

Thirteen Star Flags

The Flag Resolution of June 14, 1777

When the Flag Resolution of June 14, 1777, was issued, it was rather vague as to how a flag should look. The resolution only stated:

"Resolved that the Flag of the united states be 13 stripes, alternate red and white, that the union be thirteen stars white in a blue field representing a new constellation."

The resolution gave no instruction as to how many points the stars should have, nor how the stars should be arranged on the blue union nor how many red stripes or white stripes. Consequently, some flags had stars scattered on the blue field without any specific design, some arranged the stars in rows, and some in a circle. The first Navy Stars and Stripes had the stars arranged in staggered formation in alternate rows of threes and twos on a blue field. Other Stars and Stripes flags had stars arranged in alternate rows of four, five, and four. Some stars had six points or eight points (estoiles) while others had five points (mulletts).

Because of this, there are many variations of the early American flag. If they conform to the stated resolution, and verified as flying either on American soil or on an American war ship, they are often considered official American flags and shown equal respect.

Green Mountain Boys Flag

On August 16, 1777, the "Green Mountain Boys" fought under General Stark at the Battle of Bennington. It's a green



field represented their name and the thirteen white stars are a tribute to the thirteen colonies.

Brandywine Flag 1777

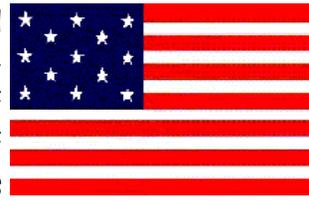


In the Revolution, military units often had different flags (or no flags). Reputedly carried at the Battle of Brandywine on September 11, 1777, this flag was one of the first with stars

and stripes. New research indicates it may have been a militia color.

1st Navy Stars & Stripes (1777)

The first documented flag was this staggered star pattern of 3-2-3-2-3 rows of stars. This flag was



recorded as first being flown by John Paul Jones on the USS Ranger. On April 24, 1778, John Paul Jones became the first American officer to have the American flag recognized by a foreign power.

Betsy Ross Flag (1776)



This version of the Colonial flag is the most well known. The circular design was by George Washington, Francis Hopkinson, and Betsy Ross. The Congress, however, did not specify an arrangement for the

stars in the canton, as a result there are many variations in the flags that followed until 1912.

Hulbert Flag (1775)

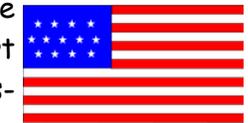


Named after an old Long Island family, the Hulbert Flag, of the Revolutionary period, displays its heraldic six pointed stars in the

rare "cross," or "diamond," pattern. It was discovered in 1926.

Fort Independence Flag (1781)

This version of the "Stars and Stripes" flag was said to have been the flag at Fort Independence, in Boston during 1781.



Francis Hopkinson Flag 1777

Strong evidence indicates that Francis Hopkinson of New Jersey, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, was responsible for the stars in the U.S. flag. At the time that the flag resolution was adopted, Hopkinson was the Chairman of the Continental Navy Board's Middle Department. Hopkinson also helped design other devices for the



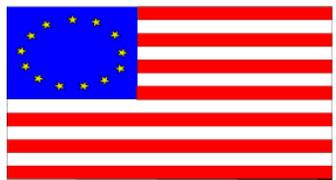
Government including the Great Seal of the United States. For his services, Hopkinson submitted a letter to the Continental Admiralty Board asking "whether a Quarter Cask of the public Wine will not be a proper & reasonable Reward for these Labours of Fancy and a suitable Encouragement to future Exertions of a like Nature." His request was turned down since the Congress regarded him as a public servant.

3rd Maryland Regiment (Cowpens Flag) (1781)

At the battle of Cowpens, South Carolina, January 17, 1781, a flag of related design was first flown by the Third Maryland Regiment; it bore in its canton a circle of twelve stars with the thirteenth in the center.



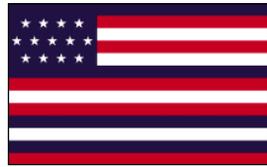
Pierre L'Enfant Flag 1783



In 1783, the celebrated Major Pierre L'Enfant, the architect who would create the

original plans for the nation's capital—sketched this flag on a proposed membership diploma for the patriotic Society of Cincinnati, a veterans' organization for the officers of the Revolutionary War. *Please note: Surviving photos indicate that the oval of stars were in fact golden yellow.*

John Paul Jones Flag 1779

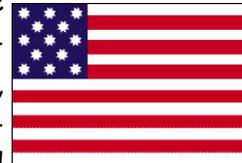


After John Paul Jones and the crew of "Bonhomme Richard" captured HMS "Serapis" on September 23, 1779, a

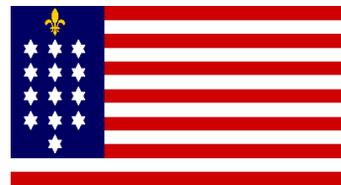
Dutch artist painted a watercolor of this flag, which Jones had hoisted in victory. Blue was considered America's prime national color.

Alliance

The "Alliance" flag is the flag flown on the US Alliance in October, 1779, when the ship accompanied John Paul Jones and the captured ship, the Serapis, to the Netherlands. Notice that this flag starts and ends with white strips.



French Alliance Flag



The French-American alliance is symbolized by a golden fleur-de-lis blooming above thirteen five or

six pointed stars that represent the "XIII Provinces" of America on a long, narrow canton of luminous sky-blue.

Bennington Flag c.1820

The striking "arch" formation may have been charged with Masonic significance, as also the use of unique seven-pointed stars.

