

THE EFFECT OF THE ASSIMILATION OF THE LA REUNION COLONISTS
ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF DALLAS AND DALLAS COUNTY

APPROVED:

A. Ray Stephens
Major Professor

W. L. ...
Minor Professor

William Hamman
Chairman of the Department of History

Smith
Dean of the Graduate School

379
N81
No. 6312

THE EFFECT OF THE ASSIMILATION OF THE LA REUNION COLONISTS
ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF DALLAS AND DALLAS COUNTY

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
North Texas State University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTERS OF SCIENCE

By

Velma Irene Sandell, B.S.

Denton, Texas

December, 1986

R. S.

Sandell, Velma I., The Effect of the Assimilation of the La Reunion Colonists on the Development of Dallas and Dallas County. Master of Science (History), December, 1986, 117 pp., bibliography, 90 titles.

This study examines the impact of the citizens of the La Reunion colony on the development of Dallas and Dallas County. The French, Belgian, and Swiss families that formed the utopian colony brought a blend of European culture and education to the Texas frontier in 1853. The founding of La Reunion and a record of its short existence is covered briefly in the first two chapters. The major part of the research, however, deals with the colonists who remained in Dallas County after the colony failed in 1856. Chapters three and four make use of city, county, and state records along with personal collections from the Dallas Historical Society Archives and the Dallas Public Library to examine the colonists effect on the government and business community. Chapter five explores the cultural development of the area through city and county records and personal collections.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. EXPERIMENT IN SOCIALISM.1
II. PROBLEMS IN A NEW LAND.14
III. INFLUENCES IN BUSINESS.47
IV. CONTRIBUTIONS IN GOVERNMENT76
V. INFLUENCES ON SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND LASTING REMINDERS96
BIBLIOGRAPHY110

CHAPTER I

EXPERIMENT IN SOCIALISM

The Utopian community of La Reunion was established in 1854 in the area of the three forks of the Trinity River in North Central Texas.¹ The settlement, by description of its founder, Victor Prosper Considerant, was to be an experiment in socialism. Based on the writings of Charles Francois Fourier, the organization of the colony was to "afford the fullest economic liberty and opportunity to its members."²

The socialistic doctrine that spawned La Reunion was part of a middle class movement developed in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution in Europe. The socialist philosophers of the period were disillusioned with society. They saw the suffering of the masses in crowded cities and the inequality of possession of wealth and property by the ruling class and sought to affect change. Calling for the elimination of control of wealth solely by inheritance, they campaigned to place the possibility of material gain within the reach of the masses. The list of early socialist plans included many interpretations of this idea from relatively

peaceful movements to provide education for the masses to more active efforts to develop trade unions. The more aggressive evangelists of social change called for the actual seizure of property.³

The most radical and perhaps best known socialist philosopher, Karl Marx, believed that a constant struggle between the working and ruling classes was inevitable. He predicted an uprising of the masses that would overthrow their leaders.⁴ This brand of socialism was the most feared by the ruling classes of the world and as a result the most widely reported. As socialistic movements grew and spread across Europe and the United States, all socialist reformers were quite often taken to be followers of Marx and this caused fear and mistrust of the term socialism in many circles. However, the Marxist vision of socialism was in almost direct contrast to the socialistic plans of Fourier that would result in La Reunion.

Charles Francois Fourier was a French philosopher who lived from 1772 to 1837. He developed a theory of socialism that gained some prominence in the early nineteenth century. Fourier witnessed the squalor and misery of the industrial city of Lyon, France and compared it to the serenity of the surrounding farm lands. He sought to develop a system that would bring order and dignity to the industrial community.

Like Karl Marx, Fourier felt the society of Europe was so corrupt that only a complete restructuring would save it. His plan called for small self-sufficient communities of approximately two thousand people where property was jointly owned and worked. These communities, called phalanges or phalanx, would be the basis structure of the plan. However, rather than preaching revolution like Marx, Fourier urged the classes to work together peacefully.⁵

All citizens of the phalanges would work and be paid according to their contribution. Work, Fourier envisioned, was to be more like organized play because the routine would constantly change. The monotonous and tedious jobs would be dispersed between all citizens thus allowing each person some time to pursue activities of more up-lifting quality. Fourier, a believer in equality of the sexes, cited women in particular as a group that would benefit and be relieved of the repetition and drudgery of housework and child rearing. People would be impelled to join the system by successful example rather than compelled by force as Marx predicted. Fourier's work gained a modest following but his writings were disorganized and hard to follow. Also Fourier was apparently by personality withdrawn and noncommunitative. He lacked the charisma to draw followers to his cause. It

was not until after his death in 1837 that his theories reached wide-spread popularity.⁶

The man most responsible for the growth in the following of the Fourierian theory was Victor Prosper Considerant. Considerant met Fourier and studied his theories in the 1830's. Three publications on Fourier's theories were published in Paris during the 1830's, La Philantree, Destine Sociale, and La Philange. Considerant and Fourier were the major contributors and Considerant was the editor. By the time of Fourier's death in 1837, Considerant was the accepted leader of the Fourierists or Phalansteriens as they preferred to be known. Considerant was an articulate speaker and writer who possessed the ability to win converts and enlist financial support. Under his leadership the movement developed a wide following in Europe and modest interest in the United States.⁷

In 1848 a revolution dethroned Louis Philippe and established a short-lived socialistic republic in France. Considerant was elected to the National Assembly. Three years later when Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, nephew to Napoleon, was elected president, Considerant was condemned to be exiled to a French island because of his criticism of government policies on suffrage. He was able to avoid capture, however, and escaped to Belgium where he lived

until he came to the United States in 1853. Considerant attempted to create financial backing for a colony in France on two occasions but failed to secure the needed capital. Meanwhile, he worked to educate the masses in the phalanistic theory and hoped that a spontaneous incorporation of the phalanx system would develop in society.⁸

During this time Considerant corresponded with Albert Brisbane, a colleague in the United States who was also a follower of Fourier. Brisbane had discovered the teachings of socialism in general and the writings of Fourier in particular while studying in Germany. He was attracted to the concept that productive labor could be structured to include dignity and challenge for workers.⁹ The American traveled to Paris to meet and study with Fourier and while there became acquainted with Considerant. After his return to the United States in 1839, Brisbane worked as a columnist for several newspapers. He won the attention of Horace Greeley with his Fourierian doctrine and together they founded a short-lived newspaper called the Future. Brisbane later wrote for Greeley's paper the New York Tribune and finally changed to the staff of the New York Chronicle as editor.¹⁰

For several years Brisbane pleaded with Considerant to locate a colony in the United States. Finally, in May of 1853, after being visited by officials of the Peter's Colony of Texas, Considerant accepted Brisbane's invitation to visit other socialist communities in North America.¹¹ The Frenchman was encouraged by the progress he saw and the open opportunities for new ideas in a new land. With the help of Brisbane, Considerant traveled west to search for suitable land for his colony.¹²

It was decided the land should be east of the Rocky Mountains and in the south to avoid the harsh winters of the northern states. New Mexico was considered but abandoned in favor of land closer to the Gulf of Mexico and Texas became the logical location. Possible choices were near Fort Worth or Fort Graham where the settlers could expect protection from Indian raids along the frontier.¹³

While these locations were being researched, Considerant and Brisbane visited the tiny settlement of Dallas in 1853 and stayed in the home of a Frenchman by the name of Adolphe Gouhanant who had been part of an earlier unsuccessful Utopian colony called New Icaria near present day Justin in Denton County. Gouhenant operated a photographic studio and art saloon in Dallas where he made

daguerreotypes, painted pictures and signs, and taught French and Spanish as well as music lessons. He also supported himself by selling wine at a dollar a bottle, which he made from wild grapes gathered in the area.¹⁴

Land across the Trinity River from Dallas was suggested as a possible site for the colony and on closer investigation Considerant seemed to favor the location. The acreage near Dallas had both rich farm land as well as thin rocky soil along a section of limestone cliffs where Gouenant had found the wild grapes. The cliffs were thought to be poor farm land by American settlers, but the French believed the terrain would be excellent for growing domestic grape vines.¹⁵

Brisbane persuaded Considerant to travel further and consider other locations before making a final decision and they visited Austin and Galveston on their way to New Orleans. According to his notes, Considerant apparently still favored the location on the upper Trinity River. No final decision was made on a location, however, before they took ship for New York. Brisbane began the work of advertising the colonial enterprise and Considerant departed for Europe to form an agency for settlement.¹⁶

In a book entitled Au Texas, he wrote glowing accounts of the Texas land. "Friends, I tell you the promised land

is a reality. We have seen it and explored it."¹⁷ He also cautioned all in great honesty, however, that the colony would be an experiment and therefore probably costly with little return on investments. Considerant called for a social sharing of property and land, but he emphasized his plan would not be communism. That doctrine he condemned as a failure. Rather, he foresaw an association of settlers who would invest money and/or labor in the colony and be repaid according to the size of their investment.¹⁸

On September 26, 1854, at Brussels, Belgium, the articles of the Societe' de Colonization Europeo-Americaine au Texas were signed by Victor Prosper Considerant, Allyre Bureau, Charles Grancois Guillon, Jean-Baptiste Codain-Lemaire, Emil Jean-Baptiste Bourdon, Jean Claude Just Muran, Gustave Landon, and M. Barclay. Bureau, Guillon, and Godain-Lemaire were the original directors. Considerant was elected executive officer of the organization in Texas and was to report to the directors. The Society sold shares in the company in units of five, twenty-five, and one hundred twenty-five dollar value and interest was set at 4 percent.¹⁹

There were several ways a colonist could invest in the new venture:

1. Associates in capital and labor
2. Associates in labor
3. Associates in capital working of their own accord

4. Workers not invested who were salaried by the association
5. Some non-associated and semi-associated residents working of their own accord
6. Pensioners, boarders, orphans, old and infirm, etc.

Only those associated by either capital or labor were full members. Others were included in the activities of the colony in limited ways.²⁰

In Au Texas Considerant expressed his approach to the colony.²¹ It would not be a proving ground for set doctrines, but rather an experimental area for ideas. Individual ownership was welcomed because he felt it would raise property values in the colony. Other groups were invited to come and try their theories of settlement and were assured that if the ideas were successful, they would be considered by others. The idea of each settler profiting according to the percentage of his investment actually is much the same as profit-sharing in a modern business today. The colony was an experiment in socialism and advanced capitalism.²²

Considerant proposed a minimum and maximum wage to be determined by the society members, mutual insurance, cooperation in credit and exchange, provisions for sickness, and social guarantees for old age and infancy.²³ A primary school and university eventually would be provided as well

as a library. The colony was to be the hub of a network of colonies in the United States with the settlement in Texas as the connecting point to markets in Europe for goods and produce created at other colonies.²⁴ The only required principles of the colony were local government, avoidance of communism, and a guarantee of freedom of action for the colonists.²⁵

Soon after the articles were signed in 1854, Francois Cantagrel, Considerant's deputy for the new colony, and a Mr. Rogers, a Belgian medical student, left for the United States. Their mission was to buy land for the colony, purchase supplies, enlist laborers, and begin construction on the site.²⁶

Cantagrel and his party first attempted to purchase land near Fort Worth but found all desirable land taken. They then returned to Dallas and began proceedings to purchase the land that Considerant had originally favored.²⁷ The land was part of the Peter's Colony. Cantagrel contracted for the following:

- 320 acres - Enoch Horton Survey
- 640 acres - Anson McCracken Survey
- 640 acres - L. G. Combs Survey
- 320 acres - Thacker V. Griffin Survey
- 160 acres - J. C. Reed Survey

The total amount was 2080 acres on both sides of the West Fork of the Trinity River approximately four miles south and west of the village of Dallas.²⁸

The arrival of Cantagrel and Rogers in Dallas was recorded in the Dallas Herald in February, 1855.²⁹

Some of the leading gentleman connected with the French Colony of Messrs. Brisbane and Considerant are now in town... We understand that industrial, mechanical, and learned professions will be fully represented... Such a settlement in our midst of a nation celebrated for its intelligence, genius, and skill in the mechanic arts, cannot fail to add greatly to its prosperity... A welcome and success to all say we.

Considerant hoped the advance guard would layout farms, build houses, and construct workshops in preparation for the settlers. Meanwhile, he remained in Europe to raise capital. One hundred thousand dollars was pledged at the time the articles were signed and by early 1855, approximately two million dollars were promised. Considerant departed for America and the new colony with high confidence.³⁰

NOTES

CHAPTER I. EXPERIMENT IN SOCIALISM

- 1 Map of the Colony Survey and Partition, A37481, Dallas Historical Society Archives. This document includes a description of the property and lists volume and page numbers to county records. Filed for record June 14, 1858 at 2 o'clock P.M.
- 2 William J. Hammond and Margaret F. Hammond, La Reunion - A French Settlement in Texas (Dallas: Royal Publishing Co., 1958), 45.
- 3 Ibid., 10.
- 4 Eugene Kamenka, ed., The Portable Karl Marx, Manifest of the Communist Party (New York: Viking Press, 1983), 204.
- 5 Hammond and Hammond, 18.
- 6 Ibid., 19-26.
- 7 Ibid.; George H. Santerre, White Cliffs of Dallas (Dallas: The Book Craft, 1955), 27.
- 8 Hammond and Hammond, 25.
- 9 Ibid., 29.
- 10 Ibid., 30.
- 11 John Henry Brown, History of Dallas County, Texas From 1837 to 1887 (Dallas: Milligan, Cornett & Farmham, 1887), 14. In part, this work discusses the Peter's Colony, founded by act of the Texian Congress, February 4, 1841. "An Act granting land to immigrants Joseph Carroll, Henry J. Peters & others".
- 12 Victor Prosper Considerant, Au Texas - An American Utopian Adventure. A translation of writings, Au Texas, The Great West, "European Colonization of Texas - An Address to the American People" (Philadelphia: Porcupine Press, 1977), Introduction.
- 13 Hammond and Hammond, 41.

14 Jerry Bywater, " Seventy-five Years of Art in Dallas,"
Dallas: Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, 1978.

15 Hammond and Hammond, 9-10.

16 Considerant, The Great West, 26-31.

17 Ibid., 7-12.

18 Hammond and Hammond, 47-48.

19 Ibid., 52-53.

20 Ibid., 57-58.

21 Considerant, The Great West, 30.

22 Hammond and Hammond, 57-58.

23 Considerant, The Great West, 30-31. No first name was
found for Mr. Rogers.

24 Ibid., 37-38.

25 Hammond and Hammond, 30-31.

26 Ibid., 85.

27 Ibid., 54.

28 Map of the Colony, A37481, Dallas Historical Society
Archives.

29 Hammond and Hammond, 85-86.

30 Ibid., 67-79.

CHAPTER II

PROBLEMS IN A NEW LAND

In 1853 when Victor Prosper Considerant first visited Texas, he was met with hospitality and enthusiasm for his project and he expected to encounter the same welcome when he returned in 1855. In the seventeen months that passed between his first and second visits, however, a curious phenomenon of American politics had changed the conditions he met. An intense wave of nationalism was sweeping the country possibly spurred by a large influx of immigrants in eastern cities who threatened job security for many Americans. Added to this was a natural suspicion of foreign cultures and growing passions over the slavery issue in the decade preceding the Civil War. This strange mixture of feelings manifested itself in a secret group called the Know-Nothing Party that flared into existence suddenly in 1854. The organization lasted only three or four years but while it was active the group managed to play on the general public's fear and suspicion of outsiders and influenced, among other things, the acceptance of Considerant and his colony.¹

The community of Dallas seemed fairly free of this prejudice as witnessed by the news article already cited. The climate in other Texas cities as well as across the nation, however, was less favorable. The Texas State Times and the Austin State Gazette were quite vocal in their criticism and letters from readers warned of socialist attempts to overthrow the government and inspire anarchy, confusing Fourierian Utopian Socialism with the Communist Manifesto of Karl Marx.²

We would rather see the State a howling desert than witness the spreading waves of Socialism stretch itself over the Christian Churches and the Slave Institution of Texas....³

A certain faction in Texas apparently saw the French colony as a plot by northern abolitionists to establish islands of anti-slavery sentiment in the south. Considerant quickly perceived the problem and published a letter entitled "European Colonization in Texas, An Address to the American People".⁴ In the letter Considerant assured the public that he and his group had no intention to arrive in their new land and immediately question the systems that prevailed. He asked only that the people of his colony be allowed time to become American citizens and learn about their new country.

