

CHAMP D'ASILE COLLECTION

An Inventory of the Champ d'Asile Collection at the Sam Houston Regional Library And Research Center 1807-1999, bulk 1815-1820

Finding aid by Darlene Mott, 2005; Updates by Lisa Meisch, 2005 and Lynda Young, 2006

Texas State Library And Archives Commission
Sam Houston Regional Library And Research Center

Overview

Title: Champ d'Asile Collection

Dates: 1807-1999

Dates: Bulk 1815-1820

Abstract: This collection consists primarily of photocopies of articles, correspondence, research papers, manuscripts, newspaper articles, maps and excerpts from publications pertaining to the French settlement of Champ d'Asile, located in present day Liberty County, Texas.

Quantity: 0.75 cubic feet

Location: These records are housed at the Sam Houston Regional Library and Research Center, P.O. Box 310, Liberty, Texas 77575, 936-336-8821.

Biographical Sketch

Following the French defeat at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815 and Napoleon's subsequent exile on St. Helena, Charles Francois Antoine Lallemand, one of his trusted generals, came to the United States. He arrived in Philadelphia in 1817 and became president of the French Emigrant Association, a group of Napoleonic exiles. The group obtained from Congress a grant of four townships in a portion of Mississippi territory, which is now part of Alabama. The land grants were sold to finance the establishment of a French military colony in Texas, on land in dispute between Spain and the United States since the Louisiana Purchase of 1803.

Lallemand's main contingent, consisting of approximately 150 men and led by Baron Antoine Rigaud, sailed from Philadelphia aboard the *Huntress* on December 17, 1817, arriving at Galveston Island on January 14, 1818. Shortly thereafter, Lallemand and his younger brother Henri, with more officers and munitions, departed for New Orleans, arriving there on February 2, 1818. They continued on to Galveston on February 19. While there the Frenchmen were the guests of Jean and Pierre Laffite, who provided the group with supplies and transportation but at the same time reported their activities to the Spanish consul in New Orleans. On March 10, the French, with the Laffites' aid, left Galveston and ascended the Trinity River in small boats. On the Trinity River near the present town of Liberty, they built strong fortifications and a village, Champ d'Asile ("field of refuge"), in defiance of Spain's decree against settlement in the area.

The intentions of Charles Lallemand and his officers remains open to question. Lallemand issued a manifesto claiming that Champ d'Asile was strictly an agricultural settlement and military only for protection. However, there is no evidence that the colonists undertook agricultural activities in a serious manner; they primarily spent their time building a fortress and manufacturing munitions. Because of their preoccupation with military exercises, the colony ran short of food. Evidence suggests that the real purpose of the expedition was to help Mexico gain its independence from Spain, place Joseph Bonaparte, brother of Napoleon, on the throne of an independent Mexico and free Napoleon from his exile on St. Helena.

Alarmed by reports of French activity, the Spanish prepared to send a military expedition, under the command of Don Juan de Castañeda, against the settlement. On learning of the Spanish advance and of objections by the United States government of the French presence, Lallemand ordered that the fort be abandoned, and the Frenchmen moved to Galveston Island. While the exiles waited for Lallemand to return from New Orleans with food, a hurricane struck the island. The storm killed many of the men and destroyed their supplies. The remaining refugees scattered; some of them remained with Laffite, but most made their way on foot to New Orleans. Charles Lallemand lived in the United States until the July Revolution of 1830, when he returned to France. He served as military governor of Corsica from 1837 to 1838 and died in Paris in 1839.

Scope and Contents of the Records

This collection consists primarily of 0.75 cubic feet of photocopies of articles, correspondence, research papers, manuscripts, newspaper articles, maps and excerpts from publications pertaining to the French settlement of Champ d'Asile, located in present day Liberty County, Texas.

To prepare this preliminary inventory, the described materials were cursorily reviewed to delineate series, to confirm the accuracy of contents lists, to provide an estimate of dates covered and to determine record types.

Arrangement of the Records

The folders are arranged in alphabetical order by the subject name shown on the file folder.

Restrictions and Requirements

Restrictions on Use

None.

Under the Copyright Law of 1996 as amended in 1998, unpublished manuscripts are protected at a minimum through December 31, 2002 or 70 years after the author's death. The term of copyright for published materials varies. Researchers are responsible for complying with the Copyright Law.

Technical Requirements

None.

Index Terms

The terms listed here were used to catalog the records. The terms can be used to find similar or related records.

