

Texas Historical Commission staff (AD), 2/5/2010, rev. 4/9/10, 4/12/10, 5/27/10  
27" x 42" Official Texas Historical Marker with post  
Comal County (Job #09CM02) Subject (Atlas ) UTM: 14 583563E 3287132N  
Location: New Braunfels, 164 Landa Street

### **LANDA PARK**

JOSEPH LANDA PURCHASED THE LAND THAT NOW ENCOMPASSES THIS PARK IN 1859. THE COMAL SPRINGS, THE LARGEST GROUP OF SPRINGS IN THE AMERICAN SOUTHWEST, ARE THE FOCUS OF THE PARK. LANDA USED THE COMAL RIVER TO POWER GRISTMILLS, COTTON AND WOOLEN FACTORIES, AN ICE PLANT AND A BREWERY. DURING THE CIVIL WAR, A SALTPETER PROCESSING PLANT WAS ALSO LOCATED ON THE SITE.

JOSEPH'S SON HARRY LANDA OPENED LANDA'S PARK AS A TOURIST SITE IN 1898, WHEN THE INTERNATIONAL AND GREAT NORTHERN RAILROAD BUILT A SPUR TO THE SITE. BY 1900, BOTH THE I&GN AND THE MISSOURI-KANSAS-TEXAS (KATY) RAILROADS RAN WEEKEND EXCURSION TRAINS TO THE PARK, WHERE VISITORS ENJOYED PICNICS, DANCING AND STEAMBOAT EXCURSIONS ON LANDA LAKE. LANDA LATER SOLD THE PARK TO A SAN ANTONIO INVESTMENT GROUP, WHO OPERATED IT UNTIL FINANCIAL PROBLEMS CAUSED THE PARK'S CLOSURE IN 1933. IN 1936, CONCERNED CITIZENS LED BY ERHARD P. NOWOTNY PETITIONED THE CITY OF NEW BRAUNFELS TO PURCHASE THE PARK, AND CITY RESIDENTS VOTED THREE TO ONE IN FAVOR OF THE MOVE. THE PARK HAS REMAINED OPEN TO THE PUBLIC SINCE THAT TIME.

THROUGHOUT THE YEARS THE PARK HAS GROWN IN ACREAGE, AND MANY IMPROVEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE. IN THE 1930s, WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION (WPA) EMPLOYEES BUILT CONCESSION STANDS, RESTROOMS, PARKING AREAS, AND RETAINING WALLS. LATER IMPROVEMENTS HAVE INCLUDED A MINIATURE GOLF COURSE, PLAYGROUNDS AND NATURE TRAILS. WURSTFEST, AN ANNUAL CELEBRATION OF FOOD AND MUSIC, HAS BEEN HELD IN THE PARK EACH NOVEMBER SINCE THE EARLY 1960s. TODAY, LANDA PARK CONTINUES TO SERVE THE PUBLIC AS A LEISURE DESTINATION BOTH FOR THE CITIZENS OF NEW BRAUNFELS AND FOR AREA TRAVELERS.

(2009)

MARKER IS PROPERTY OF THE STATE OF TEXAS

# **LANDA PARK**

**OCTOBER 30, 2008**

## **I. CONTEXT**

Landa Park is a public park covering 243 acres including Panther Canyon, the golf course, and Hinman Island in New Braunfels, Texas. The park is located in eastern Comal County and bounded by Fredericksburg Road, Landa Street and the Comal River (attachment I).

## **II. OVERVIEW**

The park contains Comal Springs, the largest springs in Texas and the Southwest. In addition the springs are the source of the 3.25 mile long Comal River, the shortest river in the state of Texas. The Balcones Fault displacement of rock formations caused the underground barrier which forces the water in the Edwards Aquifer to rise through fissures and form the springs. These springs are known to have been used by nomadic Paleo Indians as early as 11,000 B.C (1). Found artifacts in the area suggest the site was a favorite camping ground for Tonkawa, Karankawa, Lipan, Kickapoo, Waco, and Comanche Indians.

