

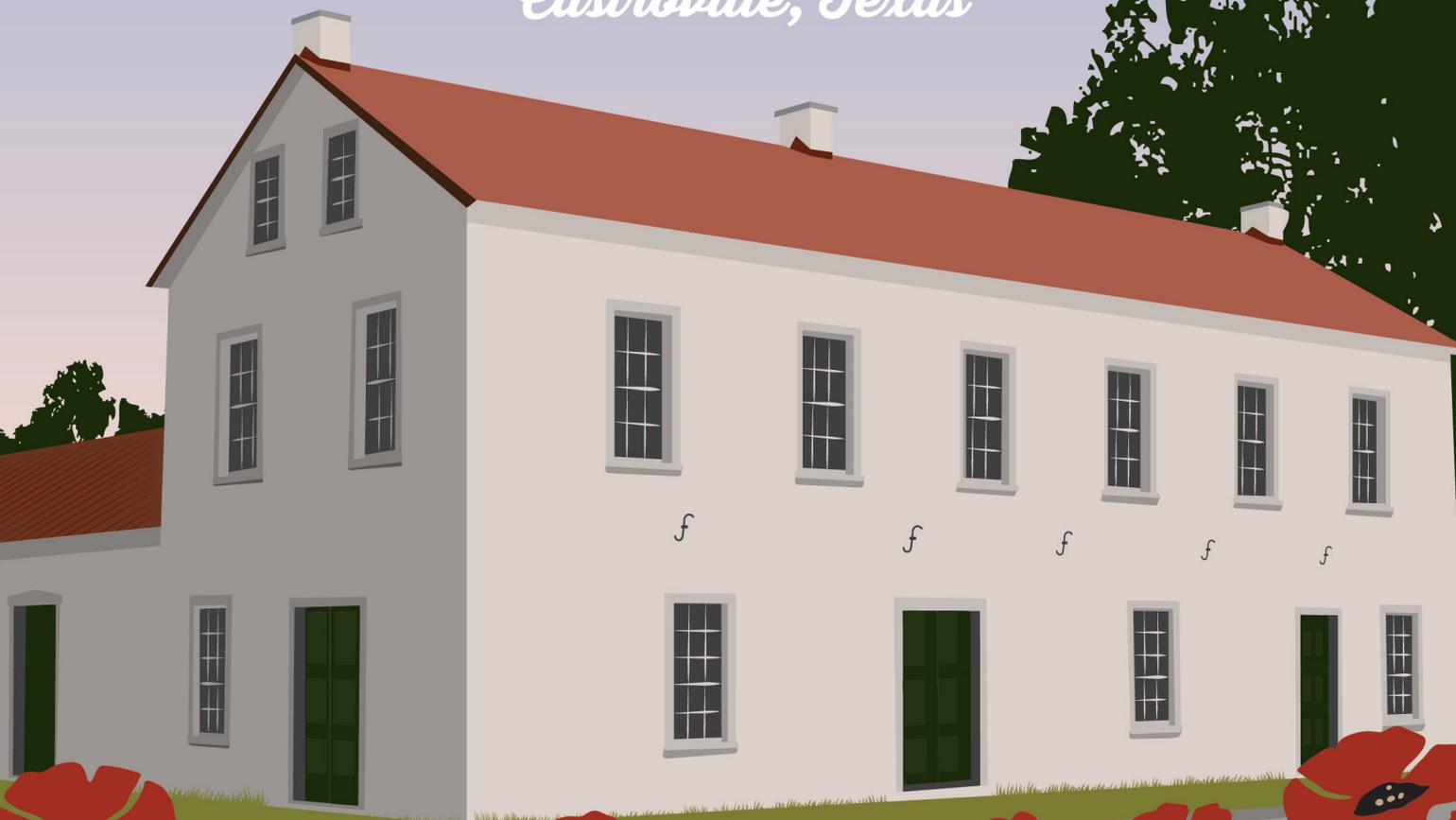
# Texas Historical Commission

Pre-Visit Guide  
High School

## LANDMARK INN

— STATE HISTORIC SITE —

*Castroville, Texas*



Pre-Visit Guide

TEXAS  
HISTORICAL  
COMMISSION   
[visitlandmarkinn.com](http://visitlandmarkinn.com)

