

Jean Loupot (1835-1904)

Born in the Ardennes region of France in February, 1835, Jean Loupot (“le petit Loupot”) became a grocer’s apprentice at age sixteen. Seeing no commercial future in a France which after the Revolution had turned inexorably against labor and in favor of middle-class property, Loupot, at the age of twenty, decided to try his luck in America. Though hardly a socialist, Loupot, like many another French, German, Dutch, Belgian, or Swiss citizen of the era, was enchanted by the writings of the ideologue Victor Considerant, who planned to establish a utopian socialist colony in the American territory across the Mississippi – the Great West. In his book, *To Texas*, full of tall tales worthy of Texas, Considerant described the lands of the new state “as the most favored on earth” which promised “absolute happiness...multiplying our life.”

Leaving most of his family, “le petit Loupot”, with his uncle François “le grand Loupot”, took ship at Antwerp on November 11, 1855. After a month at sea, the two Loupots landed at New Orleans, and then made their way overland to Galveston. When all “civilized” forms of transport ended after an unpleasant flat boat journey at Newport near Houston, Jean and his uncle began the 150 mile trek to Considerant’s colony located on the white chalk cliffs within sight of present day Dallas. Walking the entire way through a wet Texas spring which made crossing of the many rivers– running bank to bank–extremely difficult, Jean Loupot, at last, reached the colony (with the appropriate name of *Le Reunion*) on February 24, 1856. François, older and less able to adapt to the marvelous vicissitudes of Texas weather, stopped off at the east Texas city of Palestine to get over a nagging bout of dysentery. He did not rejoin his nephew at Reunion until the summer of 1856.

Instead of the New World paradise they had been promised, the Loupots found Texas to be little more than a desert; Dallas, a grimy settlement of under a hundred souls scattered around the cabin of the hard-drinking first citizen, John Neeley Bryan; and Reunion, an unfinished utopia which boasted three ramshackle buildings and a large group of musicians, artists, and dancing masters, but very few farmers. Though Reunion was supposed to put into effect the ideas of François Fourier, who hoped to give every man the possibility of rising above his own class by making class irrelevant, class, indeed, remained extremely pertinent in the colony. The Loupots came to side with the artisans drawn to the colony against the bourgeois executive council headed by Considerant. The disgruntled colonists soon found a voice in the person of a plain-spoken and brusque army surgeon named Augustus Savardan. The infighting intensified throughout 1856 and into the spring of 1857 when a freak snow storm destroyed the colony for good.

Most of the disillusioned Reunionists returned to Europe. François left in 1859 and established himself as a extremely famous musician and music teacher in Paris. As one of Savardan's staunchest allies, Jean remained at Reunion through 1857 as a member of the council that oversaw the liquidation of the colony's lands. Looking around for a better life, Jean inexplicably spent a short time in Kaufman County, but deciding that a better life could not possibly be found there, he returned to Dallas for good in 1868. Never afflicted by the socialist disapproval of money, Jean opened a saloon, began to build a political base by joining the *Odd Fellows*, and openly displayed his youthful connection to Freemasonry. Within a few months of his return to Dallas, Jean's political ambitions were fulfilled when he was appointed an alderman in the regime of Ben Long, another Reunion colonist who was elected mayor of Dallas in 1868.

In the banner year of his small political triumph, Jean accomplished a much greater triumph by marrying a local girl, Rosina Getzer. In 1875, the pair bought sixty acres to the west of the old Reunion colony, which was largely a ghost town by this time with only one permanent settler, Jean's cousin, François Santerre. Jean and Rosina built a large stone house on their land, kept a massive garden and began the first Loupot Dairy. As a wine-lover, Jean started making various vintages which he kept in large vats in the basement of his two-story farm house. Though this habit was disapproved by his stern, Minnosotan wife, Jean persisted for most of his life as a vinter. As such, he is known as the first wine-maker in Dallas County. After a long life intimately involved with the burgeoning city of Dallas, Jean Loupot "le petit" died at his home on the banks of the Trinity on October 7, 1904.

The union of Jean and Rosina, which lasted for over forty years, produced five children, Rosina, Jean, Ema, Maxime and Emile. The first son, also named Jean (but more commonly called John) would eventually marry a pretty young thing named Pauline ("Polly") Gulden. I think we all know the rest. This marriage produced the following children: John, Kathryn, and Zita ("Butzie"). They, in turn, brought into the world eight grandchildren, six great-grandchildren, and two great-great-grandchildren.

LES EMIGRANTS
(Reunion Anthem sung to tune of
La Marseilles)

Helas nous quittons une terre
Ou l'on ne sail pas pardonner
Ou l'on demande a' la colere
Ce que l'amour peut seul donner.
give.

Alas we departed a land
Where we are not forgiven
Where we demand in anger
That which love alone can

On les pauvres hiron-del
Les freres il est dit on la bas
there
Un air plus leger pour les ailes
Un sol plus facond pour nos bras.
arms.

Where go the poor swallows
Their brother it is said are over
An air more lighter for their wings
A soil more fertile for our

Non plus de sang, plus de misere
want
Nous somme les gais travailleurs
Du gloirer qui fruppait nos freres
brothers
Nous formeront de sois vainqueuers.
conquerers.

Not more by sweat, but more by
We are the gay workers
The glory which guided our
We'll make ourselves the

Nous sommes la cohorte sainen
Des ouviers de l'aviner
Nous allons preparer l'enceinte
Ou nous devons tous nous unir.

We are the holy band
Of workers of the future
We go to prepare a place
Where we must all unite.

O'liberte sois notre guide
Fraternite sois notre soeur
Vivant en paix sous votre yeux

Oh liberty is our guide
Fraternity is our sister
Live in peace, beneath you eyes