## **III. SIGNIFICANCE**

Spanish explorers called the springs Las Fontanas. Travelers on El Camino Real or The King's Highway, blazed in 1691 as a route connecting Monclova, Mexico to the Spanish missions in East Texas, stopped at the springs along the way (2).

Permanent settlement dates to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. German Prince Carl of Solms-Braunfels recognized the importance of the springs as a permanent water source when he bought the site

from the Veramendi land grant in 1845. His German settlers first arrived in New Braunfels on Good Friday, March 21, 1845. The springs have served as a source for industrial, artistic, and touristic activity until the present.

William Merriwether was the first local entrepreneur to develop the springs when his slaves constructed a mill race from the Comal River in order to build a water-powered grist and saw mill in 1847. Joseph Landa purchased the land on May 15, 1860 and further developed the industrial potential of the springs, building mills for processing grist, flour, wood, cotton and woolen factories, an ice plant, an electric plant, and a brewery (1, 3). During the Civil War William Seekatz and associates manufactured saltpeter for the Confederate Army from a site near the springs. The kiln is still an attraction today. (2)

Harry Landa, Joseph's son, understood the value of the springs as a tourist destination when he opened Landa's Park in 1898. By 1900 both the International and Great Northern and the Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroads ran Sunday excursion trains from San Antonio and Austin to Landa's Park for picnics, dancing, and steamboat excursions on Landa Lake. Old photographs show a steam engine and lady passengers in their fine hats. A flyer shows the ride cost 75 cents from San Antonio.

In 1925, Harry Landa sold the property to a San Antonio investment group, in accordance with his mother's will. The park continued to operate under corporate control until 1933 when the company suffered financial problems in The Great Depression. The park was closed to the public remained closed until 1936 when a bond election for the city to buy the park was proposed and championed by Erhard Peter Nowotny, a local entrepreneur. The bond passed and the park was purchased by the city of New Braunfels for \$630 an acre (3). Approximately 1000

local citizens spent a weekend volunteering to clean their new park after three years of total neglect.

The park has remained open to the public ever since and is hailed as “The Beauty Spot of Texas. In 1936 the Works Progress Administration (WPA) sponsored a park improvement project in Landa Park building restrooms, parking areas, a concessions stand and retaining walls. Today the park boasts playgrounds, a golf course, picnic areas, a dance floor, two swimming pools, a miniature golf course, a walking trail, a miniature train, a recreation building, and a recognized Arboretum. In addition, the famous Wurstfest sausage festival is held in the park and has become one of the top ten national festivals. Buildings housing Wurstfest, the Circle Arts Theater and recreation/maintenance facilities were all built in the Harry Landa era (4).

The population of New Braunfels has risen from 22,402 in 1980 to almost 50,000 today. Landa Park is visited by a half million to a million people yearly and the park continues to serve both the burgeoning New Braunfels population as well as out of town tourists as a much sought after destination.

Area garden clubs started planting trees 75 years ago adding to the beauty of the park and shading citizens from the hot Texas sun. With its rich history and popularity, surely this historic park is worthy of a Texas state historical marker.

## IV. DOCUMENTATION

### REFERENCES

1. *Intensive-Level Historic Resources Survey Report*, Landa Park, New Braunfels, Comal County, Texas, HHM Inc., Austin Texas and Eisenhour CRM, Inc, Austin, Texas, October 2003.
2. Hass, Oscar. *History of New Braunfels and Comal County, Texas 1844-1946*. Oscar Hass, 1968.
3. Gregory, Rosemarie and Goff, Myra Lee Adams. *New Braunfels Comal County, Texas*, The Donning Company, 1993
4. Schumann, Delores. *Landa Park Arboretum*. Pamphlet, 1983.

SUBJECT MARKERS:  
2007 Official Texas Historical Marker  
Sponsorship Application Form

**Proposed marker topic:** Landa Park

**County -** Comal

**Town** New Braunfels

**Park location:** New Braunfels, Texas, bounded by Fredericksburg Rd., Landa Street and the Comal River. Offices are located at 164 Landa Park Drive.

