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Friends for the Preservation  
of Historic Landa Park  
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Landa XIX.9

The Landas' Final Farewell

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Landa Park Bridge  
to Infinity. Courtesy of  
Leslie Schlumberger

Harry Landa and his mother, Helena, were a remarkable working team. They lived in the mansion in New Braunfels across from the main plaza. When the St. Anthony opened in San Antonio in 1909 they took two suites that were kept in the family for a number of years.

Helena frequently accompanied Harry unless she was on a trip of her own, such as her extensive European tour. Her last years were ones of much happiness, fulfillment, and completely without financial concerns. She died in 1912 at the age of 78.

Harry was heartbroken. Yes, he had his work but even that dedication couldn't overcome the overwhelming loss he felt. He and his mother always had a good relationship as he also had with his father. Since his father's death, he and his mother consistently worked together on all matters concerning the estate and they became even closer. Harry also included her in his outside commitments. An example of this was the Texas State Commission for the St. Louis World's Fair. Harry was on the Commission and in his typical fashion, he never missed a meeting. The meetings were held at the Commission headquarters in Dallas. His mother frequently accompanied him to Dallas and also later to the World's Fair in St. Louis where they had a grand time. There were many friends through their activities that were welcomed and entertained by Harry and Helena at the mansion in New Braunfels. Without her companionship Harry felt an enormous void.

As good fortune would have it, in less than a year following Helena's death, Harry met the love of his life,

It was a Saturday evening and Harry arrived at the St. Anthony later than usual after a very busy day, and an even busier than usual week. He looked forward to the serenity of his St. Anthony suite, a fine meal while his favorite tunes were softly playing on his Edison, and then a good night's sleep.

As he passed the front desk, the manager came out and told Harry that he had been waiting for him. There was a dance and they were short single men.

Over the years Harry and the manager had become friends. When he or his mother made a request for something special, the manager always came through for them.

Harry, as tired as he was, felt he could not refuse him; consequently, instead of going to his suite and getting into a comfortable robe, he put on his evening clothes and went to the St. Anthony Ballroom.

His consideration was rewarded. He met Hannah and fell in love.

The young woman who captured Harry's heart was Hannah Mansfeld of Tucson, Arizona. Hannah was visiting a friend in San Antonio whom she accompanied to the dance at the St. Anthony Ballroom where she met Harry.

There was one difficulty. She was engaged. This did not discourage Harry Landa. He met the woman he wanted to marry and nothing would stand in his way. After a whirlwind courtship, Harry and

Hannah were married March 17, 1913. Their joyous years together proved they both had made the right choice.

Her parents, Jacob and Eva Mansfeld were successful pioneers in Tucson, Arizona. Mr. Mansfeld, as a member of the first Board of Regents, coordinated land donations for the establishments of the University of Arizona. He also founded the first public library in the Arizona Territory.

Following their marriage, the Landas lived in the mansion across from the main plaza in New Braunfels. They retained the suites in the St. Anthony until 1916 when the rates skyrocketed.

Hannah quickly became an active part of the community by volunteering her services where needed. She also enjoyed bridge with the ladies, entertaining in Landa's Park, and dinner parties delightfully hosted by both Landas.

In 1929 they moved to their newly constructed Italian-Style villa overlooking San Antonio. Like the mansion in New Braunfels, the Landa's San Antonio home was always open to family and friends. Civic and charity work was an important part of their lives. In addition the Landas traveled throughout the world until Hannah's death October 28, 1942.

Their villa at 233 Bushnell Ave. eventually became a research library as a branch of the San Antonio Central Library. The four-acre grounds became a children's playground under the general supervision of the City Parks Department of San Antonio. Both the villa and the grounds were given by Harry in memory of his beloved wife, Hannah Mansfeld Landa, to the city of San Antonio. Harry passed away in 1951.

According to Harry's mother Helena's will her estate was to be liquidated ten years following her death and divided among her heirs. Helena's two older sons had died. Harry and his four sisters were to inherit. As a consequence, the Landa property including Landa's Park was sold on August 22, 1925 to J.E. Jarratt Investment Company of San Antonio. The deed was recorded July 19, 1926.

Under Harry's management the Landa Estate grew to extensive proportions with the industrial portion known as Landa Milling Company. It was a sad day for Harry when he retired from the prosperous institution that employed hundreds and operated day and night. Harry started the business and when it was sold it had a capitalization of \$1.5 million with a large surplus. Harry retained the Landa Ranch, a portion of it that we know today as the Veramendi development and the Oakwood Estates. He was concerned that if he retained all the properties, as he would have preferred, the stockholders might have felt he was getting a bargain.

All was lost by the new owners in the Great Depression but there were exciting times awaiting the incredible sites of the former Landa properties. We will learn more in future columns.

***A suggestion: A delightful Christmas gift that captures the beauty of Landa Park in exceptional photography and tells the captivating story of this area is entitled, New Braunfels' Historic Landa Park, Its Springs and Its People. The books are available for purchase throughout the community including the Parks Office on 110 Golf Course Road off Landa Park Drive. If you would like a book delivered or mailed, you may call Jo Heideman at 830-625-3186.***