replicas.



*This is Clay, a museum named original clay rabbit that was made at an unknown time during the existence of the town of Thurber.
#claysadventures*



Some historical markers near the museum.



A historical marker near the Iron Hill Restaurant.

Read More

- W.K. Gordon Museum, <https://web.tarleton.edu/gordoncenter/>

de Stolfe Journal ★★★ Broadsheets

I hope you enjoy these de Stolfe Journal Broadsheets!

I started these broadsheets as a means to reduce the number of pages for the regular journal issues. (And let's face it, you don't have time to read 50+ pages of the regular journal when not every topic in them might be of interest to you!) My broadsheets are single topics of special interest in a horizontal page format and restricted to ten pages or less (usually).



Producer, RG de Stolfe

Robert-George de Stolfe
PO Box 16156
Lubbock, Texas 79490
806.470.5867

de Stolfe Journal.....

The de Stolfe Journal is a publication made by Robert-George de Stolfe. The first issue was published in March 1986 as the de Stolfe Journal and published irregularly until 1998 (17 issues total). The *Candid* variety of the Journal started in July 2012, with a production of over 60 regular and special issues, with now the *Candid* dropped from the name. Archives of all issues—including the original ones (1980s-1990s)—are available on the website: www.destolfe.com

Publisher/Owner/Editor

Robert-George de Stolfe

Graphics/Layout*



Robert-George de Stolfe

**Unless otherwise accredited, the graphics and photos are by Robert-George de Stolfe or possibly from public domain. In some cases, the original source cannot be determined.*

This publication is published solely as a digital format. All content—unless attributed to some other source, including web sources, or from public domain sources—is original content by Robert-George de Stolfe. Public domain sources might or might not be specifically attributed.

The reader of this content has right to download and view the content for personal enjoyment. However, if someone wants to use the content for any other purpose, permission must be requested in writing and approved by Robert-George de Stolfe.

Copyright © 2021, Robert-George de Stolfe

-  Journal Archive www.destolfe.com
-  Top Hand Graphics www.tophandgraphics.com
-  RG eMail rgdestolfe@yahoo.com
-  RG LinkedIn www.linkedin.com/in/rgdestolfe
-  RG YouTube www.youtube.com/channel/UCxqM8QWWaVPwzLa0ccZ46Cw

www.destolfe.com