...We feel ourselves far more urgently called to cultivate the earth, to erect buildings...than to swell the ranks of any political party....The best

elements of the old world ask only to leave it; let America afford to them a little aid; nothing more is required, for them at once to join forces with her. Europe is now driving from her bosom whatever is good; let America give it a home with her.⁵

In Texas the Dallas Herald, the Galveston News, and the Clarksville Northern Standard were most favorable to the colony. Outside the state the New York Tribune was the major supporter of Considerant's plan. The Tribune editor, Horace Greely, was, of course, an old friend of Albert Brisbane. Support from a northern paper so strongly connected with the anti-slavery movement, however, probably did much to hurt Considerant's chances of acceptance in Texas. As a result of this controversy, Considerant was denied a land grant title by the Texas Legislature in 1855. Also Considerant credited the negative publicity with discouraging numbers of United States citizens from joining the colony as he had hoped. Cooler reasoning prevailed in Texas and finally on September 1, 1856, the grant was officially given by the legislature of Texas to incorporate the "European and American Colonization Society in Texas", but the hard fought decision probably hindered the colony's chances for success.⁶

During this time of political maneuvers, work on the colony went forward. Considerant was concerned that Francois Cantagrel and his group have time to prepare the

land and build shelters before the main body of settlers arrived, but this was not to be. Arriving in Texas later than they had planned because of travel difficulties, the advance guard experienced many delays in preparing the land for settlement. When Considerant reached New Orleans on his way to the colony in 1855 he learned with alarm that Cantagrel and Rogers had made little progress in their task. Considerant discovered that two hundred settlers, reportedly young men and women from Switzerland, Belgium, France, and Sweden, had embarked for the New Utopia promised in his book Au Texas.⁷

From the arrival of the first settlers in April 1855 the plans of the colony seemed doomed to failure. Considerant's accounts of what to expect in the new land were sketchy and in some cases inaccurate. The colonists expected to be able to travel by boat up the Trinity River to Dallas. Instead they encountered a long walk of over two hundred miles. Unable to speak the language and unsure of their surroundings they were easy prey to opportunistic freighters who charged them four cents a pound for their considerable baggage.⁸ The colonists themselves walked the entire trip in fear of Indian attack because of stories they had heard. When they finally reached the colony after more than twenty days march they found open undeveloped land rather than the

established colony with housing and planted crops as they had expected. Considerant did not arrive with this first group but traveled with his family to Austin on business probably hoping to secure his land grant.⁹

The only promise that seemed fulfilled was that the land was beautiful, nestled above and below the chalky cliffs overlooking the Trinity River. The time was April; wildflowers covered the prairie and fresh water trickled from fussions in the cliff face.¹⁰

The settlers met and elected Cantagrel as the first director and Philip Goetsell as supervisor of construction. Considerant's plan for a large communal phalanstery of fifty apartments was ruled out because of a lack of proper materials. Instead the colonists built small cottages of the native limestone, hewn by hand and plastered with a crude cement. The village was located on a bluff directly across the river from Dallas and became a collection of eighteen small houses scattered over forty acres with one main central building housing the communal kitchen, a meeting hall, community store, and apartments for Governor Considerant and his family. Small six-acre garden plots were assigned to each family who quickly planted crops as soon as proper equipment could be purchased. The small wooden plows brought from France proved useless in the

virgin chalky soil, so the new arrivals acquired large-beam prairie plows pulled by four horses or oxen. In fact, the colony was well provided initially with all manner of equipment and livestock. Farm tools and over 500 head of cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, and fowl were purchased with the funds provided by investors in Europe. Four hundred thirty acres of land were cultivated and the rest was used as pasture. The young single men of the colony planted a large communal garden and the summer harvest was such a phenomenal success that settlers from miles around came to see the sight.¹¹

Another group arrived in June and small bands of settlers trickled in from time to time. The colonists chose the name La Reunion since they envisioned their colony as a meeting place for all foreign-speaking settlers in Texas as well as the central point for other colonies that were to be.¹²

Accounts from early settlers record that Dallas residents received the new colonists well. The Europeans created quite a stir when they arrived in their loose smocks, berets, and wooden shoes. The entire population of Dallas turned out to greet them complete with one French resident, Maximillian Guillot, a carriage maker in Dallas. Guillot had come to Dallas in 1854 to establish the first

industry in town and his intervention on the part of the settlers greatly aided their acceptance by the people of Dallas. Never part of the colony, Guillot nevertheless befriended the colonists in many ways by acting as interpreter in the early years and later by providing homes and jobs for several settlers as they made the transition from the colony to Dallas.¹³

As the colony grew that first year small disagreements flared over the communal dining arrangements. Workers prepared the food in a central location and dispensed it on a first come, first serve basis. This plan meant late arrivals got little or no food. Officials soon changed the eating arrangements to a cafeteria style served in equal portions but this attempt to please proved unsatisfactory also. Finally the leaders changed the communal kitchen to a restaurant and charged a fee to those who chose to eat there. Also colonists received food supplies to be prepared at their own cottages and the people polarized into small family or ethnic groups.¹⁴

The colony directors delegated the work communally but soon found that only a few members had experience as farmers or had any knowledge of the land. Some accounts say only two farmers were included.¹⁵ Other reports claim six, but most of the settlers were professionals or skilled craftsmen

and had no desire to learn farming.¹⁶ The more wealthy colonists simply lived on funds brought with them from Europe until their resources became depleted at which time they either began to work or left the colony. The few colonists who actually worked became disgruntled because while they labored the others sat idle but all still shared in the food and materials produced. At the same time work done by the inexperienced and untrained was costly and of poor quality. The first crop of wheat cost three dollars per bushel to produce but could only be sold for seventy-five cents per bushel. In another incident a group of untrained men worked at branding stock and in doing so severely burned several head. Stock thus lost meant no return on the investment.¹⁷

The most severe test came the following winter of 1855-56. The flimsy houses hastily constructed in April proved to be no match for the Texas northers that assailed them. Rain and snow blew through cracks in the plaster and the colonists slept under umbrellas to stay dry. The winter brought record cold and the Trinity River reportedly froze over. Stock died from exposure and many colonists became ill. Early settlers remembered that meat over a fire would be frozen on one side while it cooked on the other.¹⁸ Colonists complained bitterly to Considerant that he had

chosen badly and the colony should have been further south to avoid the winter climate. Considerant became withdrawn and defensive. He spent more and more time away from the colony on business.¹⁹

Spring brought relief from the elements and promise of a fresh start. The hardy pioneers planted new crops only to have them wiped out by a late freeze in May. They planted again but the summer brought drought. Springs dried up causing crops and people to suffer for lack of water. Sickness started from nearly depleted wells and the doctors of the group, Dr. Augustus Savadan and Dr. Nicolas, unaccustomed to the extremes of the Texas climate, offered little relief to the victims. The sparse crops that did survive shriveled under the hot summer sun and as a final blow, a holocaust of grasshoppers destroyed the rest. With the prospect of starvation in the coming winter, settlers began to leave. The first to make the move were Swiss colonists led by Jacob Nussbaumer. The group chose land just east of Dallas by a shallow natural reservoir called Moon Lake and laid out farms.²⁰ Another group of Belgian settlers lead by John Phillip Goetsell relocated at Mountain Creek a few miles west of the colony. Single colonists drifted away to other surrounding towns or continued to live in the colony but sought work across the river in Dallas.²¹

New settlers continued to arrive from Europe in small numbers although Considerant had by this time sent word to directors to send no more people. The Santerre family arrived at Houston to a less than hospitable reception. The family of nine disembarked from their ship at night on a bayou near a farm used by the colony as a stopping place on the journey to La Reunion only to find discouraged colonists waiting to return to France. Francois Santerre refused to be deterred in his journey to the colony but found little encouragement from Considerant to stay when the family finally arrived. Santerre persevered and began farming the colony land but several new arrivals tarried only shortly before moving on to other towns in the area or returning to Europe. The original settlers did likewise because the winter of 1856-57, proved equally harsh as the first year.

The few colonists that held on became splintered over various issues and friction developed between the nationalities. Charges of mishandling of funds arose with specific reference to Considerant. The colonial organization, unable to pay the 6 percent interest on money borrowed in Europe, also could not pay the 4 percent interest promised to stockholders. The reserve of capital evaporated. Considerant, always the dreamer, proved to be only that and incapable of actually implementing his plan. Many colonists

criticized him for not laboring to make La Reunion a success before he launched larger, more grand schemes elsewhere. During the first two struggling years he spent colony money to buy 50,000 acres of land in Uvalde County in South Texas.²²

In 1857, Considerant left the colony for good, a discouraged man. In his memoirs he took full responsibility for the failure of the colony but denied deliberate fraud, pleading only poor planning and ill fortune. Dr. Savadan, however, wrote an embittered report on the colony after his return to France called Naufrage au Texas in which he accused Considerant of cheating the colonists and stealing colony funds. Considerant lived in San Antonio long enough to establish citizenship and become a naturalized citizen of the United States. Then he returned to France protected by his new citizenship from prosecution on the charges brought against him in 1848 and lived out his life a broken and disillusioned dreamer.²³

In 1857, Jules Lanotte leased the community store and closed the restaurant. The store represented by far the most successful project of the colony drawing customers from the area at large as well as the colony and averaging \$330 per month in sales. Early settlers remembered that the French Town store was well stocked at reasonable prices.²⁴

An advertisement in an 1860 Dallas Herald appeared as follows:

French Store - Reunion

Always supplied with large stock of Groceries, Hardware, Dry Goods, Ready Made Clothes, Crockery, Cutlery, Books & Stationery, Paints, Oils, Drugs etc. etc.

Just now receiver of full supply of
Fall and Winter Goods²⁵
Dallas Co. May 4, 1859.

The colonists that remained on the site kept to themselves and worked the land independently. They resisted efforts to pool resources and use materials and tools cooperatively. By 1859 the colony townsite consisted of a blacksmith shop, mechanic shop, general store, hotel, bootmaker, and tailor, but these private concerns fared poorly as colonists drifted away to the growing settlement of Dallas across the river.²⁶

In 1858, the directors in Europe placed the colony holdings in receivership and appointed Messieurs Michel Thevenet and Alexis Bessard to come to the colony and liquidate the holdings. Colonists who held stock received land valued at four dollars per acre. Jacque Maximillian Reverchon, Athanese Cretien, A. J. Gouffre, Alphases De Lord, Emile Remond, Jean Loupot, Francois Santerre and J. P. Henry acquired land under this arrangement.²⁷

Jules Lanotte continued to operate the store until 1861, and the outbreak of the Civil War. Jacob Nussbaumer bought the large communal stove and moved it to Dallas. Charles Capy rented the forge. The farmers who took land for their shares remained to farm as independent land owners, at least for a few years.²⁸ Others found new homes in other Texas towns such as Belton or San Antonio, or returned to Europe. A few of the colonists settled close by in communities such as Grand Prairie, Irving, Cedar Springs, and Lancaster. No complete list of settlers remains today. Some accounts drawn from memoirs of settlers suggest as many as 500 persons had settled at La Reunion during its existence while other reports claim the total never exceeded 300. Considerant had hoped to locate 2000 in the first year.²⁹

The hardships that befell La Reunion, it can be pointed out, also fell with equally heavy hand on the citizens of Dallas and surrounding towns. To move across the river was no assurance that drought and insects would not threaten again. Possibly the decision of the settlers to disband lay not so much in the problems they had encountered as it did that they found the capitalistic system had much greater rewards to offer individual effort in their new land than did Utopian Socialism. Whatever the motivation, Dallas

attracted a large number of the colonists and the history of the two settlements became intertwined.

An exact count of all the La Reunion settlers is difficult owing to the lack of accurate records of the colony. From the beginning settlers arrived and left at will with little documentation for their passing. Even after the colony began to break up in 1856, more colonists arrived, some pausing only long enough to see that the colony was a failure before moving on, so that a definite count of settlers drawn to Dallas by La Reunion has been deemed impossible. It has been necessary to rely on the memory of former colonists and their succeeding generations to provide a list of names.

George Santerre listed 150 families in White Cliffs, 42 of whom he credited with staying in Dallas.³⁰ Eloise Santerre, in her 1936 thesis on the colony, listed 58 families that stayed and a possible 45 more names that were mentioned in records but about whom little was known.³¹ John William Rogers in Lusty Texas of Dallas counted 150 colonists in Dallas while the 1860 census recorded 176 persons as foreign born.³² The introduction to the United States census of Dallas County compiled by the Dallas Genealogical Society cites 46 names (heads of households) as being part of the French colony, however, their tally failed

to recognize several Swiss and Belgian families known to have been part of La Reunion.³³

For the purposes of this study only the names of the colonists who were "heads of households" and can be documented as staying in Dallas and Dallas County will be addressed. It must be noted that many of the names appear with several different spellings, but by comparing occupations, addresses, and given names it can be reasonably established that these several spellings are one and the same person. The different spelling will be noted in this listing. Elsewhere in this work the names will be spelled as found in each particular document or situation. Using the United States Census of 1860 as a basis and adding records found in other sources, a list of occupations, original homelands, and additional information will be indicated.³⁴

Baer, Gaspard

Linguist and teacher

France

Baer had infant school for a time.

Barbier, Alexandre (Barbee)

Scientific gardener

France

After serving as Marshall of Dallas for a short term
Barbier retired to Mineral Wells and built a
vineyard.

Barbier, J. F.

Assistant city marshall France

J. F. Barbier was a civic leader in Dallas. A street
named in his honor ran from Poyadus to the northern
city limits.

Bessard, Alexis (Alexandre)

Farmer France

Bessard was one of the receivers of the colony sent
to liquidate the colony property.

Boll, Henry, Sr.

Butcher Switzerland

Henry Boll, age 57, lived with son.

Boll, Henri (Henry)

Butcher Switzerland

Henry Boll Jr. moved to Moon Lake with other Swiss
colonists. He built a home on what would become
Swiss Avenue for his family of ten children.

Involved in real estate business for many years and
prominent citizen of Dallas, Boll served as both

County Clerk and City Treasurer. On May 12, 1889, Mayor W. C. Connor presented Boll a testimonial signed by 130 citizens of Dallas in appreciation for his civic work.

Boll, Jacob

Naturalist

Switzerland

Jacob Boll, brother to Henry, came as the colony ended. He became an internationally known naturalist for his collection of specimens from across the southwestern United States.

Boulay, Frances (J. F.)

Farmer

France

Boulay, Dominique

France

Boulay left Dallas in 1866 but returned in 1882.

Bourgeois, Luc

Farmer

France

Bourgeois and his wife, Louisa were two of the original colonists who could speak English when they arrived in Dallas.

