

Stars and Stripes

“[N]ational symbols and ceremonies express deeper aspects and meanings of the nation, and function as integrative and/or divisive forces.”

“Moreover, national symbols ... form a central part of a ‘secular’ religion which provides anchorage in a dynamic world.”

“National symbols and ceremonies also have an effect upon the community they represent; that is, they raise collective consciousness of ‘who we are’ and ‘where we are from.’”

“The end of the 18th century marks the official beginning of the ‘national’ flag. This was a gradual process where official recognition came after the flag and its colours had gained some sort of symbolic value.”

“It is noteworthy that one of the first manifestations of American ‘resistance’ was a Red Ensign with the motto ‘Liberty and Union’, which was hoisted a year before the Revolution in Taunton, Massachusetts.”

“Even earlier, in 1769, Boston had flown a flag of red and white stripes. The ‘rattlesnake’ with the motto ‘Don’t Tread on Me’, was another famous flag, which later developed into a depiction of the rattlesnake with 13 segments.”

“The Pine Tree emblem, which originated from New England and was later identified with the



Liberty Tree, figured on many early American flags (and also in very early Native American symbolism).”

“The use of the Red Ensign with the motto in the fly, or with the Pine Tree in the canton and that of the plain Pine Tree Flag, were the first prime sources for the American flag tradition.”

“These constituted together with the Boston striped flag the main starting points for the colonial flag evolving during 1775.”

“[T]he concept of the ‘national flag’ is the direct consequence of political developments after the American and the French Revolution, where the idea of the flag representing the country and its people emerged.”

“The American flag was adopted to represent a multi-ethnic people; it symbolized first and foremost the attempt to break free from colonial domination.”

“At the same time the ‘Stars and Stripes’ flag made a significant contribution to the modern flag tradition as an idea of a flag representing a ‘whole population’ as well as its government, and it also reflected the more egalitarian ideas of the time.”

“The ‘Stars and Stripes’ was created on the 14 July 1777 - by whom and where remains unclear - and it was used in different forms during the remainder of the War of Independence.”

“It is worth noting that America did not have a flag representing it (or the colonies) prior to the conflicts with England.”

This broadsheet is dedicated to the 250th Anniversary Celebration of the Declaration of Independence for more information visit the National Society Sons of the American Revolution website at: www.sar.org

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