Personal Names: Charles Lallamand, Joseph Lakanal, Jean Lafitte, Don Juan de Castañeda, Antoine Rigaud, George Graham, Marcel Moraud

Corporate Names: Napoleonic Society of America, Liberty County Historical Commission

Subjects: Texas History (Spanish Texas), French Settlements in Texas

Places: Liberty County, Texas; Atascosito District; Trinity River; New Orleans, Louisiana; Galveston Island, Texas

Document Types: Correspondence, Manuscripts, Newspaper and Journal Articles, Publications, Maps

Titles:

Functions:

Related Material

Sam Houston Regional Library &
Research Center
FM RD 1011
P.O. Box 310
Liberty, Tx 77575

The following materials are offered as possible sources of further information on the agencies and subjects covered by the records. The listing is not exhaustive.

Texas State Archives

Atascosito Historical Society Collection

John Clay Collection

Jean and Price Daniel Texas History Collection

Jean Epperson Archives

Laffite Society Research Collection

Liberty County Historical Commission

Marcel Moraud Papers

Steed, Tanya. "Champ D'Asile: The History of a French Settlement in Texas." Manuscript.

Publications

Ashford, Gerald. *Spanish Texas Yesterday and Today*. Austin: Jenkins Publishing Company, The Pemberton Press, 1971.

Clay, John V. *Spain, Mexico and the Lower Trinity; An Early History of the Texas Gulf Coast*. Baltimore: Gateway Press, Inc. 1987. [Publication sponsored by the Wallisville Heritage Park.]

Delery, Simone de la Souchere. *Napoleon's Soldiers in America*. Gretna, Louisiana: Pelican Publishing Company, Inc., 1972.

Gaillardet, Frederic. *L'Aristocratie En Amerique*. Paris: E. Dentu, editeur, Libraire de la Society des Gens de Lettres, 1883. In French.

Girard, Just. *The Adventures of a French Captain, At Present A Planter in Texas, Formerly A Refugee of Camp Asylum*. Our Young Folks Library Series. Translated from the French by The Lady Blanche Murphy. New York: Benziger Brothers, 1878.

Girard, Just. *Les Aventures d'un Capitaine Francais, Planteur au Texas Ancien Refuge du Champ D'Asile*. Nouvelle ed. Tours: Alfred Mame et Fils, editeurs, [1879]. In French.

Girard, Just. *Les Aventures d'un Capitaine Francais, Planteur au Texas Ancien Refuge du Champ D'Asile*. Nouvelle ed. Tours: Alfred Mame et Fils, editeurs, [1880]. In French.

Henson, Margaret and Kevin Ladd. *Chambers County: A Pictorial History*. Norfolk/Virginia Beach: The Donning Company, 1988.

Le Texas, ou Notice Historique sur Le Champ d'Asile... par MM. Hartmann et Millard, Membres de Champ d'Asile, nouvellement de retour en France. Paris: 1819. In French.

Musique. Imprimee par les prodedes de E. Duverger, 4, re de Verneuil [no date] In French.

Partlow, Miriam. *Liberty, Liberty County, and the Atascosito District*. Austin: The Pemberton Press, Jenkins Publishing Company, 1974.

Pickett, Arlene. *Historic Liberty County*. [Dallas]: Tardy Publishing Company, [ca. 1936.]

Reeves, Jesse S. *The Napoleonic Exiles in America: A Study in American Diplomatic History 1815-1819*. Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science Series, XXIII, no. 9-10. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1905.

Remond, Rene. *Les Etats-Unis devant L'Opinion Francaise, 1815-1852*, Vol. I and II. Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1962. In French.

Soulie, Maurice. *Autour de l'Aigle Enchaîne; Le Complot de Champ d'Asile*. Les Aventures Extraordinaires Series. Paris: Marpon & Cie, editeurs, 1929. In French.

The Story Of Champ d'Asile As Told By Two Of The Colonists. Edited with an introduction by Fannie E. Ratchford. Translated from the French by Donald Joseph. Dallas: The Book Club of Texas, 1937.

Warren, Harris Gaylord. *The Sword Was Their Passport: A History of American Filibustering in the Mexican Revolution*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1943.

Periodicals

"Additional Notes on the Champ d'Asile." Translated and edited by Jack Autrey Dabbs. *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* LIV, no. 3 (January 1951): 347-358.

Gardien, Kent. "Take Pity on Our Glory: The Men of Champ d'Asile." *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* LXXXVII, no. 3 (January 1984): 241-268.

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

Champ d'Asile Collection. Sam Houston Regional Library And Research Center, Texas State Library And Archives Commission

Accession Information

Accession numbers: AC 1986.139, 1991.185, 1993.083, 1995.072, and 1997.189

The Champ d'Asile Collection was donated to the Sam Houston Regional Library and Research Center by John Morse in 1991. Additions to the Collection were donated by Charles W. Fisher, Jr. as President of the Atascosito Historical Society in 1993, Penny Clark in 1995, Betje Klier in 1997, Martine and Paul Bardon in 1997, as well as photocopy accessions.

