

Solutions for a Sustainable Future

The American Flag



The American Flag symbolizes many things; freedom, dignity, and the true meaning of being an American. The flag has gone through many transitions and changes before it came to be the flag of today (from January 1, 1776, till August 21, 1960).

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

Elizabeth Griscom Ross first was a seamstress, when her husband died in 1776. She lived near the State House and often mended George Washington's clothing. The legend has it that one day around June in 1776, Washington and two other important figures of history ask Ms. Ross to sew the flag that they sketched out. Washington knew her talent with a needle and thread. Ms. Ross is to have changed the original six point stars to five.



Another person who claimed to have designed the flag was Francis Hopkinson, he was a, a lawyer, a Congressman for New Jersey, poet, artist, and a signer of the Declaration of Independence. He had wrote a letter to the Board of Admiralty in 1780 saying that he was the one who had designed the first flag.

Factoid: The origin of the stars and stripes design is poorly documented. Most stories credit Betsy Ross for sewing the first flag from a pencil sketch handed to her by George Washington. No evidence for this exists. It is likely that Francis Hopkinson of New Jersey, designed the 1777 flag in November 1776. This contradicts the Betsy Ross legend. Hopkinson was the only person to have made such a claim during his own lifetime, when he sent a bill to Congress for his work. He asked for a "Quarter Cask of the Public Wine" as payment initially.

In June 14, 1777, congress declared the flag should have thirteen white stars in a blue background and thirteen alternate red and white stripes. The red means hardiness and valor. White signifies purity and innocence. Blue is the color of the Chief. The star symbolizes heaven and the goal all man have been striving for. The stripe is a ray of light from the sun. The first thirteen states were; Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Georgia, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maryland, South Carolina, New Hampshire, Virginia, New York, North Carolina, and Rhode Island.

It has been suggested that the modern meaning of the American flag, was forged in December 1860, when Anderson, acting without orders, moved the American garrison from Fort Moultrie to Fort Sumter, in Charleston Harbor, in defiance of the overwhelming power of the new Confederate States of America. Before that day, the flag had served mostly as a military ensign or a convenient marking of American territory, flown from forts, embassies, and ships, and displayed on special occasions like the Fourth of July. But in the weeks after Major Anderson's surprising stand, it became something different. Suddenly the Stars and Stripes flew from houses, from storefronts, from churches; above the village greens and college quads. For the first time American flags were mass-produced rather than individually stitched and even so, manufacturers could not keep up with demand.

Factoid: "The Star-Spangled Banner" is the national anthem of the United States of America. The lyrics come from "Defense of Fort McHenry", a poem written in 1814 by the 35-year-old lawyer and amateur poet, Francis Scott Key, after witnessing the bombardment of Fort McHenry by the British Royal Navy ships in Chesapeake Bay during the Battle of Fort McHenry in the War of 1812. The poem was set to the tune of a popular British drinking song

The American flag should never be allowed to touch the ground and, if flown at night, must be illuminated. If the edges become tattered through wear, the flag should be repaired or replaced. When a flag is so tattered that it can no longer serve as a symbol of the United States, it should be destroyed in a dignified manner.

Factoid: The Flag Code prohibits using the flag "for any advertising purpose" and also states that the flag "should not be embroidered, printed, or otherwise impressed on such articles as cushions, handkerchiefs, napkins, boxes, or anything intended to be discarded after temporary use". The Flag Code also states that "The flag should never be used as wearing apparel, bedding, or drapery." Therefore T-shirts, or other apparel made of or containing a representation of the flag are in violation of the code.



I am Jim Steigner (Mr. Comfort) and I just wanted you to know. As always please feel free to contact me at www.mrcomforthvac.com, under the “ask Mr. Comfort Section. Thank you to Mary V., for her thoughts and question. I hope that everyone has a wonderful holiday and that we take time to think about one of the most powerful and sustainable symbols in our world today.