

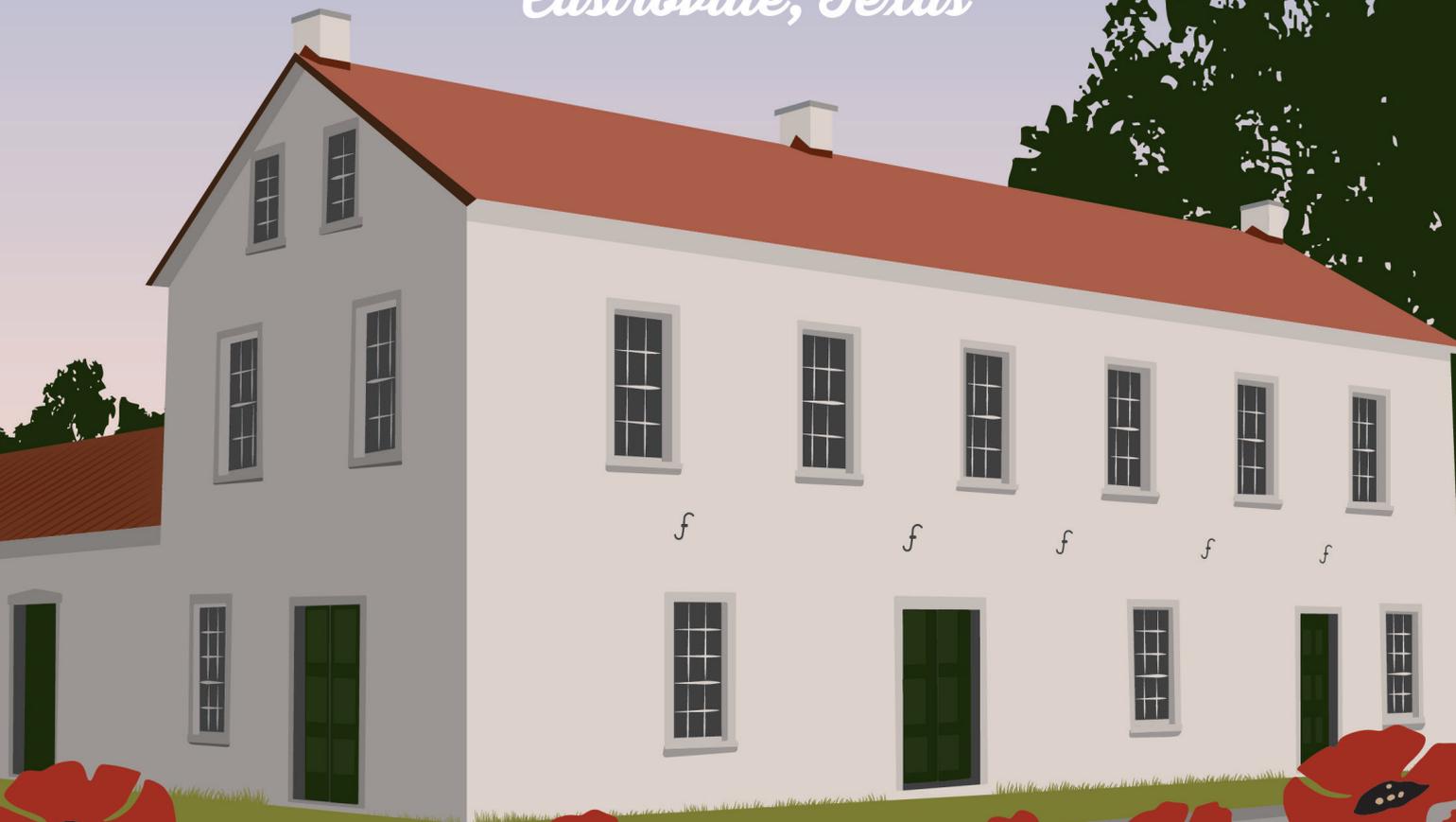
Texas Historical Commission

On-Site Activity
High School

LANDMARK INN

— STATE HISTORIC SITE —

Castroville, Texas



On-site Activity

TEXAS
HISTORICAL
COMMISSION 
visitlandmarkinn.com

Site Tour

Before facilitating the guided tour of the site, explain that Landmark Inn tells the story of commerce and industry through the evolution of the site itself— construction, demolition, and restoration and preservation of the buildings themselves. Point out that interpretation of the site can be challenging because different owners utilized the buildings for their own purposes throughout the years. Gather the whole group at the carriage house walls for an orientation before dividing learners into the five groups. As the groups rotate through each station, highlight elements of the site’s story that relate to the daily life and commerce conducted here over time.

