

## Collection Summary

**ID Number:** CS 224

**Title:** Fourierist Movement

**Extent:** 9 Folder(s)

**Span Dates:** 1977-2002

**Language:** English

**Geographic Location:** Reunion, Texas

**Abstract:** This collection consists articles and newsletters.

## Selected Search Terms

**Subjects:** Communal living; Collective settlements; Housing, Cooperative; Collective farms; Commune; Fourier, Charles, 1772-1837

**Historical Notes:** Charles Fourier (1772-1837) saw manual labor as degrading and irksome, whether in the factory or the field. He believed that all work could be turned into play—made desirable and satisfying, physically and mentally. He designed a self-contained community, housing 1,620 members, called a phalanx after the Greek term for a unit of tightly linked fighting men. He believed men had twelve fundamental passions--the five senses, four of the soul (friendship, love, ambition and parenthood) and three related to work (love of variety, rivalry, and conspiracy). People were to be organized in squads according to "passionate attraction" thus ensuring their happiness at work. Albert Brisbane (1809-1890), a wealthy student from upstate New York, became Fourier's disciple in 1832 and returned to the United States from France hoping to start the first American Fourierist community. He began Association, the communitarian socialist movement, gaining publicity and supporters among the social reformers of the country. Brisbane stressed the compatibility of the phalanx plan with American ideals of self-government, personal freedom, equity, and social progress. The first American phalanx, the Social Reform Unity, was founded in 1842 in Pennsylvania, and two years later Brook Farm in Massachusetts, discovering the teachings of Fourier, converted to Fourierism. Before the Civil War, 28 phalanxes were founded in the United States, and the movement encompassed dozens of Fourierist clubs in cities across the country as well. Cooperative socialism proved versatile and attractive even to those unprepared to commit to the absolute communalism of phalanx living. The colony known as La Réunion was located on the south bank of the Trinity River in central Dallas County, just north of Interstate Highway 30 and within the present city limits of Dallas. It was founded by Victor Prosper Considérant, one of the leading democratic socialist figures in France and director of an international movement based on the philosophical and economic teachings of François Marie Charles Fourier. Considérant planned for the colony to be a loosely structured communal experiment administered by a system of direct democracy. The participants would share in the profits according to a formula based on the amount of capital investment and the quantity and quality of labor performed. Considérant traveled across the United States to Northeast Texas in 1852-53 looking for a suitable area for a colony. Impressed by the climate and other features of the region, he returned to France to organize a company and obtain funding for the project. He set forth elaborate and specific plans for the Texas colony in the French publication *Au Texas* (1854) and in the English publication *The Great West* (1854). In these two books he called for a joint European-American venture at La Réunion and proposed the eventual establishment of a network of colonies throughout the Southwest, connected by commercial, cultural, and educational ties. Although nearly 2,000 persons had registered to immigrate from Europe, only about 200 French-speaking colonists arrived in Galveston in 1855; they traveled overland from the coast, reached Dallas in April, and arrived at La Réunion on June 16. Although many

settlers left the colony soon after they arrived, new arrivals kept the population fairly constant for about two years; the number of residents peaked at around 350 in the fall of 1856. La Réunion existed as a serious communal organization for only about eighteen months. Financial insolvency precipitated the early demise of the colony. The Société de colonisation europeo-americaine au Texas, the joint-stock company that Considérant founded to sponsor the colony, did not attract enough capital investment to provide fiscal stability, and Considérant had overspent the company's resources by purchasing large tracts of land elsewhere. Because of poor soil, unusually severe winters and summer drought, a shortage of participants with necessary skills, and rising prices in Texas, the colonists were unable to succeed in farming. Inadequate housing, nativistic opposition by other local residents, and internal conflicts compounded the problems, and on January 28, 1857, one of the heads of the colonization society, Allyre Bureau, gave formal notice that the colony had been dissolved. By 1860 most of the colonists had left the settlement. Some moved to New Orleans, and others returned to Europe. At least half of the colonists settled in other Texas communities, particularly Dallas and San Antonio, and a few purchased their own land from La Réunion holdings and remained there permanently. In later years the hill on which the colony had been located provided limestone and other raw material for manufacturing concrete. In 1940 the old cooperative store was being used as a barn, but soon the growing city of Dallas engulfed the site of the old colony, and no evidence of the communal experiment remains except a small cemetery near Fishtrap Road and a commemorative marker in Reverchon Park. Reunion Arena in downtown Dallas, as well as other frequent use of the name Réunion, perpetuates the name of the old French colony.

<https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/uel01> ; <http://brbl-archive.library.yale.edu/exhibitions/utopia/four.html>

## Administrative Information

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<b>Contents</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Container</b>	<b>Location</b>
Bruno, Verlet. "The Fourierist Colony of Reunion in Texas 1855."	n.d.	Folder 1	Filing Cabinet 13-B
Guarneri, Carl. "The Fourierist Movement in America." Saint Mary's College of California	n.d.	Folder 1	Filing Cabinet 13-B
Everts, Louis. "The Fourierite Association of Clermont County." <i>History of the Clermont County, Ohio, with Illustrations and Biographical</i>	n.d.	Folder 1	Filing Cabinet 13-B
Raritan Bay Union/Eagleswood, New Jersey: Seguine-LeVine, Joan. <i>The Eagleswood Legacy" A Research Proposal.</i>	1995	Folder 1	Filing Cabinet 13-B
Alphadelphia: Plat map of Kalamazoo County, MI	1977	Folder 2	Filing Cabinet 13-B

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Container</b>	<b>Location</b>
Clermont Phalanx: Clermont County, OH. Copies of county plat maps, deed records, county history and notes from Dr. Janzen	2002	Folder 3	Filing Cabinet 13-B
Intergal Phalanx: Sangamon county, IL. Copies of county deed records, county histories, and Dr. Janzen's notes on community location	n.d.	Folder 4	Filing Cabinet 13-B
Fourier Phalanx: Dearborn County, IN and Moore's Hill.	1993	Folder 5	Filing Cabinet 13-B
Bureau Phalanx: Bureau County, IL. Copies of county history and notes from Dr. Janzen	1996	Folder 6	Filing Cabinet 13-B
Canton Phalanx, Fulton County, IL: Map and notes from Dr. Janzen on community	1992	Folder 7	Filing Cabinet 13-B
North America Phalanx: list of resources	1980	Folder 8	Filing Cabinet 13-B
Trumbull Phalanx, Trumbull County, OH. Chicks, Richard. "The Trumbull Phalanx, 1844-1851: The Evidence of Longevity.	1992	Folder 9	Filing Cabinet 13-B