**Marker site:** DMS

X: -98° 08' 09.964W

Y: 29° 42' 41.453N

## **Attachments**

- Attachment 1. Landa Park in New Braunfels, Texas
- Attachment 2. Map of Landa Park
- Attachment 3. Sketch of Landa Park
- Attachment 4. Seekatz Saltpeter Kiln
- Attachment 5. International and Great Northern Railroad at Landa Park
- Attachment 6. Ladies in train car in Landa Park
- Attachment 7. Flyer for Outing in Landa Park
- Attachment 8. Picnic in Landa Park
- Attachment 9. Flyer for Bond Issue
- Attachment 10. Approval from Parks and Recreation Department
- Attachment 11. Approval from City Historic Commission

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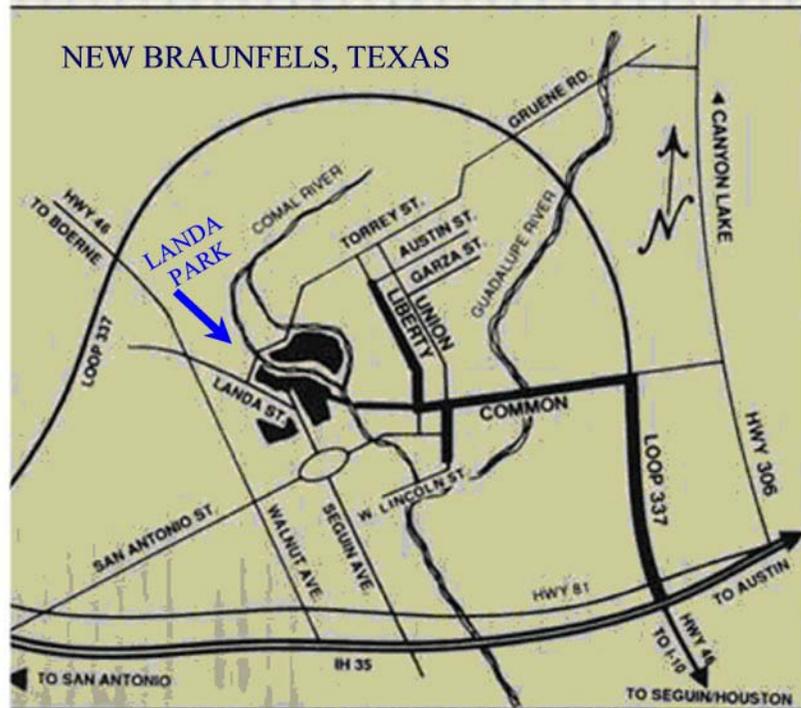
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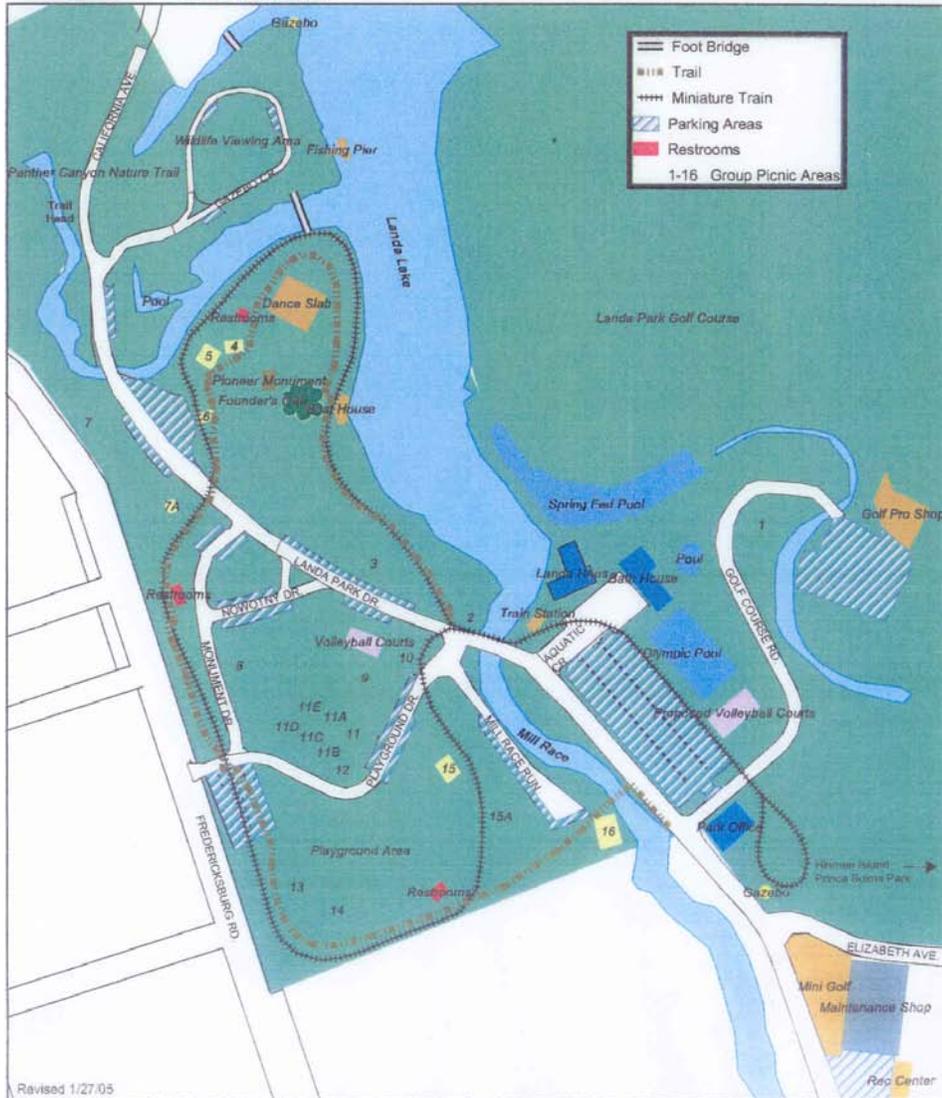
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Attachment 1. Landa Park in New Braunfels, Texas

