

Locality Guide for Callahan County, Texas

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Historical Background and Geography

Named after James Hughes Callahan, an American soldier in the Texas Revolution,¹ Callahan County boundaries were first established in 1858 from the Bexar Land District, Travis Land District, Non-County Area 17 attached to Coryell County, and Non-County Area 22 attached to Bosque County. However, the county was not fully organized until 1877, after it was detached from Eastland County. In the intervening years, the area that is now Callahan County was attached to three other counties “for judicial purposes”: first, Comanche County from 1860 to 1870, then Palo Pinto County from 1870 to 1875, followed by Shackelford County from 1875 to 1876.²

The county seat was first established in Belle Plain, but moved to Baird in 1883, three years after the Texas and Pacific railroad bypassed Belle Plain, choosing to build a depot in nearby Baird.³

There are no geographically official boundaries for the seven regions of Texas; however, culturally, Callahan County is considered part of “West Texas.”⁴ Counties bordering Callahan are Shackelford County, Eastland County, Brown County, Coleman County, Taylor County, and Jones County. (See smaller map in lower right corner of image on next page.)

Callahan County hosts four incorporated municipalities: the cities of Baird and Clyde, and the towns of Cross Plains and Putnam (amplified by blue diamonds on the map of oil wells on the next page). The entire county is a part of the Abilene Metropolitan Statistical Area.⁵

Historically, the county residents worked on ranches, farms, the railroads, and in oil and gas production – though, drilling leases and production in Callahan County has dropped sharply in recent decades,⁶ and only a small percentage of the county’s 13,708 residents in 2020 were employed in working the land.⁷

A Note About Early Records

This guide is focused on records starting from the county’s organization in 1877, especially because the ancestors of the author did not arrive until the mid-1880s. Earlier history will be covered in later updates to this guide. Until then, researchers should use the applicable *FamilySearch Research Wiki* ([https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Texas, United States Genealogy](https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Texas,_United_States_Genealogy)) to guide any early-record research for these counties (overlapping dates intentional):

Pre-1858 Coryell and Bosque County	1875-1876 Shackelford County
1856-1860 Comanche County	1876-1877 Eastland County
1870-1875 Palo Pinto County	

1 Russell Woodall, “James Hughes Callahan: Texas Revolution Soldier and Frontier Leader,” Texas State Historical Society, *TSHA Handbook of Texas* (<https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/callahan-james-hughes> : accessed 09 Sept 2024), last paragraph.

2 John H. Long, Editor, “Texas: Individual County Chronologies,” *Texas Atlas of Historical County Boundaries*, (The Newberry Library, 2008); image, *Internet Archive* (https://web.archive.org/web/20150513024355/http://publications.newberry.org/ahcbp/documents/TX_Individual_County_Chronologies.htm : accessed 08 Sept 2024).

3 William R. Hunt, “Baird, TX: History and Development of a Railroad Town,” Texas State Historical Society, *TSHA Handbook of Texas* (<https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/baird-tx> : accessed 06 Sept 2024).

4 David Carson, “The Regions of Texas,” *TexasCounties.Net* (<https://www.texascounties.net/statistics/regions.htm> : accessed 08 Sept 2024).

5 “Population: Population Statistics for Texas MSAs,” *Texas Almanac* (<https://www.texasalmanac.com/articles/population> : accessed 08 Sept 2024).

6 “Oil Wells and Production in Callahan County, TX,” *Texas-Drilling.com* (<https://www.texas-drilling.com/callahan-county> : accessed 10 Sept 2024).

7 “Callahan County, Texas,” *United States Census Bureau* (https://data.census.gov/profile/Callahan_County,_Texas : accessed 07 Sept 2024).

About Callahan County Records and Statutory Requirements

Baird is the county seat. There is no known history of record loss.⁸ In the late 19th century, parental consent was required for men under 21 years and women under 18 years to marry.⁹ State statutory requirements for county records are outlined in the table, below.

Known Beginning Dates for Government County Records						
Birth*	Marriage	Death*	Court	Land	Probate	Census
1903	1877	1903	1879	1877	1877	1829
*Statewide registration for births and deaths began in 1903. General compliance by the 1930s.						

