

1933

EC5504 History and Use of our Flag

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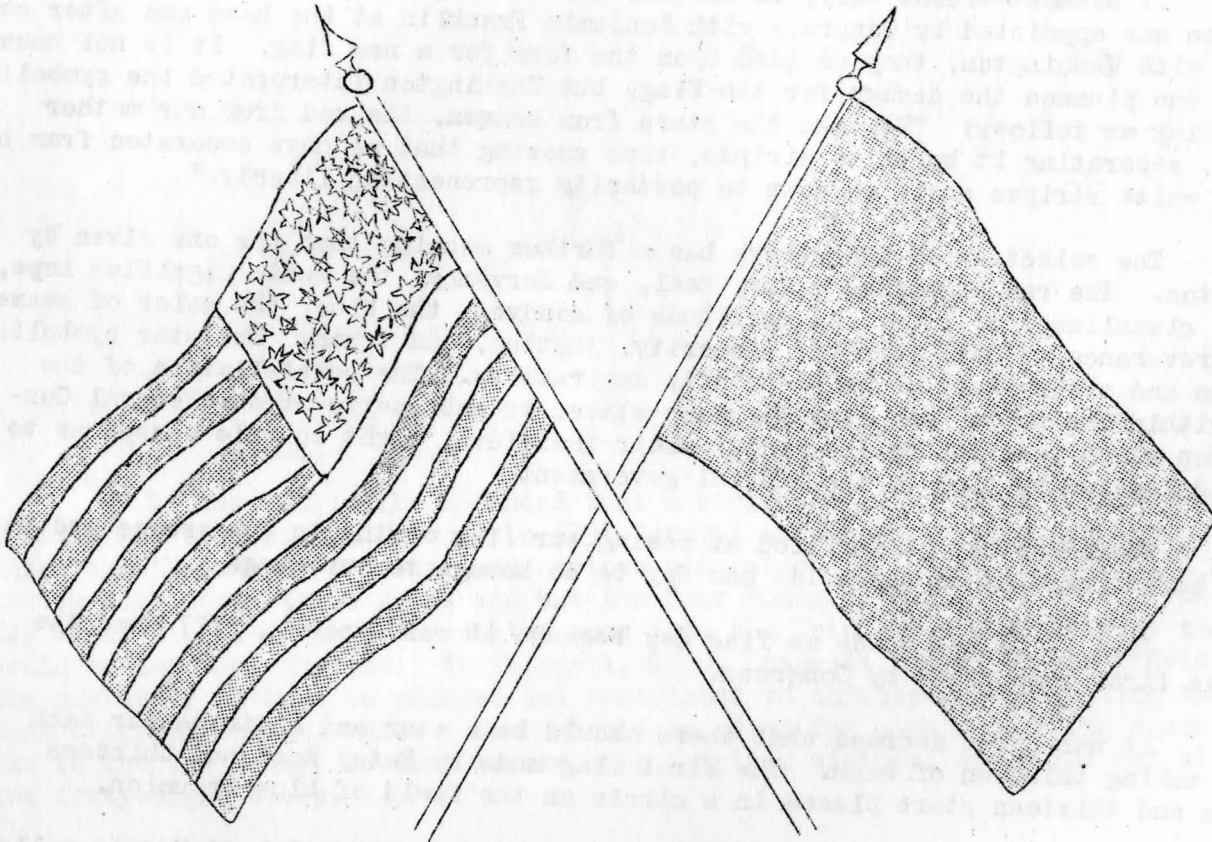
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK
IN AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS

1933

U. of N. Agr. College & U. S. Dept. of Agr. Cooperating
W. H. Brokaw, Director, Lincoln

Extension
Circular
5504

HISTORY AND USE OF OUR FLAG



THE FLAG TALKS

Insult me and millions will spring to my defense -

I AM THE AMERICAN FLAG

HISTORY AND USE OF OUR FLAG

The flag of the United States of America is the third oldest of the national standards of the world. It is older than the Union Jack of Britain, or the Tricolor of France.

During the early days of the Revolutionary War a variety of flags were used by the different colonies and military commands. Prominent among these were the "Pine Tree" and "Rattlesnake" flags with various arrangements and mottoes.

It became evident early in the War that a flag would be necessary. A committee was appointed by Congress with Benjamin Franklin at the head and after consulting with Washington, they decided upon the form for a new flag. It is not known exactly who planned the design for the flag, but Washington interpreted the symbolism of our flag as follows: "We take the stars from heaven, the red from our mother country, separating it by white stripes, thus showing that we have separated from her, and the white stripes shall go down to posterity representing liberty."