- Station 1: **Exhibit/store** for owner timeline and preservation
- Station 2: **Kitchen/garden** for daily life and domestic chores information
- Station 3: **Wash house** for daily life and domestic chores information
- Station 4: **Mill** for science and preservation information
- Station 5: **River** for science and preservation information

Station 1: Exhibit/Store

Learners explore the exhibit and store area on a self-guided tour.



Station 2: Kitchen/Garden

Context: Cesar and Hannah Monod were slave owners who lived here with a 22-year-old female enslaved person named Harriet and her 18-month-old baby boy. During the short while that the Monods lived in Castroville, Cesar worked as a dry goods merchant, served as the town mayor, and was appointed postmaster general for Medina County. He and Hannah lived and worked in their home, which also served as a store. Harriet would have spent much of her time working over the fire in the separate kitchen, doing laundry in the wash house, or doing chores in the garden.

Context: At the time of this letter, Rowena Vance would likely have used the Monod kitchen for cooking. By 1860, the Vances had built a house (now called the Vance House) separate from the store and inn. They had also built a carriage house, outdoor dining room, and an attached kitchen between the house and the store.



- Share the **Abbie Lowe Fire Insurance map** to show the locations of the kitchens and gardens on the property during the Vance family ownership.
- Learners explore the garden area.
- After exploration, gather learners together and ask: What did you observe in the garden? What is currently growing? What is in the garden now that Rowena mentioned in her letter?
- Share Rowena Vance's letter to her mother from 1854 (see resource below). Ask: How is this garden the same as and different from the garden that would have been here in the late 1800s?
- Resource:

I have recovered from the Indian depredation somewhat and now feel prepared to write of peaceable matters gardens children occ. I have an enormous beet from my garden for dinner today, also green beans turnips squashes and lettuce whenever required also last years sweet potatoes from our garden salt perk that I pickled from one of our pigs, that were, when you left Texas. I have six young ducks, had seven but one died of lice. I think you killed yours at the Salado with milk. They say it kills them. One of my others were sick and I gave it red pepper, rhubarb, butter and asafoedita and sure enough the poor creature got well.

- Discuss food preservation prior to refrigeration. Specifically, ways in which frontier settlers like the Vances may have safeguarded a variety of foods throughout the year, particularly vegetables and fruits. It is possible that Rowena would have had two planting seasons in her garden to stretch some vegetable production into the fall and winter.
- Share the 1846 article discussing how to preserve green corn (see resource below).
Ask: How was food storage and preservation (other than not having refrigeration) more challenging in the late 1800s?
- Resource (Beecher, Catharine Esther. Miss Beecher's Domestic Receipt Book. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1846, p226

Green Corn can be preserved by simply turning back the husk, all but the last thin layer, and then hanging it in the sun, or a very warm room. When it is to be used, boil it till soft, and then cut it off the cob and mix it with butter, and add, if you like, dried Lima beans cooked soft, in another vessel. The summer sweet corn is the proper kind to dry. Lima beans can be dried in the sun when young and tender. They are good to bake, when dried after they are ripe.

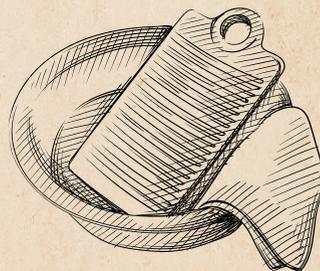
Another mode is to parboil sweet corn, cut it from the cobs, and dry it in the sun. Then store it in a dry, cool place, in a bag.