“Callahan County, Texas Genealogy,” *FamilySearch Research Wiki* (https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Callahan_County,_Texas_Genealogy : accessed 07 May 2025), Callahan County, Texas Record Dates, Table, Known Beginning Dates for Government County Records.

Vital, Probate, Court, and Land Records

Principal county-level record-holding agency

Callahan County Courthouse

1257 FM 2047, Baird, Texas 79504

Phone: 325-854-5815

County Clerk holds original birth and death records from 1903. Anecdotal experience indicates that the county has some records that are not in the statewide index or digital image collections, but none before 1903. Also, marriage, probate, tax, and land records from 1877 are available in bound volumes. As of March, 2026, the courthouse (which also houses the county library) is under renovation; call ahead so that staff can pull records.¹⁰

District Clerk has divorce and court records; adoption records are held by the district court but are not available to the public. As an alternative, adoptees and parents, can use the “Central Adoption Registry” on the *Texas Health and Human Services* website to connect with other willing parties to an adoption: <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/vital-statistics/adoption-information/central-adoption-registry>. Limited in-person research; call ahead.

Principal state-level record-holding agencies

Texas’s current state-wide vital records registration, births and deaths, began in 1903. No earlier records are stored at the state level. A birth record becomes a public record after seventy-five years and a death record after twenty-five years.¹¹

⁸ “Callahan County, Texas Genealogy,” *FamilySearch Research Wiki*

(https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Callahan_County,_Texas_Genealogy : accessed 07 May 2025).

⁹ Hans Peter Mareus Neilson Gammel, *The Laws of Texas 1822–1897*, vol 4, p 1463, (Austin, Texas: Gammel Book Company, 1898); digital images, *Portal to Texas History* (<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph6730/ml/1467> : accessed 13 May 2025).

¹⁰ Nicole Croker (County Clerk of Callahan County), telephone communication with Amy Coughlin, 17 July 2024; handwritten notes, privately held by Coughlin, Fredericksburg, TX, 2024. Croker confirmed that county records are still available to researchers during the courthouse renovations, but that calling in advance is advised.

¹¹ Kelvin L. Meyers, author, and Barbara Vines Little, editor, *NGS Research in the States Series: Texas* (Arlington, Virginia: National Genealogical Society, 2016), 42-43.

The Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC)

1201 Brazos Street, Austin, TX 78701

<https://www.tsl.texas.gov/>

Research Guidelines: <https://www.tsl.texas.gov/arc/index.html#Guidelines>

TSLAC houses thousands of original Texas records, but specifically related to Callahan County, the “County Records Available on Microfilm” finding aid indicates that Callahan County is among those included in a TSLAC-FamilySearch collaboration that microfilmed many county records between the 1970s and the early 1990s. Callahan County records on microfilm (reflecting a subset of records held by the County Clerk), are available at Tarleton State University or by interlibrary loan.¹² (See below.)

Texas State Library and Archives Commission at Tarleton State University

Dick Smith Library, Tarleton State University: Regional Historical Resource Depository (RHRD)

Box T-0450, Tarleton Station, Stephenville, TX 76402-0450

254-968-9251

<http://www.tarleton.edu/library/collections/county-records.html>

Fall & Spring Semesters

Monday – Thursday: 7:00 a.m. – 1:00 a.m.

Friday: 7:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Saturday: 12:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Sunday: 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 a.m.

Summer Semester

Monday – Wednesday: 7:30 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Thursday – Friday: 7:30 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Saturday: 12:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Sunday: 12:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Tarleton State is the designated as the Regional Historical Resource Depository, or RHRD, for Callahan County. Patrons make interlibrary loan requests through their local library.

Available Records on Microfilm

For each type of record, the form – register, certificate, etc. – varies by era.

- Birth records, 1903-1926, plus indexes from 1857 to 1930, depending on precinct.
- Death records, 1903-1981, plus a general index; some volumes are individually indexed, and some volumes contain records that were filmed out of order.
- Marriage records, 1877-1950, plus each volume has an individual index.