# Map of Landa Park

## New Braunfels, Texas

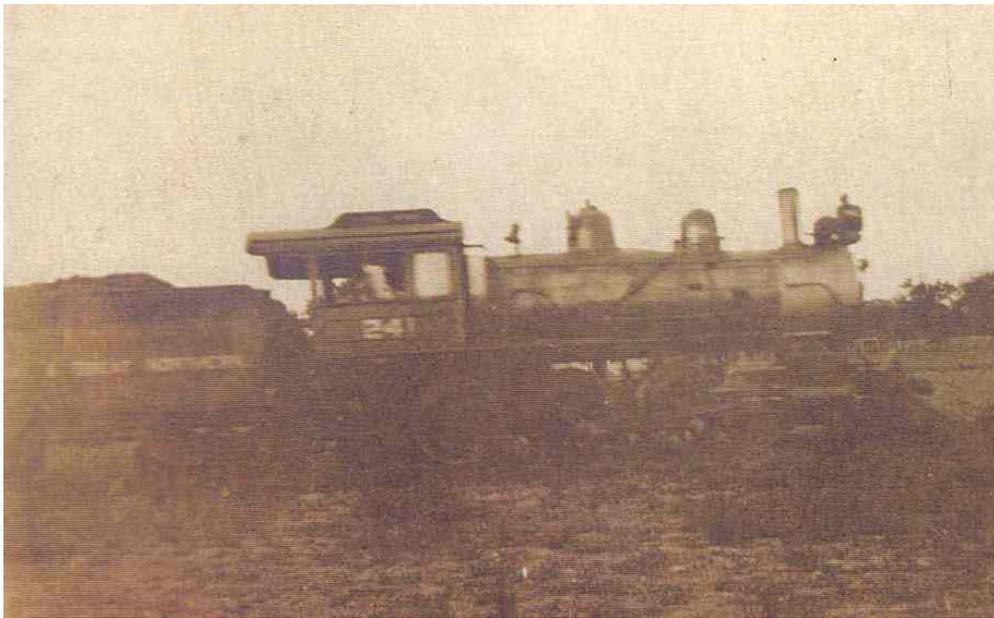


Attachment 2. Map of Landa Park

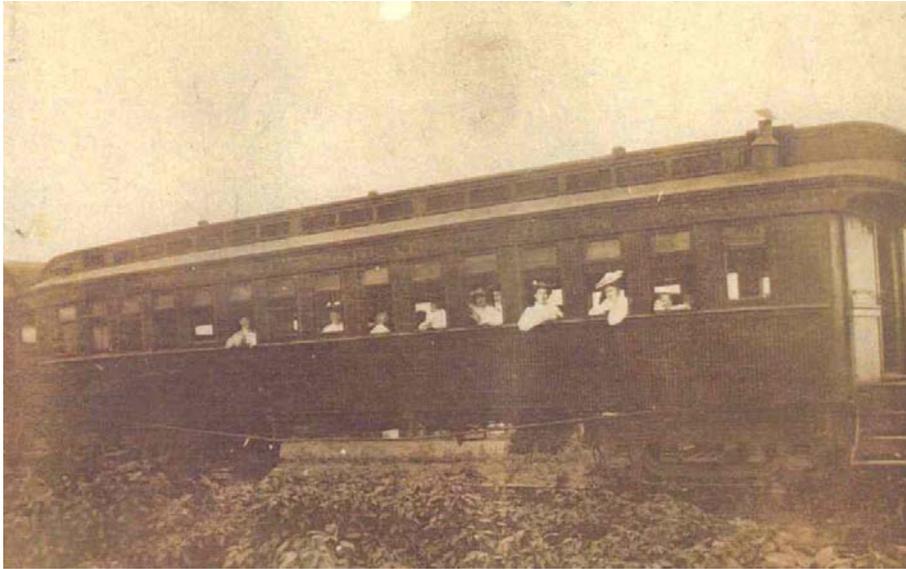




Attachment 4. Seekatz Saltpeter Kiln



Attachment 5. International and Great Northern Railroad at Landa Park



Attachment 6. Ladies in train car in Landa Park

