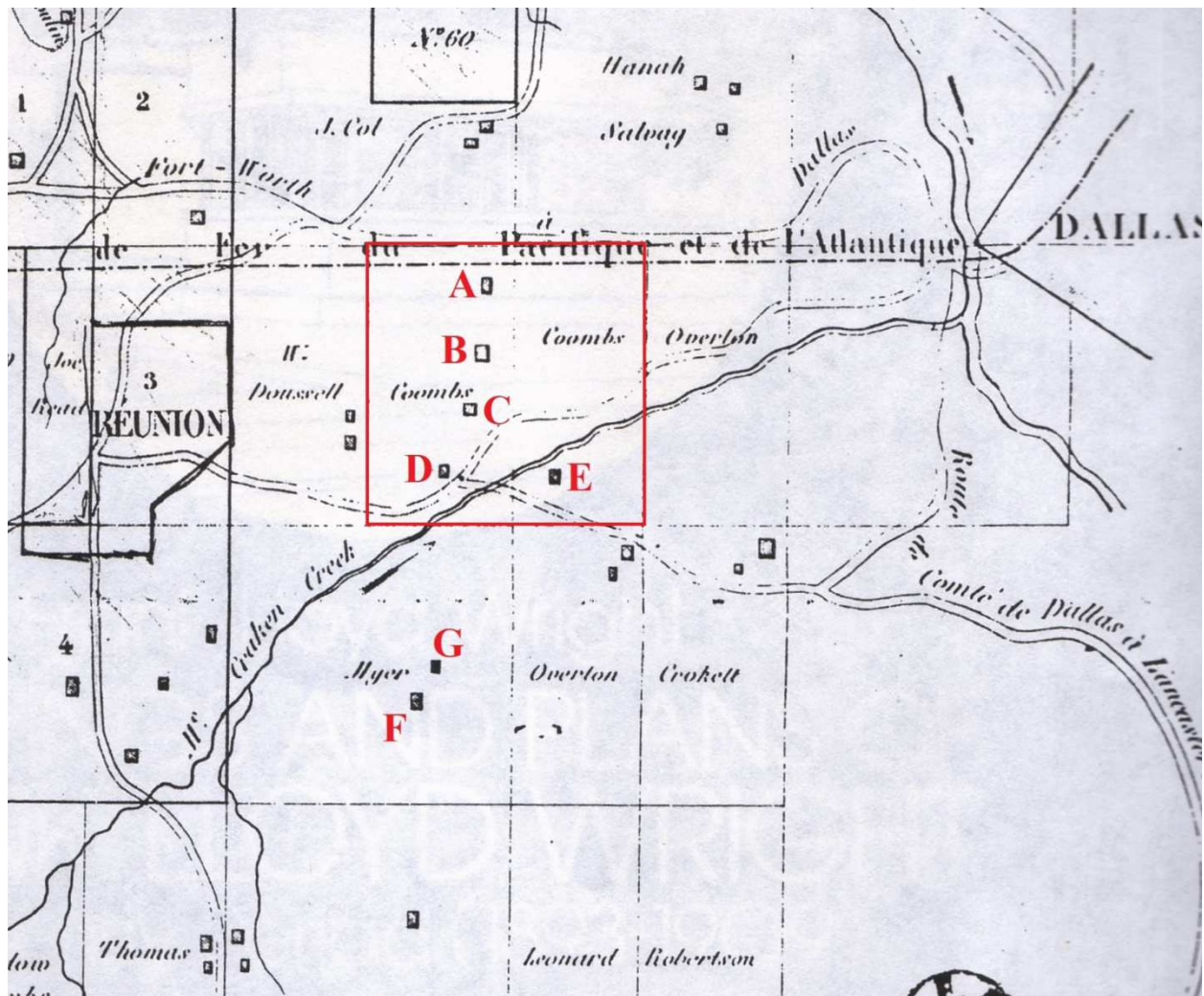


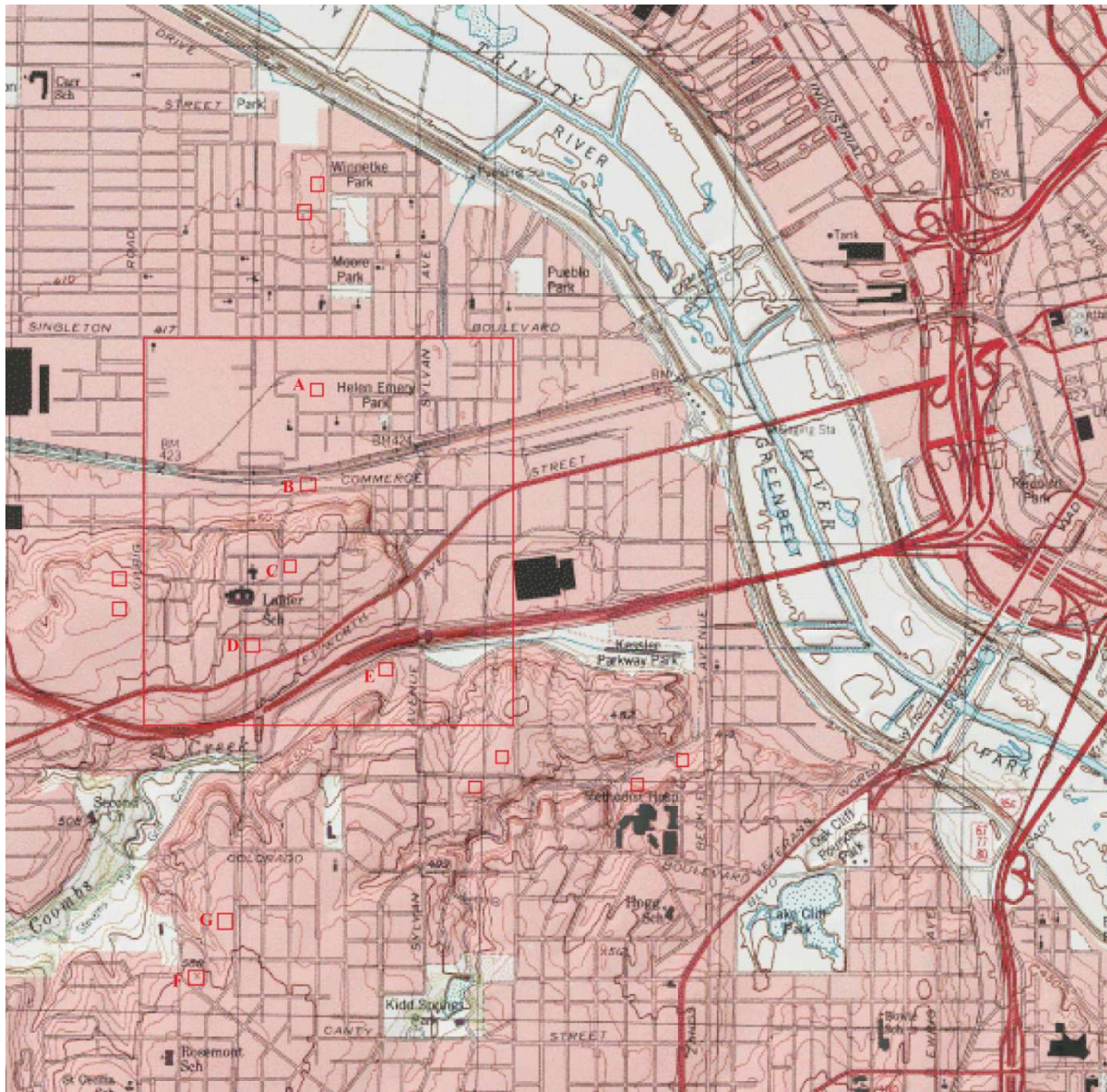
THE 1855 CABIN MAP

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An advance party of the utopian La Reunion Colony started construction of their communal buildings in 1854, a bit more than half a mile west of the *William Coombes Survey*. The first wave of socialist settlers arrived the next summer. Apparently one of the first things they did was draw a map of their new area, published as: "***Plan Des Terres: Appartenant a la Societe de Colonisation Europeo-Americaine dans la Conte De Dallas, Texas***" (*Plan of the lands belonging to the Society of European-American Colonization in Dallas County, Texas*). No date appears on this historic map. It is traditionally dated to year 1855, an estimate which tends to be confirmed by the name "Widow Coombs" printed on it – Berilla Kemper Myers Coombes was a widow after the death of her first husband, Isaac N. Coombes, in July of 1854 and prior to her second marriage, to John W. Bumpas, in December of 1856. Here, I call it "*the 1855 cabin map*" because it shows, as little squares, every structure the earliest La Reunion settlers found standing in their surrounding district, as well as early roads they were using – including today's Fort Worth Avenue and a portion of what-today-is-called Singleton Boulevard.