Library resources are available anytime the library is open, and the staff offers free research assistance, with online scheduling of librarians for either in-person or virtual appointments. Researchers can also call, email, or use an online form (“Ask a Librarian”) or via social media. <https://www.tarleton.edu/library/get-help/research/>.

Vital Statistics Section of the Texas Department of Health

<https://www.dshs.texas.gov/vital-statistics>

DSHS holds birth records starting 1903, death records starting 1890, marriage and divorce records starting 1966, plus indexes, starting in 1925. However, there is no provision for genealogical research, and all requests require proof of eligibility – even if the resources are outside of the statutory privacy requirements. It will be faster and easier to access records through one of the many other on-site and online repositories described in this guide.

¹² “County Records on Microfilm: Callahan County Records,” TSLAC (<https://www.tsl.texas.gov/arc/local/callahan.html>) : accessed 11 Sept 2024).

Online Vital Record Collections

The list of collections, below, were sourced from the *FamilySearch Research Wiki* page for Callahan County¹³ and then reformatted into a table, while also making several updates and corrections. All of these collections have searchable indexes. FamilySearch collections are free; the others are commercial websites and require a membership to access the records.

Site abbreviations: FS=FamilySearch, Anc=Ancestry, MyH=MyHeritage, Fmp=Findmypast
Key to County Codes: <https://www.usbirthcertificates.com/glossary/texas-birth-index>

Record Type	Time Period	Title	Site	Form	URL
Birth	1840-1981	Texas Births and Christenings, 1840-1981	FS	Index	https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1681015
Birth	1903-1936	Texas Birth Certificates, 1903-1935	FS	Index and images	https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1803956
Birth	1903-1997	Texas Birth Index, 1903-1997	FS, Anc	Index	https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1949342
Marriage	1802-2010	United States Marriages	Fmp	Index	https://search.findmypast.com/search-world-records/united-states-marriages
Marriage	1824-2019	Texas, U.S., Marriage Index, 1824-2019	Anc	Index	http://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=8795
Marriage	1837-2010	Texas, County Marriage Records, 1837-2010	FS	Index and images	https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1803985
Marriage	1837-1973	Texas Marriages, 1837-1973	FS	Index	https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1681052
Marriage	1837-1977	Texas, County Marriage Index, 1837-1977	FS	Index and images	https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1803987
Marriage	1837-1965	Texas Select County Marriage Index 1837-1965	Anc	Index	http://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=60183
Marriage	1966-2010	Texas Marriages, 1966-2010	FS	Index	https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/2031191
Marriage	1966- "onwards"	Texas Marriages and Divorces	MyH	Index	https://www.myheritage.com/research/collection-10069/texas-marriages-divorces
Death	1890-1977	Texas Deaths, 1890-1977	FS	Index and images	https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1983324
Death	1903-1973	Texas Deaths and Burials, 1903-1973	FS	Index and images	https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1681049
Death	1903-1982	Texas, U.S., Death Certificates 1903-1982	Anc	Index and images	http://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=2272
Death	1903-2000	Texas Death Index, 1903-2000	FS	Index	https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1949337
Death	1964-1998	Texas Death Index, 1964-1998	FS	Index	https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1375599
Death	1977-1986	Texas, Deaths, 1977-1986	FS	Index and images	https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1930157
Divorce	1966- "onwards"	Texas Marriages and Divorces	MyH	Index	https://www.myheritage.com/research/collection-10069/texas-marriages-divorces
Divorce	1968-2010	Texas Divorce Index, 1968-2010	FS	Index	https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/2038378
Divorce	1968-2015	Texas Divorces 1968-2015	Anc	Index	http://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=8794

¹³ "Callahan County, Texas Genealogy," *FamilySearch Research Wiki* (https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Callahan_County,_Texas_Genealogy : accessed 07 May 2025).

