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Friends for the Preservation of  
Historic Landa Park  
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Landa XVIII 13

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Caption: Harry Landa (1862-1951)  
His vision created Landa Park.

### A Glimpse of a Life Well Lived

Reflecting on Harry Landa's early years in New Braunfels where he was born, the positive blessing of loving, and disciplined parents come to the forefront in setting him on a productive pathway.

He had the ability in his early twenties to leave the community and on his own become a successful entrepreneur. A few years later he had the misfortune as a passenger to be shot during a train robbery. Numerous surgeries and a recovery taking several years depleted all his savings requiring financial assistance from his parents. With his misfortune he did not give-up or feel defeated. Rather, he studied the latest milling systems, technology and operating principles because Harry was determined to assist his parents as they had helped him.

Upon his return to New Braunfels following his long recovery process in New York and Germany, Harry immediately began to help not only his parents but within the community. He encouraged Landa's Pasture be made available to the community. The same site was made available for the Comal County Fair. In 1893 Harry was elected the first Fair Association president and guided its development.

The Landa Milling Industries that he began used equipment and methods he studied during his lengthy healing. The result was a vital industry that employed many in the community. Its success was followed by the magical development of Landa's Park that became a tourist mecca giving even more emphasis to the beauty of New Braunfels.

Harry's involvement in the community continued. When World War I was on the horizon, Harry headed the local War Saving Stamps campaign. He thought having a patriotic loyalty parade would bring attention to the looming war, in addition to selling War Saving Stamps. Harry began planning and contacted his long-time friend General Pershing, who was stationed in San Antonio. On parade day, the General arrived with two military bands and a regiment of soldiers for participation in the parade. Following the parade and a patriotic address that General Pershing delivered to the crowd, a telegram was handed to him. After reading it, he handed it to Harry. The telegram was from the President of the United States to inform General Pershing that he was now the Commander and Chief of the Expeditionary Forces in France.

The initial meeting to begin a community public library was held in the craftsman-style home of Dr. and Mrs. Menan Hagler at 285 N. Castell. At the following meeting, also held at the Hagler home, the location of a library was addressed. Harry Landa made available what was known locally as Landa's small house, adjacent to the Landa mansion across from the main plaza to serve as the first library of New Braunfels. The library was opened to the public on Monday and Friday afternoons with Mrs. Starr and Mrs. Hagler serving as librarians. Also welcomed to Landa's small house for their meetings were the New Braunfels Boy Scouts.

In 1936 when the German Pioneer Monument was being planned, Harry, who owned Landa Highlands above Landa Park, offered to donate a Highland site overlooking New Braunfels for the

monument. Although Harry's offer was appreciated the Landa Park site was selected.

With his many accomplishments Harry was proud to be connected with encouraging the publishing of the initial English language newspaper in New Braunfels, the New Braunfels Herald. The first edition was May 7, 1892. In the years ahead, new owners of the English language newspaper purchased the Neu Braunfelser Zeitung, first edited by Ferdinand Lindheimer. Eventually the New Braunfels Herald became the New Braunfels Herald-Zeitung.

Harry always attributed the many successes in his life to strong and honorable principles taught to him by his parents. A particular favorite, "Let not the sun go down on my wrath." Harry stated he truly held no malice towards anyone. This gave him a marvelous freedom.

Also, he learned early in his life that in order to accomplish goals, hard work and persistence were necessary.

His father further encouraged him to always honor his debt obligations on time. If he felt he might not meet a debt obligation he was to go to the lender before it was due and arrange for an extension. Because of his father's teachings, Harry made a practice of having his payment arrive one week before it was due. As a result of his responsible practices, in later years Harry Landa could borrow a million dollars or more in New York on his note alone without security.

Not only was he respected in his financial dealings, but in all aspects of his life. "It is considered that his principle asset is that of courtesy, kindness, hospitality, and regard for his fellow man," wrote author Clarence R. Wharton, referring to Harry Landa.

Harry's last day of active ownership of Landa's Park and Landa Milling Company was June 30, 1926. Knowing it was a painful time for Harry and also wishing to show appreciation for everything he gave the New Braunfels community, the Chamber of Commerce entertained with a luncheon in Landa's Park. There were 134 in attendance. Many spoke of their appreciation and admiration of the honoree.

Harry was deeply touched and thanked them for their friendship through the years. He wanted everyone to know that it was the late Joseph Faust who loaned him the needed \$5,000 to purchase the first carload of grain that gave the milling business its start. It was that business that allowed Harry the financial freedom to develop Landa's Park. Because Faust had faith in him, he had the opportunity to make it all happen.

Harry Landa touched many lives. Hundreds were employed by him. Hundreds more throughout the city, state, and nation called him friend. Harry's life showed that he lived by his mother's teaching, "Yehay Baraho", or "Be a Blessing". He was.

This column is based on the book, New Braunfels' Historic Landa Park, It's Springs and Its People by Rosemarie Leissner Gregory and Arlene Krueger Seales. For more information, visit [www.friendsforlandapark.org](http://www.friendsforlandapark.org) and Facebook.