

THE FLAGS OF AMERICAN LIBERTY

This evening, the young men of Troop 331 are proud to have the opportunity to present "THE FLAGS OF AMERICAN LIBERTY", an opportunity to see many of the flags that have represented the people of the United States of America, from the time of the Declaration of Independence to today. You may remain seated or at ease during the presentation of the historical flags. At the end of the program, we will ask you to stand as our color guard presents the Flag of the United States of America and to join us in the pledge of allegiance.

From the beginning of recorded time, banners and flags have served as symbols of ideas or allegiances. After the voyage of Columbus, many European flags flew over the land that was destined in time to become this nation. At various times the flags of Spain, France, England, Holland, Sweden and Mexico flew over what is today the United States of America. As the sentiments of freedom and independence began to grow among the colonists, it was quite natural for them to create new flags to symbolize their new ideals. We now present some examples of these flags with their history.

The Taunton Flag

The Magna Charta had established for Englishmen the principle that "taxation without representation is tyranny". The colonists felt that the King and Parliament when dealing with Englishmen living on American soil should, not abandon this, and other principles fundamental to the rights of English citizens.

Life in the New World was to engender an ever-deepening desire in the hearts of these American colonists for freedom and the elimination of many of the Old World's class distinctions. In their desire for a flag more expressive of their new concepts as free men, the townspeople of Taunton, Massachusetts, in October of 1774, placed the words "Liberty" and "Union" upon the plain red field of the old English sea flag.

The colonists resented the injustices practiced by England; but because of their common heritage, family ties, and cherished traditions, they were reluctant to separate themselves completely from the Mother Country. And so, at the outset, we find them seeking only political freedom within the British Empire.

The Pine Tree Flag

The colonists had left Europe to escape the abuses, restraints, and dictates of men in government. They had made the venture on their own initiative and at their own risk, and because of this, they felt no subservience to the British government. By 1763, the colonial story in America began to fade, and our American destiny began to unfold. Liberty became the watchword, and in New England the pine tree became the symbol of liberty.

The colonist's choice for the pine tree as a symbol went back to the earliest days of Massachusetts, when these majestic trees had covered the hills with their virgin beauty, and had furnished the logs for the colonist's primitive homes.

The flag got its legend, "AN APPEAL TO HEAVEN", from a resolution sent to England by the Massachusetts Provincial Congress, which declared: "Appealing to Heaven for the justice of our cause, we determine to die or be free".

The Grand Union or Cambridge Flag

Not only had the King unjustly levied taxes but he had restricted trade. At first, the colonists were only resentful. At the outset, they sought only Justice and what they considered their rights as Englishmen. However, with the passage of the Intolerable Acts of 1774, they determined upon a course of action that would free them from the whims and dictates of men in government. The common passion for self-government that existed throughout the 13 colonies was to form the bond that was to weld them to each other.

As the colonial forces took on a national aspect, it became necessary to provide a national flag, and out of this situation came the Grand Union or Cambridge Flag...its 13 red and white strips symbolizing the union of the 13 colonies; the King's colors still remaining in the canton. While this banner was only half American, it expressed the political situation in the colonies, which still acknowledged their allegiance to Great Britain.

In 1777, the Second Continental Congress took over the colonial armies and unanimously elected George Washington as General and Commander in Chief of the new American army. When Washington took command at Cambridge, Massachusetts, on January 2, 1776, this flag was officially hoisted as the standard of the American army. It continued to be the Flag of the Revolution until the adoption of the Stars and Stripes.

The Bedford Flag

Under this unusual banner, the Minute Men of Bedford Massachusetts assembled at Concord and Lexington to defend the military supplies of the patriots stored at Concord Bridge. With no national emblem available, they chose to march under this flag when they were to fire the shot for freedom that was "to be heard around the world". To the Minute Men of New England, the mailed fist clasp ing a dagger that you see extending from the gray cloud, symbolized their faith that God supports in battle the cause of a righteous purpose. Translated, the Latin motto means "Conquer or Die", a battle cry which later in America was to become "Liberty or Death".

The Moultrie Flag

On September 13, 1775, Colonel William Moultrie raised over Fort Johnson, in the harbor of Charleston, South Carolina, what is reputed to be the first distinctly American Flag used in the Colonial Army in the far South.

On June 28, 1775, Colonel Moultrie and his men were engaged in constructing a rampart for the defense of the fort, when a British fleet of nine ships fired upon them. At one point during the battle, the crescent flag fell outside the breach. Sergeant William Jasper, seeing this, called to the Colonel, "Let us not fight without a flag!" Leaping from the parapet, Jasper recovered the flag and, amid a hail of bullets, mounted it again upon the bastion. This bravery inspired the soldiers to greater resistance and, after an intense artillery attack lasting 10 hours; the British were compelled to withdraw. Charleston was saved and this victory left the southern states secure from invasion for more than two years.