The selection of the colors has a further meaning than the one given by Washington. The red signifies valor, zeal, and fervency; the white signifies hope, purity, cleanliness of life, and rectitude of conduct; the blue, the color of heaven, is for reverence to God, loyalty, sincerity, justice, and truth. The star symbolizes dominion and sovereignty as well as lofty aspirations. The constellation of the stars within the union, one star for each state, is emblematic of our Federal Constitution which reserves to the states their individual right to rule except as to rights delegated by them to the Federal government.

Should we not be thrilled at seeing our flag waving in the breeze and is it not befitting that we set aside one day to do homage to our flag?

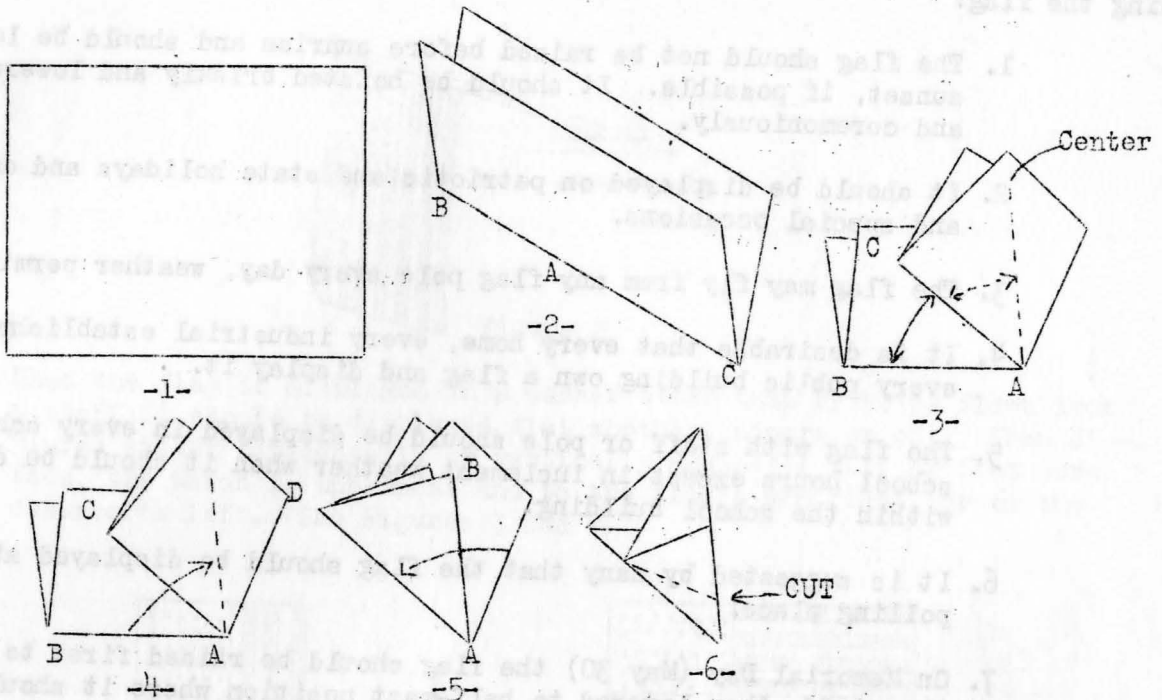
June 14 is set aside as flag day because it was June 14, 1777 that the flag was first authorized by Congress.

It was first decreed that there should be a star and a stripe for each state, making thirteen of each. The first flag made by Betsy Ross had thirteen stripes and thirteen stars placed in a circle on the field of blue or union.

It is told that General Washington, George Ross, and Robert Morris called upon Betsy Ross and told her about the flag they wished to have made. The drawing they submitted had six-pointed stars. Betsy Ross suggested that a five-pointed star would be much prettier, but General Washington remarked that they were so hard to make. Betsy replied that she could make one with a snip of the scissors. The diagram on the next page shows how this is done.

Any shape paper (Figure 1) is folded in half (Figure 2). The center point A is marked or folded. The edge A-C is folded over so that the edge comes half way between the edge A-B and the middle of the paper (Figure 3). The part indicated by the heavy arrow is equal to the part indicated by the dotted arrow. The dotted line indicates the middle or center of the folded paper.

