

NO MAN'S LAND

BECOMING LOUISIANA

1819-1821

OVERVIEW

LOUISIANA'S FINAL FRONTIER

The Neutral Strip region, (a.k.a. No Man's Land) draws its name from the area's brief stint as an official buffer zone between Spain and the United States following the Louisiana Purchase. When the United States purchased the territory from France, Spain and the U.S. were in conflict over the boundary south of Natchitoches. In part, this confusion derived from the region's long history, even before Spanish rule during the 1790s and 1800s, as a contested area with unclear boundaries. Moreover, to a large degree Spain governed the region with a blind eye, issuing land grants and allowing squatters and all manner of self-directed settlers, such as Native Americans who lost lands during the French-Indian War, to settle there in order to thwart American expansion. In lieu of an armed clash to decide the new territory's borders, both governments agreed to remove all troops from the disputed area until boundaries could be determined, and the official Neutral Strip was born.



The region's use as an official buffer between Louisiana and Spanish Texas lasted roughly from 1806 until the 1819 Adams-Onís Treaty that established the Sabine River as the territory's western boundary.

While some may lump the culture of the very western portion of Louisiana into the general culture of Louisiana, others identify it as a separate folk region. Slow to be settled, and marked by a pivotal moment in history, the Neutral Strip region exhibits a culture colored by several pockets of diverse folk groups—like Native Americans, remnants of early Spanish colonies, Scots-Irish pioneers, African Americans, and others—who fiercely hold on to their traditions and notions of identity. Sometimes described as a place filled with an outlaw culture or as a region with a reputation for a tough and isolated place, the region is better understood as a bastion for those cultural groups who wished to find a home where they could preserve a way of life they cherished.

• A BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION •

PURPOSE

WHERE COLLARDS MEET CRAWFISH

The hardy pioneers who settled in this area combined elements of Native American, Anglo, Spanish, French, and African cultures and created rugged individuals who developed a strong sense of independence and self-reliance as they made a life for themselves and their families in Louisiana's final frontier, "No Man's Land".

Like our stories of outlaws or buried treasure, our other traditions—legends of circuit riders, running deer with dogs in the woods, and so on—express not only the knowledge that our people found a way to inhabit and thrive in a region known to be sparsely populated, set apart, and perhaps even a little dangerous, but also their pride in having done so.

The No Man's Land - Becoming Louisiana Bicentennial Celebration is a collaborative effort between the seven parishes who are historically tied to the geographic area of No Man's Land. Beginning in the Fall of 2018 and continuing into the Fall of 2021, the No Man's Land Bicentennial Committee will jointly promote the culture, history, art, folklife, natural resources, cuisine, attractions and events of No Man's Land.

BICENTENNIAL COMMITTEE

Looking for ways to celebrate the bicentennial? Contact your parish representative for more bicentennial information. Get creative and help us mark this special celebration with any current events that you have planned or any new events that you may be looking to plan as a way to mark this celebration.

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