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Friends for the Preservation of Historic Landa Park

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Photo Caption: County Commissioner Hugo

Neuse was in charge of the trucks  
that removed many loads of debris  
during the clean-up of the park.

Courtesy of Merry Saegert, PhD.

## RECLAIMING LANDA PARK

Landa Park was saved from the developers by the Jaycees, Chamber of Commerce, Board of City Development and the busy printing presses of both Charlie Scruggs' New Braunfels Herald and Fred Oheim's Neu Braunfelser Zeitung. Their combined efforts brought an awareness to the entire community that resulted in a bond issue which with a 3 to 1 majority assured the purchase of Landa Park for the community.

Mayor H.F. Fischer proclaimed Friday, June 5, 1936 as "Landa Park Clean-up Day". Through the Mayor's proclamation notice in the newspapers, handbill distribution, and conversation throughout town, the word was spread. The message was "Citizens of the area are contributing their time and resources to reclaim and restore the beautiful Landa Park. Come join us!."

There were requests for donations of gas, lumber, and financial contributions. Plans got underway. Landa Park was to be returned to its former glory with everyone working together. Men in the community would bring their rakes, hoes, axes, hammers and nails. Women in the community planned to make the food to feed the busy workers. Plenty of coffee would be provided all-day long and mid-day lunch would be served also. All the activity was reminiscent of the "Repair the Roads" projects when friends and neighbors gathered to clear a roadway. This time it was to reclaim their beloved Landa Park.

Then came the day, June 5. The community turned out to clean-up the overgrown park. It was a dramatic moment when the 12-foot high fence actually came down. All who planned to help restore the park came with their own tools and marched into the debris filled site to begin the necessary work.

Jaycees and the Chamber recruited a large crew from New Braunfels who were joined by friends and neighbors from nearby communities. Principal leaders of the group were president of the Chamber of Commerce, John R. Fuchs, and Jaycee president, Hilmar Triesch.

Fire Chief Walter Faust was overall chairman assisted by Park Commissioner Albert Ludwig and park manager for 25 years, Erwin Scholl. Martha Borne, who organized the New Braunfels Garden Club 3 years before in 1933, and Patty Fuchs, also a member of the garden club, headed the committee in charge of flower beds and worked alongside the men.

Debris by the truckloads left the park using Comal County trucks. County Commissioner Hugo Neuse was in charge of the trucks along with Frank Haase, City Commissioner George Reininger, and Hugo Nowotny, Sr.. Walter Sippel was in charge of the Carpentry and Repairs Committee. He was the decisio-maker. If he did not believe a structure salvageable, down it came; otherwise, it was

repaired .

Miss Ottie Coreth, Mrs. Milton Tolle, and Mrs. Oscar Babel served the noon lunch of sandwiches and cookies prepared by the ladies of New Braunfels and the local Girl Scouts. The Boy Scouts assisted with the clean-up. It was a day no one who was there ever forgot. Spirits ran high. The participants shared the same objective and working together, they achieved it.

Overgrown brush and debris were cleared including the remnants of the destruction caused by the 1935 storm. The natural beauty of the park that held such happy memories for the volunteers was being brought back to its former glory through their labor and cooperation. The clean-up and repairs progressed steadily. By Saturday, June 20 the swimming pool opened. The cafe and concession stands were ready for business with tables and benches repaired and painted, The pavilion and all buildings were cleaned and the picnic grounds cleared.

On opening day Poole Manufacturing charted an excursion train from San Antonio bringing hundreds to the park for a district meeting and picnic. The following day, Sunday, June 21, was the first dance since the re-opening. The music was by Jerome Faust and his orchestra. Happily for all concerned every Sunday evening of the season had a dance scheduled.

Excitement reigned on Wednesday, June 24 with a free dance arranged by Park Commissioner Albert Ludwig. The dance was in appreciation for the cooperation of all who worked to clear the park and make it again the "Oasis of Texas". There was music by two orchestras and crowds of grateful people attended happy to have their special park once again.

The moon shone brightly overhead. The mini-lights in the branches of the old oak that centered the glazed dance floor produced sparkling reflections off Landa Lake. It was another perfect evening. in the park. Their working together had made it all possible.

Landa Park was joyously reclaimed.

This column is based on the book *New Braunfels' Historic Landa Park, Its 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. To obtain a book, call Jo Heideman @ 830-625-3186.