Processing Information

Finding aid by Darlene Mott, 2005.

Updated by Lynda Young and Lisa Meisch, 2006

Detailed Description of the Collection

Champ d'Asile Collection, 1807-1999, bulk 1815-1820. 0.75 cubic ft.

Box 1

Folder 1. 9-4-1807 Original Letter Re: Atascosito District

Original (4 pages) letter, photocopy, and typed translation of a letter written by Marshal Grouchy dated Eleutherian Mills, Wilmington, [Delaware], le 24 Septembre 1807. 9 pages.

Folder 2. 2-3-1818 Original Letter Re: Atascosito District

Original (1 page) letter, photocopy, and partial translation of a letter dated 3 February 1818. 3 pages.

Folder 3. Account of French Colony in Province of Texas, May 11, 1818

Transcription and translation of one document in French dated 1818. Title page contains the following handwritten notation: "Account of the French Colony in the Province of Texas, headed Champ D'Asile, Province De Texas May 11, 1818. Published in "L'Abeille Americaine" dated July 9, 1818 at Philadelphia. Donated by Percy W. Holt, March 13, 1947. . Transcript." [Pressboard binder] Photocopy. 12 pages.

Folder 4. Champ d'Asile Roster of Officers.

Roster of officers at Champ d'Asile. From journal article, "Take Pity on Our Glory: The Men of Champ d'Asile." *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* LXXXVII, no. 3 (January 1984): 266-267. Photocopy.

Folder 5. Chaudron, Jean Simon (Letters to)

Transcriptions and translations of five unsigned letters in French to J. S. Chaudron. Title page contains the following handwritten notation: "Letters from the Province of Texas, New Orleans and Philadelphia to Jean Simon Chaudron, publisher of the first French newspaper in the United States, Dec. 1817, March, April & June 1818. Transcripts donated by Percy W. Holt. March 13, 1947. Letters contain references to Galvez, Galveston, the Province of Texas and the locality of the Trinity River." In a pressboard binder. Photocopy. 13 pages.

Folder 6. Color Copy of Print of Settlement, 1993. Original Dates 1830

Copy of a Garneray print of Champ d'Asile printed on a catalog for Dorothy Sloan Books. 1 page.

Folder 7. Copy of Painting of Marshal Emanuel, Marquis de Grouchy, ca. 1818.

Copy of an engraving by Henry Wolf, based on the painting by Jean Sebastien Rouillard [?] in the Museum of Versailles. No publication data regarding the copy. 1 page.

Folder 8. Courrier de la Louisiane, May 1820

Newspaper article, published in French. Photocopy. Negative print. 2 pages. 11 x 17".

Folder 9. de Castañeda, Captain Don Juan. Log and Reports. September-November 1818.
Reports #1, 9, and 10 of Captain Don Juan de Castaneda to Don Antonio Martinez, Spanish governor of the province of Texas, concerning Champ d'Asile and Log of the Journey to the Lower Trinity, Sept. 16, 1818 to Nov. 24, 1818. Photocopies of transcriptions.

Folder 10. de Castañeda, Captain Don Juan. Report No. 9: Enemies in the Areas of the Trinity.

Photocopy of a handwritten transcription of Report #9 of Captain Don Juan de Castañeda to Don Antonio Martinez. In a pressboard binder.

Folder 11. Defourni, Sarrassin and Hollzer. Testimony at Bexar, Nov. 24, 1818

Handwritten translation of the testimony given at Bexar on November 24, 1818. Photocopy. 11 pages. (Second copy in the file contains only partial copies of pages 8 and 10.)

Folder 12. French Migration to America (Publication)

Excerpt of article entitled "Bonapartist Exiles in America" located on pages 152-158 of *French Migration to America* (no publication data). Photocopy. (Poor quality) 4 pages.

Folder 13. George Graham's Mission to Galveston, Texas, 1818

Typed excerpt of article, "George Graham's Mission to Galveston in 1818: Two Important Documents Bearing Upon Louisiana History", edited by Walter Prichard, originally published in *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 20, no. 1, pages 619-650, 1937. In a pressboard binder. Photocopy. 11 pages.

Folder 14. Graham, George. "Documents Relating to George Graham's Proposals to Jean Laffite for the Occupation of the Texas Coast", by Harris Gaylord Warren

Excerpt of an article entitled "Documents Relating To George Graham's Proposals to Jean Laffite for the Occupation of the Texas Coast," translated and edited by Harris Gaylord Warren. *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* (no date). (File only contains pages 213-219.) Photocopy. (Poor quality) 4 pages.

