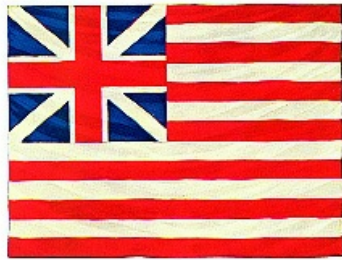


THE AMERICAN FLAG IS BORN

GRAND UNION



The first flag of the colonists to have any resemblance to the present Stars and Stripes. It was first flown by ships of the Colonial Fleet on the Delaware River. On December 3, 1775 it was raised aboard Capt. Esek Hopkin's flagship *Alfred* by John Paul Jones, then a navy lieutenant. Later the flag was raised on the liberty pole at Prospect Hill, which was near George Washington's headquarters in Cambridge, MA. It was the unofficial national flag on July 4, 1776, Independence Day; and it remained the unofficial national flag and ensign of the Navy until June 14, 1777 when the Continental Congress authorized the Stars and Stripes.

The necessity of a common national flag had not been thought of until the appointment of a committee composed of Benjamin Franklin, Messrs. Lynch and Harrison which assembled at camp at Cambridge. The result of their conference was the rendition of the King's colors (union jack), representing the still-recognized sovereignty of England, but coupled with to thirteen stripes, alternate red and white, emblematic of the union of the thirteen colonies against its tyranny and oppression, in place of the loyal red ensign.

Interestingly, the Grand Union flag was also the standard of the British East India Company. It was only by degrees that the Union Flag of Great Britain was discarded. The final breach between the Colonies and Great Britain brought about the removal of the British Union from the canton of our striped flag and the substitution of the stars on a blue field.

BETSY ROSS



During the Revolutionary War, several patriots made flags for our new Nation. Among them were Cornelia Bridges, Elizabeth (Betsy) Ross, and Rebecca Young, all of Pennsylvania, and John Shaw of Annapolis, Maryland. Although Betsy Ross, the best known of these persons, made flags for 50 years, there is no proof that she made the first Stars and Stripes. It is known she made flags for the Pennsylvania Navy in 1777. The flag popularly known as the "Betsy Ross Flag", which arranged the stars in a circle, did not appear until the early 1790's.

THIRD MOUNTAIN REGIMENT



Carried into battle at Cowpens, SC on January 17, 1781 by the Third Mountain Regiment.

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Information about



COLONIAL FLAGS 1775-1781

An Overview

**To preserve
for succeeding generations
the principles of freedom
for which
our forefathers fought**

SONS OF LIBERTY



As protests grew within the colonies, Liberty Poles, Liberty Trees and Liberty Flags were seen with increasing frequency. Benjamin Franklin's design of the disjointed snake, each section representing one of the Colonies, became a popular device to express the need for unification. Franklin's design had a snake cut into eight parts (NE, NY, NJ, PA, MD, VA, NC and SC). Paul Revere's adaptation appeared in the *Massachusetts Spy* newspaper in 1774, depicting a snake cut into nine parts, adding Georgia. This artist's conception blends Franklin's snake with early Revolutionary War accounts of a flag bearing nine vertical red and white stripes.

LIBERTY



Flags of protest were usually red ensigns bearing mottos such as "LIBERTY" or "CONGRESS". In 1775, General Charles Lee suggested that all Army flags bear the motto "LIBERTY".

NAVAL PRIVATEER



In September, 1775, two strong floating batteries were launched on the Charles River, Massachusetts, and in the following month opened fire on the enemy at Boston. Their ensign used was a pine tree.

Col. Joseph Reed, in a letter dated October 20, 1775 from Cambridge, Massachusetts, to Colonels Glover and Moylan, said, "Please to fix some particular color for a flag, and a signal, by which our vessels may know one another. What do you think of a flag with a white ground, a tree in the middle, the motto -- 'Appeal to Heaven'? This is the flag of our floating batteries."

