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FRIENDS OF THE LANDMARK INN

Join us in protecting this special place. Consider volunteering as a docent or becoming a member of the Friends of Landmark Inn. For more information, please call 830-931-2133.

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LANDMARK INN STATE HISTORIC SITE

402 E. Florence St., Castroville, TX 78009
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REAL PLACES TELLING REAL STORIES



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Welcome to Landmark Inn State Historic Site! Established in 1849 and expanded throughout the 19th century, the Landmark Inn became a commercial and industrial center for Castroville. Today, visitors stay overnight, picnic, fish, learn about history, and browse the museum store.

HISTORIC WAYSIDE

Water, shade, and wildlife around the Medina River ford supported American Indians, Tejanos, and immigrants from Alsace, Europe, Mexico, and the United States. Empresario Henri Castro chose this site because it was one-days' wagon journey from San Antonio (25 miles) on the freight road to Chihuahua and El Paso. On this site, 27 people established a European-style village named Castroville on September 3, 1844.

SETTLEMENT

In 1849, César and Hannah Monod built a one-story L-shaped family residence, mercantile store, stage stop, post office, and detached kitchen.

In 1853, John and Rowena Vance bought out the Monods, and John became postmaster until 1872. During their ownership, the Vances built an expansion to the mercantile, added the second floor to the main structure, and began renting rooms to travelers. They also built a carriage house, guest dining room, and larger hotel kitchen, since razed but represented by their replicated foundations.

PRODUCTION

George Louis Haass and Laurent Quintle built a gristmill and cotton gin in 1854. Medina River water powered the mill, supplemented by a steam engine. A headrace entrance, located at the dam across the river, supplied water flowing through an underground channel into the mill pit that operated the mill wheel or turbine. Alsatian colonists Joseph

and Margarethe Courand bought the mill in 1876 and their son Joseph and his wife Julia Courand purchased the Vance Homestead in 1899. The milling complex processed corn, wheat, cotton, wool, and cypress for shingles. Despite the railroad bypassing Castroville in the 1880s and periodic destructive floods, the mills flourished into the 1900s. Following the death of Julia Courand, Joseph sold the property to Jordan T. Lawler in 1925. Lawler was a Progressive who built public utilities for cities that could not develop their own. Lawler converted the gristmill to electricity generation in 1927.

PRESERVATION

Inspired by the 1936 Texas Centennial, Jordan's sister Ruth Lawler began restoring the buildings. She renamed the hotel "Landmark Inn" in 1942. Ruth, her sister Genevieve Lawler, Genevieve's partner Mary Ruth Lionberger, and many other women planned the preservation of the site and Castroville. Since 1944 Landmark Inn has been recognized for its historic preservation accomplishments. In 1952, editors of the two largest newspapers in Alsace stayed at Landmark Inn to interview Castroville's Alsatian-first-language speakers to further preserve the language.

On March 11, 1974, Ruth Lawler donated the site to the State of Texas, retaining life tenancy until her death in 1990. Today the site is a reminder of settlement, enterprise, and preservation.



WALKING GUIDE

1 LANDMARK INN

César and Hannah Monod, who spent most of their working lives on the Texas Coast, became merchants in the growing city of Castroville from 1849-1853. John and Rowena Vance purchased the Monod's property and bequeathed the hotel to their youngest child, James Wilson Vance, in 1887.



2 MONOD KITCHEN



Detached kitchens kept fire, heat, and cooking debris away from living spaces. This kitchen was likely also home to two African Americans, Harriet and her son, enslaved by the Monods.

3 WASH HOUSE

Typical of first colonists, Michel and Rosine Simon received this lot and a 40-acre farm. What may have been their Sunday House, an in-town weekend home, in 1847 became a wash and laundry facility by 1860.

4 REPLICATED FOUNDATIONS: VANCE CARRIAGE HOUSE, HOTEL KITCHEN, AND GUEST DINING ROOM

These buildings formed a continuous wall between the house and inn, sure to impress travelers. Castroville's first newspaper, *The Castroville Era*, began in the carriage house in 1876. Unneeded for milling, they were demolished by Joseph Conrad in 1889.



5 VANCE HOUSE

This elegant house was built for Rowena Vance in 1859. The Vances used the basement as storage for processed cotton. During the Conrads' ownership of the property, the home was stripped out and both floors were used as



warehouse space. Refitted by Ruth Lawler, it served as a rental property following World War II, and afterwards as the Lawlers' home. Many local residents recall taking piano lessons in the parlor.

6 HAASS-QUINTLE MILL AND MILL COMPLEX AREA

A newspaper correspondent who evaluated this site in 1854 said it was worth traveling 100 miles in any direction to see—a trip that would have taken four days by wagon at the time. The U.S. Army purchased cornmeal from the mill for forts west of Castroville, including Forts Lancaster and McKavett, other THC historic sites that you can visit.

The remains of the wool and cotton processing building are located opposite the gristmill as you move up the hill. Look west of the gristmill for a wall of the processing building. Look for the historic scale, boiler, and turbine, restored and relocated to the mill area.

