

Early Leticia history mentions a Portuguese explorer who, after becoming lost on the Amazon, died of starvation at the present site of Leticia with the rest of his crew. The Peruvian captain Benigno Bustamante, then governor of the Peruvian department of Loreto, founded the city itself on April 25, 1867. Legend has it that when the Peruvian government decided to colonise the area (in order to prevent the Colombian government from claiming it first), they found a cross inscribed with the words "San Antonio", naming the new town after this cross.



Parque Santander's old picture

A legend states that a Colombian soldier fell in love with an Amerindian woman named Leticia and decided to name the settlement after her. It could also be named after Saint Leticia. However, Peruvian records indicate that on the 15 December 1867, the port of "San Antonio" was renamed to "Leticia" by Peruvian engineer Manuel Charón. Charón named the port in honor of a young female resident of the Peruvian city of Iquitos named Leticia Smith.

Small border incidents between Peru and Colombia occurred in 1911, and in 1922 the two governments of those countries reached a controversial agreement awarding the Leticia area to Colombia in exchange for recognizing Peru's rights to the zone south of the Putumayo River, which was also claimed by Ecuador. This agreement proved to be unpopular among the Peruvian population, despite the treaty's ratification in 1928, because the treaty was signed in secret and it awarded Colombia a region that had been founded by Peruvians and that had a large Peruvian population living within its borders.



Leticia Amazonas First Mayor

A small war between Colombia and Peru over the town began in September 1932 when two hundred Peruvians, followed later by military troops, occupied public buildings in Leticia. Hand-to-hand combat ensued between small Colombian and Peruvian forces in early 1933. The conflict lasted until May 1933, when a cease-fire negotiated by the League of Nations went into effect in order to settle the conflict. The League finally awarded the disputed area to Colombia in June 1934.

**Visits:** (9193)