The 1855 *cabin map* shows a route imagined for a future transcontinental railroad, corresponding roughly with the path the Texas & Pacific actually built on fifteen years later.

I have lettered squares of interest in RED on *the 1855 cabin map*, and scaled their locations in BLUE onto this modern topo map – with the *William Coombes Survey* outlined as a blue square.

There are five structures shown on this 1855 cabin map inside William Coombes' square mile. Discussion about these follows, plus about two other shown in the William Myers Section.

The town site for the commune is outlined, and named "REUNION", on *the 1855 cabin map* – positioned the escarpment's slope at – and above – today's concrete smoke-stack (surviving today from a former cement factory, otherwise now completely dismantled and gone).

This is a wonderful map, but its accuracy turns out to be too imprecise to pinpoint exact locations of the various cabins and structures it represents. For example, we have a good idea of the exact location of the cabin occupied in 1855 by William Coombes, labeled here with a red "D". The scaled map location is more than 1,100 feet away from where we think Coombes cabin had actually stood (a "block and half" – more than 335 meters). The La Reunion map makers presumably measured cabin locations by counting their "paces" (the number of footsteps between markers), or by experienced guesses of distance based only on eyesight. The meanderings of Coombes Creek (labeled "McCracken Creek") are rendered as a mere wavy line.