Brochier, P. (Birqui, Burkli)

Farmer

France

One of the original directors, Brochier brought 30 Swiss settlers in 1856.

Brunette, E. (Joseph)

Laborer / Locksmith

France

Brunette lived in Dallas for a short time but moved to Austin in 1861 and established an ice factory.

Cantagrel, Francois (Cantegrel)

2nd colony President

France

Cantagrel moved to Dallas after the break-up. In 1875 he was authorized to sell the last of the colony assets.

Caperon

Saloon / Winehouse

France

Cappy, Charles (Capy)

Carpenter / Contractor

France

Cappy built many buildings in Dallas and was active in community life.

Charpentier, Joseph

Cobbler / Harness maker

France

Charpentier was killed by raiders during Civil War.

Christian, M. (Cristian)

Carpenter France

Cretein, Anthase (Cretin, Cretien)

Carpenter / Hide tanner France

Cretein was trained as a metallurgist in Europe and used his skill in construction in Dallas.

Coiret, Francois

Liquor and wine maker France

Coleman, Louis

Store clerk Switzerland

Colin,

Wooden shoemaker (sabotier) France

Colm, Francois

Carpenter France

Come, Sebastian

Wagonmaker France

De Lord, Emile

Farmer France

De Lord built the last house constructed at the colony site.

Delasseaux, Michel

Shoemaker

France

Delasseaux stayed in Dallas for a short time but later moved to San Antonio.

Delore, Alphense

Store clerk

France

Dusseau, Pierre

Scientific gardener

France

Dusseau's daughter, Louisa, married Sam S. Jones of Dallas. Dusseau was in charge of commune gardens, and was known for success with unusual plants.

Farine, Nicholas

Farmer

France

Forette, Antoine

Farmer / Carpenter

France

Frichot, D.

Jeweler / Brickmason

France

Frichot studied astronomy and jewelry making in Europe but worked in the family brick company in Dallas.

Frichot, Hershel

Brickmason / Manufacturer France

Frichot, Pere Philip

Brickmason / Manufacturer France

Pere Frichot built the first house at Bryan and Harwood Street.

Frick, Henrick

Blacksmith Switzerland

Frick moved to Mountain Creek with John Goetsell and started a ranch. Later, he moved to Dallas and opened grocery store on Olive Street. He lived at 2020 Bryan Street.

Frick, Otto

Switzerland

Girard, Pierre

Carpenter Switzerland

Joseph, Frank and Pierre (Peter) quarried the rock and constructed the buildings for Julian Reverchon's herbarium.

Goetseed, Lucine

Farmer / Merchant

France

Goetsels, John (Goetsell, Goetseel, Goetseels)

Rancher

Belgium

Goetsels founded town of Louvain at Mountain Creek and most of the Belgian settlers moved there as La Reunion began to fail. Louvain failed, also, and Goetsels moved to Dallas.

Gouffe, A. J. (Gouffre, Goffe)

Tailor

France

Gouffe was a prominent citizen of Dallas and active in city government.

Grisset, Josephine (Gresset)

Milliner / Widow

France

Guillemet, Auguste

Soldier

France

One of the oldest colonist that came to La Reunion, Guillemet bought land in the Horton survey and farmed.

Guyot, Remy

Farmer

France

Guyot moved to Grand Prairie.

Haize, Jules

Carpenter

France

Henri, Paul (Henry)

Lithographer

France

Henri brought a printing press from France. During the Civil War he moved to the settlement of Lancaster to work in the pistol factory located there. After the war he stayed to operate store and bank.

Heymans, F. T.

Farmer

France

Hitten, Gustavus (Hetten)

Clerk

Belgium

Knapfli, Jacob (Knopfli, Knapfly, Knoepfli)

Farmer / Grocer

Switzerland

The Knapfli family built a jewelry store in 1884 remembered as the first skyscraper in Dallas.

Lagoguey, Jean Baptiste (Lagogue)

Shoemaker

France

Lagoguey stayed for a short time in Dallas, but later moved to San Antonio.

LaNotte, Alex (Lanotte)

Clerk

France

LaNotte, Jules

Farmer

France

LaNotte operated the commune store until 1861. Later he moved to a farm north of Dallas.

Leinhardt, George

Wagonwright

Alsace

Long, Benjamin (Lang)

Scholar / Real estate

Switzerland

Long operated a ferry across the Trinity for a time. He married Eugenia de Vleschoudere, a Belgian colonist, and served as Mayor of Dallas for several years. Long donated land for the first fire station. He visited Switzerland in 1870 and returned with thirty-five Swiss settlers in 1871. In 1877 he was appointed to serve as United States Commissioner.

Louckn, John (Louckx)

Builder / Architect

Belgium

Louckn built houses at colony site and later built many buildings in Dallas such as the Catholic Church.

He was a prominent citizen on the city council and a member of the first school board.

Louis, Louis

Blacksmith

France

Lupot, Frances (Loupot)

Grocer / Baker

France

Lupot owned a saloon in Dallas. Frances, Jean, and John are possibly the same man.

Lupot, Jean (John Loupot)

Farmer

France

Jean Lupot owned sixty acres west of colony site where he raised a vegetable garden and ran a dairy.

Mausion, Emmanuel (Mansion)

Farmer

France

Mc DeLore, Aut. (McDelore)

Farmer

France

Michel, Ferdinand (Michell)

Brickmason / Lime kiln

France

Michel owned land where Union Station now stands.

Monduel, John (Manduel)

Cooper / Brewer / Winemaker

France

Monduel operated the first commercial brewery in Dallas.

Moulard

France

Moulard's wife had bakery on Jackson Street for a time. They later moved to Irving.

Nussbaumer, Jacob

Farmer / Butcher

Switzerland

Nussbaumer was the first Swiss settler to move to Dallas. He established an abattoir (slaughter house) and owned a ranch near Fort Worth. He built a home on Swiss Road at corner of Germaine Street next to Henri Boll's home and donated land for the Texas and Pacific depot in 1872.

Peier, Jacob (Prier, Pier)

Wagonwright

Switzerland

Peier is remembered as building wagons from Bois d'Arc hewn on Bois d'Arc Island south of Dallas.

Pinpare, Rene (Pimpare)

Farmer

France

Poitevin, Guillome

Brewer

France

Poitevin made and sold beer on the North side of the square. He later returned to France.

Priot, Jean

Tailor / Brick manufacturer France

Priot built a new post office for Dallas in 1884.

Prota, Antoine (Protat)

Farmer France

Quinet, N.

Cooper France

Raymond,

Farmer

Raymond stayed to farm land at the colony site.

Reinhardt, Louis

Jeweler Saxony

Reinhardt's wife, Sally, taught piano and vocal lessons. She advertised in Dallas paper, Feb. 1, 1859.

Remond, Emile

Brick manufacturer / Geologist France

Remond collected minerals, rocks, and fossils and wrote scientific studies of the minerals of Dallas

County. He displayed much of his collection at his home.

Reverchon, Julian

Son of Maximillian

Julian Reverchan was an internationally known botanist working with budding and grafting of fruit trees. He taught at Baylor School of Pharmacy.

Reverchon, Maximillian

Farmer

France

Maximillian Reverchon's farm near present day Davis and Westmoreland Streets was known for its beautiful garden, flowers, and fruit trees. Early settlers remembered him as always wearing white French smocks and sandals woven from straw.

Royer, Joseph

Miller

France

Roza, Joel

Trader

Belgium

Santerre, Francois (Soutaire)

Farmer

France

Santerre wrote a book on agronomy and scientific farming. His farm was located where Colorado Blvd. and Westmoreland Street now cross. Santerre spoke

This page has been inserted during digitization.

Either the original page was missing or the original pagination was incorrect.

Von Gronderbeck, Louis

Carpenter

Belgium

Vorin

Farmer

France

Vorin settled on a farm four miles west of Dallas on Ft. Worth Road.

Vreidag

Architect

Flanders

Vreidag moved to Terre Haute, Indiana. Later he returned for a visit and submitted plans for the Dallas County Courthouse.

Wealms, John (Johm)

Carpenter

Belgium

Willemet, F. L.

Farmer/ Restaurateur

France

Willemet's legal name was Thervignon, but he changed it when he came to the United States to escape trouble in France. He became a prominent citizen in Dallas and served on city council from 1870 to 1875. He was instrumental in many city projects.

Witt, Susan

Switzerland

NOTES
CHAPTER II. PROBLEMS IN A NEW LAND

1 William J. Hammond and Margaret F. Hammond, La Reunion - A French Settlement in Texas (Dallas: Royal Publishing Co., 1958), 63-66.

2 Ibid., 73.

3 Texas State Gazette, August, 1855.

4 Victor Prosper Considerant, "European Colonization of Texas - An Address to the American People," (Philadelphia: Porcupine Press, 1975), 3-30.

5 Ibid., 6.

6 Hammond and Hammond, 84; The Laws of the State of Texas 1822-1897, Vol. IV (Austin: The Gammel Book Co., 1898), 762-3.

7 Marion Moore Coleman, "New Light on La Reunion," Arizona and the West, Vol. 6, Part I.; Hammond and Hammond, 84. The term Swedish settlers is used, but no other evidence that Swedish colonists were included was found in other sources.

8 "Pioneers Gather to Have Reunion," Dallas Times Herald, June 3, 1906.

9 George Santerre, White Cliffs of Dallas (Dallas: The Book Craft, 1955), 43.

10 Ibid., 46.

11 Ibid., 53.

12 Hammond and Hammond, 51.

13 Frank M. Cockrell, History of Early Dallas, Originally published in weekly installments in the Dallas Sunday News, May 15, 1932 through August 28, 1932. Private edition of 20 copies, 1944, Dallas Historical Society Archives, 80; Dallas Morning News, Jubilee Edition, October 1, 1935, Sec. VIII, 1-2. Guillot lost his family inheritance in France and came to the United States to seek his fortune. He traveled

from New Orleans intending to go to the California gold fields, but stopped for a time in Dallas and decided to stay. His carriage factory was the first industry in Dallas.

14 Hammond and Hammond, 103.

15 Anne Toomey, "Germaine Santerre Remembers," Dallas Morning News, December 18, 1927.

16 Texas State Gazette, August, 1855.

17 Hammond and Hammond, 105.

18 Melvern Krehbiel Leisy, essay, "La Reunion, The Utopia of Texas," March 7, 1936, Dallas Public Library.

19 George Santerre, White Cliffs, 65.

20 Anne Toomey, "When Dallas Folk Wore Wooden Shoes," Dallas Morning News, December 18, 1927.

21 George Santerre, White Cliffs, 90.

22 Hammond and Hammond, 109.

23 Eloise Santerre, thesis, "Reunion," Southern Methodist University, 1936.

24 John William Rogers, Lusty Texans of Dallas (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1951), 82.

25 Dallas Herald, April, 1860.

26 George Santerre, White Cliffs, 101.

27 George Cretien, letter to Frank Cockrell, March 30, 1932, Cockrell Collection, Dallas Historical Society Archives.

28 Eloise Santerre, "Reunion."

29 George Santerre, White Cliffs, 64.

30 Ibid, 36-37.

31 Rogers, 82.

32 E. B. Comstock, United States Census of Dallas County, 1850-1860. Copies from original census records on file at Washington, D.C. Compiled and indexed by the Dallas Geneological Society, 1932.

33 Ibid.

34 United States Census of Dallas County, 1850-1860; Sarah Horton Cockrell, Record of land sales, A4340, Dallas Historical Society Archives. A list of lots sold by J. M. Bryan and wife to A. Cockrell and S. H. Cockrell; Dallas County Tax Records, 1859; Hammond and Hammond, 117-125; Marcelle Hunt and Joy Benge, "Dallas County District Court Civil Case Papers" (July, 1983), Dallas Public Library; George Santerre, White Cliffs, 36-37.

CHAPTER III

INFLUENCES IN BUSINESS

The town of Dallas across the river from La Reunion was located in a highly advantageous spot. When John Neely Bryan picked the site for his claim in 1839 he chose a good river crossing and time would prove it to be the best crossing on the upper Trinity. In 1840, the Republic of Texas designated a road to extend northward from the new capital city of Austin to the Red River where Coffee's Trading Post and the settlement of Preston existed. By fate and good fortune Bryan, coming south from Coffee's Post the year before, had selected the same crossing that the new road would eventually follow. Since Preston Road would be the only route into the northern territory of Texas, it was destined to be important.¹

Bryan's settlement grew and in 1846 the Texas legislature created Dallas County. The settlement of Dallas became the temporary center of government and four years later, by a narrow margin, the electorate chose Dallas as the official county seat by a over Hord's Ridge(Oak Cliff) and Cedar Springs. The county's population at that time consisted of 2743 free persons and 207 slaves. The people

listed as their place of birth Norway, Germany, England, Ireland, Mexico, and 22 states of the United States.²

This was the settlement that Considerant found on his visit in 1853. The town of Dallas was not actually incorporated until 1855; the same year of the arrival of the La Reunion settlers. The town site was a one-half mile square expanse on the east bank of the Trinity River, two miles below the joining of the Elm and West Forks on the river and less than a mile south of a second planned military road called the National Central Highway that was to run between Bastrop and the Red River counties of Northeast Texas. The new road was intended to shorten the trip for new settlers and commercial traffic from the United States through Arkansas to Texas. With these three events, the establishment of Preston Road, the proposal to construct the National Central Highway, and the naming of Dallas as the county seat of Dallas County, John Neely Bryan's settlement became significant. Alexander Cockrell thought so and cast his fortune with Dallas by moving there in 1852 and shortly thereafter buying Bryan's lucrative ferry and most of his town lots for \$7,000.³

By 1855 when the first La Reunion settlers reached Dallas the town had grown to 430 people and Cockrell had constructed a wooden bridge across the Trinity replacing

Bryan's ferry and insuring Dallas as a trade center for furs and other produce from the prairies to the west. The town proper consisted of a wooden frame courthouse and three buildings. That same year the Dallas County Commissioner's Court let a contract to build a new brick courthouse; one of the projects that possibly provided work for colony craftsmen.⁴

The directors of the colony selected the eastern corner of the colony land directly across the river and three miles west of Dallas to be the townsite for La Reunion.⁵ The colonists surveyed a road down to the bridge and although some travelers regarded the toll fee for crossing as slightly prohibitive, from the beginning apparently settlers on both sides of the river made use of the crossing.⁶

The colonists began their work on the west bank and settlers in surrounding communities watched their progress closely. The single men of the colony laid out a large communal garden, planting a wide variety of seeds brought with them from Europe, and the success of their endeavor became a public curiosity in the summer of 1855. Settlers from Hord's Ridge, Cedar Springs, and Dallas visited the colony to admire the work. Later as disenchantment with farming and the hardships of the winter of 1856 began to

erode the efforts of the colonists, individuals crossed into Dallas to find work as builders and laborers.⁷

The Swiss colonists were the first to make the permanent move into Dallas. Led by Jacob Nussbaumer in 1856, several families located on land east of the Dallas townsite and set up farms. They bought property in the Captain Jefferson Peak Addition for fifty cents an acre.⁸ Best known of these men were Nussbaumer, Henri Boll, Jacob Knoepfli, and Benjamin Long. As Dallas grew, these investors became actively involved in the development of the town during the next two decades. Later when Colonel W. H. Gaston laid out the town of East Dallas east of the Houston and Texas Central Railroad, the road to the Swiss farms became Swiss Avenue. Jacob Nussbaumer's and Henri Boll's homes were located where Germaine Street (now Liberty Street) and Swiss Avenue cross.⁹

The 1860 census estimated that 2,000 persons lived in Dallas with trade from the west and the promise of land in the new state of Texas undoubtedly accounting for the rapid increase in population. County census records listed 8,665 people including 821 slaves. The population had more than tripled since 1850. In the 1860 census, 173 persons registered as foreign born and most of those were from La Reunion.¹⁰

The following chart identifies the country of origin of some foreign born citizens of Dallas County in 1860 and 1870:¹¹

Birth place of Foreign Inhabitants of Dallas County			
	1850	1860	1870
France	0	85	45
Belgium	0	6	8
Switzerland	0	12	4

Census returns for 1860 indicate that 63 percent of the heads of household of foreign birth reported their occupations to be following a trade or skill, while 37 percent listed farming as their primary economic interest. In contrast, 74 percent of the remainder of the Dallas County population listed farming as their chief means of support with only 26 percent listing a trade or profession.¹² The French, Belgian, and Swiss settlers can hardly be given sole credit for Dallas development since the county population had increased by 4,649 people in the decade, but the high percentage of skilled trades and crafts contributed by the colonists would have had to be a major boon to the community. Rather than the La Reunion settlers sparking growth in Dallas it was the growth of Dallas that drew the colonists across the river. New business and increased population meant new buildings and a market for skilled labor.

By 1860 the west and north sides of the town square were fairly well developed. Cockrell erected a two story brick building on the northwest corner of the square and several other businessmen had constructed buildings on the south side. Perhaps the most historically significant event as far as the La Reunion settlers were concerned must be recorded as the burning of Dallas on July 18, 1860. Starting in front of W. W. Peak's store on the west side of the courthouse, the fire, fanned by a brisk southwest wind, quickly spread from building to building and consumed the entire south, west, and the western edge of the north side of the square. Cockrell records list the businesses burned as:

13

- W. W. Peak Bros. Drug
- A. Shirek warehouse
- Herald office
- Smith & Murphy
- Cockrell Building, St. Nicholas Hotel
- Crutchfield House
- Westers Barber Shop
- A. Simon (frame of new building)
tavern
- B. W. Stone office
- Carr's saddle shop
- Herman Hirsh storehouse
- Darvell's livery stable
- A. Simon storehouse (warehouse)
- D. P. Thomas drug
- J. W. Ellett's storehouse and warehouse
- Sayres drug
- W. Bartle Shop and residence
- E. M. Stockpole's Store and warehouse
- Lynch and Son's Saddle Shop
- Caruth and Simon's storehouse
- R. R. Fletcher & Co. storehouse

J. C. McCoy Law Office
 black smith shop
 homes threatened

Just off square in rear of burned buildings:

Dr. C. C. Spencer/ W. S. J. Adams (Offices in Peaks
 Drug Store)
 Samual Russel and John S. Chapman - law office
 James N. Smith office
 Dr. A. A. Johnson
 John J. Good
 Post Office destroyed in Crutchfield house / hotel
 J. M. Crockett Office
 Nichalson and Ferris Law Office

None of the businesses named belonged to La Reunion settlers. Maxmillian Guillot's wagon factory on the northeast corner of the square was untouched by the blaze. Likewise, colony member A. J. Gouffre's tailor shop was spared.¹⁴ Most of the colonist who had businesses apparently worked out of their homes. Mrs. McDermett remembers Mr. and Mrs. Moulard's bakery in the area of Jackson Street where many of the former colonists lived.¹⁵

The significance of the fire for the colonists was not in property lost but in the demand the fire created for their building skills. George Cretein stated in an interview with W. S. Adair that the work his father secured in Dallas in 1860 after the fire prompted him to move to Dallas where his skill as a carpenter was in great demand.¹⁶ Cretein bought the scrap iron from the old courthouse and fashioned it into carpentry tools and metal parts used in new buildings being constructed to replace the ones

destroyed in the fire. Frickot and Frickot began their brick business at this time.¹⁷

During this period several of the colonists purchased land in Dallas. The town site ran from the river east to Poydarus Street and from McKinney and Cochran Streets on the north to Young and Columbia Streets on the south, an area of one-half square mile.¹⁸ According to the records of Sarah Horton Cockrell, who had assumed her husband's expansive holdings on Dallas after his death in a gunfight in 1858, La Reunion colonists bought the following property:¹⁹

J 300	8 acres	S. H. Cockrell to A. J. Gouffre
July 25,	1866	
R 538	7 acres	S. H. Cockrell to A. Cretein
October 22,	1872	
G 313	2 acres	S. H. Cockrell to P. P. Frichot
February 17,	1858	
L 519	1 acre	S. H. Cockrell to Charles Capy
November 11,	1861	
J 428	1&2 acres	S. H. Cockrell to F. Michell
December 17,	1866	
G 2	3&4 acres	S. H. Cockrell to F. Michell
October 15,	1857	
F 664	2 3/4 acres	S. H. Cockrell to F. Michell
June 27,	1859	

Also found in a separate file was the record of the of the sale of lot 6, Block 22 in Dallas by Alexander Cockrell to Joseph Carpentier.²⁰

According to Dallas County Tax records of 1859 eleven La Reunion colonists owned property in Dallas County outside the town limits.²¹ The colonists and the amounts owned were:

	Acre
John Goetseels	86
	305
	160
	320
Jacob Nussbaumer	34
Henry Boll and father	13 1/10
	149
Bessard, A.	78 7/8
Frichot, P. P.	266
Micholas Farine	160
Frichot, C. D.	(amount illegible in record)
Girard, Peter	50
Goetseels, Lucy	86
Reverchon, Julian and M.	50
Vangrinderbeck	80

By 1860 the French stockholders sent two men to close the accounts of the colony and recoup what value they could. Michel Thevenet and Alexandre Bessard took over the remaining colony property and sold off all assets at twelve and one-half cents on the dollar.²² Thevenet, under Francois Cantagrel's direction, supervised the account through the Gaston & Thomas Bank. Jean Baptiste Adoue as the banking agent and eventually sold off the balance of land. The bank involved eventually became the National Bank of Commerce.²³ Nussbaumer bought the giant stove from the communal store for use in his abattoir. Other property was sold for the best price with the proceeds divided between the investors. Many of the colonists took land as payment for their investments at a value of four dollars an acre. While officials negotiated the settlements, Texas seceded

from the United States and joined the Confederate States of America. As currency changed to Confederate money, the desperate directors attempted to recoup some value for the European investors by accepting Confederate money in payment. When the South lost and the Confederate money proved worthless, the European investors lost all chance of ever regaining their investments. Many of the colonists suffered the same loss but at least one of the original settlers refused to accept the currency of the South on payment of debts owed to him by the colony. George Santerre records that his father believed strongly that the South would loose and refused Confederate money.²⁴

As Texas was drawn into the Civil War the records of property became confused and spotty. In Dallas, limited city government was carried on during the war years and for several years thereafter, but for citizens left behind Dallas was a promising location. After the state legislature designated Dallas a military supply depot, many military men brought their families to Dallas, and with most of the local men away fighting, skilled labor was at a premium.²⁵ A man could earn ten dollars a week and a woman four or five. La Reunion settlers apparently made good use of their wages by buying land in and around Dallas.²⁶

During the war Mrs. D. R. P. McDermett recalled that weaving

and craftsman were in high demand and although the name she recalled, a Mr. Miller, was not a colonist, it can be surmised that the machinery the colonists had brought in 1855 was put to good use.²⁷

In the post-war years Dallas began to revive slowly. Never in physical danger during the war, the recovery extended not to buildings but to the financial strength of the area and the Dallas citizens began almost immediately to build a new economy. The records of the Town Of Dallas Assessor Registrar for 1867 were found in the Cockrell family papers.²⁸ Among the citizens reported as property owners were several La Reunion people:

Lot	Block	Owner
8	3	Poitevin, G.
1	5	N 1/2 Gouffe, A. J.
7	5	1/2 Bourgeois, L.
8	5	1/2 Bourgeois, L.
8	32	Gouffe, A. J.
H2	32	Gouffe, A. J.
H2	34	Bourgeois, L.
1	37	Capy, Charles
5	37	Moulard, Jean / Burford N. M.
6	37	Moulard, Jean / Burford N. M.
7 & 8	37	Moulard, Jean / Burford N. M.
1,2,3,4	38	Michell, F.
1	39	Michell, F. / Caruth W. & Bro.
2	39	Michell, F. / Caruth W. & Bro.
3	39	Michell, F. / Caruth W. & Bro.
4	39	Michell, F. / Caruth W. & Bro.
3	16	Jones, Sam S. (Married to Louisa Dusseaux, colony member)
4	16	Jones, Sam S.
5	16	Jones, Sam S.
6	16	Jones, Sam S.
7	16	Jones, Sam S.

8	16	Jones, Sam S.
5	17	Leinhart, George
6	21	Vanderbosch, G. J.
1 & 2	21	Michel, F.
5 & 6	22	Charpantier for Charles Capy
2	7	1/2 Gouffe A. J.
5	7	Boulay
6	7	Boulay

Following the war the population of Dallas began to grow. While the state wrestled with a change of government, Dallas citizens turned their attention to building a city and developing its commercial interests. In 1868 a group of Dallas businessmen offered a \$500 purse to the first person to steam up the Trinity River to Dallas. In May of 1868 Captain J. H. McGarvey, his wife, an engineer, and one hand answered the challenge. McGarvey made the trip in "Job Boat No. 1, dimensions 66 X 20 ft. bearing 26 tons burden." Dallas citizens greeted his arrival with great enthusiasm and several people took a trip down the Trinity as far as Mount East Fork. McGarvey recommended that the channel could be cleared fairly easily and by closing one chute of the channel at Bois d' Arc Island the other course would be suitable for river traffic.²⁹

As a result of McGarvey's success, several Dallas citizens in 1869, built a boat which they christened the "Sallie Haynes" after the daughter of one of the town's leading merchants. They hoped that the boat would be the first of many successful vehicles on the river. Dallas

businessmen circulated a memorial in the counties bordering the Trinity between Galveston and Dallas asking the legislature to appropriate \$75,000 to remove obstructions from the river and otherwise clear the river channel. The business leaders gave the petition to the Internal Improvements Company during the administration of Governor Edmond J. Davis and prepared a bill for legislature. Nothing further was ever done on the issue, however. The idea of river travel was heavily outweighed by an interest in building railroads. In 1869, Dallas citizens presented a memorial to the members of the constitutional convention at the city of Austin explaining the economic advantages of river travel and proposing that Dallas County would raise \$5,000 of the needed amount by tax with one-third of the whole amount paid by citizens owning property within the corporate limits of the town of Dallas. The paper suggested a tax ceiling of \$0.60 on each \$100 valuation and 155 citizens signed their names. Counted among these were the following former La Reunion colonists:³⁰

Ben Long
M. Thevenet
Henry Boll
John Boll
John F. Barbier
J. B. Louchx
A. J. Gouffe
L. Von Gronderbeck
Otto Frick
Julian Reverchon

W. Von Gronderbeck
Alex Barbier
F. Priot
G. Poitevin
J. Nussbaumer

In 1873, the legislature did grant a subsidy in land certificates of 10,000 acres per mile to Captain Poitevant (not from the colony) to remove overhanging timbers and snags.³¹ He did so as far north as Anderson County but the complete trip was never made to Dallas. In the 1870's the railroads captured the public interest and river navigation diminished in importance.³²

The coming of the railroad marked the beginning of a phenomenal boom in the growth of Dallas. Beginning in 1856 Galveston and Red River Railroad line officials first approached the townspeople advertising for funds.³³ The intervening war and post-war confusion halted all activity, however, and not until 1867 did talk of a rail line surface in Dallas again. The Galveston and Red River line changed its name to the Houston and Texas Central and inched north through Bryan, Hearne, Calvert, Kosse, Grosbeck, and finally reached Corsicana by 1871. Dallas lay sixty miles away and the citizens raised \$5,000 through public subscription to ensure that their town would be the next stop on the line. In a show of slight indifference the railroad came through Dallas county a mile east of the courthouse on July 16,

courthouse on July 16, 1872. Jacob Nussbaumer, one of the Swiss La Reunion settlers that had settled east of Dallas, donated the land for a rail station and the rural quiet of the Swiss farmland was quickly drawn into the city's growth. When the first train arrived the local citizens turned out in large numbers, listened to speeches, and ate barbecued buffalo steaks.³⁴

With the rail lines came the terminus merchants-shop keepers who rode the lines to their limit and set up shop, in many cases literally overnight. Most of the businessmen arrived from Corsicana with portable buildings carried in sections and assembled them along streets stretching east between the courthouse square and the railroad terminal a mile away. Almost within days more than 170 stores went up. In the next year more than 900 new buildings were raised in Dallas. Sanger Brothers bought the tailor shop of A. J. Gouffre at the corner of Lamar and Main and erected their first permanent store in Dallas. The population grew at an alarming rate so that by 1874 the estimated city population was 10,000. Six years later the next federal census showed a new total of 10,358.³⁵

During this time the investment that early settlers had made in Dallas real estate began to pay a return. Town lots around the square and in the area stretching to the railroad

depot became quite valuable and settlers who had purchased sizable tracts of land east of the township found their property in great demand. Throughout the 1870's and 1880's Nussbaumer, Boll, and Thevenet were among the persons who subdivided their property and developed residential lots. Areas along Field, Grand, Floyd, Gaston and Swiss Streets as well as along streets bearing the names of the developers themselves in East Dallas are a lasting reminder of the La Reunion colonists.³⁶

Following close on the heels of the first railroad, Dallas merchants set their aim for procuring a second line crossing the first from east to west. The railroad then crossing the nation, the Texas and Pacific, was following the thirty-second parallel across the continent along a route that would lead it 60 miles south of Dallas. Dallas business leaders sent John W. Lane to Austin as their representative and with the help of other legislators from Dallas County attached a rider to a bill stating that any east-west line across Texas should have lenient right-of-way choices but must pass within one mile of Browder Springs to insure sufficient water supply for the rail line. The railroads eagerly backed the generous bill that provided six million dollars in bonds and the other state legislators supported it without question. The bill passed into law on

November 25, 1871, and shortly thereafter the legislature adjourned.³⁷ Not until several months later as the railroad surveyors scouted ahead of the tracks for the route the line would take was it discovered that the Browder Springs specified by law as a checkpoint on the rail line was located in Dallas. The railroad, accustomed to bargaining with each new town for a large bonus as well as the other towns in Texas who had hoped to get the railroad complained loudly but the law was already in force. The railroad threatened to build the line exactly one mile south of Browder Springs as far from Dallas as the law allowed but on April 24, 1874, the citizens rallied again and collected a \$100,000 bonus for the railroad plus right of way through the town on Pacific Avenue to insure the proper location. As a result the Texas and Pacific crossed the Trinity just north of the courthouse in 1873 and Dallas became a transportation crossroads.³⁸

The railroad sparked interest in another civic project that traces the colonists involvement in the business interest of Dallas in the form of the Dallas Iron Bridge Company. Founded in 1859 principally by Sarah Horton Cockrell, the purpose of the company was "To build a good and substantial Iron Bridge across the Trinity River at the town of Dallas, Dallas Co."³⁹ In 1870 the idea of a

permanent iron bridge became more economically feasible and Mrs. Cockrell sold stock in her bridge company. Nine local citizens signed the original charter; two of whom were La Reunion members, A. J. Gouffe and Ben Long. Stock certificates held by Henry Boll in the Dallas Bridge Company were found in the Dallas Historical Society archives:⁴⁰

