

April 21, 2019
Friends for the Preservation
of Historic Landa Park
Rosemarie L. Gregory
Arlene K. Seales

LP4.21.19.16

Photo:
Caption: Texas Wildflowers
Courtesy of Photographer
Elisabet Barker

Easter Memories

Among the many scenic delights of the Hill Country are the colorful masses of wildflowers particularly during the Easter Season. Because weather conditions have been excellent this is an exceptional year for our local wildflowers.

We remember when we were children the excitement of going out in the countryside with our mothers to gather wildflowers. They were for the Easter nests we were to make. We both had a younger brother and of course, they joined the adventure. In this column initially Rosemarie will share her wildflower Easter memories.

Wildflowers and the Easter Season go together. Rock Street had beautiful open fields of wild flowers. We delighted in gathering them there. The real fun came when we got home and began to make the Easter nests of wild grass interlaced with wildflowers we had gathered.

Easter morning found us up early eager to see what the Easter Bunny brought and left in the nests. Always there was a large wicker basket in each nest filled with Easter candies, possibly a stuffed bunny or fluffy little chick. One Easter there were 2 white adorable real live bunnies. Magically there was already a sizeable cage built for them located by the storage shed in the backyard.

There were beautifully colored hard-boiled eggs hidden throughout the yard. What a clever Easter Bunny. We gleefully grabbed the baskets the Easter Bunny left for us, placing all the plumb chocolate bunnys and other delights into a secure place provided by our mother and dashed off with our baskets to find the beautiful eggs. Once we'd gathered the eggs it was time to get ready for Sunday School. Sunday School was always part of our weekend. It was particularly special at Easter and Christmas. Following the meaningful services our family returned home to have a delicious lunch prepared by our mother who was a superb cook. Other members of the family and frequently friends joined us. All gathered around the large dining room table covered by a linen cut-work cloth created by our Omie Nowotny. The table was centered with a basket of decorated Easter eggs. Two crystal vases filled with bluebonnets that we had gathered along with the other wildflowers were placed on either side of the basket.

While some of the adults had a brief after-lunch nap, my brother and I and visiting cousins and friends hid the Easter Eggs and had the fun of finding them again and again. When the naps were over we were off on a drive in the "Mountains". (The "Mountains" was what we called the Hill Country in earlier days.) The objective of the drive was to visually enjoy all the wildflowers we could find.

Enid Zipp and her brother Karl had a similar Easter morning. After church they, along with their parents, joined other family members who headed to their Aunt Elsie and Uncle Howard Pfeuffer's home on Union Street. Their Aunt Elsie had a large flower garden in the back yard. That's where the children repeatedly hid their Easter Eggs with the fun of finding them again and again.

The day before Easter Enid and Karl also gathered wildflowers for Easter nests but they didn't have to leave the neighborhood. They lived on Market Ave. Their home was on the hill overlooking the beautiful Comal River. There were still open areas at that time which were amass of colorful wildflowers. Enid and Karl simply had to take a step out of their yard and go across the street to gather all the wildflowers they wanted.

Sisters Nancy Staats Chafin and Tina Staats Lindeman continue to enjoy the beautiful ranch where they grew-up off Hwy. 46 in the Mission Valley Community. Their father, Hilmar Staats, was a dedicated rancher. He was fortunate to have his young helper always at his side, his daughter Nancy on her pony Valentine.

Nancy and Tina as youngsters also made their Easter nests as did their children and grandchildren in the years to follow. The wildflowers for the nests were right there, in the ranch fields, and remain visually delightful. Scattered amongst the masses of beautiful bluebonnets are colorful phlox, verbena, daisies, and buttercups.

They too gathered the brightly colored eggs after the fun of discovering Easter baskets on Easter morning. After church a large and happy gathering of friends and family continue to be welcomed for the noon meal at the ranch. Then all can simply look out the window or step outside the door to enjoy nature's scenic beauty of Texas wildflowers.

Another place to enjoy the beauty of our Texas wildflowers is at New Braunfels own outstanding Fischer Park. This is a prime year for wildflowers. Don't miss this exceptional display. (We'll learn more about Fischer Park in future columns.)

And now to Landa Park...Through the years, Easter weekend was the official opening of the spring-fed pool in Landa Park, although a wise Park Manager would have everything in readiness weeks ahead, just in case the weather cooperated and the pool could be opened even earlier for its eager patrons to enjoy.

In 1995 our community celebrated the 150th Anniversary of its founding. Herb Skoog was chairman of the Steering Committee of the 1995 Sesquicentennial. The Landa Park site has always been part of community celebrations dating back to 1856 when Herman Seele held the first Kinder-maskenball there. The following shares one of the events held there during the Sesquicentennial:

The Easter season of 1995 Gazebo Island in Landa Park was overtaken by happily squealing children. The 10th Annual Easter Egg Hunt took place Saturday, April 8 at 11 a.m., sponsored by the New Braunfels Evening Rotarians, Wuest's Grocers, and the Parks and Recreation Department. That year, 1995, in recognition of the New Braunfels Sesquicentennial Celebration, there was the added fun of Sesquicentennial souvenir certificates found inside the Easter eggs and redeemed for prizes at the end of the hunt. David Whatley, director of the Parks and Recreation Department, along with Joe Alvarado, Evening Rotarians' chairman of the event, arranged a separate area for toddlers to hunt eggs. The Easter Bunny added to the fun by visiting throughout the Island greeting everyone. Excited shrieks of laughter and discovery were heard as 400 youngsters enjoyed the colorful Easter Egg Hunt on beautiful Gazebo Island on that special Saturday in April.

And on this special Sunday in April, we wish you a very Happy Easter.