Census Records

Coverage and Availability

The land region currently identified as Callahan County is included in each of the decennial U.S. Federal Censuses, beginning in 1850, through 1950 – excepting 1890, which exists only in fragments, covering a few families in a few counties in Texas, but none in Callahan County. All extant population and non-population schedules pertaining to individuals in Callahan County are available online. Prior to statehood in 1845, a few censuses and citizenship registrations were conducted in territory that is now within the boundaries of Texas and are compiled in the book described in the first item in the census table, below.

Census Records Before 1877

When searching censuses prior to the county’s organization in 1877, see the “Historical Background and Geography” section of this locality guide to help determine which districts or counties might contain census entries for settlers within the current boundaries of Callahan County.

Social Statistics Schedules

The social statistics schedules for Texas collected 1850-1880 are not available online, but they are available on microfilm at NARA; the originals are available at the Texas State Library, Archives Division. See contact information for the state archives under “Archives, Libraries, Museums, and Historical Societies” in this locality guide.

Extant Census Records for Callahan County

The table below includes only extant censuses and schedules. For a statewide list of existing and lost census records see https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Texas_Censuses_Existing_and_Lost.

CENSUS	ACCESS
The first census of Texas, 1829-1836, plus citizenship lists 1821-1845	<i>FamilySearch</i> , “The first census of Texas, 1829-1836: to which are added Texas citizenship lists, 1821-1845 and other early records of the Republic of Texas” https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/records/item/539824-the-first-census-of-texas-1829-1836-to-which-are-added-texas-citizenship-lists-1821-1845-and-other-early-records-of-the-republic-of-texas
1850 US census population schedule	<i>Ancestry</i> , “1850 United States Federal Census” https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/8054/
1850 US census agriculture and industry/manufacturers schedules	<i>Ancestry</i> , “U.S., Selected Federal Census Non-Population Schedules, 1850-1880” https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/1276/
1850 US census slave schedule	<i>Ancestry</i> , “1850 U.S. Federal Census – Slave Schedules” https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/8055/
1850 US census mortality schedule	<i>Ancestry</i> , “U.S., Federal Census Mortality Schedules Index, 1850-1880” https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/3530/
1860 US census population schedule	<i>Ancestry</i> , “1860 United States Federal Census” https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/7667/
1860 census agriculture and industry/manufacturers schedules	<i>Ancestry</i> , “U.S., Selected Federal Census Non-Population Schedules, 1850-1880” https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/1276/
1860 US census slave schedule	<i>Ancestry</i> , “U.S., 1860 Federal Census – Slave Schedules” https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/7668/
1860 US census mortality schedule	<i>Ancestry</i> , “U.S., Federal Census Mortality Schedules Index, 1850-1880” https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/3530/
1870 US census population schedule	<i>Ancestry</i> “1870 United States Federal Census” https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/7163
1870 census agriculture and industry/manufacturers schedules	<i>Ancestry</i> , “U.S., Selected Federal Census Non-Population Schedules, 1850-1880” https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/1276/

1870 US census mortality schedule	Ancestry, "U.S., Federal Census Mortality Schedules Index, 1850-1880" https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/3530/
1880 US census population schedule	Ancestry, "1880 United States Federal Census" https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/6742/
1880 census agriculture and industry/manufacturers schedules	Ancestry, "U.S., Selected Federal Census Non-Population Schedules, 1850-1880" https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/1276/
1880 US census mortality schedule	Ancestry, "U.S., Federal Census Mortality Schedules Index, 1850-1880" https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/3530/
1880 US census defective, dependent, and delinquent classes schedules	Ancestry, "U.S., 1880 Federal Census Schedules of Defective, Dependent, and Delinquent Classes" https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/1634/
1890 US census veterans/pensioners schedule	Ancestry, "1890 Veterans Schedules of the U.S. Federal Census" https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/8667/
1900 US census population schedule (only)	Ancestry, "1900 United States Federal Census" https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/7602/
1910 US census population schedule	Ancestry "1910 United States Federal Census" https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/7884/
1920 US census population schedule	Ancestry, "1920 United States Federal Census" https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/6061/
1930 US census population schedule	Ancestry, "1930 United States Federal Census" https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/6224/
1940 US census population schedule	Ancestry, "1940 United States Federal Census" https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/2442/
1950 US census population schedule	Ancestry, "1950 United States Federal Census" https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/62308/

Laws and Legal Resources

Gammel's Laws of Texas

<https://texashistory.unt.edu/explore/collections/GLT/>

Digitized set of books include the published statutes for the state of Texas from 1822 to 1897, which can be used to better understand and trace land grants, mineral rights, tax rolls, and statutory requirements for marriage and probate law. Additionally, one can research the roles and responsibilities of ancestors who were elected officials.

Archives, Libraries, Museums, and Historical Societies

Texas State Library and Archives Commission

Dick Smith Library, Tarleton State University: Regional Historical Resource Depository (RHRD)

Box T-0450, Tarleton Station, Stephenville, TX 76402-0450

254-968-9251

<http://www.tarleton.edu/library/collections/county-records.html>

NOTE: See "State-Held Government and Vital Records" section earlier in this document for description, hours of operation and other details.

Cross Plains Public Library

149 N Main St, Cross Plains, TX 76443

(254) 725-7722

Phone: 254-725-7722

cppubliclibrary79@gmail.com

<https://www.crossplainslibrary.com/>

Open: Monday through Thursday: 12pm-5pm, follows school policies for inclement weather closures.

Offers access to *The Baird & Callahan County Star* 1888-1935, and the *Cross Plains Review* beginning in 1911 on microfilm; there are gaps. Holds Callahan County history books and typescripts, and some histories of surrounding counties. Some links on the web site are out-of-date but give clues to online sources for obituaries, marriages, cemeteries, and others.

Callahan County Library and Pioneer Museum

100 West 4th Street # B1, Baird, TX 79504

(325) 854-5875

library@callahancounty.org

Small collection of local history resources and artifacts. Limited access during courthouse renovations, which are more than a year past the original completion date as of March 2026.

Baird Texas T&P Railroad Depot Museum

100 Market St, Baird, TX 79504

(325) 854-2003

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/people/Baird-Texas-TP-Railroad-Depot-Museum/100057423760621/>

Bing aggregator shows hours as 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Monday-Saturday, but Facebook says “always open.” Web site appears incomplete/abandoned, so skipping link. Reviews on Facebook indicate that it’s a short stop for visitors, with a few artifacts and a friendly volunteer, willing to chat.

West Texas Historical Association

<https://wtha.wildapricot.org/>

The West Texas Historical Association Yearbook, started in 1925, is published annually. Articles are focused on West Texas history. The Association started in Abilene, in Callahan County’s backyard, but is now located in Lubbock. *The Cyclone* newsletter is published irregularly, but at least once a year. Research extends into both New Mexico and Oklahoma.

Texas State Genealogical Society (TSGS)

<http://www.txsgs.org/>

TSGS publishes *Stirpes*, which covers Texas genealogy and history. Past issues are available online for members. Maintains a list of local and regional genealogy societies and offers lectures, an annual conference, a blog, an eNews bulletin, a podcast, a Texas-based GRIP-like institute called TIGR, and a “Heritage Certificate” pedigree-application process for descendants of early Texas ancestors.

Texas State Historical Association (TSHA)

<http://www.tshaonline.org/>

TSHA publishes the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, a scholarly publication begun in 1897. The *Handbook of Texas* is a free, digital state encyclopedia, which, like most encyclopedias, can be a good place to start, but is best used to learn more about more scholarly resources. The TSHA sells books that represent a good source of Texas and Southwest historical context materials.

The Portal to Texas History

<https://texashistory.unt.edu/>

This can best be described as a digital compendium that includes everything from scholarly history, to maps and newspapers, along with yearbooks, playbills, and photographs. (See the “Maps” and “Newspapers” section elsewhere in this guide.) The portal can be used for both historical context as well as genealogical records searches. The site was created and is maintained by the University of North Texas Libraries.

Abilene FamilySearch Center

TX_Abilene@familyhistorymail.org

3325 N 12th St., Abilene, TX 79603-4763

(325) 668-4223 – call for hours

Offers research assistance and expanded access to *FamilySearch* online resources.