# PICNIC AT LANDA'S PARK NEW BRAUNFELS

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL PICNIC  
GROUNDS IN TEXAS,

# SUNDAY!

## JULY 16, 1899

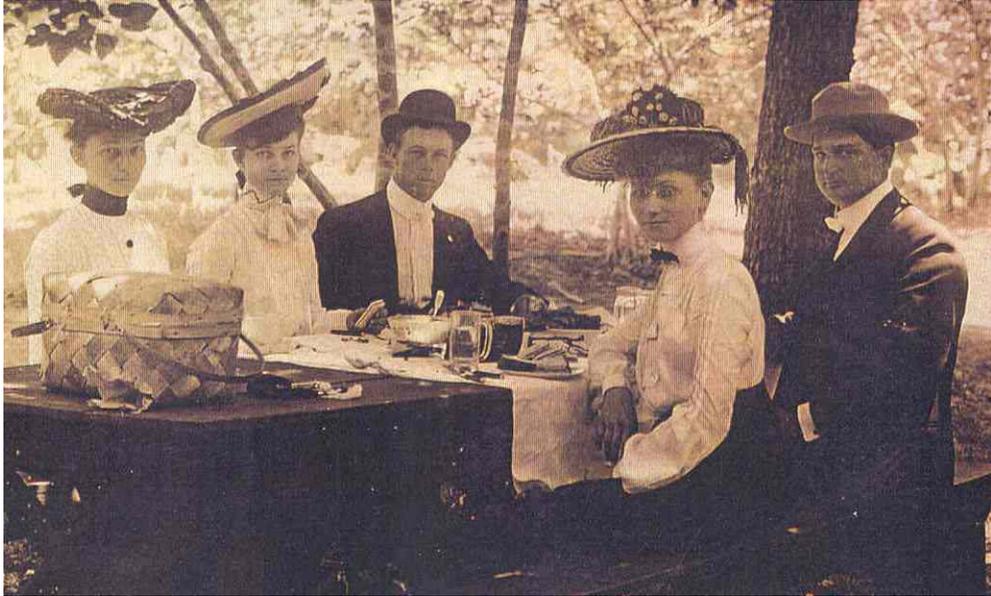
THREE CONCERTS BY CARL BECK'S MILITARY BAND.  
This will make an ideal place for a day's outing.  
Fishing, Swimming, Boating, Cake-walks, Dancing, etc.