## Overview: The Start of the Landmark Inn Story

Built on the banks of the Medina River on the Chihuahua-San Antonio Road, the businesses that operated at Landmark Inn State Historic Site sheltered travelers, outfitted adventurers, and milled grain for local area farmers for over a century. In preparation for a visit to the site, students learn about the arduous journey of Henri Castro and the European immigrants who founded Castroville in 1844 through investigating primary sources and analyzing geographical features.

## U.S. History Since 1877 TEKS

(3) History. The student understands the political, economic, and social changes in the United States from 1877 to 1898. The student is expected to:

(B) analyze economic issues such as industrialization, the growth of railroads, the growth of labor unions, farm issues, the cattle industry boom, the growth of entrepreneurship, and the pros and cons of big business.

(28) Social studies skills. The student understands how historians use historiography to interpret the past and applies critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired from a variety of valid sources, including technology. The student is expected to:

(A) analyze primary and secondary sources such as maps, graphs, speeches, political cartoons, and artifacts to acquire information to answer historical questions;

(B) analyze information by applying absolute and relative chronology through sequencing, categorizing, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, comparing and contrasting, finding the main idea, summarizing, making generalizations, making predictions, drawing inferences, and drawing conclusions;

(C) apply the process of historical inquiry to research, interpret, and use multiple types of sources of evidence.

### Materials

- ★ Historical images for display/distribution
- ★ Primary Source Analysis resource
- ★ Evolution of Landmark Inn activity resources
- ★ KWL activity resource

### Vocabulary

- commerce:** the buying and selling of goods and services
- industry:** the production of goods, especially by manufacturing or processing; usually on a large scale



## Activity: What Do You See?

15 minutes

**Context:** Henri Castro, a French banker and businessman, founded Castroville in 1844. Castro was an empresario contracted with the Republic of Texas who recruited over 2,000 settlers from the Alsace region of France and from Germany. Many of the historic buildings and homes still standing in Castroville today reflect the Alsatian and European culture of the area's first settlers, now blended with traditional south Texas regional architecture. The paintings for this activity are by Rowena Vance. The painting with the horses was done in the 1850s and depicts her home in Castroville, Texas. Her children and family pet are standing together at the door of the family general store. Today, these buildings are part of Landmark Inn State Historic Site. The second painting was done in the 1860s and shows the Vance Store.

Display the **paintings** and distribute the **Primary Source Analysis resource**. Preview the paintings and the analysis tool. Give students time to examine the paintings and record their observations. Share responses when completed.

## Activity: Settling Castroville

15 minutes

Ask students to imagine that, like Henri Castro in the 1860s, they are responsible for finding a good location to establish a new town. Brainstorm with students about the kinds of geographic features and attributes a location would need in order to sustain a community. (water, wood, roads, access to animals to hunt or foraged foods, good land for farming/ranching)

Display the **plan of Castroville map**. Explain that this is a map of the early Castroville settlement. Point out that the labels in the map are in French. Ask:

- ★ **What features do you see on this map?** [map title, compass, key, street grid, Medina River label, areas labeled abcd]
- ★ **What does the map tell you about how the city of Castroville was laid out?** [laid out on a grid, most of the settlement bounded by the Medina River]

Display the **San Antonio-Chihuahua/El Paso Trail map**. Ask:

- ★ **People who traveled this trail were likely traveling to and from what two locations?** [Mexico/west Texas (bottom left), San Antonio (top right brown circle Bexar)]
- ★ **The trail passed through Castroville. During the 1800s, how might this have affected the settlement?** [brought more people to the area, increased trade opportunities]

To extend the activity, watch the Landmark Inn Historic Site [YouTube video](#) about the Medina River habitat. (3:39 min).