Another way is to take off all the husks but the thin one next the corn; tie this over the corn tight, and pack it in salt.

Station 3: Wash House

Context: Bathing in the early 1800s usually entailed splashing with cool water from a pitcher and basin in one's bedroom or the very infrequent scrub-down in a metal or wooden basin outside, near the kitchen (for access to boiled water). Women with very oily hair may only have washed their hair every couple of weeks, while women with dry hair would have limited hair washing to once-a-month to preserve their natural oils.

Bath houses in the 1850s were a luxury. Among those mentioned in San Antonio newspapers of the time were stand-alone versions (Madame Masse's), those connected to a hotel (McLeod's), and others located inside structures including a brickyard, candy store, and "segar" shop. Season bathing ticket prices were sold at ten to fifteen cents per bath, or five dollars for six months. There were fixed times of day for women and men and separation of adults and children. A wash and bath house would have been an excellent addition to Vance's business portfolio.



By the 1860s, expert opinion was nearly unanimous that the best kind of bath was a brief plunge in cold water to relieve congestion of the brain and fight anything from cholera to whooping cough. For the most part, hot baths were a no-no, as was actually relaxing and enjoying the water. (<https://daily.jstor.org/when-americans-started-bathing/>)

In the more developed areas in America, the installation of indoor plumbing grew in the 1870s as more awareness of its benefits came following the publication and more common access to Louis Pasteur's germ theory, developed by 1864. Public plumbing, sewers, and running water became more broadly available in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

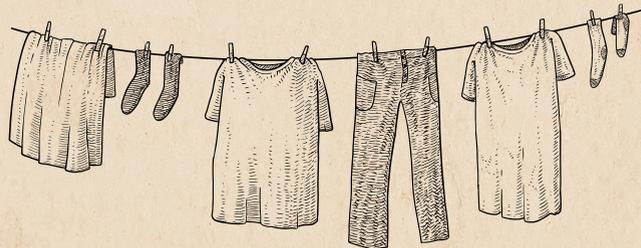
In the household, soap-making days happened only once or twice a year. On those days, all of the household soap supply for the entire year was made in boiling kettles outside. The chemical reaction, called *saponification*, between the lye (potassium hydroxide) and the oils (triglycerides) produced soap.

Commercially-made soaps were not widely available until the latter half of the 19th century. William Colgate, a soap and candlemaker, opened a factory in New York City in 1806. By the 1840s, the company began selling their individually packaged bars in uniform weights. Colgate introduced the trademarked "Cashmere Bouquet" soap in 1872 and their first toothpaste in 1873. William Proctor, a candlemaker, and James Gamble, a soap maker, were immigrants who founded Proctor & Gamble in Cincinnati, Ohio. By 1859, their sales had reached \$1 million per year. That same year they won a contract to provide the Union army with soap and candles. They developed their "white soap," which later became famous as Ivory Soap.

Activity

- Share Rowena Vance's May 1854 letter to her mother:

Another accident has happened equal to the Indian scrape. Last night after supper Mr. Vance started to bathe and at nine o'clock at night had not been seen. We searched for him all over the house, town, river oc. and till near 11 he was not found. then we discovered him asleep out doors on the wheel barrow. 6 or 7 men were going with a lantern up and down the River. He had been working hard cleaning corn all day and sat down on the barrow to wait for me to bathe too when first he knew he was asleep. I supposed he was tired of waiting and had gone alone. Sleepy head.



- Direct learners' attention to artifacts/reproduction materials such as wash tubs, lye bar soaps/soap flakes, lye bars, pitchers and basins, toothpowders/table salt/charcoal powder, etc. Ask how each item might have been used for personal hygiene.
- Ask these suggested discussion questions:
 - The river was a water source for bathing, but so was the well. Was one source preferable to the other? Why?
 - How would water get from the source to the wash house?
 - How was water heated for bathing?
 - What was the physical labor involved in taking a hot bath from start to finish?
 - How were bath soaps and toothpaste alike and different to today's products?
- Demonstrate making toothpaste by combining and mixing these ingredients in a small jar or bowl:
 - 1 tablespoon (T) baking soda
 - 1 T salt
 - 3 drops food-grade essential oil, like peppermint
 - few drops of water to mix to a paste consistency

This can be done as a demonstration only, or as a paired activity with each pair receiving all ingredients plus a mixing container and mixing stick. If done as a demonstration, provide each student who wants one a small sample on a clean cotton swab.