The six schooners first commissioned by Washington in the same month to cruise in Massachusetts Bay and the first vessels commissioned soon afterwards by the Continental Congress, sailed under the same device -- a green pine tree in the center of a white field -- with the motto: "Appeal to Heaven" and the floating batteries of the State of Pennsylvania in the Delaware River also carried this flag in the summer of 1775, and likewise during the operations on that river in the defense of Philadelphia in 1777 and 1778.

GADSDEN (Navy)



In December, 1775, the Continental Congress provided for the fitting-out of five ships of thirty-two guns, five of twenty-eight guns, and three of twenty-four guns, making thirteen ships in all, to form a navy for the United Colonies; but no provision was made for a naval flag.

John Jay, in a letter dated July, 1776, stated that Congress had made no order "concerning Continental colors, and that captains of the armed vessels had followed their own fancies." He names as one device a rattlesnake rearing its crest and shaking its rattles, and having the motto, "Don't Tread on Me".

De Benvouloir, the emissary of Vergennes, in 1775, reported to the French minister: "They have given up the English flag and have taken for their device a rattlesnake with thirteen rattles."

The rattlesnake was a favorite device with the Colonists, and its origin as an American emblem is a curious feature of our national history.

In a letter from Paris to the Ambassador of the King of the Two Sicilys dated October 9, 1775, Benjamin Franklin and John Adams wrote:

". . .Some of the States have vessels of war distinct from those of the United States. For example, the vessels of war of the State of Massachusetts Bay have sometimes a Pine Tree; and those of South Carolina a rattlesnake, in the middle of thirteen stripes. . ."

SOUTH CAROLINA NAVY



The rattlesnake was a favorite device with the Colonists, and its origin as an American emblem is a curious feature of our national history. Although no original of this flag exists, the flag of the South Carolina Navy was depicted in the background of a 1776 English mezzotint of "Commodore Hopkins, Commander-in-Chief of the American Fleet", by Thomas Hart, 22 August 1776.

CRESCENT



The Crescent Flag, used in the historic defense of Fort Sullivan (now Fort Moultrie, Sullivan's Island, SC, in Charleston Harbor) against the British in June, 1776 by Colonel William Moultrie, was the first American flag used in the South during the American Revolution.

OBJECTIVES OF THE SONS OF THE REVOLUTION

THE PURPOSE OF THE SONS OF THE REVOLUTION is to preserve for succeeding generations the principles of freedom and good government for which our forefathers fought. It develops awareness of, and interest in, the beginnings of our nation, recalls the sacrifices that accompanied its birth, and underscores the wisdom which devised a system of checks and balances under which all can find an area of opportunity and achieve a full measure of freedom.

THE MEMBERS ARE DESCENDANTS OF THOSE WHO RENDERED SERVICE IN BEHALF OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE DURING THE WAR OF THE REVOLUTION. That service was as a military, naval, or marine officer, soldier, sailor or marine or an official of the thirteen original Colonies or States or of the National Government representing or composed of these Colonies or States. The service of such official was of sufficient importance to have rendered the official liable to arrest or imprisonment, the same as a combatant, and liable to conviction of treason against the Government of Great Britain.

THE SONS SEEK TO ENROLL THOSE WHO HAVE THIS HERITAGE AND VALUE IT HIGHLY. Over 184,000 individuals served in the American Revolution. Thus it is likely that many men could prove direct descent from one qualifying ancestor. Those who believe in God, competitive free enterprise and individual freedom with responsibility have a great deal at stake in seeing this organization is successful in carrying out its purposes, and should join it.

The rich reward of Liberty was all too bitter won.

Revere and guard that precious trust and pass it on to your son, grandson or nephew.

MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

ELIGIBLE MALES with one or more ancestors who between April 19, 1775 and April 19, 1783 actively assisted in establishing American independence by service:

- as a military, naval or marine officer, soldier, sailor or marine, or
- in the Continental Congress or the Congress of any of the thirteen colonies or states, or
- as an official under authority of such bodies rendered during the War of the Revolution, becoming thereby liable to conviction of treason against the Government of Great Britain

but remained always loyal to the authority of the Colonies or States are invited to apply for membership in any one of the State Societies or to the General Society for admission as a member-at-large without regard to race, religion or political affiliation. Prospective members file applications on forms supplied by the Society, together with the documentation proving by competent genealogical research the line of descent.

SENIOR MEMBERSHIP: Available to eligible males 18 years or older.

JUNIOR MEMBERSHIP: Available to male candidates from birth to age 18.

LIFE MEMBERSHIP: Prepays dues for life.

THE SONS HAVE PERMANENTLY PRESERVED ON MICROFICHE the ancestral records of all members. Eligibility may often be determined from documentation of a qualifying ancestor, some of whose records now also are available in the Sons' data bank, some from other lineage societies or from family records. If such records are not available, the Sons can provide a list of sources that can be pursued, including names of qualified genealogists who can do this work at nominal cost.

PATRIOTIC SOCIETIES

Those interested in joining the Sons are sometimes confused by the variety and number of organizations that have roots in the American Revolution. This summary provides perspective:

The SOCIETY OF THE CINCINNATI was founded in 1783 as an organization of those who held commissions in the Continental Army and Navy. Membership in that group is confined to the primogeniture succession of eldest sons.

The SONS OF THE REVOLUTION was organized in New York on December 18, 1875 primarily by leading members of the Society of the Cincinnati in order to broaden participation in preserving American heritage. At a subsequent meeting on January 15, 1876, a Constitution was approved. On December 4, 1883, at a dinner in Fraunces Tavern's Long Room celebrating the 100TH anniversary of George Washington's farewell to his officers, all present signed the Constitution approved in 1876. A Certificate of Incorporation was executed on April 29, 1884 and signed by the appropriate judge on May 2, 1884. The Society accepts male descendants, through male or female lines, of ancestors of all military rank who were called into the service of the State or the United States during the War of the Rebellion. Also accepted are descendants of civilians who, because of patriotic service to the cause of independence, were specially liable to arrest and imprisonment.

The GENERAL SOCIETY, SONS OF THE REVOLUTION was formed by the New York, Pennsylvania and District of Columbia Societies at a meeting on April 19, 1890 in Washington, DC following conferences held in 1888 to devise an organizational structure that would provide a satisfactory combination of local autonomy and national unity to the several State Societies.

SONS OF THE REVOLUTION IN THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

The SONS OF THE REVOLUTION IN THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA was founded on May 15, 1893 in Los Angeles, California. Today, it is one of the largest State Societies in the Nation.

From its first meeting, the officers of the California Society recognized the importance of the Society maintaining a permanent space in which the members and others could gather. This became even more pressing as the Society began assembling what would become the largest library of its kind in the western United States — the **American Heritage Library and Museum**. Located at 600 South Central Avenue, Glendale, for more than 115 years the American Heritage Library and Museum has been operated and maintained as a service to the community by the Sons of the Revolution in the State of California, a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation. Today, the Library comprises over 35,000 titles and is well known as one of the largest collections relating to the American Revolution and Colonial America in the western United States. In 2006, the Society received the AASLH Award of Merit, the most prestigious recognition for achievement in the preservation and interpretation of state and local history. The Library and Museum is supported by the generous donations of patriotic Americans who value our nation's heritage. The Library specializes in genealogical and early American history resources with emphasis on the Colonial and Revolutionary War period. It also has a fine collection of 18th and 19th century vital records, city, county and state histories, family histories, American military history, English genealogy, and hundreds of CD-ROM references.

An invitation to apply for membership falls within the purview of the Board of Directors of the Society. The Membership Committee is privileged to make qualified recommendations. Once an invitation to membership is extended, the candidate is provided an application which he must complete detailing his direct descent from a qualifying ancestor who served in the American Revolution. The Society does not accept the lineage papers of other societies. Our Bylaws require an application for membership be endorsed by two members of the Society.

Inquiries: Membership Committee, Sons of the Revolution, 600 South Central Ave., Glendale, CA 91204.