Events Under American Flag in Ascension Parish Recalled

Acadians Came to Area While Spanish Ruled

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DONALDSONVILLE, La. —

The coming of Flag Day on June 14 is a reminder that the American flag, adding stars as the years went along, has flown over Ascension Parish for a very long time.

It has waved in the breezes that have cooled the populace in the heat of summer and in the whipping winds that have chilled the people in winter.

Its stars and stripes have been visible in big events and in small ones, as history was made by men and women who moved through their particular times.

It continued to be visible in a time when Louisiana and Ascension Parish chose a Confederate banner, and "Old Glory" remained in the hands of those termed "Union" and "Federal" forces.

The Acadians, who were expelled from Nova Scotia and a flag under which they had lived there, came to Louisiana when the Spanish flag was flying. They were on hand when the American flag was raised.

"ACADIAN" COASTS

In fact, at the time the United States acquired the Louisiana territory, the Acadians formed at least two-thirds of the population of what came to be known as the "First Acadian Coast" and the "Second Acadian Coast."

These two, now St. James and Ascension parishes, were one of the 12 original counties when the area became an American territory and the county name was "Acadia."

In its years of floating in the breeze over Ascension Parish the American Flag has witnessed flood, fire, government and the workings of progress.

It saw the early days of steamboat travel, and an early newspaper account notes that during the stage of low water at the meeting place of the Mississippi River and Bayou Lafourche the village was "torpid," with citizens remaining at home and "perched upon a temporary platform they had raised above the counters and upon which goods and merchandise were piled pell mell."

The writer found Mr. Blouin and H. D. Minor "perched upon the levee presents a pleasing appearance" thick with spectators.

The flag waved from the top of the Louisiana State House for the brief period that Donaldsonville was the capital city in 1830 and 1831, a town that legislators found dull and lonely, to their disgust and disgruntlement as they left 60 days later.

There were 25 representatives and 14 senators in those days and when they returned in 1831 they stayed one week then returned the capital city title to New Orleans.

The small area of Faubourgs Lessard and Conway were by Act 83 of the 1840 legislature incorporated into the municipality of Unionville with a mayor and five aldermen. Six years later this community, over which the flag had waved, became part of Donaldsonville.

HOUSED IN CITY

The Acadian Coast was housed in this city and headed by W. J. McCulloch in 1854.

The American flag was visible as a Federal officer asked the Donaldsonville mayor to evacuate the population within three days because the town would be bombarded for the trigger-happy action of a Confederate sympathizer in firing a hidden cannon on the Union vessel Laurel Hill and killing its pilot.

Crevasse and high water were witnessed by the flag. An April, 1882, letter by an unidentified person in The Donaldsonville Chief, local newspaper, told of arriving at the store of Mr. C. Z. Blouin on the way to New River and running "right into it with my heavy oak skiff."

The flag was waving as the telegraph came to town and a special service was begun in lieu of a telephone line for which subscriptions had been solicited. There was a slight charge for wire messages but those who had subscribed to the telephone were told they could use "the fire free of charge."

As the American flag waved over the parish, J. D. Clarkson in 1916, as manager of the Jefferson Highway, sought the best route from Port Allen to New Orleans, but decided against the west side of the Mississippi River when he learned the mileage was 125 and there were 27 dangerous turns to be negotiated. The east bank got the highway.