Folder 15. Gulf Coast Historical Review, Spring 1997; The Consortium on Revolutionary Europe 1750-1850: Proceedings, 1992

1. Klier, Betje. "Peste, Tempestad, & Patisserie: The Pastry War: France's Contribution to the Maintenance of Texas Independence." *Gulf Coast Historical Review* 12, no. 2 (Spring 1997): 58-73. 8 pages.

2. *The Consortium on Revolutionary Europe 1750-1850: Proceedings, 1992*. Institute on Napoleon and the French Revolution, Florida State University, 1993. Contains "Session 7-A Napoleonic Exiles in America: General Count Bertrand Clauzel and The Vine and Olive Colony" by Russell W. Strong, pages 395-402; and "The Bayeux Tapestry and the Papier Peint of Dijon, Known As The "French Wallpaper" in Montgomery, Alabama" by Betje Klier, pages 403-420, and a commentary by David M. Vess regarding Strong and Klier, pages 421-423. Photocopy. 17 pages.

Folder 16. Hall, Andy. Material from Lecture at Laffite Society meeting, 3/13/1995.

Charts showing the organization of Champ d'Asile and nationalities of the men and text of Manifesto of Champ d'Asile issued May 11, 1818.

Folder 17. The History of Louisiana

Excerpt of the portion of *Histoire de la Louisiana* by Francois Barbe-Marbois (Firmin Didot, 1829) that discussed Champ d'Asile in Texas. (File only contains pages 396-398.) Photocopy. 3 pages. File also contains duplicate copy of illustrations as photocopied from *Autour de L'Aigle Enchaîne; Le Complot du Champ d'Asile* as located in a previous folder.

Folder 18. Laffite, Jean. "Jean Laffite is Back"

Article, "Jean Laffite is Back," by Audrey Walls Lloyd, *Texas Parade*, July 1960. Re: Jean Laffite's journal. Photocopy. 3 pages.

Folder 19. Lakanal's Note Regarding General Lallemand, 18 July 1818. In French.

Original (4 pages) and partial photocopy (1 page) of a portion of an letter from [Joseph] Lakanal to French patriots who intended to settle the Vine and Olive Colony in Alabama. Folder includes a preliminary translation by Melinda Barton (2 pages) and a brief (4 x 5 inch card) biography of Joseph Lakanal. 9 pages.

Folder 20. Lakanal's Note Regarding General Lallemand, 18 July 1818.

Transcription and translation of a portion of a letter from [Joseph] Lakanal to French patriots who intended to settle the Vine and Olive Colony in Alabama. Translation by Betje Black Klier. 2 pages.

Folder 21. Lallemand, Charles. Excerpts from Victor Jacquemont Letters

Typed excerpts from *Victor Jacquemont, Letters to Achille Chaper: Intimate Sketches of Life Among Stendhal's Coterie*. With an introduction and Notes by J. F. Marshall. Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1960. Photocopy. 5 pages.

Folder 22. Latour, Arsene Lacarriere. Part Two of the Arsene Lacarriere Latour Archives.

Portfolio containing 30 documents in French, with an accompanying description page of each one. The documents are not totally translated but the description page lists dates and subject. Includes cover letter from Paul Bardon, dated July 4, 1997.

Folder 23. Le Champ-D'Asile, Au Texas. Par C... D...

French publication. In a pressboard binder. Photocopy.

Folder 24. Le Champ D'Asile, Tableau Topographique Et Historique Du Texas. Par L F. LH.... (de l'Ain)

French publication. In a pressboard binder. Photocopy.

Folder 25. Letter From Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 21 December 1818.

Letter in French, dated December 21, 1818 and one page, typed in English re: Champ d'Asile. Photocopy. 13 pages.

Folder 26. L'Héroïne Du Texas, Ou Voyage De Madame Aux Etats-Unis Et Au Mexique. Par M. G...n F....n.

French publication. In a pressboard binder. Photocopy.

Folder 27. Magazine of the French Legion of Honor.

Article entitled "French Explorers, Pioneer and Social Reformers in Texas (1682-1860)", by Marcel Moraud. *Magazine of the French Legion of Honor*, (no volume or number given), pages 117-133. With a note by Marcel Moraud stating "From the Magazine of the French Legion of Honor of which no copy is available". In a pressboard binder. Photocopy. 18 pages.