Nevertheless, here are positions of a few structures scaled from the 1855 cabin map and notes:

"A": (32.776568 N; 96.840435 W), now 1190 Manacor Lane 75212.

No other record is known about any cabin in this spot in year 1855; but Judge William Coombes (1857-1939) recalled, "In 1845 grandfather erected a treadmill, in what is now Edgefield addition. The mill stood, as an abandoned building, till about 1870." (1928-07-01; *Dallas Morning News*, p.8; W.S. Adair, "*Horse Stealing Best Sport of Texas Indians*".) The "Edgefield Addition" is a subdivision located a couple of blocks to the north, on the north side of Singleton Boulevard – beyond William Coombes' northern property line. *The 1855 cabin map* shows no structure standing in "the Edgefield Addition". Perhaps this "A" (instead) was the site of William Coombes treadmill building of 1845.

"B": (32.772866 N; 96.841324 W), now 1211-1299 West Commerce Street.

No other record is known about any cabin in this spot in year 1855; but in 1889 Samuel Houston Coombes (1860-1898), a son of William N. Coombes, purchased a home at almost exactly this location (Lot 2, Block 26; Fishers 2nd Addition; per Dallas County Deed Records, Vol. 126, page 329), sold to him by W.R. Fisher, his step-brother-in-law. There is no record that the 1889 purchase had been an older cabin – but it's a possibility.

"C": (32.770306 N; 96.841766 W), presently 1246 N. Stafford.

No other record is known about any cabin at this spot in year 1855; but reportedly a log cabin is enclosed within a frame house across the street, at 1319 Stafford. Western Heights resident Deborah Carpenter tells me saying that the cabin – which she had heard called "the long house" or "the Long's house", now enclosed in 1319 Stafford (supposedly a "dog trot" design). had previously been on Edgefield, facing downtown.

Here it will mentioned that there is reportedly yet another old log cabin embedded in a house west of Neal on Flanders Street. Deborah Carpenter repeats a report that there is a log cabin is inside 1727 Flanders. No cabin appears in a corresponding position on this *1855 cabin map*; nothing at all appears in this position on the 1922 Sanborn map of the area. Her husband's grandmother, Willie Myrle "Shanny" Sims Crabtree Allen lived there in the 1940s-1950s, dying in 1962. The Allen family might have moved across Vilbig from the David Hunter Survey sometime after 1922. The cement factory quarried (excavated) west of Vilbig.

"D": (32.76728 N; 96.843485 W), presently the southeast corner of Castle and Windomere.

This appears to represent the cabin occupied by William Coombes (attributed originally to Mabel Gilbert), which, as stated in the separate article "Mabel Gilbert's Cabin", is believed to be seen in old aerial photos and Sanborn Insurance maps, located about 1,100 feet west northwest (at: 36.7500278 N; 96.8452778 W). This cabin was moved at sometime after 1950 and demolished in 2018.

The *1855 cabin map* illustrates the ancient road now known as Fort Worth Avenue, as well as a road now non-existent -- crossing the Creek (then far more shallow) and climbing up into what-is-now East Kessler.

"E": (32.766453 N.; 96.837238 W.), presently 1602 Kessler Parkway.

No other record is known about any cabin in this spot in year 1855; but this is a likely candidate for being the second grist mill of William Coombes. In this webpage's summary biographical article ("William Coombes in Texas", at www.7Ladders.com/Coombes/Combes-Bio.pdf, p. 12 of 26), this author states, "At some point in time after his second marriage in October 1848, William Coombes borrowed money to build his second mill, located on the southeast corner of his square mile. It was constructed by his second wife's father, John McDowell, a millwright."

Also, since this author endeavors to chronicle the history of the adjacent William Myers Section, the following two structures appearing on the 1855 cabin map are noted:

"F": (32.75734 N.; 96.84524 W.), presently 1506 Kingshighway.

Previously I calculated this cabin's site as being at 950 Montclair (32.755835 N; 96.845967 W.), a hilltop prominence with a better scenic view to the west.

"G": (32.75.7043 N; 96.94443 W), presently 1051 N. Windomere.

In *The History of the William Myers Section, Volume 5* (2002), page 88, in a reproduction of an abstract title for the Kessler Square Addition there is an affidavit from a J.H. English and wife, dated October 1913, affirming that though they have rented this land for years, they make no claim to ownership. There is no similar affidavit in an abstract of title for The Oak Cliff Annex addition (Kingshighway), bound as **Volume 4** (2002). (*Jim Barnes Collection, Dallas Public Library, and/or Dealey Library of the Dallas Historical Society*). Since this English family was still living on the east half of the William Myers Section in 1913, with Oak Cliff Annex having been platted in 1909, then their residence had (probably) not been located on Kingshighway. Perhaps they lived in newer construction -- it is not certain that the English household resided in either of the cabins shown on *the 1855 cabin map* -- and even if they had, it is uncertain which of the two, "F" or "G", might have been theirs; but I am inclined to imagine that they resided in "G", which stood on the grounds of the Kessler Square addition, in whose abstract of title their affidavit is cited.

It is marvelous that La Reunion created this extraordinary map of their district; but it lacks sufficient precision for us confidently to ascertain exact locations of buildings..

(End)