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Friends for the Preservation of
Historic Landa Park
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Landa XVII 7

Pg 100-101
Caption: Imperial White Pekin
Ducks in Landa's Park photo-
graphed by Ben Nuhn.
Courtesy of Roger Nuhn.

Harry Landa's Favorite Stories

Harry Landa always enjoyed the fun of a good story. He did not object to telling one on himself. Here are a few of his favorites:

All was going well with the industries, his cattle, the irrigated farms, and Landa's Park that brought him such delight. Harry believed the Comal River that furnished the water power to operate the industries was the most beautiful stream in the south.

He had one major concern. The concern was the variety of water grass that grew in the bed of the river. This grass impeded the flow of the river. The grass would break loose and flow through the mill race. This action clogged up the water wheels. The clogging caused constant repairs that were quite costly.

The solution, Harry was told, was a flock of ducks because ducks kept the river free of water grass.

Upon hearing this Harry purchased a shipment of Imperial White Pekin ducks from Long Island. He imported the drakes from China. In addition, he had a large electric incubator for the eggs.

It did not take long before Harry had 11,000 beautiful white ducks swimming in the Mill Race and on the river. They were a sight to behold. Furthermore, the water grass problem was solved.

In addition the ducks were a most pleasant hobby. That is, until the City Commissioners of New Braunfels notified Harry that his ducks were polluting the stream. He lost no time in selling the ducks and shipped them all at one time to New Orleans.

Harry Landa had much good fortune but this time, he was fouled by the fowl.

Another story Harry enjoyed telling was about an adventure with his boyhood friend Ben Stripling. The Striplings came for a visit with the Landa family for several weeks every summer. During those weeks Harry was given a reprieve from his usual chores. His concentration while the Striplings visited was to be a good host and companion to Ben.

Harry and Ben had a grand time and were all over the Landa estate. While on their adventures they did not bother to wear socks and shoes. Youngsters going barefoot was the normal thing until frost came. Harry's father, Joseph Landa was concerned for the safety of the boys because there were water moccasins on the banks of the mill race. For their protection he purchased each boy a pair of shoes. The shoes were leather high tops with leather laces and brass-tipped toes.

At Joseph's request, the boys promised faithfully to wear the shoes. This they did most

uncomfortably for several days. Then they were chasing a squirrel up a tree. The chase became impossible with those shoes. The boys stopped long enough to take off the shoes. They quickly tied them together with the leather laces, tossed them in the hollow of a nearby pecan tree and resumed the chase. When the chase was over they tried in vain to find the shoes. Finally they had to go home shoeless to whatever fate awaited them.

Fifty years later it was necessary to build a new pump house across the mill race from Harry's office. The workman who was to chop down the pecan trees on the site returned to Harry's office with two pairs of little shoes still tied together with their leather laces.

The lost was found. It just took half a century