

The

AMERICAN FLAG

ITS HISTORY
AND CUSTOMS



courtesy of
Assemblyman
**Angelo
Santabarbara**



www.nyassembly.gov

Assemblyman Angelo Santabarbara



Dear Friend,

The American flag has stood as a symbol of freedom and justice for more than 240 years. Through war and peace, the sight of the American flag has shown friend and foe alike that the spirit of democracy lives on.

I have prepared this brochure to help you better understand the significance of the American flag and its customs. As always, if you have any questions or comments about this or any other community issue, please contact my district office.

Sincerely,

Angelo Santabarbara
Member of Assembly

District Office:

433 State Street, Center City
Schenectady, NY 12305
518-382-2941

Albany Office:

Room 654, LOB
Albany, NY 12248
518-455-5197

Email:

santabarbara@nyassembly.gov

OUR AMERICAN FLAG

The origins of the Stars and Stripes are deeply ingrained in American folklore. It is widely believed that Betsy Ross made the first American flag. However, various towns in colonial America have claimed to be its birthplace.

We know that on June 14, 1777, the Continental Congress adopted the Stars and Stripes as the official flag of the United States of America.

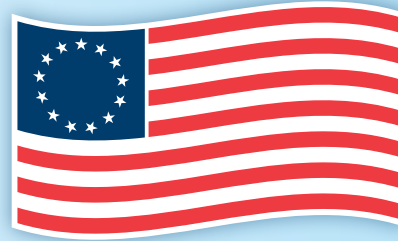
The Declaration of Independence made this resolution necessary. Previously, each colony had its own flag, which they flew on colonial vessels. England considered these armed vessels pirate ships and hanged their crews if they were captured.

The American flag was designed to represent the new union of the 13 original states: It would have 13 stripes, alternating red and white, and 13 stars, white on a blue field.

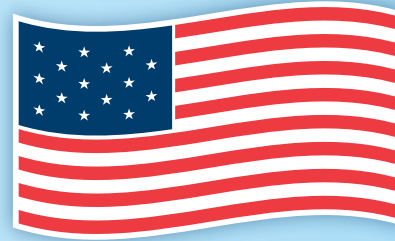
One of the first flags had the stars arranged in a circle, based on the idea that all colonies were equal. The 13 stripes, resting side by side, symbolized the struggle for independence. The flag's color scheme also has symbolic meaning: red stands for valor, white signifies purity and blue represents loyalty.

In 1818, after a few design changes, Congress decided to retain the flag's original 13 stripes and add new stars to reflect each new state that entered the union.

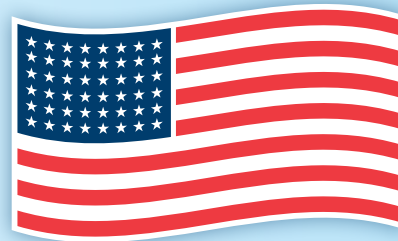
Since then, Americans have fought for and died to preserve the ideals of democracy represented by the flag.



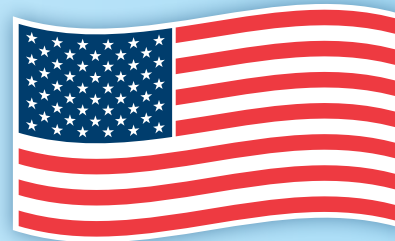
The "Betsy Ross" Flag
In use June 14, 1777 - May 1, 1795



The 15-Star, 15-Stripe "Star Spangled Banner" Flag
In use May 1, 1795 - July 3, 1818

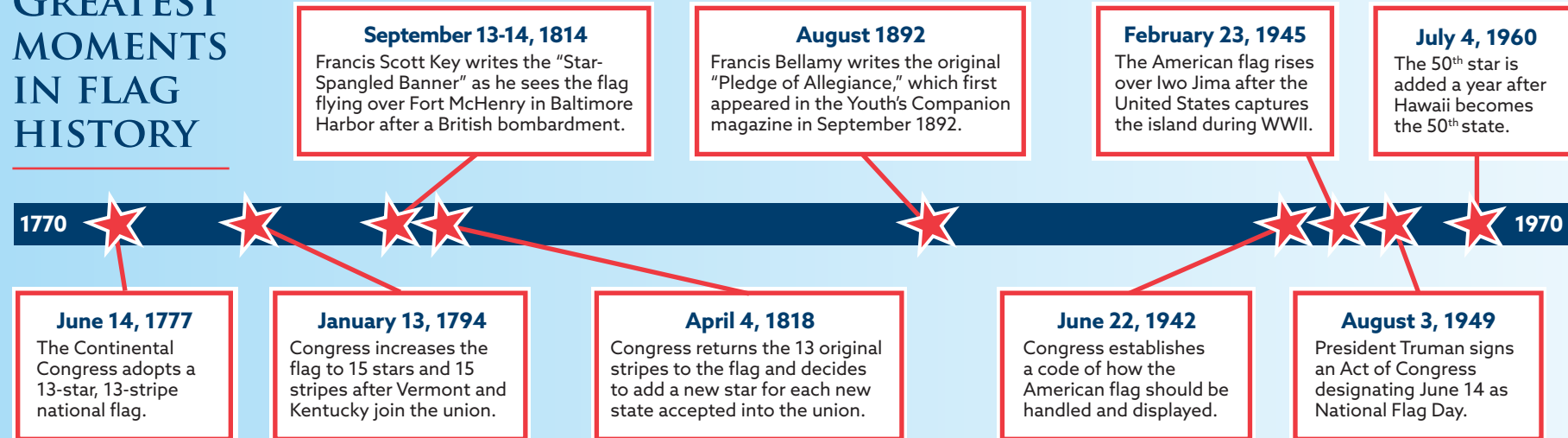


The 48-Star Flag
In use July 4, 1912 - July 3, 1959













The 50-Star Flag
In use July 4, 1960 - present

GREATEST MOMENTS IN FLAG HISTORY



CUSTOMS FOR DISPLAY

-  Display the flag from sunrise to sunset on buildings or flagstaffs and at night, only if properly lighted.
-  The flag should be raised and lowered by hand and never raised furled.
-  Always hoist the flag briskly and lower it ceremoniously.
-  The flag may be displayed on any day, but especially on national holidays.
-  On Memorial Day, display the flag at half-mast until noon only; then hoist it to the top of the staff.
-  When carried, the flag should be held aloft, never flat or horizontal.
-  Salute a flag when it passes by in a parade, during the Pledge of Allegiance or National Anthem and in a ceremony raising or lowering it.
-  The flag should never be allowed to touch the ground or floor, nor brush against any objects, nor be used as drapery of any sort.
-  The flag should never be displayed with the union down except as a signal of distress in instances of extreme danger.
-  When a flag is no longer in a condition to be displayed, it should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning.