

THE AMERICAN'S CREED

WM. TYLER PAGE

I believe in the United States of America as a government of the people, by the people, for the people; whose just powers are derived from the consent of the governed; a democracy in a republic; a sovereign nation of many sovereign states; a perfect union, one and inseparable; established upon those principles of freedom, equality, justice and humanity for which American patriots sacrificed their lives and fortunes.

I therefore believe it is my duty to my country to love it; to support its constitution; to obey its laws; to respect its flag; and to defend it against all enemies.

RESPECT THE FLAG

WHEN you see the Stars and Stripes displayed, son, stand up and take off your hat. Somebody may titter. It is in the blood of some to deride all expression of noble sentiment. You may blaspheme in the street and stagger drunken in public places, and the bystanders will not pay much attention to you; but if you should get down on your knees and pray to Almighty God, or if you should stand bareheaded while a company of old soldiers marches by with flags to the breeze, some people will think you are showing off.

But don't you mind! When Old Glory comes along, salute, and let them think what they please! When you hear the band play "The Star-Spangled Banner" while you are in a restaurant or hotel dining room, get up even if you rise alone; stand there and don't be ashamed of it, either!

For of all the signs and symbols since the world began there is none other so full of meaning as the flag of this country. That piece of red, white and blue bunting means five thousand years of struggle upward. It is the full-grown flower of ages of fighting for liberty. It is the century plant of human hope in bloom.

Your flag stands for humanity, for an equal opportunity to all the sons of men. Of course we haven't arrived yet at that goal, there are many injustices yet among us, many senseless and cruel customs of the past still clinging to us, but the only hope of righting the wrongs of men lies in the feeling produced in our bosoms by the sight of that flag.

Other flags mean a glorious past, this flag a glorious future. It is not so much the flag of our fathers as it is the flag of our children, and of all children's children yet unborn. It is the flag of tomorrow. It is the signal of the "Good Time Coming." It is not the flag of your king—it is the flag of yourself and of all your neighbors.

Don't be ashamed when your throat chokes and the tears come, as you see it flying from the masts of our ships on all the seas or floating from every flagstaff of the Republic. You will never have a worthier emotion. Reverence it as you would reverence the signature of the Deity.

Listen, son! The band is playing the national anthem—"The Star-Spangled Banner!" They have let loose Old Glory yonder. Stand up—and others will stand with you.

This tribute to the flag is offered to the country in appeal to all men and women of all races, colors and tongues, that they may come to understand that our flag is the symbol of liberty and learn to love it.

ALVIN M. OWSLEY,

Past National Commander, The American Legion.

HISTORY OF THE FLAG

The United States Flag is the third oldest of the National Standards of the world; older than the Union Jack of Britain or the Tricolor of France.

The flag was first authorized by Congress June 14, 1777. This date is now observed as Flag Day throughout America.

The flag was first flown from Fort Stanwix, on the site of the present city of Rome, New York, on August 3, 1777. It was first under fire three days later in the Battle of Oriskany, August 6, 1777.

It was first decreed that there should be a star and a stripe for each state, making thirteen of both; for the states at that time had just been erected from the original thirteen colonies.

The colors of the Flag may be thus explained: The red is for valor, zeal and fervency; the white for hope, purity, cleanliness of life, and rectitude of conduct; the blue, the color of heaven, for reverence to God, loyalty, sincerity, justice and truth.

The star (an ancient symbol of India, Persia and Egypt) symbolizes dominion and sovereignty, as well as lofty aspirations. The constellation of the stars within the union, one star for each state, is emblematic of our Federal Constitution, which reserves to the States their individual sovereignty except as to rights delegated by them to the Federal Government.

The symbolism of the Flag was thus interpreted by Washington: "We take the stars from Heaven, the red from our mother country, separating it by white stripes, thus showing that we have separated from her, and the white stripes shall go down to posterity representing Liberty."

In 1791, Vermont, and in 1792, Kentucky were admitted to the Union and the number of stars and stripes was raised to fifteen in correspondence. As other states came into the Union it became evident there would be too many stripes. So in 1818 Congress enacted that the number of stripes be reduced and restricted henceforth to thirteen, representing the thirteen original states; while a star should be added for each succeeding state. That law is the law of today.

The name "Old Glory" was given to our National Flag August 10, 1831, by Captain William Driver of the brig Charles Doggett.

The flag was first carried in battle at the Brandywine, September 11, 1777. It first flew over foreign territory January 28, 1778, at Nassau, Bahama Islands; Fort Nassau having been captured by the Americans in the course of the war for independence. The first foreign salute to the flag was rendered by the French admiral LaMotte Piquet, off Quiberon Bay, February 13, 1778.

