

MCCULLOCH COUNTY

Population: 7,896 (2003 estimate)

History:

Located in the geographic center of Texas on the Dodge Cattle Trail, McCulloch County was named for Ben McCulloch. A soldier in the Battle of San Jacinto and Mexican War, elected Representative of the Republic of Texas and frontier surveyor, McCulloch served as a US Marshal in 1856 when the county was established. The first settlers on the banks of McCulloch County's Brady Creek donated land in the mid-1870s to create Brady City. It was named the county seat in 1876, with the name shortened to Brady in 1906 upon incorporation.



Credit: McCulloch County Chamber of Commerce

Before the 20th century, livestock, primarily cattle ranching was the principal occupation in the area. With an influx of immigrants in the late 1880s and 90s, farms increased with poultry, sheep, goats, pecans and cotton developing into significant sources of income. Brady became one of the primary shipping points in central Texas when the Fort Worth and Rio Grande Railway arrived in 1903, further bolstering its industry. The track was later abandoned in 1959, leaving Brady with considerably less access to outside markets and halting their more than 50-year growth spurt. The Santa Fe train depot, a symbol of Brady's early successes, has been restored and now serves as an art gallery and restaurant.



Credit: McCulloch County C. of C.

Today, McCulloch County is still primarily a ranching and farming community, with additional industries such as mohair combing and sand mining. Their stone courthouse, circa 1899, remains a stately presence in the center of the town square. The county has a strong sense of community, numerous city-owned recreation areas and a variety of outdoor sportsman pursuits. It is home to numerous hometown festivals including the Brady/McCulloch County World Championship Goat Cookoff held each Labor Day. Now in its 32nd year, the event attracts cooking teams from all over the nation and sometimes internationally.

Geography:

McCulloch County lies in the geographic center of Texas, at the edge of the Texas Hill Country and 115 miles northwest of Austin. It is crossed by the San Saba River and Brady Creek still runs through the center of the county seat.

Brady (pop. 5,523): The county seat and largest city in McCulloch County, it is located 115 miles northwest of Austin. Brady Creek, the town's namesake, still runs right through the city.

Things to see and do:



*Credit: Heart of TX
Country Music Museum*

Heart of Texas Historical Museum: Housed in a county jail dating to 1910, this exhibit details early farm and home life of the area's pioneers. Open Saturday and Monday from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Brady. 325/597-0526.

Heart of Texas Country Music Museum: Displays a collection of personal items (left) from various country music legends such as Roy Acuff, Kitty Wells and Johnny Cash, as collected by radio DJ Tracy Pitcox. Open Friday from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.; Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sunday from 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. Brady. 325/597-2119.

McCulloch County Courthouse: A Texas Historic Landmark dating to 1899, this courthouse was constructed of native stone from two local quarries (*right*). Brady.



Credit: Dr. Richard Lane

Brady Lake: 25 miles of shoreline offering outdoor enthusiasts opportunities for swimming, fishing, boating and camping. Boat storage, facilities, RV hookups, screened shelters and outdoor picnic areas are also available. Brady. 325/597-2152

Brady Municipal Golf Course: A nine-hole public golf course featuring rolling terrain and tight fairways. Open daily. Brady. 325/597-6010.

Santa Fe Center: The restored Santa Fe train depot that now functions as an art gallery and restaurant. It is available for parties and small conventions. Brady. 325/597-3491

Lodging:



Credits: McCulloch County Chamber

Numerous lodging properties are available in McCulloch County including full service motels such as Best Western Brady Inn and Days Inn Motel, rustic cabins in the woods like the Cabin at San Saba Oaks (*view featured left*), quaint bed & breakfast properties like Heart of Texas Bed & Breakfast, and both city and privately owned RV sites. They can accommodate both small and larger groups with more than **XXX** rooms and **XX** RV hookups.

Shopping:

Back at the Ranch - home décor and gift items
Christi's Room - embroidery, gourmet foods, and gifts
Cynthia's Collection - sterling silver, glass collectibles, quilt accessories and gifts
Evridge's - home appliances, home furnishings, bridal, gifts and an automotive store
Texas Tumbleweed - antiques, art, crafts and collectibles
Young's Jewelry – custom jewelry designs

Dining:

Brady and McCulloch County offer a variety of restaurants including barbeque, down home country cooking, steaks, ethnic foods and chain favorites. There is sure to be something to suit most every taste. Some of the local favorites are:

Down Home Country Cooking, Brady
Flores Café & Cantina, Brady
Heart of Texas Depot Restaurant, Brady
Hard Eight BBQ, Brady
Jacoby Café, Melvin
Texas Corral, Brady

Festivals/Events:

July: Brady/McCulloch County July Jubilee
PRCA Rodeo/PBR Bull Riding (*right*)
September: Brady/McCulloch County World
Championship Goat Cook-off
California Rock Crawling and Off Road Championship Event
October: Muzzle Loader Fall Shoot
November: First Christian Church Annual Bazaar
December: Brady/McCulloch County Christmas In the Heart



Credit: McCulloch County Chamber

For more information about McCulloch County and the Central Texas Hills & Rivers Region, visit their website at www.mccullochcountytx.com.