

# 3 Flags Festival

March 10-14, 2004 - St. Louis, Missouri

THE LOUISIANA PURCHASE BICENTENNIAL

1804  
France Spain  
America



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## For Immediate Release

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### Three Flags Festival to Commemorate Louisiana Purchase Bicentennial

*Schedule of events will culminate with commemoration of historic ceremony*

1904  
St. Louis – The largest and swiftest act of American expansion—the Louisiana Purchase—doubled the size of the fledgling United States, transforming the country’s history and shaping its geographical, political and cultural contours. The Louisiana Purchase Three Flags Festival in St. Louis March 10-14, 2004, will commemorate the bicentennial of this momentous occasion, as well as the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial.

The Three Flags Festival is one of the earliest Signature Events of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial. The final transfer of the Louisiana Territory to the United States in St. Louis made it possible for the explorers to begin their expedition.

“The Louisiana Purchase has such historical significance, it is only fitting we recognize this anniversary in a reflective manner involving all the cultures impacted by the purchase and subsequent expedition,” said Elizabeth Gentry Sayad, co-chairperson of the Three Flags Festival. “The commemoration of the purchase will be no mere ceremony. It will be an exercise in civic engagement, a call for renewed understanding of the American past and its lessons for the future.”

The Three Flags Festival will offer activities ranging from significant exhibits of art, artifacts and historical documents, scholarly symposia, family-style festivals and religious ceremonies. The festival will culminate with the Three Flags Ceremony on the banks of the Mississippi on the grounds of The Gateway Arch. The Principal Chief of the Osage Nation and heads of state from France, Spain and the United States are invited to commemorate the final transfer of the Louisiana Territory to the United States.

(more)

2004

The Three Flags Festival will begin March 10 with a scholarly symposia co-sponsored by the National Park Service and Missouri Historical Society attracting scholars from Europe and America. Friday, March 12 will feature expert-guided tours of the historic "Creole Corridor" on both sides of the Mississippi River, along with a formal concert at the St. Louis Cathedral Basilica. Participants are encouraged to visit the wide range of exhibits on Saturday, March 13, before the Louisiana Purchase Bicentennial Ball in the evening.

The festival's final event, the commemoration of the Three Flags Ceremony, will take place Sunday, March 14, after Festival High Masses at the St. Louis Cathedral Basilica and Christ Church Cathedral. The United States Mint will publicly release the first coin in its Westward Journey Nickel Series. An actor portraying Meriwether Lewis, a signatory witness of the Louisiana Purchase, will cross the Mississippi River from Illinois to join the ceremony. Original purchase documents from the National Archives will be on display. An Osage Prayer Song will open the ceremony. The Scott Air Force Band with soloists from the St. Louis Symphony, St. Louis Opera Theatre and the Municipal Opera, as well as the St. Charles Fife and Drum Corps will perform the three national anthems. Noted historian, Dayton Duncan, will emcee the ceremony.

Invited dignitaries include American President George W. Bush, French President Jacques Chirac, Spanish King Juan Carlos and Principal Chief James Gray of the Osage Nation.

St. Louis will once again become the center of the world's attention in marking the bicentennial of the Louisiana Purchase and the Lewis and Clark Expedition, beginning with the Three Flags Festival. "The events in St. Louis in 1804 forever shaped the future of the young United States," said Blanche Touhill, co-chair of the Louisiana Purchase Three Flags Festival. "America's history of westward expansion has captivated generations of people around the world. We expect thousands will undertake a pilgrimage to St. Louis to be part of this important historical event."

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*The Louisiana Purchase Three Flags Festival in St. Louis, March 10-14, 2004, will commemorate the Louisiana Purchase Bicentennial and the treaty's role in the history of the United States and Missouri. Leading up to the anniversary of the final transfer of the Louisiana Territory, which took place in St. Louis on March 10, 1804, the public events and other programming of the Three Flags Festival will highlight the continuing importance of the Louisiana Purchase in American politics and culture. The Three Flags Festival has been developed by the National Louisiana Purchase Bicentennial Committee, which is a coalition of major St. Louis, regional and national public and private organizations and citizens.*