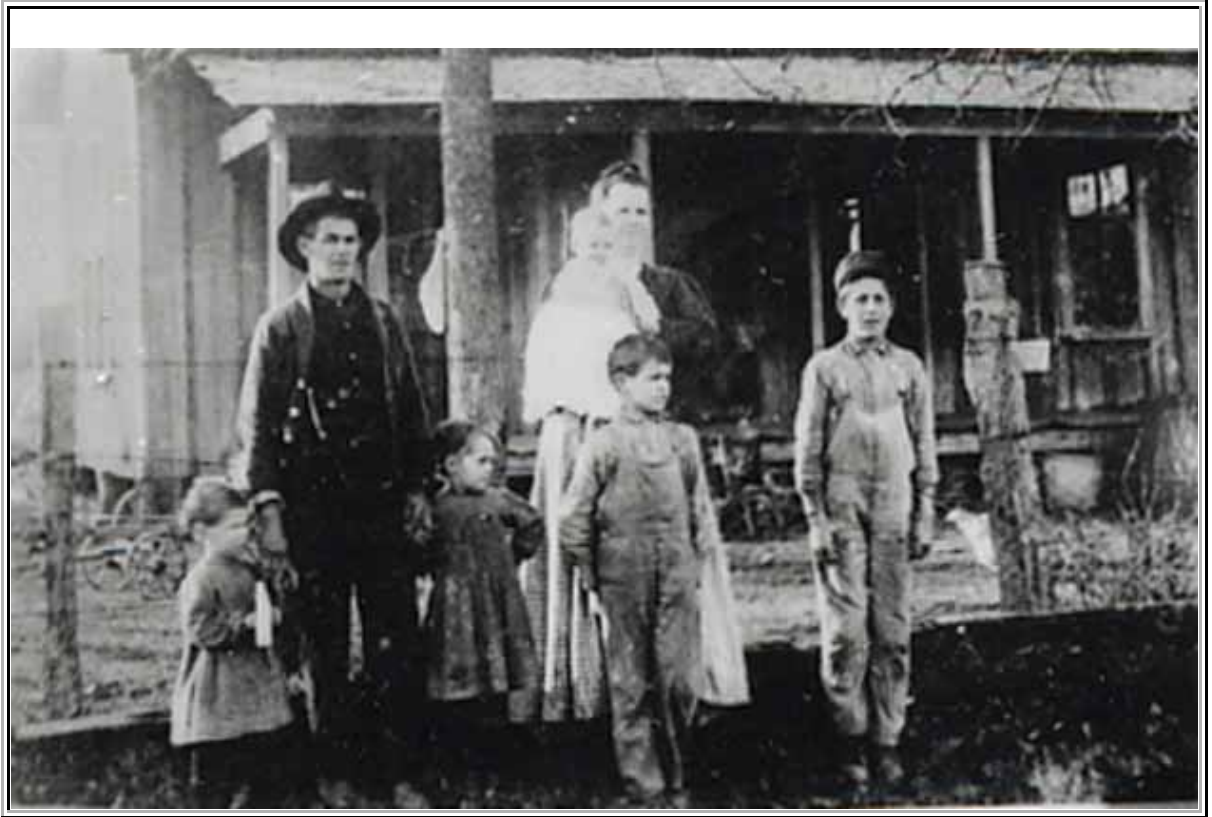

Union Bower Community Life



During the mid-1850s, a group of French, Belgian, and Swiss immigrants formed the La Reunion colony in western Dallas County. By the late 1850s, the colony had failed, and several of the families from the colony moved into what would become the Union Bower community in what is today's eastern Irving. The community was located along the banks of the Elm Fork of the Trinity River about 10 miles northwest of Dallas, Texas. Charles Voirin, a son of one of the La Reunion families, married Lucy Santerre, whose family was also from the La Reunion colony. Their son, Emile Voirin, purchased land in the Union Bower community in 1884. Pictured above are Emile and his wife Mary Lee Densmore and their family on their farm in the Union Bower community, c. 1912.



Pictured here is the home of William and Virginia Smith, which they built in 1888. The Smiths came to the area from Pennsylvania in 1879. The couple became leaders in the community. The

area became known as Union Bower after a town where William Smith taught school in Pennsylvania. They were instrumental in establishing a school and church in the community. They also donated land for a community cemetery after the death of their young daughter. William Smith died in 1904. Virginia lived until 1930. The Smith home, shown in the pictures above, stood until 1986.



Residents from surrounding communities would gather in Union Bower on occasion for a square dance or picnic. In the photo on the left, local musicians pose with their instruments, c. 1907. On the right, a young couple seeks shelter from the sun at a Union Bower gathering, c. 1910.