Spun of sturdy Vermont flax, and presumably colored with home dyes, the flag has faded back almost to the natural tint of the fibers. Assuming, however, that the lighter and darker tones were once, respectively, white and red, then it appears that the stripes followed the heraldic order frequently used to the end of the Revolutionary period: alternate white and red, instead of the alternate red and white of modern custom.



Indian Peace (1803)

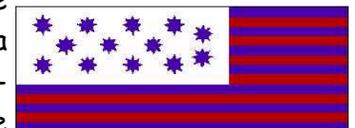


The American government often presented the Stars and Stripes to friendly Indian

nations. These "Indian Peace Flags" displayed the U.S. coat of arms and usually accompanied other gifts, including medals with the words "peace and friendship."

Guilford Courthouse Flag (1781)

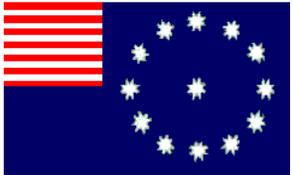
The flag of the North Carolina Militia is reputed to have



been flown at the battle of Guilford Courthouse, March 15, 1781. Thirteen

great blue stars—eight pointed- flash dazzlingly on its elongated canton , and the bold red and blue stripes on the field .

Easton PA Flag (1812)

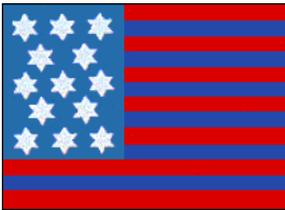


In the Easton Flag, the positions of the national devices are reverses. The thirteen small stripes in the canton recall the

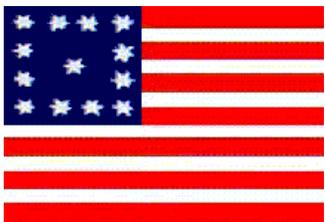
Markoe and Tallmadge standards, which probably did furnish the inspiration for this flag made in Easton Pennsylvania.

Yorktown Simcoe

During the battle of Yorktown in October, 1781, this flag flew on the right flank of the American troops. British commander, John Simcoe, painted this from his station across the river.



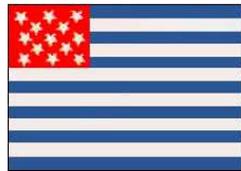
Trumbull



This 13 star flag has 12 of the stars forming a square with the 13th in the center. Revolutionary War officer-turned-painter, John

Trumbull, sketched this version of Old Glory.

Fort Mercer

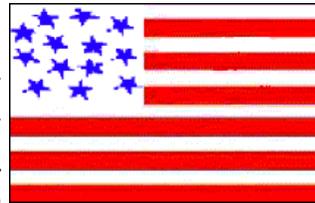


This most unusual 13 star flag was flown at Fort Mercer starting in October, 1777. This flag was clearly inversed with red

and blue switching places. The designer, and the reason for the color changes are unknown

Blue Star

This flag was used during the Revolutionary War. What military units might have carried it are not known. Besides the reversed color canton, the stripes start out with white and there are only 12 of them.



Whiskey Rebellion

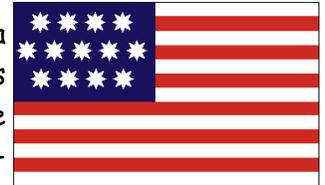


To finance the new country, the Federal government imposed an excise tax on distilled spirits. Many farmers sold their products, including whiskey, for cash and resented this "income tax" on their work. Since coins and currency were scarce, whiskey also served as an important medium of exchange in the commerce of bartering. In Western Pennsylvania, the farmers refused to pay the tax and attacked the collectors

sent from the government. Historians believe that this flag was used in the brief protest, which ended when General Washington called out 15,000 militia men from 5 states.

John Shaw

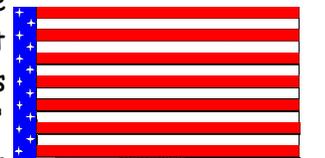
This unusual American flag is a replica of one of two flags ordered by the governor and Council of Maryland in



1783 to be hoisted for the President of the Continental Congress which was scheduled to convene in Annapolis on November 23, 1783. One of the flags probably flew over the president's residence at what is now the grounds of the U.S. Naval Academy. The second one flew atop the State House. These two flags, both of which were made by John Shaw, no longer exist. The design was deduced from receipts for the materials found 200 years later at the Maryland State Archives.

Vertical Star Flag

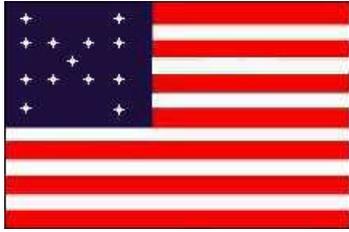
This flag was one of many different takes on the 'stars without a field' idea. The designer



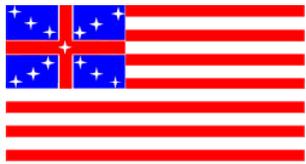
is unknown and its use is as well. The only records we have come to us from a French paper published in 1796

Cross Flag

This flag has the stars making a St. Andrew Cross in such a way that when the flag is hung as a banner, it looks like an hourglass.



Kings Cross



The Scotti Flag Sheet, 1796, contains a flag similar to the Grand Union

Flag. The thirteen stripes begin and end with a red stripe. The blue canton contains a red cross edged with white. Thirteen stars are used to form the St. Andrew's Cross so that the thirteen stars appear in the center of the red cross.