Historical Context Materials

Brutus Clay Chrisman, *Early Days in Callahan County* (Baird, Texas: Abilene Print & Stationery, 1972).

The most commonly cited source for most online histories of Callahan County.

Hicks A. Turner, editor, *I Remember Callahan* (Dallas, Texas: Taylor Publishing Company, 1986).

The second most commonly cited source, which also relies heavily on *Early Days in Callahan County*. After the lightly cited introductory history, the rest of the book is composed of short articles about county families and individuals, which fall under the category of “family tradition” but can provide clues.

Frontier Times Magazine (Texas: Jay Marvin Hunter, 1923-1954);

Published at a time when Texas pioneer settlers were still alive and able to tell first-hand stories, 352 issues are available for download, for a fee, through the web site:

<https://www.frontiertimesmagazine.com/> . Reprint hardcopies from the 1970s are also available, along with collectable originals. Primary benefit is historical context, but many issues also include genealogically relevant information, such as family names, ancestors, relationships, locations, employment, migration, dates of birth, and dates of death.

Research Guides

“Callahan County, Texas Genealogy,” *FamilySearch Research Wiki*

[https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Callahan County, Texas Genealogy](https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Callahan_County,_Texas_Genealogy) : 2024.

Always a good place to start, but site is not consistently kept up-to-date.

Kelvin L. Meyers, author, and Barbara Vines Little, editor, ***NGS Research in the States Series: Texas*** (Arlington, Virginia: National Genealogical Society, 2016).

I own both PDF and paperback.

Fane Downs, Paul D. Lack, and Robert Sledge, Compilers, **“Inventory of County Records, Callahan County Courthouse, Baird, Texas”** (Austin, Texas: Texas State Library, 1977), 164 pages; images, *FamilySearch Library* <https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/viewer/508871>.

A part of the Texas County Records Inventory Project, the bulk of the book is a thorough description of available record sets/books/files, across 10 county offices/officials/roles: Commissioners’ Court, County Clerk, County Court, County Attorney, District Clerk, Justice of the Peace, Sheriff, Tax Assessor-Collector, County Treasurer, School Superintendent. Also includes introductory context and explanation of each of the offices/officials/roles (with citations), a summarized listing of all county records and the dates covered, including gaps (starting on page 125/image 127), and an index to the book (starting on page 138/image 150). Table of contents begins on page iii/image 4.

Genealogy Societies and Social Media

Callahan County Historical Commission

PO Box 745 Cross Plains, TX 76443

<https://www.facebook.com/Callahancountyhistoricalcommission>

Focused on preservation through funding historical markers and a few historical sites, providing school programs, lectures open to the public, and scheduled tours of historic buildings in the county.

West Texas Genealogical Society

544 CR 332, Abilene, TX 79606-7118

325-864-1624

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~txwtgs/index.html>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/wtgs.abilene>

Covers 13 counties, including Callahan. Meets monthly, and usually has a speaker.

Geo-Genealogy: People in Place and Time

City Directories

Situated in a very rural county, none of the two cities and two towns in Callahan County are covered by any extant city directories or farm directories. There are 30 extant city directories for the nearest city, Abilene, in Taylor County, available online at *The Portal to Texas History*;¹⁴ they offer insight into many of the services and cultural opportunities available to Callahan County residents, even though they do not list individuals from the county.

Maps

The Texas General Land Office

1700 N. Congress Ave., Austin, TX 78701

512-463-5001

<https://www.glo.texas.gov/archives-and-heritage>

Created by the Republic of Texas in 1836, the General Land Office determined and documented who owned what and where after the Texians and Tejanos won independence. The modern-day GLO manages state lands but also serves in many other capacities that have no direct relation to “the land.” For example, the GLO helps Texans recovering from natural disasters, helps fund Texas public education through the Permanent School Fund, provides benefits to Texas Veterans, and manages the Texas Coast.

The GLO maintains an online resource called “Archives and Heritage,” which includes a land grant database with more than 6 million digitized documents, a surname index for grantees and patentees, and a map database and store, where users can download maps or purchase reproductions.

