



802 San Marcos Street Austin, Texas 78702
(512) 472-8180 www.frenchlegationmuseum.org

Hands on the Past

How well do you remember the French Legation?

1. Between the years of 1836 and 1846, Texas was a _____. What happened in 1846 to change this?
2. The French Legation was built in _____. How many other buildings like it remain in Austin?
3. _____ was the first country to recognize Texas as an _____.
4. Alphonse Dubois was:
A. the French Foreign Minister B. A charge d'affaires C. The mayor of New Orleans D. An Ambassador.
5. Dubois started the _____ War with Richard Bullock, an _____.
6. As a result of this episode, Dubois had to:
A. have dinner with Sam Houston B. Return to France C. Depart Austin D. Fight a duel
7. The breezeway in the house is called a _____. Why were houses built like this?
8. Dr. Joseph Robertson bought the French Legation in 1848 to start a _____. Why do you think he wanted to do that?
9. Dr. Robertson and his wife, Lydia, had _____ children.
10. How many of the Robertson daughters shared a bedroom? How many beds did they have?
11. How did the Robertsons take a bath?
12. How many years did the Robertsons live in the house? Name two other major historical events that took place during this time.
13. Why was the kitchen built separately from the house?
14. What kind of floor did the original kitchen have? Who worked in the kitchen?
15. Name three artifacts that you remember from the kitchen. How were those artifacts used?

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Teachers' Key

1. Between the years of 1836 and 1846, Texas was a *republic*. What happened in 1846 to change this? *Texas became part of the United States.*
2. The French Legation was built in *1841*. How many other buildings like it remain in Austin? *No other buildings like it remain in Austin.*
3. *France* was the first country to recognize Texas as an *independent nation*.
4. Alphonse Dubois was: *B. A charge d'affaires*
5. Dubois started the *Pig* War with Richard Bullock, an *innkeeper*.
6. As a result of this episode, Dubois had to: *C. Depart Austin*
7. The breezeway in the house is called a *dogtrot*. Why were houses built like this? *To allow the air to circulate through the house and keep it cool.*
8. Dr. Joseph Robertson bought the French Legation in 1848 to start a *school for girls*. Why do you think he wanted to do that? *In the mid-nineteenth century, daughters from affluent families studied at girls' schools or female seminaries, where they learned to speak French, play a musical instrument, paint, and to improve their penmanship and reading. Today, an institution such as this is called a finishing school.*
9. Dr. Robertson and his wife, Lydia, had *11* children.
10. How many of the Robertson daughters shared a bedroom? How many beds did they have? *Six Robertson daughters shared a bedroom and only one bed.*
11. How did the Robertsons take a bath? *Children and adults had a hipbath or small tub in which the bather sat upright. Water warmed at the kitchen fireplace was poured into the tub. People at this time usually bathed once a week – some even less.*
12. How many years did the Robertsons live in the house? Name two other major historical events that took place during this time. *The Robertsons lived in the house ninety years [1848 to 1940]. The Civil War, the Spanish-American War, World War I, and the Great Depression all took place while the Robertsons lived at the French Legation. Railroads, the telephone, the automobile, electricity, and the radio all came to Texas in those ninety years.*

13. Why was the kitchen built separately from the house? *In the southern United States, most kitchens were separate from the house to reduce the danger of a fire spreading to the main house. It also kept cooking odors and heat away from the house as well. It is believed that the Legation's kitchen burned several times before 1880.*
14. What kind of floor did the original kitchen have? Who worked in the kitchen? *The kitchen had a dirt floor because it reduced the cost of construction and helped to prevent fires. Servants and slaves worked in the kitchen.*
15. Name three artifacts that you remember from the kitchen. How were those artifacts used? *Memorable artifacts from the kitchen include the glass flycatcher [lures and traps flies so they cannot escape], panetiere [bread cooler or baker's safe], chauffe bain [used to heat hot water for one's bath], and lavabo [used for running water].*