Station 4: Mill

Context: The wheel and axle is one of the first “simple machines” used to harness nature’s power. The wheel holds potential energy. The water holds kinetic energy. When water and wheel meet, the water applies force on the wheel, causing it to turn and generate mechanical energy. Water wheels have been used for centuries to generate mechanical power. Using water to harness energy is called *hydropower*. Hydropower is this nation’s largest renewable energy source.

When the Haas-Quintle gristmill was in operation, water from the Medina River was redirected into the head race and down into the mill pit, turning the turbine. The rotation of the turbine and the vertical shaft created enough mechanical energy to run the gristmill that moved the grain elevators and turned the millstones or mill roller. When J.T. Lawler converted the mill into a hydroelectric power plant in 1927, he continued to harness the Medina River water rushing down the head race and through the turbine to generate electricity for the city of Castroville.

Data shows that about 80% of the nation’s energy comes from fossil fuels (oil, coal, natural gas), 11% from renewable sources, and 8.3% from nuclear power. As of this date, wind is the fastest growing renewable resource, but it contributes only about 2.4% of the total energy used in the United States. (Energy Information Administration (EIA) (2019) Monthly Energy Review August 2019)

Activity

- Review these key terms:
 - **gristmill:** a building that houses machines that grind grains such as wheat and corn into flour or meal
 - **hydropower:** mechanical or electrical energy created by flowing water
 - **kinetic energy:** energy from motion
 - **potential energy:** untapped, stored energy
 - **renewable resource:** energy resources that can be replenished
 - **work:** the energy transferred from or to an object when applied force causes movement
- Observe the water wheel. **Ask:**
 - **How many blades does this turbine use?** (16)
 - **Hydropower is a renewable resource, meaning that the source never runs out. What are some other examples of renewable resources?** (solar/wind/geothermal energy)
 - **What work is the water wheel doing?** (lifting the weight as the shaft turns)
 - **What are the features of a good water wheel?** (more blades catch more water to turn the wheel, creasing each blade to create a pocket to hold more water, symmetry)



- **How might raising the height from which the water is poured affect the wheel spin?** (Test their hypotheses. Then raise the height of the water to test.)
- **How could you change the design of the wheel to make it faster?** (Answers will vary, but could include adding more blades, increasing the blade creasing, creating a sturdier wheel center)
- **Look at the location of this mill. What preservation and restoration challenges are posed by the location of the mill and the potential flooding of the Medina River?** (Answers will vary).

Activity Extension: Mill Fire and Flooding Discussion

Context: In April 1864, the mill burned due to arson. The evidence of fire damage can be seen in the chemical change in the limestone from brown to a pink color. In addition, there were at least ten floods between 1854 and 1902 that flooded the first floor of the mill. Six of those also flooded the second floor. These submersions damaged mill machinery. In many cases, flood damages accelerated equipment upgrades. After the flood of 1900, the engine room had to be repaired and rebuilt and the turbine and two gin stands were replaced. The first floor of the mill itself was replaced and the level was raised 10 inches in an attempt to prevent this level of damage in the future.

Ask students to observe the right side of the mill. Discuss the mill's flooding history and the interventions made to decrease flooding damage. As a group, examine the location of the mill. Consider the advantages and disadvantages of this particular placement for the Haass and Quintle Mill. Discuss how modern technology or other interventions might assist in solving flooding problems. Also discuss how modern technologies might help in the preservation and restoration of historic sites with potentially problematic locations.

Station 5: River

Context: Before the first bridge spanning the Medina River was built in 1903, all traffic into and out of the city had to ford the river. However, that ford was not accessible when the Medina was flooded. The current bridge is constructed from other bridges. In the center is the 1940 WPA project bridge of plate metal spans on concrete piers. On either side of that are 1978 reinforced concrete spans that widened the highway from two lanes to five lanes plus sidewalks.