Box 2

Folder 1. Martinez, Antonio. Letters of Antonio Martinez to Arredondo

Translations of letters from Antonio Martinez that mention Callo de Gallardo with a cover letter from Virginia H. Taylor, Spanish Translator in the General Land Office. Photocopy. 17 pages.

Folder 2. Moraud, Marcel. Lecture, "Champ d'Asile"

"Champ d'Asile." Lecture by Marcel Moraud, Chairman, Department of Romance Languages, Rice Institute. Translated by Thomas G. Rice. No date.

Folder 3. Murph, Jean. "The Search for Champ d'Asile"

Manuscript with photocopies of maps and other research material concerning Champ d'Asile.

Folder 4. Murph, Jean. "The Search for Champ d'Asile" (Part II)

Continuation of Box 2, Folder 1. Additional research material concerning Champ d'Asile.

Folder 5. The Napoleonic Society of America (Journal). October 1990.

Article, "The Sacred Fire in Texas" by John Morse, on pages 15-16, regarding the subjects of Lallemand, Lafitte, and Champ d'Asile.

Folder 6. New Orleans: History of Napoleon & His Soldiers, 1814-1934.

Excerpt of a chapter published in *New Orleans* (Oakland, CA: Compass American Guides, Fodor's Travel Publications, Inc., 1994) regarding the Napoleonic exiles and their influence in the city of New Orleans. Photocopy. 5 pages.

Folder 7. Physical Description of Champ d'Asile

Listing compiled by Ellen Pickett in 1966 of the description of Champ d'Asile as located in referenced works. This file contains two copies of the list, which is also included in the file entitled "References". Photocopy. 5 pages.

Folder 8. Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association; Our Catholic Heritage in Texas: 1519-1936.

1. Article, "Extracts from Letters from the French Colony of Trinity River in the Province of Texas." *Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association*, Vol. IV (July 1900- April 1901): 348-349. Photocopy. 3 pages.

2. Excerpt from chapter entitled "Last Filibustering Expeditions and Independence, 1817-1820" published in *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas: 1519-1936*. Vol. VI, *Transition Period: The Fight For Freedom 1810-1836*, pages 149-160. Photocopy. 8 pages.
3. Excerpt from article entitled "Champ-d'Asile", pages 58-63. Publication unknown. Photocopy. 6 pages.

Folder 9. References

List of references compiled by Ellen Pickett in 1966, and revised in 1969, with a cover letter to Hal Jensen regarding the "dig" to occur on October 18, 1969. 16 pages.

Folder 10. Research Files of Liberty County Historical Commission.

Photocopies of research files and correspondence regarding Champ d'Asile. Unprocessed. 115 pages.

Folder 11. Research Files of Liberty County Historical Commission.

Continuation of Box 2, Folder 10. Photocopies of research files and correspondence regarding Champ d'Asile. Unprocessed. 124 pages.

Folder 12. Rigaud, Antoine. Biography, in French

1. *Biographie Nouvelle des Contemporains, ou Dictionnaire Historique et Raisonne de Tous Les Hommes Qui, Depuis La Revolution Francaise, Ont Acquis de la Celebrite par Leurs Actions, Leurs Ecrits, Leurs Erreurs Ou Leurs Crimes, Soit en France, Soit Dans Les Pays Etranger*, (Paris: A La Librairie Historique, Hotel D'aligre, 1825), Tome Dix-Huitieme, pages 22-23 and title;
2. *Nouvelle Biographie Generale Depis Les Temps Les Plus Recules Jusqu'a Nos Jours, Et L'indication des Sources a Consulter*, (Paris: Firmin Didot Freres, Fils et C, Editeurs, 1863), page 287 and title, specifically mentions Champ d'Asile. Photocopy. 4 pages.

Folder 13. Soulie, Maurice. Les Aventures Extraordinaires

Autour de L'Aigle Enchaîne; Le Complot du Champ d'Asile. Selected pages of illustrations as follows: title, 46, 62, 110, 174, 190, 206, map, one unnumbered page and Sources et. Ouvrages Consultes, table Des Matieres. Photocopy. (Poor quality) 13 pages.

Folder 14. Tompkins, William C. Moss Bluff, Texas

Includes correspondence (original and transcribed) to Herbert E. Bolton dated October 30, 1907, maps, and deed records re: Moss Bluff, Texas and Spanish settlement. Photocopy. 15 pages.

Folder 15. "A Visit To Galveston Island by J. Randall Jones in 1819"

Typewritten copy of a manuscript containing a mention of General Lallemand. Photocopy. 2 pages.

Folder 16. "Where Was Champ d'Asile?" by Jean L. Epperson

Article (including two maps) published in the *Laffite Society Chronicles* 5, no. 2 (August 1999). Photocopy. 5 pages.