#29	\$30.00	August 19, 1871
#36	\$20.00	July 20, 1871
#74	\$50.00	November 24, 1871
#27	\$10.00	June 29, 1871

According to John William Rogers in Lusty Texans of Dallas, a group of citizens sent a proposal to the government in Austin asking that a free bridge be erected across the Trinity at public expense. The legislature turned down this petition and instead granted to Mrs. Cockrell a charter to erect a toll bridge of her own. Rogers speculates that money for such an undertaking would have been difficult to raise immediately after the war. At any rate Mrs. Cockrell got clearance to build her new bridge. In 1872 the bridge was completed at a cost of \$80,000. Ten years later the County of Dallas purchased the bridge and it became a free access.⁴¹ The bridge connected Dallas to major roads west of the Trinity to Fort Worth, Galveston, Houston, Austin, and San Antonio and was second only to the railroad as important to the town's growth and prosperity.⁴²

As the town grew several colonists made contributions in other ways. Emile Remond of the old colony had first moved to Hutchins, south of Dallas, but in 1879, he returned to his property in Dallas and used his geological skill in analyzing the soil of Dallas County. An undated and unsigned letter addressed to the Dallas Times Herald found in the Dallas Historical Society Archives is presumed to be a report from Remond. In his letter he asked that "Space in your valuable journal for Public Benefit" be given to publish a value estimate of Dallas minerals for "investors, promoters, prospectors, and Home People". The report found Northwest Dallas "idealistic" for clay industries because of raw materials found there. He invited investors to "come and see Production of cement samples made by me from Dallas Minerals" and be convinced.⁴³

Included with the letter is a breakdown of a cubic yard sample of soil (Carbo-Lime C/Co Limerock) and its approximate worth in dollars and cents. Remond manufactured cement to use in Dallas construction and his survey of materials is credited with drawing the attention of investors to the area. In 1901, James T. Taylor and several other businessmen from Galveston, influenced by Remond's research, organized the Texas Portland Cement Company in Dallas. Remond's property is today swallowed up by the

companies who used the chalky soil of the old colony to manufacture cement and cement products.⁴⁴

Remond's findings influenced Ferdinand Michel to build a lime kiln on his land along the Trinity (where Union Station stands today). Mr. Michel's kiln provided lime for Dallas construction for twenty-five years.⁴⁵

Another large contribution to the agriculture of the region was the truck farming business. Several La Reunion colonists were scientific gardeners with backgrounds in agricultural science in Europe. Using advanced methods brought with them from their homeland, they were able to grow a wide variety of plants, vegetables, and fruit trees new to Texas, thus proving the potential of the area. The Santerre farm on the original colony tract was for many years one of the largest fruit farms in Texas. Also, John McCoy in his collection of letters wrote about visiting the farm of a Frenchman (Reverchon) six miles west of Dallas in 1872 to view the flower garden, "Rivaled only by the Cincinnati Exposition." McCoy described acres of beautiful flowers in bloom as well as many fruit trees. McCoy marveled at the almond trees flourishing in the Texas soil. The farm, known as the Reverchon herbarium, was located in what is today the Dallas Country Club. Joseph, Frank, and

Peter Girard used rocks hewn by hand from a quarry fifty yards away to construct the buildings.⁴⁶

Another farm located within the city limits was the truck farm of Alexis Barbier. An early pioneer of Dallas remembered Barbier's orchard as unrivaled in its success where the Frenchman grew fruit, grapes, and melons successfully and used hot beds to provide fresh fruits and vegetables to the market year round.⁴⁷

In the 1870's John Loupot's grocery advertised sugar, coffee, candy, canned fruits, and choice liquors.⁴⁸ A. J. Gouffe operated what was described as a "French type" tailor shop on the north side of the square for a time. Later he moved his business to the corner of Lamar and Main Streets and carried on business until 1872 when he sold his property to the Sanger brothers. Numerous colonists worked as carpenters and brick masons in the city.⁴⁹

Outside the city of Dallas several colonists were well known. Jacob Nussbaumer's abattoir provided fresh meat products to the town.⁵⁰ Some colony names are associated with surrounding towns. John Goetseel tried to found a new town for the Belgian colonists at Mountain Creek in 1856 without success because of flooding and crop failure. When he made the move to Dallas in 1862 several Belgian colonists came with him, but some such as Henri Frick stayed behind

and operated a successful ranch for several years before moving to Irving.⁵¹ Paul Henri moved his family to Lancaster during the Civil War and worked as an engraver at the Lancaster Pistol Works. Following the war Henri remained in Lancaster and developed a series of successful businesses including a general store and a bank.⁵²

As the town of Dallas grew newcomers outnumbered the original settlers. In 1872 a group of businessmen established the Dallas Board of Trade with sixty-two charter members. A full list of names was not found and possibly several La Reunion citizens were included, but none were officers. New businessmen who had arrived with the railroad in 1872 held the leadership positions. In 1875 Butterfield and Rundlett published the second City Directory of Dallas.⁵³ Not one name recorded was from the La Reunion colony. According to newspaper records and recollections of settlers, the colonists operated small businesses but the new influx of population drawn to Dallas by the efforts of the early inhabitants, including many colonists, completely overshadowed the longtime residents. With few exceptions the new arrivals stepped into the forefront of city leadership in business. La Reunion settlers as well as other early Dallasites received a high return on the property investments they had made in Dallas town lots and quietly

took a back seat to the flood of new businessmen. Possibly hard feelings over the Civil War might be partly responsible for the omission of colonists' names from the early directory. Maximillian Guillot was listed as follows:

He was a southern soldier because he regarded the Southern cause as a just one, ...and was the only Frenchman of this section to do so....⁵⁴

This statement was not true since several men of the colony supported the Confederacy with service but the directory apparently reflected a feeling held by some segments of the Dallas citizenry. By 1878 the next directory included many La Reunion people, which suggests that a less biased editor included a broader range of citizens.⁵⁵

In the 1880's and 1890's some original La Reunion names were still visible in the community. Jacob Nussbaumer's market and the Joseph Knopfly and Sons Jewelers were located on the south side of the square.⁵⁶ Knopfly and Sons Jewelers erected the first skyscraper in Dallas on the southwest corner of Poydras and Main Street in 1884. A three-story structure featuring stained glass windows costing \$2,800 and the latest in modern construction, the building was the showplace of Dallas business houses well into the twentieth century.⁵⁷ One of the most prominent names in the Dallas community in the 1880's was John Louchx

who had come to Dallas with the original colonists as a young man of twenty-six. Trained as an architect in Belgium, Louckx contributed much to the building of Dallas during the early boom years brought on by the railroad. One of his most important contributions was the design and construction of the Sacred Heart Catholic Church in 1884.⁵⁸ Also in the 1880's Jean Priot built the city a new brick post office.⁵⁹

In 1875 the Dallas County Pioneer Association was organized at the courthouse. Leaders of the group were a mixture of original settlers and new citizens that came with the railroad. None of the La Reunion settlers was included.⁶⁰ By 1925, however, a group was organized by the Times Herald called the Half Century Club. The list included residents who had contributed to the growth of Dallas for at least fifty years and each person received a medal minted by Linz Jewelers. Included in the list were Mrs. Nativa Capy, Mrs. John Louckx, and Mr. and Mrs. Gus Santerre.⁶¹ Dallas was remembering its beginnings.

The La Reunion colonists supplied a wide variety of skills and services to a growing community. In general a refined, educated, and responsible group, these citizens provided solid productive members to the area in its formative period when pioneers in business took the initial steps for the building of a city. These idealists, however,

were not the movers and shakers of industry that would mold Dallas into the recognized center of commerce in North Texas. That title was left for the young entrepreneurs delivered by the railroad in 1872.

NOTES
CHAPTER III. INFLUENCES IN BUSINESS

1 John William Rogers, Lusty Texans of Dallas (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1951), 28-30; George Henry Santerre, Dallas First Hundred Years 1856-1956 (Dallas: The Book Craft, 1956).

2 E. B. Comstock, United States Census of Dallas County 1850-1860. Copied from original census records on file at Washington D.C. compiled and indexed by the Dallas Geneological Society, 1932; Santerre, Dallas First Hundred Years.

3 Frank M. Cockrell, History of Early Dallas, Originally published in weekly installments in Dallas Sunday News, May 15, 1932 through August 28, 1932. Private edition of 20 copies, 37.

4 "Pioneers Gather to Have Reunion," Dallas Times Herald, June 3 1906.

5 Map of Colony Survey and Partition, Dallas, A3748, Dallas Historical Society Archives. This document includes a description of the property and volume and page numbers to county records. Filed for record June 14, 1858, at 2 o'clock P.M.

6 George Cretein, letter to Frank Cockrell, March 30, 1952, Dallas Historical Society Archives, A4340.

7 Cockrell, History of Early Dallas, 85.

8 "The Dallas Story," Dallas Times Herald, August 28, 1949, Sec. C, 13; William L. McDonald, Dallas Rediscovered (Dallas: Dallas Historical Society, 1978), 128.

9 Dallas Morning News, Jubilee Edition, October 1, 1935, Sec. IV, 16.

10 Comstock, Census; The Texas Almanac and State Industrial Guide - 1936, Texas Centennial Edition (Dallas: The A. H. Belo Corporation, 1936), 144.

11 Herbert Gambrell, statistical study of the Dallas County Census, 1850-1860, A40183, Dallas Historical Society Archives.

- 12 Comstock, Census.
- 13 Mrs. Charles Cagy, letter to Frank Cockrell, June 26, 1932, A4340; History of Early Dallas, 37, 71.
- 14 Cagy letter, A4340.
- 15 Mrs. D. R. P. McDermott, "La Reunion - Ill Fated Dream," Daily Times Herald, June 5, 1927.
- 16 W. S. Adair, "Saw Herds of Stock Driven Through City," Dallas Morning News, September 12, 1926. Article based on an interview with George Cretein.
- 17 Mrs. D. R. P. McDermott, "Historic Old French Colony Near Dallas Made Up of Tradesmen and Artists," Clipping found in Mrs. Barry Miller Scrapbooks on Early Dallas Society in the Dallas Public Library.
- 18 Map of the City of Dallas, Texas, 1878.
- 19 Sarah Horton Cockrell Papers, A4340, Dallas Historical Society Archives.
- 20 Cockrell Papers, A43301, Dallas Historical Society Archives.
- 21 Dallas County Tax Records, 1859.
- 22 Cretein letter, A4340.
- 23 Ibid.
- 24 Anne Toomey, "When Dallas Wore Wooden Shoes," Dallas Morning News, December 18, 1927.
- 25 The Laws of the State of Texas 1822-1897, Vol. 4, Compiled and Arranged by H. P. N. Gammel (Austin: The Gammel Book Co., 1898), 19; John Cochran, Dallas County - A Record of Its Pioneers and Progress, Supplement to J. H. Brown with correction of errors, Early Settlers and Their Families (Dallas: Services Publishing Co., 1928), 87.
- 26 Dallas Times Herald, August 29, 1949, Sec. D, 12.
- 27 "La Reunion - Ill Fated Dream."

- 28 Sarah Horton Cockrell Papers, A4340.
- 29 The Lone State State, Memorial and Biographical History of Dallas County, Texas (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Co., 1892), 236-239.
- 30 Ibid., 236-239.
- 31 The Law of the State of Texas, Vol. 7, General Laws of the Twelfth Legislature, Second Session - 1871 (Austin: Gammel Book Co., 1871), 742-743.
- 32 The Lone Star State, 236-239.
- 33 Cockrell, 48.
- 34 St. Clair Griffin Reed, A History of Texas Railroads (Houston: St. Clair Publishing Company, 1941), 210; Rogers, 118.
- 35 Rogers, 119.
- 36 City of Dallas Tax Rolls of Real Estate & Personal Property, 1879-1887, Dallas Public Library.
- 37 The Law of the State of Texas, Vol. 7, General Laws of the Twelfth Legislature of the State of Texas (Austin: Gammel Book Co., 1871), 94-96; Charles S. Potts, Railroad Transportation in Texas (Austin: The University of Texas, 1909), 87; Reed, 209.
- 38 Potts, 88; Reed, 210; The Lone Star State, 124.
- 39 Cockrell, 46.
- 40 Sarah Horton Cockrell Papers, A4340.
- 41 Elizabeth York Enstam, When Dallas Became a City - Letters of John Milton McCoy, 1870-1881 (Dallas: Dallas Historical Society, 1982). 49.
- 42 Cockrell, 47.
- 43 Monroe Cochran papers, A4524, Dallas Historical Society Archives.
- 44 Mrs. Charles Capy letter, A4340.

- 45 Monroe Cochran Papers, A4524.
- 46 Enstam, 70; "La Reunion - Ill Fated Dream."
- 47 W. S. Adair, "When Dallas Was a City of Orchards," Dallas Morning News, January 20, 1924, Article written on an interview with D. C. McCord.
- 48 Dallas Times Herald, August 29, 1949.
- 49 Cockrell, 72.
- 50 Dallas Morning News, Jubilee Edition, Sec. IV, 16.
- 51 William J. Hammond and Margaret F. Hammond, La Reunion - A French Settlement in Texas (Dallas: Royal Publishing Co., 1958), 90.
- 52 History of Lancaster, Texas 1845-1945 (n.p.: Lancaster Historical Society), 1978, 212.
- 53 City Directory of Dallas (Dallas: F. E. Butterfield and C. M. Rundlett, 1875), No copies of the first directory published in 1874 are still in existence.
- 54 Ibid.
- 55 City Directory of Dallas (Marshall: C. D. Morrison & Co., 1878).
- 56 Dallas Morning News, Magazine Section, February 17, 1924.
- 57 Dallas Morning News, Jubilee Edition, Sec. III, 10.
- 58 Ibid.
- 59 Sam Acheson, Dallas Yesterday (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1977).
- 60 John Henry Brown, History of Dallas County, Texas From 1837-1887 (Dallas: Milligan, Cornett & Farmham, 1887), 56.
- 61 John H. Cochran, 269-277.

CHAPTER IV

CONTRIBUTIONS IN GOVERNMENT

Political considerations were not of particular importance to the La Reunion colonists in the beginning. Foreigners in a strange land, they occupied themselves with physical survival at first. Most did not speak English and the American political system was yet beyond their comprehension or interest. The colonists had not become naturalized and could not vote, but in philosophy they were strongly anti-slavery, admirers of Abraham Lincoln, and greatly loyal to the Union of the United States, a country that had granted them freedom to pursue their socialistic doctrines.¹

Unfortunately, these sentiments were not widely held in Dallas on the eve of the Civil War. When Lincoln was elected in 1860, Texas threatened secession and the people rushed to choose sides in the conflict. Military conscription officers covered the state enlisting men to prepare for the time when the fighting might begin.

On the road to La Reunion, two such agents accosted one of the colonists and ordered him to stop. When the old man,

who did not understand English, failed to follow their order he was shot in the hip. The small number of colonists still living at the colony site did not understand who the men were and considering the attack an act of aggression against their colony, barricaded themselves in a storehouse. When a detachment of Confederate soldiers came later that day to enlist the colony men into military services, Alexander La Notte, who understood English, spoke with them. The officer in charge explained why he had come and demanded that all able-bodied men present themselves to be enlisted in the army. On a signal from La Notte the windows of the storehouse burst open and guns appeared at every opening. The Confederates, thinking they faced a superior force, withdrew to Dallas and discussed reprisal.²

Captain Arch Cochran, a citizen of Dallas and a captain in the Confederate Army, settled the issue by reasoning with his leaders. He persuaded the Confederate authorities to leave the colonists alone, arguing that most of them did not speak English and did not understand the issues involved.³ Most of the townspeople viewed the colonists as "peace loving and tired of war" and shielded them from taking a stand on the secession issue.⁴

This is a curious example of the tolerance the early citizens of Dallas showed toward their colony of foreigners.