Distribute the **Crossing the Medina River and 1911 map of the Medina River** activity resources. After river observations are complete, gather the groups to share responses.

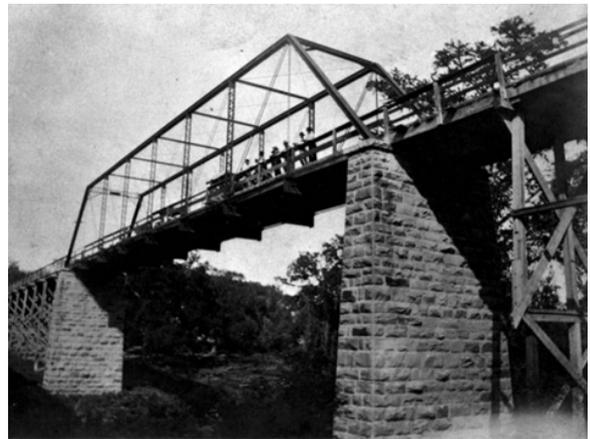
Site Tour Completion

Once all groups have completed all five stations, distribute the **Historian Certificate** to each learner.



Crossing the Medina River

Look at these primary source photos, circa 1903. The left image is of a wagon fording the Medina River. The right image shows the Medina River bridge under construction. Write at least three observations of how the current site is alike and different from what is pictured in the 1903 photographs.



Medina River Bridge, circa 1903 during construction. <https://digital.utsa.edu/digital/collection/p9020coll008/id/5084>

ALIKE	DIFFERENT

Look at the **map of the Medina River and the Courand Mill Complex from 1911**. Then look at the landscape today. **Circle** the names of features you see today that are also present on the 1911 map.

scales boiler mill gin and seed house warehouse headrace tailrace

Write two questions you'd like to investigate about the site features that remain today.

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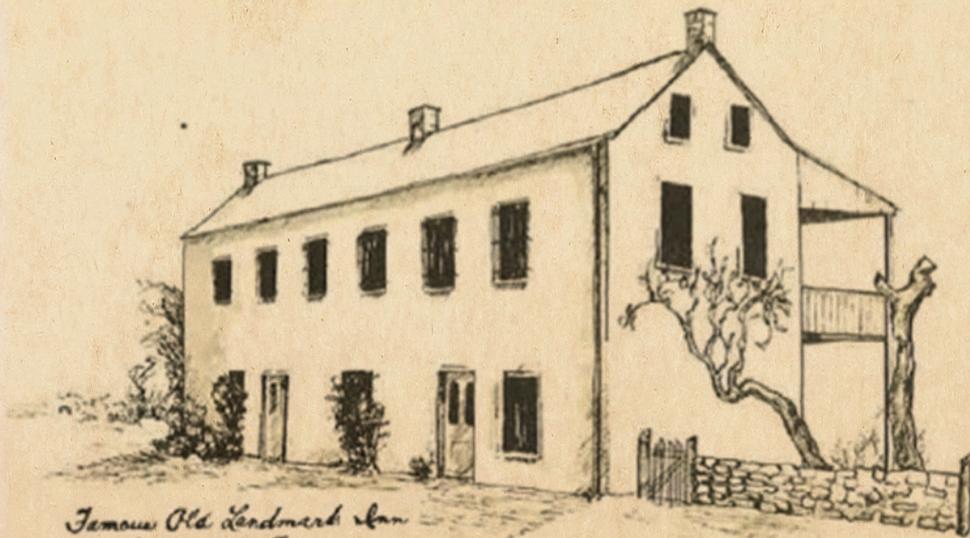
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SETTLER CERTIFICATE

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Awarded to

for becoming an expert in the daily lives of
early Castroville settlers who lived and worked at
Landmark Inn State Historic Site.



*Famous Old Landmark Inn
Castroville, Texas*

Date

TEXAS
HISTORICAL
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REAL PLACES TELLING REAL STORIES

