

**BANKHEAD HIGHWAY**  
**GRAND PRAIRIE SIGNIFICANT LANDMARK**  
**Site Medallion No. 80**

Bankhead Highway became the premier transcontinental highway through the southern states in 1916 connecting Washington D.C. to San Diego. In 1919, the “All-Texas” route was chosen over the Okalahoma proposal. This led the highway right through the Dallas/Fort Worth area.

Bankhead Highway was named for Alabama Senator John Hollis Bankhead. Born on September 13, 1842, Bankhead was a native of Moscow (now Sulligent), Alabama. He served as captain of the 16<sup>th</sup> Alabama Volunteers during the Civil War, where he was wounded three times. His primary occupation was a planter, but he devoted most of his life to public service, first at the state level and then at the national level.

As a senator, the Good Roads Movement was one of Bankhead’s favorite causes. In 1916, he sponsored the Federal Aid Roads Act, which was developed by his friend Logan Page and the American Association of State Highway officials. Bankhead has often been nicknamed “The Father of Good Roads in the United States Senate.”

Bankhead Highway was also nicknamed Main Street USA, Dixie Overland Highway, but the most popular monicker was Broadway of America.

Remainders of this road are still known in some parts of the country, however around Dallas, this roadway soon became known as Highway 80 once the federal numbering system came in 1926. Highway 80 stretches from Savannah, Georgia, to San Diego, California. The part of the roadway between Dallas and Fort Worth is no longer a US Highway, but instead Texas 180. Starting in the west it is Commerce Street in Dallas, Main Street in Grand Prairie, Division Street in Arlington, and Lancaster Avenue in Fort Worth.

Cities that were connected by this major highway include:

- Washington D.C.
- Virginia-Fredricksburg, Richmond, Clarksville
- North Carolina- Durham, Greensboro, Charlotte
- South Carolina-Greenville
- Georgia- Athens, Atlanta
- Alabama- Birmingham
- Mississippi- Tupelo
- Tennessee- Memphis
- Arkansas- Little Rock, Hot Springs, Texarkana
- Texas- Dallas, Fort Worth, Abilene, Roscoe, Big Spring, El Paso
- New Mexico- Deming, Lordsburg
- Arizona- Tucson, Phoenix, Yuma
- California- San Diego