Next fold the edge A-B along the edge of A-C. The edge A-B should now be in the center of the triangle thus formed. Next fold the two edges together. The fold should be along the edge A-B and the two parts should be equal in size (Fig. 5). Holding the folded paper in the left hand with the two edges toward the left, cut as indicated in Figure 6.



It was originally intended that a stripe and star would be added each time a new state entered the Union. In 1791 Vermont and Kentucky were admitted to the Union and the number of stars and stripes was raised to fifteen. This flag remained in use for twenty-three years and was the Star Spangled Banner of which Francis Scott Key wrote in 1814. As other states came into the Union it became evident that there would be too many stripes. So in April, 1818, Congress passed an act providing that the number of stripes be reduced and restricted to thirteen, representing the thirteen original states, while a star should be added for each succeeding state. That law is the law today, so that we now have thirteen stripes, seven red and six white, and forty-eight stars.

New Mexico and Arizona were the last states to enter. In June, 1912, the President approved an enabling act providing for the admission of these states separately. The law requires that the stars be added to the flag on July 4th, following the admission of a state to the Union. Thus on July 4, 1912, the forty-seventh and forty-eighth stars were added to the flag. Nebraska entered as a state in 1867, being the thirty-seventh state to enter.

Every respect should be given our flag since it means so much to us. Flag Day should be regarded as having more meaning and greater significance. Custom has set up certain rules and regulations used in the displaying of the flag which show respect and reverence for it. Let everyone see that he observes these rules.

The matter becomes very simple if we keep in mind that the National Flag represents the living country and is itself considered a living thing. The field of blue which is commonly called the union is the point of honor and should be given preference in placing while on display.

The following are a few general rules to be observed when displaying or using the flag:

1. The flag should not be raised before sunrise and should be lowered at sunset, if possible. It should be hoisted briskly and lowered slowly and ceremoniously.
2. It should be displayed on patriotic and state holidays and on historic and special occasions.
3. The flag may fly from any flag pole every day, weather permitting.
4. It is desirable that every home, every industrial establishment, and every public building own a flag and display it.
5. The flag with staff or pole should be displayed in every school during school hours except in inclement weather when it should be displayed within the school building.
6. It is suggested by many that the flag should be displayed at every polling place.
7. On Memorial Day (May 30) the flag should be raised first to the top of the staff, then lowered to half-mast position where it should remain until noon. It is then hoisted to the top to remain until sunset. See Fig. 1.

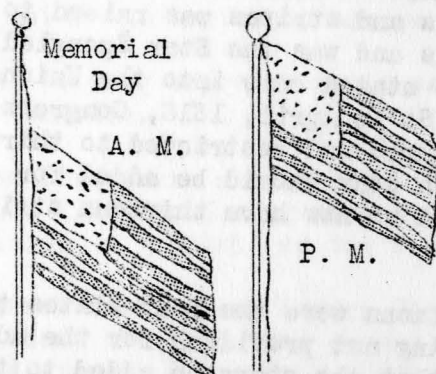


Figure 1

8. The flag should never be allowed to touch the ground or trail in the water.
9. When the flag is displayed from a staff projecting horizontally or at an angle from the window sill the union, which is the field of blue, should go clear to the peak of the staff unless the flag is at half-mast. See Figure 2.

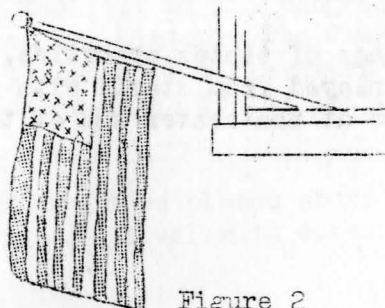


Figure 2

10. When the flag is displayed in a manner other than by being flown from a staff it should be displayed flat whether indoors or out. When displayed either horizontally or vertically against a wall or flat surface, the union is uppermost and to the flag's own right, or to the observer's left. See Figures 3 and 4.

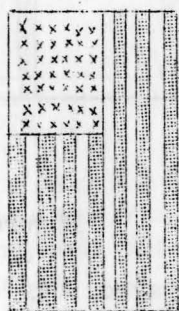


Figure 3

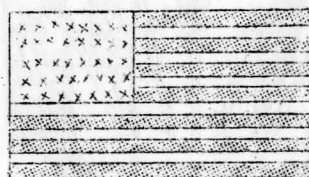


Figure 4

11. When it is displayed over the middle of a street as between buildings, the flag is suspended vertically with the union to the north in an east and west street or to the east in a north and south street. See Figure 5.