The First Stars and Stripes –Commonly Known As The "Betsy Ross Flag"

As the war progressed, sentiment and affection for the Mother Country turned to bitterness and the colonists became determined to fight for Independence as well as Justice. On July 4, 1776, they set for in a Declaration of Independence, the various economic and political grievances which had forced them to this separation. With their new determination came, of course, the desire for a new flag – one which would show no allegiance to England or her monarch.

On June 14, 1777, the forefathers in session at the Continental Congress in Philadelphia, by resolution, created a starry banner. The resolution read:

**“That the flag of the United States be
13 stripes alternate red and white,
that the union be 13 stars white on a blue field,
representing A New Constellation.”**

From antiquity, stars have been considered a symbol of sovereignty; and in this new “constellation”, united now in one radiance and luster, were the stars of the 13 free, sovereign, and independent states. With the adoption of this flag, our colonial period ended and the history of the new nation began.

The Flag of the Culpeper Minute Men

Symbolizing the determination and resolution of free men to remain free, and carrying the defiant challenge “DON’T TREAD ON ME”, flags with Rattlesnake designs were as well-loved in the southern states, as designs with Pine Trees were in New England.

Patrick Henry, idolized for his fearless defense of freedom, was the original leader of the Culpeper Minute Men, and many Virginians served their country gallantly under this flag. Instead of regular uniforms, the men wore the hunting shirts and fur caps of frontiersmen and on their shirt fronts, emblazoned in large white letters, were the memorable words of Patrick Henry – “Liberty or Death” – and these words were also part of the legend on their flag. This Culpeper flag was the challenge of men who would remain free. It was the emblem of those who preferred death to enslavement.

The Bennington Flag

The Bennington Flag – one of the most beautiful of the American Revolution, is believed to have been carried by General Stark and his Green Mountain Boys at the Battle of Bennington, Vermont, on August 16, 1777.

Burgoyne, the British general operating in Northern New York, had been advised that the cattle, horses and food supplies which his army badly needed for furthering his campaign, were available in Southern Vermont. He accordingly sent a force of soldiers to capture these supplies.

Fortunately for America, General Stark, a resolute and experienced military leader with 1500 New Hampshire volunteers, was near Bennington. Legend says as these frontiersmen approached the battlefield, General Stark said to his patriot soldiers, “My men yonder

are the Hessians. Tonight the American flag floats from yonder hill, or Molly Stark sleeps a widow." That night the American flag did float from "yonder hill".

The defeat of the royal troops was a bitter blow to Burgoyne and eventually led to his final surrender at Saratoga. This victory led King Louis XVI of France and his ministers to recognize the independence of the United States, and brought France into the war as a much-needed ally.

The Star Spangled Banner

When Vermont and Kentucky were admitted to statehood in the new union of the Republic, it was quite natural that they should wish to be represented in the nation's flag; so on May 1, 1794, Congress passed the Second Flag Resolution providing:

**"That the flag of the United States
be 15 stripes alternate red and white,
and that the union be 15 stars,
white on a blue field."**

This flag flew over Fort McHenry during the bombardment of September 13, 1814. The British had just razed the City of Washington, and re-embarked on their ships to attack the City of Baltimore, the approach to which was guarded by Fort McHenry. On this night a young attorney in Baltimore had gone to the British officers to secure the release of a friend, and being detained aboard ship during the night, had anxiously waited and watched to see the outcome of the battle. With the coming of dawn, he glimpsed the stars and stripes still flying over Fort McHenry. This was the incident, and this the flag which inspired Francis Scott Key to pen the words of our national Anthem, "The Star Spangled Banner."

The First Old Glory

Between 1794 and 1818, five more states were to seek admission to the federal union, and it became apparent that if a star and a stripe were added for each new state, the flag would become unwieldy. Thus, it was on the 4th day of April 1818, Congress passed a third resolution (the resolution still in effect today), providing for a flag of 20 stars and 13 red and white stripes. It also provided for the addition of one star to the union of the flag on the 4th day of July next succeeding the admission of any additional state.

Under this resolution, our national emblem assumed permanent form and through the years, the admission of 30 additional states has brought to its union of 50 stars, representing a truly glorious constellation!

Now will everyone please rise for the presentation of the colors?

Color Guard attention!

Forward March

Scout Salute or Hands Over Your Hearts

Color Guard Post the Colors

Would you please join us in the Pledge of Allegiance?

Color Guard Dismissed

At Ease