## Activity: Come to Castroville

25 minutes

Display the **1842 newspaper advertisement**. Ask students to give at least two observations about the source. [appears to be old, not written in English (in French and German), is probably about Castroville due to the headlines]

Display this translation of the final paragraph in each article:

Castroville is generally known as the most considerate and European-devoted settlement. Mr. Castro agrees to give each family 15 hectares of land free of charge, and all single persons 8 hectares, plus two hectares in the city, if only the conditions indicated in the prospectus are met.

Ask:

- **What can you learn from this paragraph?**  
[free land was available to settle in Castroville]
- **What was the purpose of these articles published in 1842?**  
[advertisement to persuade people to come settle Castroville]
- **Why are these articles not written in English?**  
[Article was aimed at people living in the Alsace region of France who spoke mainly French or German.]
- **Besides having land available, how else is Castroville described that might be appealing to foreign citizens?**  
[European-devoted which implies a friendliness to European settlers]
- **How is this 1842 newspaper advertisement like something you would see today? How is it different?**  
[alike: has a specific purpose and audience, makes an emotional appeal, provides specific information, is written in languages other than English]  
[different: is in a print medium only, advertises something that no longer exists (free land)]
- **If you lived in the crowded European region of Alsace in 1842 and you saw this ad, would it have persuaded you to move to Castroville? Why or why not?**  
[answers will vary]



## Timeline Investigation: Evolution of Landmark Inn

40 minutes

Distribute or display the **Evolution of Landmark Inn timeline** and the **timeline investigation worksheet**. Preview each resource. Students may work individually or in small groups. Share responses when completed

### Assessment

Evaluate student engagement and instructional activities for completeness and understanding.

### Take-home Extension

Distribute **KWL chart**. Have students complete the K and W columns of the chart. The L column will be completed during the Post-Visit activity.

### Additional Resources & Extensions

#### Landmark Inn SHS Mill and River Videos

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL4ZnBIj9yvPMeVWQNIxOO94hvcdPiM6fS>

#### The Portal to Texas History

<https://texashistory.unt.edu>

#### The Handbook of Texas Online

<https://tshaonline.org/handbook>

#### Library of Congress

<https://loc.gov>



## Activity Images: Vance Hotel and Landmark Inn by Rowena Vance

Image courtesy of Landmark Inn State Historic Site



# What Do You See?

## Primary Source Analysis Resource

Look carefully at the painting of Landmark Inn by Rowena Vance. Write your observations to complete the activity.

**Write at least five (5) things you see in the painting in each category.**

PEOPLE	OBJECTS	ACTIVITIES	COLORS

**Write a new title for this painting.**

**Why do you think Rowena Vance painted this scene?**

**Write at least two (2) questions that you would like to ask one of the people in the painting.**

- 
- 

**Write at least two (2) questions that you would like to ask the artist about her painting.**

- 
- 

**What else does this painting make you curious about?**



# Primary Source Activity Image: Come to Castroville!

1842 newspaper advertisement

## TEXAS, CASTRO-VILLE.

Des calomnieurs et des faussaires continuant contre la colonisation du sousigné au Texas, un système de dénigrement inqualifiable, le public est invité à s'informer sur la prospérité de CASTRO-VILLE, près la belle rivière Médina, en s'adressant aux personnes suivantes dont la moralité et la bonne fois sont à l'abri de tout soupçon.

A Bremen : M. W. Robertson, consul des Etats-Unis d'Amérique.

A la Haye : M. le colonel d'Engerfield, chargé d'affaires du Texas.

A Paris : A la Legation du Texas et chez M. Jussaud, notaire.

A Neufreystædt, pour le grand duché de Bade : MM. Huth et comp., banquiers.

A Anvers : MM. J. Decock et Bischeop, armateurs.

P. S. CASTRO-VILLE est notoirement connue comme l'établissement le plus considérable du Texas, et peuplé d'Européens.

M. Castro continue à donner gratis à chaque famille 15 hectares de terres, et à tout célibataires 8 hectares, plus deux ares dans la ville, pourvu qu'ils soient dans les conditions indiquées au prospectus qu'on peut se procurer chez M. Grandpré, représentant de la maison Th. de Coek et F. Bissechop, Castro hôtel des Deux-Clefs, à Colmar.

