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## Location

The historical exhibit is displayed in the  
Balch Springs Library-Learning Center  
12450 Elam Road  
Balch Springs, Texas 75180

## Hours of Operation

Monday thru Friday 10:00 am - 9:00 pm  
Saturday 10:00 am - 3:00 pm  
Sunday closed

## Admission

Entrance to the exhibit is free of charge. To  
schedule a group tour, contact Sandy Gallion,  
Director, Balch Springs Library-Learning  
Center, 972.913.3000. Educational packets are  
available upon request.

## History Committee

For information about the “Balch Springs - The  
Early Days” committee and ongoing research  
projects, contact the Balch Springs Chamber of  
Commerce, 972.557.0988.

## Driving Directions

From North Dallas travel east and then south on  
I635 crossing I30 and I80. Exit at Elam Road  
and travel east.

From Fort Worth travel east on I20 until it  
merges into I635. Exit at Elam Road and travel  
east.

The Balch Springs Library-Learning Center is  
located at 12450 Elam Road.

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## Project Sponsorship By

Texas Lakes Trails  
Texas Historical Commission  
[www.thc.state.tx.us](http://www.thc.state.tx.us)



Balch Springs  
Chamber of Commerce  
P.O. Box 800095  
Balch Springs, Texas 75180  
972.557.0988  
[www.balchspringschamber.org](http://www.balchspringschamber.org)



City of Balch Springs  
Municipal Building  
3117 Hickory Tree Road  
Balch Springs, Texas 75180  
972.557.6070  
[www.cityofbalchsprings.com](http://www.cityofbalchsprings.com)



# BALCH SPRINGS THE EARLY DAYS



**Explore the history, culture  
and lifestyle of early settlers.**

**Balch Springs Library-Learning Center  
12450 Elam Road  
Balch Springs, Texas 75180  
(972) 913-3000**

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## Local History Section

The exhibit, “Balch Springs - The Early Days”, covers the years from 1845 to 1953. It gives a historical account from the days of the Republic of Texas until the date of the city’s incorporation.

Visitors to the exhibit can explore the early days through textual and visual accounts. History buffs will also delight in the Local History/Genealogy Collection, which is host to newspapers and information not found in other collections.

### Local History Section

The Balch Springs Library-Learning Center contains over 200 files in its local history collection. Files include information on topics such as: early settlers, farming, churches, education, and social life. When Balch Springs was incorporated it encompassed the Balch Springs, Zipp City, Five Points, Triangle, and Jonesville communities, as well as portions of Rylie and Kleberg.

Local newspapers from 1966-1999 are also cased in this section. These newspapers are a very important asset to the collection. They have never been microfilmed, and they are not in any electronic database. They are unique to the Balch Springs collection.

*Cover photo courtesy of Daisy Shepherd Folks*

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## Genealogy Section

In 1841 the Republic of Texas authorized the Texas Emigration and Land Company, also known as W.S. Peters and Associates or the Peters Colony, to recruit settlers for a 1,300-square-mile area in North Texas. By 1845 William Hardy Bennett and other farmers moved to the present-day Balch Springs area with their families. In 1846 the area, which had been in Nacogdoches County, became part of Dallas County, when the State of Texas created Dallas County from portions of Robertson and Nacogdoches Counties. The immigrants in Southeast Dallas County were mostly small farmers.

The present-day Balch Springs area remained sparsely populated until after World War II. Residents were at various times served by post offices in neighboring communities. In addition to the Balch Springs community, the genealogy collection includes information on individuals in these communities: White Rock, Prairie Creek, Scyene, Haught’s Store, and Lawson.

The genealogy collection includes over 200 obituaries for people who lived or worked in the Balch Springs area. The obituaries include deaths from 1888 to the present. The history committee encourages individuals to donate family group sheets, pedigree charts, and obituaries to the collection.

Heritage Quest Online is available for visitors to access on the library’s computers. Heritage Quest provides federal census databases as well as other resources essential to genealogical research.

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## The Story Behind The Name

The city of Balch Springs sits as the southeastern gateway to the Dallas / Fort Worth Metroplex. Current population is estimated to be 19,708. Although none of the city’s springs are currently open to the public, the city did indeed receive its name because of the plentiful springs in the late 1800s.

Early maps show creeks labeled North Mesquite Creek and South Mesquite Creek. The springs running off the South Mesquite Creek were not named. In the early 1880s William H. Bennett, son of Hiram Bennett, had a large amount of land in what is now the Lake June Road and Eastgate Drive area. He sold a small parcel to John M. Balch. Apparently the locals began referring to the springs on Mr. Balch’s property as “Balch Springs” and continued to use the name after John Balch sold the property and moved away.

When Dallas County established a school for the community circa 1885, it was named Balch Springs School. From 1904 on, numerous articles in the Mesquite newspaper refer to the Balch Springs community.

Current research indicates that the first occurrence of the name Balch Springs (referring to the water, not the community) is on a 1918 map.