The United States Flag is unique in the deep and noble significance of its message to the entire world, a message of national independence, of individual liberty, of idealism, of patriotism.

It symbolizes national independence and popular sovereignty. It is not the Flag of a reigning family or royal house, but of 205 million free people welded into a Nation, one and inseparable, united not only by community of interest, but by vital unity of sentiment and purpose; a Nation distinguished for the clear individual conception of its citizens alike of their duties and their privileges, their obligations and their rights.

It incarnates for all mankind the spirit of Liberty and the glorious ideal of human freedom; not the freedom of unrestraint or the liberty of license, but an unique ideal of equal opportunity for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, safeguarded by the stern and lofty principles of duty, of righteousness and of justice, and attainable by obedience to self-imposed laws.

Floating from the lofty pinnacle of American idealism, it is a beacon of enduring hope, like the famous Bartholdi Statue of Liberty Enlightening the World to the oppressed of all lands. It floats over a wondrous assemblage of people from every racial stock of the earth whose united hearts constitute an indivisible and invincible force for the defense and succor of the downtrodden.

It embodies the essence of patriotism. Its spirit is the spirit of the American nation. Its history is the history of the American people. Emblazoned upon its folds in letters of living light are the names and fame of our heroic dead, the Fathers of the Republic who devoted upon its altars their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor. Twice told tales of National honor and glory cluster thickly about it. Ever victorious, it has emerged triumphant from eight great National conflicts. It flew at Saratoga, at Yorktown, at Palo Alto, at Gettysburg, at Manila Bay, at Chateau-Thierry, at Iwo Jima. It bears witness to the immense expansion of our national boundaries, the development of our natural resources, and the splendid structure of our civilization. It prophesies the triumph of popular government, of civic and religious liberty and of national righteousness throughout the world.

The flag first rose over thirteen states along the Atlantic seaboard, with a population of some three million people. Today it flies over fifty states, extending across the continent, and over great islands of the two oceans; and two hundred and five millions owe it allegiance. It has been brought to this proud position by love and sacrifice. Citizens have advanced it and heroes have died for it. It is the sign made visible of the strong spirit that has brought liberty and prosperity to the people of America. It is the flag of all of us alike. Let us accord it honor and loyalty.

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On Flag Day, June 14, 1923, representatives of over 68 organizations met in Washington for a conference, called by and conducted under the auspices of the National Americanism Commission of The American Legion, to draft an authentic code of flag etiquette. The code drafted by that conference was printed by the national organization of The American Legion and given nation-wide distribution. Millions of copies have been placed in the hands of interested citizens since 1923-24. The 77th Congress of the United States (Second Session) passed Public Law 623, which is a codification of the Flag Code. This law was later amended, and the Flag Code has now been changed to comply with the law. Since the original Flag Conferences, in 1923-24, the code has been adopted for use by 45 other organizations, American Legion Posts should bring the rules and diagrams contained in this revised edition of the code to the attention of schools and citizens generally.



HOW TO DISPLAY IT
HOW TO RESPECT IT

The Living Symbol of Our Great Republic

UNITED STATES
OF THE
FLAG

"I would like to go a step further and insist upon Americans being able to sing 'The Star-Spangled Banner.'"
"I have noted audiences singing—I should say trying to sing—the American national air, but outside of about 2 per cent they are only mumbling or pretending to sing. I would like to have the spirit of America show itself in song. I hope you will insist upon some suitable provision to that end in your code."—President Harding to National Flag Conference called by The American Legion.

O say, can you see, by the dawn's early light,
What so proudly we hail'd at the twilight's last gleaming,
Whose broad stripes and bright stars, through the perilous fight,
O'er the ramparts we watch'd, were so gallantly streaming?
And the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there,
O say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?
On the shore, dimly seen through the mists of the deep,
Where the foe's haughty host in dread silence reposes,
What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep,
As it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses?
Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam,
In full glory reflected now shines in the stream:
'Tis the star-spangled banner—O long may it wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!
And where is that band, who so valiantly swore,
That the havoc of war and the battle's confusion,
A home and a country should leave us no more?
Their blood has wash'd out their foul footsteps' pollution;
No refuge could save the hireling and slave
From the terror of flight or the gloom of the grave,
And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.
O, thus be it ever when freemen shall stand
Between their lov'd homes and the war's desolation;
Blest with vict'ry and peace, may the heav'n-rescued land
Praise the power that hath made and preserved us a nation!
Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just,
And this be our motto: "In God is our trust."
And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.

STAR-SPANGLED BANNER