Will run Special Train  
from San Antonio  
and make  
**VERY LOW  
EXCURSION RATES!**

TRAIN SERVICE AND RATES		
GOING	RATES	RETURNING
Lv. San Antonio . . . 5.00 a m . . . 9.00 a m . . . 12.30 p m . . .	\$ .75	Leave New Braunfels 2.38 p m . . . 6.30 p m . . . 9.09 p m
" Davenport . . . . . 5.37 a m . . . . . 9.37 a m . . . . .	.35	
Ar. New Braunfels . . . . . 6.02 a m . . . . . 10.02 a m . . . . .		
Lv. Taylor . . . . . 3.30 a m . . . . . 11.12 a m . . . . .	1.00	Leave New Braunfels *1.26 p m 9.42 p m
" Hutto . . . . . 3.50 a m . . . . . 11.30 a m . . . . .	1.00	
" Georgetown . . . . . 4.00 a m . . . . . 11.00 a m . . . . .	1.00	
" Round Rock . . . . . 4.09 a m . . . . . 11.47 a m . . . . .	1.00	
" McNeil . . . . . 4.20 a m . . . . . 11.56 a m . . . . .	1.00	
" Austin . . . . . 5.15 a m . . . . . 12.50 a m . . . . .	1.00	
" Manchaca . . . . . 5.50 a m . . . . . 1.19 p m . . . . .	1.00	
" Buda . . . . . 6.00 a m . . . . . 1.27 p m . . . . .	1.00	
" Kula . . . . . 6.15 a m . . . . . 1.40 p m . . . . .	1.00	

Attachment 7. Flyer for Outing in Landa Park



Attachment 8. Picnic in Landa Park

# PRICE?

Real Estate in Landa Park Highlands is sold at \$1,000 an acre.

Single lots in Landa Park Estates were sold for \$1,000 each.

Is Landa Park worth \$630 an acre?

DO NOT BE MISLED—Do you want to vote against Park Bond Issue and HELP A FEW

OR

Do you prefer to vote for Park Bond Issue and HELP THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY

For historical, sentimental and material reasons

## Vote the Bond Issue Monday

Attachment 9. Flyer for Bond Issue

## IV. DOCUMENTATION

### REFERENCES

1. *Intensive-Level Historic Resources Survey Report*, Landa Park, New Braunfels, Comal County, Texas, HHM Inc., Austin Texas and Eisenhour CRM, Inc, Austin, Texas, October 2003.
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# the southwell co.

928 N. Alamo St.  
San Antonio, TX 78215

RECD JUL 23 2010

# INVOICE

9536

INVOICE #

Phone: (210) 223-1831 Fax: (210) 223-8517

SOLD TO  
TX HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
P.O. BOX 12276  
AUSTIN, TX 78711

SHIP TO  
MERRY SAEGERT  
257 EAST BRIDGE STREET  
NEW BRAUNFELS, TX 78130

Accounts not paid within terms are subject to a 6% monthly finance charge.

TERMS **Net 30 DAYS**

YOUR P.O. NO.		YOUR PROJECT NAME		OUR JOB NO.	DATE
COMAL		LANDA PARK		09CM02	8/25/2010
QUANTITY	PRODUCT CODE	DESCRIPTION		UNIT PRICE	TOTAL PRICE
1	C#01-NEW	Contract #1 Des. E 27"x42" W/Post (EA)		1,280.12	1,280.12
		<p><b>1500 / 8089155 / 5/7/10</b></p> <p><b>SHIPPED</b> JUL 15 2010</p> <p><b>ENTERED</b></p>			
Sales Tax (8.125%)					\$0.00
<b>TOTAL DUE</b>					<b>\$1,280.12</b>

RETURN REMITTANCE COPY WITH PAYMENT

Please Pay From This Invoice  
Payment due in Bexar County; San Antonio, Texas at above address.

**MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: THE SOUTHWELL CO.**

WE ACCEPT:



*Thank You*  
*For Your*  
*Business*

**BOOKKEEPING COPY**

www.southwellco.com

E-mail: sales@southwellco.com