State Was Ruled by Spanish on First Day of Thanksgiving

Acadians Settled on Site Now Donaldsonville

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Donaldsonville, La.

When the United States celebrated its first national Thanksgiving Day on Nov. 26, 1789, Louisiana, governed by Estevan Miro, was under Spanish rule. But in those waiting days of blessings, heat waves were known.

November 180 years ago the exiled Acadians who had settled on the site of what would be Donaldsonville must have expressed gratitude to God for the fertile soil that had yielded through the generations.

In the third year after Louisiana was purchased from France, this community had reason to be thankful, for in 1800 the sugarhouse of Louis Colomb, caught fire by a spark from a chimney, and both building and its 120 bushels of sugar were destroyed. That was in 1802.

In the midst of the Thanksgiving period in 1833 severe weather destroyed what had been a highly promising sugar crop in the Donaldsonville vicinity.

November also marked the time of call to the political arena, and at the month drew to a close there were those who were thankful that they had scored a victory.

In 1879, with November elections looming, the town council pledged itself "to keep the peace of the said town on the withdrawal of the militia." It ordered bars to remain closed at election time until the "ballot boxes are regularly removed from the town.

In 1871, local residents were thankful for the railroad which was transporting passengers and hauling freight, but there was no job in November on Cahaba to the street where rains were defeating pedestrians.

Discussing the impossibility of the rain-soaked street, the editor of "The Child," local newspaper, remarked: "We'd rather stick a nail in our foot than walk to the railroad after a rain.

November of 1874 brought the happy news that a steam ferry would operate on the Mississippi River at Donaldsonville.

Again in 1876 the parishioners of Ascension Catholic Church had cause to be thankful...