¹⁴ “City Directories,” University of North Texas Libraries, *The Portal to Texas History*

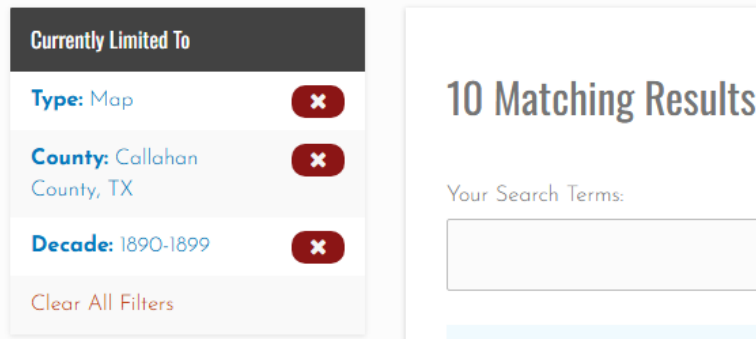
(https://texashistory.unt.edu/explore/collections/CIT/browse/?fq=str_location_county:Taylor%20County,%20TX :

Accessed 17 May 2025).

The Portal to Texas History

<https://texashistory.unt.edu/search/?t=fulltext>

Follow the link, above, to the full-text search page, then in the “Filters” menu choose maps from the resource type list, Callahan from the county list, and then filter on decades or years. The online maps include more than 30 Sanborn Insurance maps, along with maps showing land ownership, various industries, such as oil and railroad, and maps created to support community projects.



Partial screen shot of full-text search filters, University of North Texas Libraries, *The Portal to Texas History* (https://texashistory.unt.edu/search/?q=&t=fulltext&sort=added_d&fq=dc_type%3Aimage_map&fq=str_location_county%3ACallahan+County%2C+TX&fq=until_decade%3A1890-1899 : Accessed 17 May 2025).

Library of Congress

Library of Congress holds a vast collection of maps, many of them digitized. Visit here: https://www.loc.gov/item/sanborn08416_006/ to go directly to search results for the eleven online maps available for Callahan County; nine of them are Sanborn Insurance Maps of Baird and Cross Plains from as early as 1885 up to 1939. The remaining two are county-wide relief maps – both showing land ownership – one from the Texas & Pacific Railway from 1870 and the other from the Texas General Land Office from 1879.

Newspapers

During the years of interest, 1880 to 1934, there are about three dozen newspapers. Most of those titles have at least a few extant original issues, microforms, and online digital images covering Callahan County news – if including Abilene-based newspapers, which often reprinted news from Callahan papers, or, for more newsworthy stories, the Abilene papers would supply their own coverage of events in Callahan County. **Keep in mind that due to frequent reprinting of news, items about activities in Callahan County can show up in many other areas across the state.** After gleaning from the local sources, an expanded search, statewide may yield more news items.

Chronicling America

<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>

All holdings: Searching on Callahan and Taylor counties provides a list of newspapers, which can be filtered further by timeframe of interest (1880-1940). The search on Taylor county includes a couple of farmers' journals, a college newspaper, and some religious papers. Most of the holdings listed, below, are at libraries that participate in interlibrary loans for microfilm.

Callahan County:

The Baird Star, 1887-1969
The Baird Weekly Star, 1877-1887
Callahan County Clarendon, 1879-1887

The Clyde Enterprise, 19??-????
The Cross Plains Review, 1910-Current
The Putnam News, 1936-????

Taylor County:

Abilene Daily Reporter, 188?-18??
Abilene Daily Reporter, 1897-1937
The Abilene Evening Times, 1913-1927
The Abilene Morning News, 1926-1937
Abilene Morning Reporter, 1918-19??
The Abilene Morning Times, 1927-1928
The Abilene Reporter, 1881-1918
Abilene Semi-Weekly Farm Reporter, 1910-11
The Abilene Semi-Weekly Reporter, 1911-1918
The Abilene Times, 1928-????
The Abilene Weekly Reporter, 1918-1920
The Coyote, 1906-19??
The Baptist Tribune, 1905-????
The Baptist, 18??-1905
The Buffalo Gap Weekly News, 1881-?

