

## THE FLAG.

The Flag is the symbol of nations, the distinguishing mark of armies and fleets, departments of governments and parties, and the personal standard of rulers and officers. The word is derived from the Anglo-Saxon "fleogan", meaning to float or fly in the wind. The typical form of the flag is that of an oblong piece of cloth of light material, such as cotton or silk, attached to a staff, and bearing devices of special meaning. The flag as it is known today is the result of many centuries of development. In the early dawn of civilization man felt the need of some token that would distinguish family from family and tribe from tribe, and from these ancient symbols came the standards which were emblematic of nations.

The earliest national symbols were figures worked in metal, wood or stone, borne at the top of a pole or spear. Standards of this character were carried in battle by the Egyptians, Hebrews, Persians, Assyrians and Romans. It is supposed that the waving flag originated with the Saracens. During the middle ages this form of standard came into general use.

There are several interesting customs in connection with the flags of today. Flags are borne on the mast of vessels to designate the country to which they belong, and also on war vessels, to show the rank of the officer by whom the vessel is commanded. When a naval ship enters the port of a foreign nation it hoists the flag of that country and fires a salute of twenty-one guns. In the army, each regiment carries a flag as its distinguishing mark. Flags are used for signaling at sea, where, by international codes, ships may communicate with each other.

The story of the national emblem of the United States begins with the stormy days of the Revolutionary War. During the first few months of the struggle several different local flags were carried by the soldiers. At the battle of Concord, in 1775, a standard was unfurled there which bore, in Latin, the motto "Conquer or die" and at Bunker Hill, the same year, the pine-tree flag of New England inspired the American Troops. On January 2, 1776, Washington raised over the American Camp at Cambridge the first ensign of the united colonies, known as the Grand Union Flag of 1776. On its blue field were combined the crosses of Saint Andrews and Saint George, symbolizing the union of Scotland and England, and it bore thirteen alternate red and white stripes. The king's colors on the blue field showed that the colonies still owed allegiance and acknowledged the sovereignty of Great Britain, and the stripes represented the thirteen colonies.

After the declaration of Independence in 1776, it was felt that a national emblem of union and independence should be chosen, and on June 14, 1777, congress adopted a resolution, providing that the flag of the Thirteen United States should be thirteen stripes, alternate white and red, and that the Union be Thirteen white stars on a blue field. In this resolution was born the national Stars and Stripes. The flag then adopted had a circle of thirteen stars on a blue field. The story has come down that Mrs. Betsy Ross, residing in Philadelphia, made the first flag and suggested that the stars should be five-pointed.

In 1794 Congress ordered that after May 1, 1795, the flag should bear fifteen stripes, alternate red and white, and that there should be fifteen stars on the blue field. This was done so that Kentucky and Vermont, which has been recently added to the Union, might be represented in the national banner. In 1818 Congress passed an act providing for the addition of one star for each new state when it should be admitted to the union, and