According to the accounts of early settlers such as Mrs. McDermett and other researchers such as Rogers, the colonists were eventually granted an exemption by the governor.⁵ The records of the governors of the Confederacy held in the Texas State Archives, however, reveal no such document. Instead the colonists were probably covered by a general exemption issued by the Confederate States of America War Department that excused from military duty any foreigners living in the Confederacy who had not become naturalized.⁶ Regardless of the source, Mrs. McDermett recalled that the order smoothed over the difficulty but the colonists "never felt at ease until the war was over."⁷

Some incidents apparently occurred, however, because on May 16, 1862, a group from the La Reunion colony sent a petition to the Governor of Texas, asking to be reimbursed for the value of several firearms taken from them by a group of soldiers from Colonel N. H. Darnell's Regiment. The colonists complained that the soldiers entered their homes and demanded the weapons using "threat and assault" without respect for home or property. Twenty-five colonists signed the petition.⁸

In another incident Joseph Charpentier, a cobbler, was killed at the old ford on the Trinity during the Civil War, in an attack by renegades. Accounts by early settlers seem

to view the killing as a senseless act without connection to war issues, but it might have been a reflection of feelings toward the colonists in some quarters.⁹

Several colonists enlisted in the Confederate Army on their own. According to John H. Cochran, Ashiel Frichot and Emil Remond enlisted in the 19th Texas Cavalry, Company B; Frichot as a 1st Corporal and Remond as an Ensign. Henry Boll, William Knapfly, and Jacob Knapfly joined the 19th Texas Cavalry, Company K as privates and John Louckx served two years in Confederate forces with Company F of Wallers Battalion.¹⁰ Dallas was General Quartermaster and Commissary Headquarters for the Trans-Mississippi Department handling transportation and recruiting.¹¹

Nearby Lancaster was the location of an arms repair and pistol manufacturing plant. Paul Henri was employed there as an engraver. After the war Henri and his family settled in Lancaster and became leading citizens. Following the war, Henri was appointed Post Master by Governor Edmund J. Davis during Reconstruction and served for several years.¹² Apparently some factions of Lancaster held a grudge about Henri's position in the Reconstruction government because in 1885, he was removed from the post. A news article in the Dallas Herald recorded the change by saying that "a good Democrat now holds the post."¹³

Although few confrontations over war sentiment toward the colonists who chose to avoid involvement occurred, some hard feelings can be detected. George Jackson, in his book Sixty Years in Texas, published in 1908, chose to ignore totally the La Reunion colonists in listing the early citizens of Dallas.¹⁴ Likewise, John Henry Brown, war hero and leading Confederate, neglected to mention a single La Reunion settler in his list of outstanding early settlers written in 1887.¹⁵ John H. Cochran wrote a supplement to Brown's history in 1928, with a "correction of errors." In it, Cochran added five men to the list of early pioneers after 1848 and before 1861:¹⁶

Henry Boll
 C. A. Capy
 Paul Henry
 S. S. Jones (Married to a colony girl)
 J. B. Louckx

Dallas continued to grow during the war. Its designation as a military depot drew many families of military men plus a steady stream of recruits. Many people brought their slaves to Dallas to stay for the duration of the war and as a result field labor was never at a shortage and crops continued to be planted.¹⁷ During this time the Confederate Government extended the city limits from Bryan's original one-half square mile to an area measuring one and one-half miles by two and one-quarter miles.¹⁸

Following the war the Reconstruction Act of Congress on March 2, 1867, established a provisional government. General Philip Sheridan, commander of the Fifth Military District, appointed new local and state officers. In Dallas several of the men chosen were La Reunion colonists. (Colonists will be noted by an asterisk.) In November, 1867, the following appointed officers replaced Dallas County elected officials:¹⁹

County Judge - A. Bledsoe
 County Clerk - S. S. Jones
 District Clerk - E. P. Spillman
 Sheriff - N. R. Winnifred
 Treasure - A. J. Gouffre*

On June 2, 1868, E. B. Spillman was replaced by Benjamin Long*, who in turn was replaced by Michael Thevenet* in November, 1868. In September, 1868, General J. J. Reynolds, head of the Texas Military District appointed a slate of city officials:²⁰

Mayor - Ben Long*
 Marshall - John F. Barbier*
 Assistant Marshall - Alexis Barbier*
 Treasure - A. J. Gouffre*
 Alderman - J. P. McKnight, C. R. Miller, Henry Boll*,
 Edwin Taylor and John Tenison

John Barbier* had the difficult job of representing Dallas citizens while martial law was enforced by Federal troops. Henry Boll* resigned at the first council meeting on the grounds that he did not reside in the city. John Tenison also resigned shortly after. These two men were

replaced by Samuel S. Jones and J. C. Seydel. Jones also refused to serve and John Loupot* was substituted.²¹

The period was obviously a difficult time. Few people in Dallas were perceived by the Military Occupation Government to be free from connection with the Confederacy and fewer Dallasites still wanted to be cast in the role of perpetrators of the military rule from Austin. The large number of La Reunion men pressed into service probably is a result of the colony being allowed exemption from duty during the war. General Sheridan and General Reynolds apparently believed the colonists were, if not northern sympathizers, at least impartial. The citizens of Dallas, realizing their political situation as a conquered nation, reacted probably as well as could be expected to the appointments. According to recollections of early settlers, Benjamin Long* was the man favored for the job by the people.²²

The council accepted their appointments to office and proceeded to carry out the duties of government to the best of their ability. Dallas was indeed a town in need of leadership. Now the home of an estimated 2,000 people, the town had no streets, only random trails alternately muddy or dusty according to the weather. The first order of business of the new council was to address the street improvement

problem. On November 24, 1868, the council appointed Sam Jones, C. R. Miller, and Edwin Taylor to examine Main Street and prepare a plan for grading it between the Public Square and the Nat M. Buford residence. Two days later Jones resigned from the council and John Loupot* replaced him. On December 3, 1868, Jacob Nussbaumer* received a contract to grade the street and by February 12, 1869, he had completed the street grading and accepted payment of \$250. The committee next examined Ross Avenue and during 1868 and 1869 Ben Long* and his council addressed the problem of streets and the filling of ponds.²³

On January 11, 1870, the Dallas City Council ruled the city corporation "will assist as much as possible the building of a bridge across the Trinity".²⁴ During this time period the citizens mentioned in the previous chapter petitioned the state government for a free bridge over the Trinity, in lieu of a toll bridge controlled by Mrs. Cockrell, but the legislature approved Mrs. Cockrell's plan. After she built the toll bridge and operated it for ten years, Mrs. Cockrell sold the structure to Dallas County which discontinued the toll fee.²⁵

On April 4, 1870, Benjamin Long* announced he would travel to Europe to visit his homeland of Switzerland. The council chose Henry Ervay to serve as Mayor pro-tem during

Long's absence. On August 8, 1870, the council approved plans to lay out streets to the east line of the city. Two committee members, Jacob Nussbaumer* and M. Thevenet*, were from the colony. On November 19, 1870, F. L. Willemet* became a member of the council and on December 5, 1870, council members appointed Willemet*, E. W. Tucker, and Sam'l Crosley to select a site for a city burial ground. The men chose four acres of land next to the Masonic Cemetery on the east edge of town near the present day City Hall and Dallas Convention Center.

The Dallas population increased rapidly from 1868 to 1870. The council kept busy trying to maintain city services and control growth. City workers laid out and graded new streets to encompass the larger incorporated area designated by the Confederacy. On February 15, 1871, Barbier Street, named for J. F. Barbier*, was opened. T. L. Willemet* served on a number of committees from laying out burial plots in the cemetery to drafting a plan for a Market House to house farm products brought to the city to sell. At the same meeting, the council appointed a committee to find a location for a depot to accommodate the the Houston and Texas Central Railroad. On March 18, 1871, the council selected nine acres of land belonging to Jacob Nussbaumer* in the Jefferson Peak Addition. On April 3, 1871, the

citizens voted 167 to 11 to approve a tax to purchase six and one-half acres and to pay \$14,650 for the property.

On May 1, 1871, the council appointed Henry Boll* to serve as City Treasurer. In June the elected representatives divided the rapidly growing city into four wards for council purposes. In July Julius Royer* became secretary of the council and in August Henry Boll* began service as Treasurer Pro-tem of a special railroad tax. In September the council charged a committee including Henry Boll* to lay off streets in the extensions of the city limits and Willimet* made a motion for the city to purchase lumber for completion of the Trinity River Bridge.²⁶

Also in May, 1871, the local government authorized a city railroad. The cars, pulled by Mexican mules, traveled from the courthouse square and the Crutchfield House (hotel) to the new railroad depot east of town.²⁷ On December 1, 1871, in anticipation of the coming of the railroad a group of citizens agreed to loan the city enough money to improve grading and graveling of Main Street to the railroad depot. Among the contributors were:²⁸

Henry Boll*	for Goodman	\$100
Jacob Nussbaumer*		\$150
G. Leinhardt*		\$50

By 1872, Ben Long* returned from his European trip and served on a committee that petitioned the city to hold an

election for the purpose of raising \$100,000 in bonds for the Dallas and Wichita Railroad. Henry Boll* and John Loupot* also served on the committee and Willemet* presented the resolution to the council. At the same meeting the council appointed a committee to select land for schools in the city.²⁹

The council, still struggling under the regime of Governor Davis in Austin, worked constantly to comply with rulings sent down from the capital and also to meet the needs of a booming population. On April 16, 1872, the city purchased fire equipment from J. H. Lithgaw and Company of Louisville, Kentucky and Benjamin Long* provided land for the building of the city's first fire station approximately 150 feet from the corner of Lamar and Commerce Streets.³⁰

On July 16, 1872, the Houston and Texas Central Railroad pulled into town and the population increased dramatically as the terminus merchants arrived in Dallas. A new town sprang up along Elm and Main running east to the train depot and the council faced the task of building roads and making improvements quickly. In 1873, alone, 725 new buildings were erected. Within a few months the population jumped from 3,000 to 7,000 people.³¹

The boom town atmosphere brought on by the railroad attracted people of every sort, both lawful and unlawful.

The citizens of Dallas suddenly confronted every kind of vice and corruption and the city council acted quickly to set up guide lines for an orderly community. In his letters, John M. McCoy noted the rules the city fathers invoked. The leaders forbade all publications of an "indecent or obscene" nature and indecent exposure, bawdy, lewd, or obscene words and obscene paintings or engravings. They enforced rulings against disorderly conduct and disturbing the peace, including fighting or loud noises, and held accountable any house, saloon, or grocery selling liquor to not allow drunkenness. The council ruled strongly against prostitution. A city ordinance imposed fines of five to fifty dollars or fifteen days in jail and prohibited residing in brothels, associating with prostitutes, working as musicians or servants in brothels, or renting property for the purpose of prostitution. The law also listed gambling as a disorderly activity and subject to a fine.

The council invoked rules concerning the keeping of animals in the rapidly growing town. Gates were to be kept closed and the owner of any animal allowed to roam the streets was fined up to twenty dollars. Vicious animals, whether "dog, bull, cow, horse or other," were to be penned. Wild horses could not be broken within the town limits and

breeding animals could not be brought into the town for that purpose.

Wagons could be driven no faster than seven miles per hour and no barrels of oil, coal oil, or benzene could be kept in the city as a precaution against fire. Only the police or military could carry firearms and no gun could be discharged outside of the owner's own property except in defense of one's life. The law imposed fines up to twenty-five dollars for vagrancy, dishonest business dealings, and destruction of public and/or private property. On June 15, 1872, the Dallas Herald published this list of ordinances and gave written evidence of the town's effort to establish a civilized, peaceful community in the midst of rapid change.³²

On November 5, 6, 7, and 8, 1872 the city held an election to fill the ward positions in the new municipal plan. The voters chose Ben Long* as mayor over E. W. Hunt by a vote of 348 to 246. This was the first election allowed by the Reconstruction government and it shows the respect the citizens had for Benjamin Long*. The voters elected Charles Capy* as alderman of First Ward for a short term and Michel Thevenet* as the long term alderman of Third Ward. The men once elected drew lots to determine long and short terms. Henry Boll* was elected Treasurer of the council on

a vote of four and four with Ben Long* as mayor breaking the tie. Charles Capy* served on the Committee of Public Buildings and Markets as well as the Commission on Claims with Mr. Thevenet*. The council appointed Thevenet* to investigate city finances and make recommendations. One of the major problems facing the booming settlement was a water shortage. The city council authorized the digging of cisterns to supplement the town water supply and act as fire safety supplies. A body of water on Benjamin Long's land known as Long's Lake became the first city reservoir.³³ Later Browder Springs supplied water to the town.³⁴

In December, 1872, the council proposed to construct a city hospital and in January, 1873, appointed a committee of seven ladies to solicit subscriptions for a hospital building. Two of the women, Mrs. Boll* and Mrs. Thevenet* were La Reunion colonists.³⁵ The effort came none too soon, because in 1873, a smallpox epidemic terrified the county. The disease, transmitted by passengers on the new railroad lines, spread from town to town. Each community denied the problem for as long as possible to avoid unfavorable publicity that would effect the economy and Dallas was no different, but quietly on February 13, 1873, the city council ruled that a Pest House should be erected to handle smallpox cases. The epidemic never truly reached

Dallas but a few cases occurred. During this period Dr. F. E. Hughes volunteered his services for the charity hospital proposed by the city. The committee of ladies raised money for the project and the council designated a percentage of municipal funds to create a permanent hospital fund.³⁶ On February 25, 1873, the council voted to publish a commendation in the Dallas Daily Herald for the ladies in appreciation of their work for the hospital. This was the beginning of the facility that would become Parkland Hospital.³⁷

Also in early 1873, James S. Hamilton, William J. Keller, W. H. Scales and Thomas E. Keller presented a petition to establish a "Coal Gas Works" within city limits to provide gas lights for city streets. Workmen installed wooden mains under the city and service began in June, 1874.³⁸ In March of 1873, the municipal government finalized plans for the Market House and set aside space for city council chambers on the second floor. An early settler remembered the market fondly in an interview with writer W. S. Adair in 1924. Contractors erected the building at the corner of Main and Akard Streets and the city council passed an ordinance that no other open market could operate within town limits. This ruling concentrated business activity in the center of town and drew customers for other businesses.

The city market was a great success with wild game, fish, beef, and fresh vegetables available year round at reasonable prices.³⁹

On March 20, 1873, the council addressed a problem involving a new city charter that had been altered in Austin by state officials and John Henry Brown, the Dallas representative. Unable to come to an agreement, officials delayed the problem until March 22. At that time the council voted to ask the Lieutenant Governor to stay out of city council affairs and approved the charter the way they council had originally submitted it. The controversy continued for several months between Governor Davis's police state rulings and the council members. Finally, in protest, seven of the eight council members resigned and called for a special election to be held on June 9. Among the councilmen who resigned were Charles Capy* and M. Thevenet*. Ben Long* remained as mayor until the next election on April 8, 1874, when W. L. Cabell defeated him.⁴⁰

No La Reunion members served on the council for the next year until F. L. Willemet's* election on April 10, 1875. The control of the city had passed to a new guard. On April 13, 1875, Mayor Cabell addressed the council and cited the growth of the city and the many improvements that had been made to streets and bridges, the city hospital and fire

department. La Reunion members profoundly influenced all of these projects. Willemet*, alderman for Ward 1, actively served on council committees to survey streets, establish a fire department, and build the city market. He also worked on the Ways and Means Committee for several years with responsibility for the spending of city funds. In 1876, Willemet* left the council and not until a decade later in 1885, was a La Reunion colonist represented in city government. In 1885, voters elected John B. Louckx* as alderman for Ward 1 and he remained in that office until 1890. Louckx* concurrently served on the first school board following his election in 1884. From 1874 to 1884 the schools had been run by the city council but for most of those years La Reunion people were not active on the council.⁴¹

By the time of the next census in 1880, Dallas had grown to a city of 10,358. The county reported a population of 33,488.⁴² Positions of power in city and county government had slipped from the hands of the original settlers including the La Reunion members and new names appeared on the council record, but during the first years of growth La Reunion influence shaped Dallas as a city.

NOTES
CHAPTER IV. CONTRIBUTIONS IN GOVERNMENT

1 Mrs. D. R. P. McDermett, "Historic Old French Colony Near Dallas Made up of Tradesmen and Artists," Mrs. Barry Miller Scrapbook of Early Dallas Society, Dallas Public Library.

2 John William Rogers, Lusty Texans of Dallas (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1951), 98.

3 Anne Toomey, "Germaine Santerre Remembers," Dallas Morning News, December 18, 1927.

4 McDermett, "Historic Old French Colony."

5 Ibid.; Rogers, 98.

6 Correspondence and Proclamation of the Governors, 1846-1879 (Austin: Records of the Secretary of State, Administrative Division), Texas State Archives; Brig. Gen. Fred Ainsworth and Joseph W. Kirkley, The War of the Rebellion, A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1900.), 367.

7 McDermett, "Historic Old French Colony."

8 Petition to the Governor of Texas from the Citizens of La Reunion, Dallas, March 16, 1862, Box 301-40, no. 21, Texas State Archives.

9 Mrs. Charles Capy, letter to Frank Cockrell, June 26, 1932, Dallas Historical Society Archives. Mrs. Capy describes the group that killed Joseph Charpentier as Quantrell's men but further proof was not found.

10 John H. Cochran, Dallas County - A Record of Its Pioneers and Progress, Supplement to J. H. Brown with correction of errors, Early Settlers and Their Families (Dallas: Services Publishing Co., 1928), 95-114.

11 Ibid., 87.

12 History of Lancaster, Texas 1845-1945 (n.p.: Lancaster Historical Society, 1978), 212.

- 13 Dallas Herald, August 28, 1885.
- 14 George Jackson, Sixty Years in Texas (Dallas: Wilkerson Publishing Co., 1908).
- 15 John Henry Brown, History of Dallas County, Texas From 1837-1887 (Dallas: Milligan, Cornett & Franham, 1887), 56.
- 16 Cochran, 76.
- 17 Mrs. D. R. P. McDermett, "La Reunion - Ill Fated Dream," Daily Times Herald, June 5, 1927.
- 18 John William Rogers, Lusty Texans of Dallas (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1951), 99.
- 19 Brown, 27.
- 20 Ibid., 54.
- 21 Minutes from the City Council of Dallas, September 1868 - June, 1875, Dallas City Hall.
- 22 McDermett, "Historic Old French Colony."
- 23 Minutes from the City Council.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 Elizabeth York Enstam, When Dallas Became a City - Letters of John Milton McCoy 1870-1881 (Dallas: Dallas Historical Society, 1982), 49.
- 26 Minutes from the City Council.
- 27 Dallas Morning News, Jubilee Edition, October 1, 1935, Section VII, 1.
- 28 Minutes of the City Council.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 Dorothy Carter, "Swiss Took Important Role in Early History of Dallas," Mrs. Barry Miller Scrapbooks on Early Dallas, Dallas Public Library; Mr. R. D. Coughanour, speech before students at the Hall of State, Dallas Historical Society, December 2, 1944.

- 31 Rogers, 125.
- 32 Enstam, 74-76.
- 33 Minutes of the City Council.
- 34 Dallas Morning News, Jubilee Edition, Section VII, 6.
- 35 Minutes of the City Council.
- 36 Ibid.; Darwin Payne, Dallas - An Illustrated History (Woodland Hills, California, Windsor Publishing Inc., 1982).
- 37 Minutes of the City Council; Dallas Morning News, Jubilee Edition, Section VII, 16.
- 38 Minutes of the City Council.
- 39 W. S. Adair, "When Dallas was a City of Orchards," Dallas Morning News, January 20, 1924, This article is an interview with D. C. McCord.
- 40 Minutes of the City Council.
- 41 Ibid.; Walter E. Schiebel, 1874-1966, Ninety-two Years of History, Education in Dallas, 1966.
- 42 Texas Almanac and State Industrial Guide, Texas Centennial Edition, 1936 (Dallas: A. H. Belo Corporation, 1936), 144.

CHAPTER V

INFLUENCES ON SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND LASTING REMINDERS

The social life of the frontier town of Dallas was sparse in the early 1850's. Adolphe Gouhenant's saloon provided the only hint of culture in the tiny settlement and early settlers remembered it fondly in their memoirs. Gouhenant, a traveling daguerreotype artist, covered the walls and ceiling of his establishment with art canvases and filled the room with candlelight for many socials and dances. Early settlers remembered Fiddlin' Walker playing songs like "Sallie Goodin" and "Blackjack Grove" as the young people from miles around danced.¹

The Frenchman brought music and merriment to the frontier, but in 1856 Gouhenant closed his saloon and left town. Later he returned and sued Cockrell and other town leaders for return of his property which they sold for taxes after he abandoned the premises. In 1857 the Texas Supreme Court reviewed the case and ruled in favor of Gouhenant, who had moved his photographic studio to Fort Worth by that time.²

In 1855, when the La Reunion colonists arrived they

brought their cultural influence in the form of "champ d' fetes," or open air dances held at the colony on Sunday nights. Settlers from surrounding communities could attend, but they tended to shun the dances because many of them regarded dancing on the Sabbath as blasphemy. Maximillian Guillot interceded, however, to explain the French custom and most of the town folk excused the practice as a peculiarity of foreigners. Some even joined in. In fact, the dances probably resulted in the first wedding of the colony when Sam S. Jones of Dallas married Louisa Dusseaux. Some historians have emphasized the social influence of the champ d' fete, but George Cretein remembered years later in an interview that the parties and festivals occurred infrequently in the early years. The hardships of the first two years left very little time for celebration.³

The colonists also brought with them an appreciation of music and singing. Allyre Bureau, the first director of the colony, is credited with bringing the first piano to Dallas as well as writing several songs while he was in Dallas. For many years, a children's textbook used in music classrooms in Texas included two of his songs. Also, in 1857, Charles Capy organized a singing society. The first such organization in Dallas, it continued for several years and can be cited as the first attempt in Dallas for the

encouragement of the performing arts. In 1874, the Dallas Glee Club boasted 2,000 members.⁴

One of the first social events for Dallas was the community's county fair held in 1859. For a county only thirteen years old this fair was an ambitious undertaking, drawing over 2,000 people to a location now occupied by Union Station near the old course of the Trinity River. Staged by the Dallas County Agricultural and Mechanical Association, the fair lasted four days and advertised Dallas as a marketing and trading center. Displays of the latest farm equipment and contests in handwork, crafts, cooking, and horse racing were the attractions. According to early accounts, the La Reunion settlers took home many of the prizes, but verification of this information from other sources has been impossible.⁵

In 1860 a second fair was held that lasted five days and drew 10,700 people. With the outbreak of the Civil War the county fair was set aside for other concerns until 1868, but these first attempts can be cited as the beginnings of the State Fair of Texas.⁶

As in most frontier communities the earliest social contacts were probably made through church. Religious groups in Dallas had no formal buildings for the first few years, but met in private homes.⁷ These activities from the

most part would have excluded the La Reunion colonists because they were anti-clerical and not inclined to join organized religious groups. This is not to say they were atheistic, but their socialistic theories sought to throw off the bonds that a highly organized religion had held over their lives in Europe. Weddings during the colony years were civil ceremonies conducted by a Justice of the Peace. Some couples were married later by a clergyman as is the French custom still today. Funerals were also performed without clergy. Fellow colonists provided the ceremony. Accounts recorded that the women of the colony missed a church affiliation but the men did not.⁸

Cultural influence was strong from the beginning. Most of the colonists were well educated in Europe and brought with them a love of books, music, and art. They found the citizens of Dallas had already taken steps toward the collection of a library, and the townspeople availed themselves of the instruction of the colonists in the arts.⁹ French teachers were added to the school curriculum at a time when most frontier schools could offer only the bare essentials of learning. Professor Paul Gerard's school of the dance was enthusiastically patronized by the young ladies of the town during the war years. Art lessons and handwork brought a breath of culture to the frontier and

many Dallasites learned sketching or lacemaking from the colony ladies.¹⁰

Schools in Dallas in the 1850's and 1860's were private classes held in the homes of a few settlers. Mrs. Hord had a school for her children and a few neighbors at Hord's Ridge (now Oak Cliff) in the 1850's.¹¹

Later classes were held in the Masonic Hall in Dallas. Mrs. McDermott remembers several La Reunion colonists attending her classes in order to learn English even though they were already adults. Some colonists also taught French and German in the schools.¹² The Dallas City Council managed the educational facilities from 1875 to 1884 and few records remain. A history of Dallas schools dismissed these early schools with little more than a mention and dated the beginning of the Dallas school system from the election of the Dallas Public School Board in 1884. As mentioned earlier, La Reunion settler John Louchx served on that first board.¹³

One of the major contributions of La Reunion to Dallas was the number of settlers attracted there in a second wave of settlement. In 1869 Benjamin Long, mayor of Dallas, resigned his post and made an extended visit home to Switzerland. While there he spoke so enthusiastically of his new home in Dallas that he persuaded a group of

thirty-five Swiss settlers to come back with him. The group reached Texas in 1872, and rode the train to Halleville.

There Henry Boll met them and the group made the final distance in wagons that Boll provided. These Swiss families lived with Nussbaumer and Boll for a time in East Dallas before buying land and building homes of their own.¹⁴

Chroniclers remembered the following names as part of the group that set up farms east of town on a road that became known as Swiss Road, later Swiss Avenue.¹⁵

- John E. Hess - became sheriff of Dallas
- Emil Fretz - son of Jacob
- Jacob Fretz - tailor
- August Mueller - contractor and brewer
- Louis Wagner - grocer
- Jacob Waespi
- Henry Schmidt - leader of the group
- Charles Meisterhans - beer garden
- Charles Ott - grocer
- Chris Moser - came later in 1874 - dairy owner
- Jacob Buher - came later in 1879 - dairy owner
- Metzger - founded Metzger's Dairies in 1889
- Theodore Beilharz - stonemason for many Dallas buildings

This group can be credited with starting a Swiss Benevolent Society or Dallas Gruetle Verein 1874 that worked to help civic growth in the community as well as to promote cultural functions. By 1935 the society had distributed over \$23,000 for health care and educational needs. Citizens also formed a Swiss Bell Ringers Society that in 1874 staged a Maifest with singing and dancing contests.

These settlers also served as volunteer firefighters and staunchly supported civic development in the community.¹⁶

Another citizen of note that moved to Dallas because of connections with the La Reunion families but not the colony was Jacob Boll. Boll came in 1859 after his brother, Henri Boll, had already moved to Dallas. Jacob Boll was a respected naturalist in Europe and when he reached the United States he visited a childhood friend, Louis Agassiz, a professor of zoology and geology at Harvard University. Knowing that Boll intended to go on to his brother's family in Dallas, Agassiz suggested that Boll accept a position with Harvard to research natural history in the region of Texas. Boll agreed and spent his remaining years cataloguing and documenting fossil finds throughout the state.¹⁷

Boll's influence touched Julian Reverchon, son of Maximillian Reverchon and an original member of the colony. Julian had collected and catalogued the plant life of the region since he came as a small boy, but without direction or encouragement to share his work. After meeting Jacob Boll, Reverchon began in earnest to publish his findings and is credited with identifying several examples of vegetation not previously identified in Texas. His accomplishments are recorded in Naturalists of the Frontier by Dr. S. W. Geiser

and his collection is housed in the Botanical Gardens in St. Louis, Missouri. Reverchon became an internationally respected botanist and taught classes in botany at the Baylor School of Medicine and Pharmacy in Dallas.¹⁸

In 1884, Henry Boll developed eye problems and traveled to Switzerland seeking medical treatment. While there he met Dr. T. E. Arnold, a leading authority in eye medicine in Europe, and influenced him to immigrate to the United States. Dr. Arnold and his son, Charles Erwin Arnold, moved to Dallas in 1884, where Dr. Arnold continued his practice. Charles Erwin was a specialist in photography who became a leading expert in chemical and paper research for the Eastman Kodak Company. For many years he directed photo research for the Baylor Dental School in Dallas. Also he developed a crime and ballistics lab for the city of Dallas.¹⁹

One of the major contributions of the La Reunion and Swiss citizens of Dallas was the idea of a park system for the city. Long Lake, named for Benjamin Long on whose property it was located, was the city's first reservoir and first city park.²⁰ In 1904, the city council established a park board and commissioned it to set aside land for public use. Emil Fretz, who came to Dallas with Benjamin Long as a small boy, served as one of the original park commissioners.

Influenced by the Swiss park system, these early directors sought to provide areas for relaxation and recreation for Dallas citizens.²¹

By the 1880's, Dallas was a bustling city of 30,000 people. Cockrell lists thirteen general stores, two hotels, and a variety of shops and factories. Frame structures had in large part given way to impressive brick buildings of several stories. One of the central businesses to the community was Emil Fretz's barbershop and turkish bath. This establishment boasted 200 shaving mugs representing the elite of Dallas citizenery and 20 barber chairs. Fretz provided a barber shop in the front of his business and bathing facilities in the rear which most of the prominent men of the town reportedly frequented.²²

Meisterhans Beer Garden was the social center of the town featuring outdoor tables and a collection of wild animals for viewing. The beer garden was the first establishment to display electric lights. Families spent pleasant evenings under the trees listening to music provided by local bands.²³

As the original La Reunion settlers reached advanced age, their direct influence on the community lessened, but the contributions made by this unique group have been remembered. In Dallas today Reverchon Park is named for

Julian Reverchon, the botanist. Also Fretz Park is named for Emil Fretz because of his work on the Park Commission. Several streets in Dallas bear names reminiscent of the colony. In East Dallas Swiss Avenue, and Nussbaumer, Boll, and Cantegrel Streets are listed on the map, and in southwest Dallas at the site of the old colony streets are called Santerre, Remond, Old Orchard, and French Colony.²⁴

Most of the colony site is gone, absorbed by cement companies following the lead of Emile Remond and using the chalky soil to manufacture cement. The last site visible today is the colony cemetery. Today it is called Fish Trap Cemetery but the gravestones record the names of several colonists. Nearby is a plaque that reads as follows:²⁵

The Site of
The French Colony
La Reunion
Settled 1854
Placed by
Jane Douglas Chapter
Daughters of the American Revolution
April 10, 1924

In the distance looms the recently completed structures of Reunion Tower and Reunion Arena. Exact documentation of the choice of names is unclear, but in 1978, Dallas Councilman Bob Nicols proposed the La Reunion name be chosen from the many entries because it was "the original name of the early French colony."²⁶ Today the sports complex and

tower serve to keep the name of La Reunion fresh in the minds of a city that has almost forgotten the original namesake.