The Farmers Journal, 1903-19??
The Merkel Mail, 1890-Current
The McMurry Bulletin, 1923-1923
McMurry War Whoop, 1927-1950
The Optimist, 1912-Current
The Simmons Brand, 1916-1934
The Tuscola Valley Vidette, 1912-19??
The Taylor County News, 1885-19??
Taylor County Times, 1913-????
The Texas Eagle, 1881-1882
The War-Whoop, 1923-1927
The Western Evangel, 1906-19??
West Texas Baptist, 1924-????
West Texas Sentinel, 1891-19??

Digitized Newspapers: The list of Texas newspapers digitized on the Chronicling America web site is relatively short, focused on larger cities. But since some descendant family members migrated to the cities, such as Fort Worth, it is worth noting that some news of them may be found in the larger newspapers. See the link for “All Digitized Newspapers 1756-1963.”

Texas Tech University, Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library, “Newspapers”

<https://collections2.swco.ttu.edu/handle/20.500.12255/1>

It is a little bit difficult to navigate when using the on-screen controls, so use of those site features require patience. However, the search feature is very good, with filters that work well. It even pulls surnames out of advertisements in stylized print. It does have some of the same OCR issues found in the *FamilySearch* full-text experiment, but still worth the effort. It is one of the few sites I’ve found with online access to Callahan County newspapers from the time of greatest interest. From the provided link, scroll down the alphabetical list (or search) for ***Baird Star/Callahan County Star*** and for ***Cross Plains Review***.

Cross Plains Public Library

<https://www.crossplainslibrary.com/>

Offers access to ***The Baird Star/Callahan County Star*** 1888-1935, and the ***Cross Plains Review*** beginning in 1911, on microfilm; there are gaps. See the full entry for this library under “Archives, Libraries, Museums, and Historical Societies.”

FamilySearch

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/search/catalog/349648>

Search collections for **Taylor County News**, which is broken up into nine image groups, available for browsing or searching using the *FamilySearch* full-text search feature.

The Portal to Texas History

<https://texashistory.unt.edu/search/?t=fulltext>

From the linked full-text search page, in the “Filters” menu choose newspapers from the resource type list, Taylor from the county list (no coverage for Callahan newspapers), and then filter on decades or years. See the entry for *The Portal to Texas History* for an example of filtering on the site in the “Maps” section of this guide. The digitized collections cover 32 newspapers (though most incomplete), but filtering down to the decades of greatest interest trims the list substantially to just **The Abilene Reporter**. Still, nearly all of the newspapers listed on *Chronicling America* have at least one issue digitized. (See list under “Chronicling America” in this guide.)

Subscription Newspaper Web Sites

Log in and check all state genealogy society membership web sites, pedigree society web sites, and paid services, such as *Ancestry* for member benefits. Many paid subscriptions come with access to one or more of the paid newspaper websites, or access to one of the paid services that then have access to newspaper sites.

Newspapers.com, <https://www.newspapers.com/papers/>

As of March 2026, no Callahan County papers, but includes five newspapers from Taylor County within the timeframe of interest (1880-1940): **Abilene Daily Reporter, The Abilene Reporter, Abilene Reporter-News, Abilene Semi-Weekly Farm Reporter, The Taylor County News.**

NewspaperArchive, <https://newspaperarchive.com/search/location/>

As of March 2026, no Callahan County papers, but includes nine newspapers from Taylor County within the timeframe of interest (1880-1940): **Abilene Daily Reporter, Abilene Morning News, Abilene Morning Reporter, Abilene Morning Reporter News, The Abilene Reporter, Abilene Reporter-News, Abilene Semi-Weekly Farm Reporter, Abilene Semi-Weekly Reporter, The Taylor County News.**

GenealogyBank, <https://www.genealogybank.com/newspapers/sourcelist/tx>

As of March 2026, no Callahan County papers, but includes nine newspapers from Taylor County within the timeframe of interest (1880-1940): **Abilene Morning News, The Abilene Reporter, Abilene Reporter-News, The Taylor County News.**