## Texas, Castroville.

Da Verläunder und Verfälscher gegen die Colonisation des Unterzeichneten im Texas fortfahren dieselbe auf eine unbeschreibliche Weise zu verschwärzen, so wird das Publikum aufgefordert, sich über den Wohlstand von Castroville an dem schönen Flusse Medina bei nachbenannten Personen zu erkundigen, deren Moralität und Rechlichkeit außer allem Zweifel sind.

In Bremen bei dem Hn. W. Robertson, Consul der Vereinigten Staaten Americas;

Im Haag bei dem Hn. Obristen von Engerfield, Geschäftsträger im Texas;

Zu Paris bei der Legation des Texas und bei dem Hn. Jussaud, Notarius;

Zu Neufreistadt, für das Großherzogthum Baden, bei den Hn. Huth und Comp., Bankiers;

Zu Antwerpen bei den Hn. J. Decock und Blichop, Aheeder.

N. S. Castroville ist allgemein als die beträchtlichste und mit Europäern bevölkertste Niederlassung bekannt.

Hr. Castro gibt fernerhin jeder Familie mientgeldlich 320 und jedem Ledigen 160 Acres, ferner ein Loos in der Stadt, wenn sie nur die in dem Prospectus angedeuteten Bedingungen erfüllen, welche man sich bei Hn. Grandpre, Repräsentanten des Hauses Th. de Coek und Bissechop, im Gasthause zu den Zwei Schlüsseln zu Colmar, verschaffen kann.



# Timeline Resource: Evolution of Landmark Inn



**1844**

- Henri Castro founded the settlement of Castroville along the banks of the Medina River with colonists recruited from the Alsace region of France as well as other parts of Europe.



**1844-1847**

- Michel Simon bought a property lot from Henri Castro and built a home. By 1860, the structure was being used as a bath or wash house.



**1849**

- César Monod, from Switzerland, bought Simon's lot and an additional lot from Henri Castro. Monod built the kitchen and a one-story house/store building. An established merchant by this time, Monod recognized the value of the property (at the entrance to Castroville on the San Antonio-Chihuahua/El Paso trail) as an excellent location for a roadside mercantile/tavern/hotel.



**1853, 1860s, 1870s**

- John and Rowena Vance purchased Monod's property. They added on to the hotel and store, making it "L" shaped. In 1859, they also built a new home for their family, known today as the Vance House. A few years later, the Vances added a second story to the hotel, expanding the number of rooms for rent. During the Civil War in the 1860s, civilian and military traffic increased on the San Antonio-Chihuahua/El Paso trail. The Vance businesses prospered in the 1870s.



**1854, 1864**

- Haass and Quintle purchased the riverside portions of the property from Vance for \$4,000. The partners built the Medina River dam, a two-story gristmill, and a gin. The mill was designed by David Monroe of Seguin, who was considered the state's premier mill architect. The cost to build the dam, head race, and mill at that time was \$8,000. In today's money, that \$12,000 would be approximately \$500,000.
- In April 1864, much of the mill was damaged by arson.



**1869**

- Stephen S. Brown acquired the mill in its entirety and added a 20-horsepower steam engine to ensure continuous production.





### 1876, 1879

- Joseph Courand, Sr., an early Castroville settler, purchased the mill, dam, and mill race from S.S. Brown in 1876. In 1879, the San Antonio Daily Herald mentioned the expanded operation of Courand's steam-and water-powered flour, grist and lumber mill. This was the first mention of flour milling.