The colonists of La Reunion contributed to an interesting and colorful chapter in Texas history. The settlers that chose Dallas as their home after the colony disbanded must be remembered for the example of high moral character and foresighted civic leadership they provided Dallas in its beginnings.

NOTES
CHAPTER V. INFLUENCES ON SOCIAL AND CULTURAL
DEVELOPMENT AND LASTING REMINDERS

1 "Dallas Becomes Heart of Great Wheat Region in 1950's," Dallas Morning News, Jubilee Edition, October 1, 1935. Although Gouhenant's establishment was referred to as a saloon, it was apparently more of a painting and photography gallery used by Dallas citizens as a social hall.

2 Dallas Herald, February 16, 1856; Marcelle Hunt and Joy Benge, ed., Dallas County District Court, Civil Case Papers, Dallas Public Library, July, 1983.

3 Melvern Krehbiel Leisy, essay, "LaReunion, The Utopia of Texas," March 7, 1936, A3623, Dallas Historical Society Archives; George Cretein, letter to Frank Cockrell, March 30, 1932, Cockrell Collection, Dallas Historical Society Archives.

4 Dallas Guide and History, part 2, Writer's Program, 1940, Dallas Public Library, 52.

5 "Dallas Becomes Heart of Great Wheat Region;" Mrs. D. R. P. McDermott, "Historic Old French Colony Near Dallas Made Up of Tradesmen and Artists," Mrs. Barry Miller Scrapbooks on Early Dallas Society, Dallas Public Library.

6 Nancy Wiley, The Great State Fair of Texas (Dallas: Taylor Publishing Co., 1985), 4.

7 Frank M. Cockrell, History of Early Dallas, Originally published in weekly installments in Dallas Sunday News, May 15, 1932 through August 28, 1932. Private edition of 20 copies, 82.

8 Frank M. Cockrell, "Many Families Trace Origin to La Reunion," Mrs. Barry Miller scrapbooks on Early Dallas Social Life, Dallas Public Library; Anne Toomey, "Germaine Santerre Remembers," Dallas Morning News, December 18, 1927.

9 Cockrell, History of Early Dallas, 44.

10 Ibid., 46; McDermett, "Historic Old French Colony."

11 Elithe Hamilton and Elizabeth Mood, "Dishes Bought in Peter's Colony Are Still in Use," interview with Matie Hord Crawford, November 19, 1933, Mrs. Barry Miller Scrapbooks on Dallas Social Life, Dallas Public Library.

12 George Santerre, Dallas First Hundred Years 1856-1956 (Dallas: The Book Craft, 1956); McDermett, "Historic Old French Colony."; Cockrell, History of Early Dallas, 86.

13 Walter E. Schiebel, 1874-1966, Ninety-two Years of History, Education in Dallas, Dallas, 1966.

14 Article by W. S. Adair, Dallas Morning News, May 29, 1932.

15 Dorothy Carter, "Swiss Took Important Role in Early History of Dallas," Mrs. Barry Miller Scrapbooks on Early Dallas Business, Dallas Public Library; Paul V. Thalmann, "Swiss Colony Gave Much to Dallas Growth," Dallas Morning News, Jubilee Edition, October 1, 1935.

16 Carter, "Swiss Took Important Role."

17 Cockrell, "Many Families Trace Origin."

18 Ibid.; Bulletin of Baylor University, College of Pharmacy, 3rd Session, 1903-1904.

19 William L. McDonald, Dallas Rediscovered (Dallas: Dallas Historical Society, 1978) 130; Thalmann, "Swiss Colony Gave Much."

20 Thalmann, "Swiss Colony Gave Much."

21 Sam Acheson, Dallas Yesterday (Dallas: Southern Methodist University, 1977) 240; "Dallas Really Started Growing Up as Railroad Came," Dallas Morning News, Jubilee Edition, October 1, 1935.

22 Ted Dealey, Diaper Days of Dallas (Nashville: Adington Press, 1966), 21-22; Cockrell, History of Early Dallas, 9.

23 Carter, "Swiss Took Important Role."

24 Map of the City of Dallas, 1982, Dallas Public Library.

25 Cockrell, History of Early Dallas, 84.

26 Dallas Morning News, March, 1978, Clipping in file on the construction of Reunion Tower, Dallas and Texas collection, Dallas Public Library.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES Manuscript Materials

ORGANIZATIONAL COLLECTIONS

- Austin, Texas. Texas State Archives. Petition to the Governor of Texas from the citizens of La Reunion, March 16, 1862, Box 301-40, no. 21.
- Dallas, Texas. Dallas Historical Society Archives. Cockrell Papers, A43301, A431551, A433. A miscellaneous collection of Cockrell family papers.
- Dallas, Texas. Dallas Historical Society Archives. Monroe Cochran Papers, A4524.
- Dallas, Texas. Dallas Historical Society Archives. Sarah Horton Cockrell Papers, A4340. A miscellaneous collection of records and documents.
- Dallas, Texas. Dallas Historical Society Archives. Herbert Gambrell, statistical study of the Dallas County Census, 1850-1860, A40183.
- Dallas, Texas. Dallas Historical Society Archives. Reverchon Papers, will of Maximillian Reverchon, 84. 75.
- Dallas, Texas. Dallas Historical Society Archives. Santerre Collection, A353, A1052, A1057. A miscellaneous collection of Santerre family papers.
- Dallas, Texas. Dallas Historical Society Archives. Value of Dallas County Mineral Deposits, A7710.

GOVERNMENT RECORDS

City of Dallas

Minutes of the City Council of Dallas, September 1868 -

September 1875. Dallas City Hall.

Transcript of the Town of Dallas from Assessors Register for 1867, Sarah Horton Cockrell Papers, A4340. Dallas Historical Society Archives.

County of Dallas

Dallas County Tax Rolls, 1859. Dallas Public Library.

Hunt, Marcelle and Joy Benge, ed. Dallas County District Court, Civil Case Papers. July, 1983. Dallas Public Library.

Lu, Helen Mason, et. al. Index to Probate Cases, Dallas County, Texas 1846-1900, Vol.1. Dallas Genealogical Society, Dallas Texas, 1978.

Minutes of Dallas County Commissioners Court, Vol. C, 1861-1871. Dallas County Court House.

LETTERS, INTERVIEWS, SPEECHES, AND BULLETINS

Bulletin of Baylor University College of Pharmacy, Third Session, 1903-1904. Dallas Historical Society Archives.

Capy, Mrs. Charles. Letter to Frank Cockrell, June 26, 1932. Dallas Historical Society Archives, A4340, A43155.

Caillet, Mrs. Elizabeth. Interview with a descendent of the Reverchon family, April, 1986.

Cretein, George. Letter to Frank Cockrell, March 30, 1932. Dallas Historical Society Archives, A4340, A43155.

Coughanour, R. D. Speech before students at the Hall of State, December 2, 1944. Dallas Historical Society Archives, A44157.

NEWSPAPERS

Dallas Herald, February 16, 1856.

- Dallas Herald, July 17, 1858.
- Dallas Herald, 1860.
- Dallas Herald, August 28, 1885.
- Texas State Gazette, August, 1855.

MAPS AND ALMANACS

- Map and description of the Proposed Phanlanstery of Fifty Units. Dallas Historical Society Archives, A7710.
- Map of La Reunion Colony. Survey and Partition, A3748, Dallas Historical Society.
- Map of Dallas, 1878. Dallas Public Library.
- Map of Dallas, 1982. Dallas Public Library.
- Texas Almanac and State Industrial Guide, Centennial Edition. Dallas: The A. H. Belo Corporation, 1936. Dallas Public Library.

BOOKS AND ARTICLES

- Ainsworth, Brig. General Fred C. and Joseph W. Kirkley. The War of the Rebellion, A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1900.
- City Directory of Dallas, 1875. Dallas: F. E. Butterfield and C.M. Rundlett, 1875.
- City Directory of Dallas, 1878. Dallas: C. D. Morrison and Co., 1879.
- City Directory of Dallas, 1889-1890. Galveston: Morrison and Fourmy, 1890
- Considerant, Victor Prosper. Au Texas- An American Adventure. "European Colonization of Texas - An Address to the American People." Translation by Rondell V. Davidson. Philidelphia: Procupine Press, 1975.

Considerant, Victor Prosper. Au Texas. Translation by Rondell V. Davidson. Philadelphia: Porcupine Press, 1975.

Considerant, Victor Prosper. The Great West. Translation by Rondell V. Davidson. Philadelphia: Porcupine Press, 1975.

"Greetings from La Reunion: A Letter from Jacques Maximilien Reverchon." Dallas County Historical Society, Heritage News, Spring, 1983.

State of Texas Correspondence and Proclamation of the Governor, 1846-1879. Austin: Records of the Secretary of State, Administration Division. Texas State Archives.

Texas House Journal. Confederate States of America, Ninth Legislative Session, 1861-1862. Austin:n.p., 1964.

SCRAPBOOKS AND COLLECTIONS

Mrs. Barry Miller Scrapbooks on Early Dallas Life, Dallas Public Library. These scrapbooks contain personal collections of photographs, party invitations, and articles.

Mrs. Tom Cruse Scrapbook on Early Dallas Life, Dallas Historical Society Archives. This scrapbook contains a personal collection of articles, booklets, and memorabilia.

SECONDARY WORKS

BOOKS

Acheson, Sam. Dallas Yesterday. Dallas: Southern Methodist University, 1977.

Brown, John Henry. History of Dallas County, Texas From 1837-1887. Dallas: Milligan, Cornett and Farnham, 1887.

Cochran, John H. Dallas County - A Record of Its Pioneers and Progress, Supplement to J. H. Brown with

- correction of errors Early Settlers and their Families. Dallas: Services Publishing Co., 1928.
- Cockrell, Frank M. History of Early Dallas. Originally published in weekly installments in Dallas Sunday News, May 15, 1932 through August 28, 1932. Private edition of 20 copies. Dallas Historical Society Archives.
- Davidson, Rondell V. Au Texas - An American Utopian Adventure. Philadelphia: Porcupine Press, 1975.
- Dealey, Ted. Diaper Days of Dallas. Nashville: Adingdon Press, 1966.
- Enstam, Elizabeth York. When Dallas Became a City - Letters of John Milton McCoy 1870-1881. Dallas: Dallas Historical Society, 1982.
- Hammond, William J. and Margaret F. Hammond. La Reunion - A French Settlement in Texas. Dallas: Royal Publishing Co., 1958.
- History of Lancaster, Texas 1845-1945. n.p.: Lancaster Historical Society, 1978.
- Jackson, George. Sixty Years in Texas. Dallas: Wilkerson Publishing Co., 1908.
- Kamenka, Eugene, ed. The Portable Karl Marx, Manifest of the Communist Party. New York: Viking Press, 1983.
- Lone Star, The, Memorial and Biographical History of Dallas County, Texas. Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Co., 1892.
- McDonald, William L. Dallas Rediscovered. Dallas: Dallas Historical Society, 1978.
- Payne, Darwin. Dallas - An Illustrated History. Woodland Hills, California: Windsor Publishing Inc., 1982.
- Potts, Charles S. Railroad Transportation in Texas. Austin: The University of Texas, 1909.
- Reed, St. Clair Griffin. A History of the Texas Railroads. Houston: The St. Clair Publishing Company.

Rogers, John William. Lusty Texans of Dallas. New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1951.

Santerre, George Henry. Dallas First Hundred Years 1856-1956. Dallas: The Book Craft, 1956.

_____. White Cliffs of Dallas. Dallas: The Book Craft, 1955.

Schiebel, Walter E. 1874-1966, Ninety-two Years of History, Education in Dallas. Dallas: n.p., 1966.

Wiley, Nancy. The Great State Fair of Texas. Dallas: Taylor Publishing Co., 1985.

ARTICLES, BOOKLETS, AND ESSAYS

Bywater, Jerry. "Seventy-five of Art in Dallas." Dallas: Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, 1978.

Coleman, Marion Moore. "New Light on La Reunion." Arizona and the West, Vol. 6, Part I.

Hazel, Michael V. "From Distant Shores: European Immigrants in Dallas. Dallas County Heritage Society, Heritage News, Spring, 1985, 9-15.

Leisy, Melvern Krehbiel. "La Reunion, The Utopia of Texas." essay, March 7, 1936. Dallas Historical Society Archives, A3623.

Rejebian, Ermance V. "La Reunion: The French Colony in Dallas County." Southwestern Historical Quarterly, April, 1940, Vol. 43, no. 4, 472-478.

NEWSPAPERS

"A Dream That Vanished - Story of Old French Colony ." Dallas Daily Times Herald, Section 2, Sunday, August 3, 1919, 13.

Adair, W. S. Dallas News, May 29, 1932.

_____. "Saw Herds of Stock Driven Through City." Dallas Morning News, September 12, 1926.

- . "When Dallas Was A City of Orchards."
Dallas Morning News, January 20, 1924.
- Carter, Dorothy. "Swiss Took Important Role in Early History of Dallas." Undated newspaper clipping located in the Mrs. Barry Miller Scrapbook on Early Dallas Business. Dallas Public Library.
- Cockrell, Frank M. "Many Families Trace Origin to La Reunion." Undated newspaper clipping located in the Mrs. Barry Miller Scrapbook of Early Dallas Social Life. Dallas Public Library.
- "Dallas Became Heart of Great Wheat Region in 1850's."
Dallas Morning News, Jubilee Edition, October 1, 1935.
- Dallas Morning News, Magazine Section, February 17, 1924.
- Dallas Morning News, Jubilee Edition, October 1, 1935.
- Dallas Morning News, March, 1978. Clipping in a file on the construction of Reunion Tower. Dallas and Texas collection, Dallas Public Library.
- "Dallas Really Started Growing Up As Railroad Came."
Dallas Morning News, Jubilee Edition, October 1, 1935.
- "Dallas Story, The." Dallas Times Herald, August 28, 1949.
- Dallas Times Herald, August 29, 1949.
- Hamilton, Elithe and Elizabeth Mood. "Dishes Bought in Peter's Colony Are Still in Use." Unidentified newspaper clipping of an interview with Mattie Hord Crawford, November 19, 1933, found in the Mrs. Barry Miller Scrapbook on Early Dallas Social Life. Dallas Public Library.
- McDermett, Mrs. D. R. P. "Historic Old French Colony Near Dallas Made Up of Tradesmen and Artists." Undated newspaper clipping located in the Mrs. Barry Miller Scrapbook on Early Dallas Social Life, Dallas Public Library.

McDermott, Mrs. D. R. P. "La Reunion - Ill Fated Dream." Daily Times Herald, June 5, 1927.

Pioneers Gather to Have Reunion." Times Herald, June 3, 1906.

Thalman, Paul V. "Swiss Colony Gave Much to Dallas Growth." Dallas Morning News, Jubilee Edition, October, 1935.

Toomey, Anne. "Germaine Santerre Remembers." Dallas Morning News, December 18, 1927.

_____. "When Dallas Folk Wore Wooden Shoes." Dallas Morning News, December 18, 1927.

" A Dream That Vanished- Story of Old French Colony." Dallas Daily Times Herald, Section 2, Sunday, August 3, 1919, 13.

THESES

Keith, Ruby. "Early History of Dallas." Master's thesis, University of Texas, August 1930. Dallas Public Library.

Santerre, Eloise. Master's thesis "La Reunion." Southern Methodist University, 1936.