### 1879, 1881, 1890, 1892, 1893, 1899



- Joseph Courand, Jr. and family inherited the mill. In 1880, Courand, Jr. built a new gin on the property. The two-story gin house was built of sheet iron and equipped with Brown 60-saw gin and Coleman steam press. In 1890, Courand replaced a set of millstones with a roller mill, which crushed the grain allowing for faster milling. Courand installed a new boiler for the mill and a large wagon scale for weighing wagons of cotton and grain. In 1899, the Courands purchased the rest of the property from the James Wilson Vance, the youngest child of John and Rowena. The Vance House was converted to a warehouse for the mill/gin complex, and rooms in the Vance Hotel were rented out and likely occupied by mill workers. These improvements to the mill complex transformed the mill from a custom milling enterprise into a fully commercialized operation.
- In 1881, when Courand, Jr. was expanding the mill complex and Vance was operating his store and hotel, the Galveston, Harrisburg & San Antonio Railroad bypassed Castroville and established the new town of Hondo on the rail line. The county seat of Medina County moved from Castroville to Hondo in 1892. With the building of a new county courthouse in Hondo in 1893, the decline of Castroville began.

### 1925



- In 1925, the Lawler family purchased the mill and surrounding property. J.T. Lawler held to progressive ideals. He demolished the gin and converted the mill into a hydroelectric power plant, which provided areas of Castroville with electricity, a first for the city. By the 1920s, the flow of the Medina River had been compromised by an irrigation dams built upstream. The majority of the power plant machinery was sold as salvage during WWI.

### 1942, 1972, 1974



- On July 4, 1942, the Hondo Army Air Field was dedicated. On that same day, Ruth Lawler reopened the hotel as the Landmark Inn to capitalize on the need for lodging at the nearby air bases. The housing shortage resulted in the restoration of many historic houses like Landmark Inn and revived Castroville. Due to Ruth's persistence and passion for preservation, Landmark Inn was placed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1972. In 1974, she gifted all of the structures and the property to the state of Texas.



# Timeline Investigation Resource: Evolution of Landmark Inn

★ The historic site now known as Landmark Inn was established along the banks of the Medina River and along the San Antonio-Chihuahua/El Paso trail route in the mid-1800s. How might the site's location have contributed to its century of history of commercial success?

★ Look at the timeline summaries and consider the historic commercial and industrial activity at the Landmark Inn site across the 1800s and the 1900s. Write at least three observations each about how those activities were alike and different from one century to another.

Activity ALIKE	Activity DIFFERENT



## Timeline Investigation Resource: Evolution of Landmark Inn pg. 2

- ★ Many people played important roles in the evolution of Castroville and the Landmark Inn site. Make a case for which of the following people you believe made the **greatest** impact in terms of the commercial/industrial success of the historic site. You must include reasons and evidence. Choose from: **César Monod, John and Rowena Vance, Haass and Quintle, Stephen S. Brown, Joseph Courand, Jr., or J.T. Lawler.**

In my opinion, \_\_\_\_\_ made the greatest contributions to the commercial/industrial success of the historic Landmark Inn site because

- ★ In 1881, the Galveston, Harrisburg & San Antonio Railroad bypassed Castroville. Discuss **at least two ways** in which this event would have affected the growth and success of the community
- ★ Interest in the preservation of historic places began in a limited way in the early 19th century. Initially, mostly “famous sites” were targeted. The movement gained interest and energy with the passage of Theodore Roosevelt’s 1906 Antiquities Act and the 1916 National Park Service Act. Other primary preservation legislation now includes the Historic Sites Act (1935), the creation of the National Trust for Historic Preservation (1949), and the passing of the National Historic Preservation Act (1966). Landmark Inn is included in the National Register of Historic Places. In your opinion, 1) what is the importance and the purpose of preserving historic places, and 2) how can you contribute to preservation efforts?

1) The importance and purpose of preserving historic places is

2) I can contribute to preservation efforts by



# Evolution of Landmark Inn KWL Chart

<b>Know</b>	<b>Want to Know</b>	<b>Learned</b>



## Site Visit Recommendations

- Complete the pre-visit lesson or other introductory lessons prior to your field trip.
- Divide students into small groups, each with an adult chaperone.
- Make sure students bring pencils. Pens and markers are not allowed in the exhibits.

## Information

To schedule a site visit field trip for your students, please call 830-931-2133.

For admission prices and hours of operation, please visit us online at [Landmark Inn State Historic Site](http://www.landmarkinn.com).

## Contact Us

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