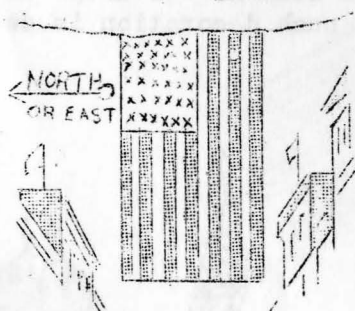


Figure 5

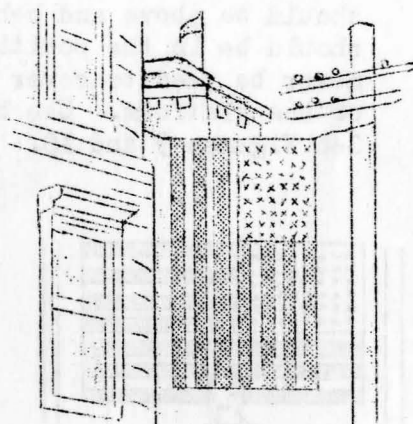


Figure 6

12. When the flag is suspended over a sidewalk from a rope, extending from a house to a pole at the edge of the sidewalk, the flag should be hoisted out from the building to the pole with the union first. See Figure 6.

13. When the flag is displayed with another flag and the staffs are crossed, the Flag of the United States should be on the flag's own right, with its staff over the staff of the other flag. See cover page.
14. When a number of flags of states or cities, or pennants of societies are grouped and displayed from staffs with the Flag of the United States, the latter should be at the center and at the highest point. See Figure 7.

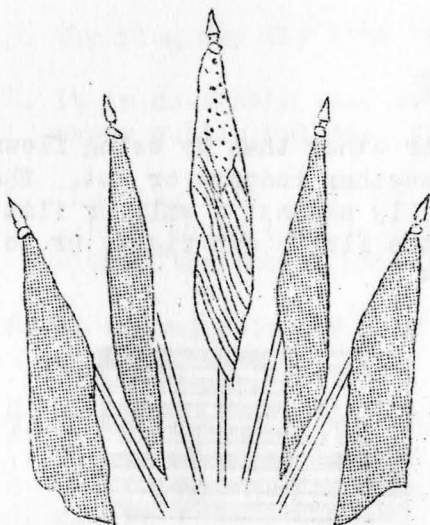


Figure 7

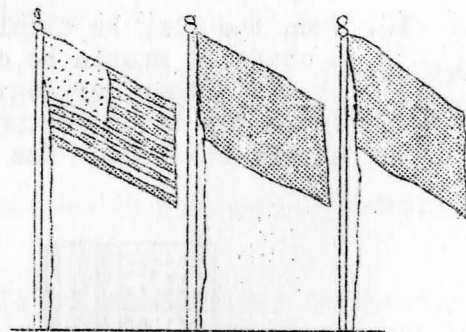


Figure 8

15. When flags of two or more nations are displayed they should be flown from separate staffs of the same height and the flags should be approximately equal in size. See Figure 8 above.
16. When used on a speaker's platform, the Flag is displayed flat and should be above and behind the speaker. If flown from a staff, it should be in the position of honor, at the speaker's right. It should never be used to cover the speaker's desk nor to drape over the front of the platform. Use bunting where such decoration is desired. See Figures 9 and 10.

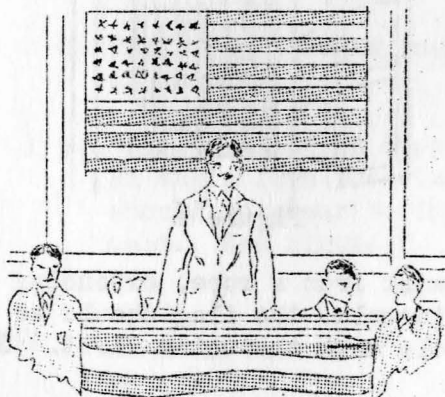


Figure 9

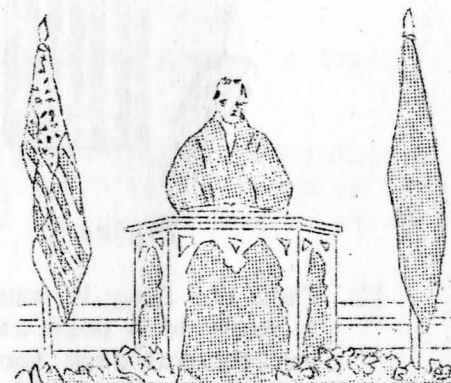


Figure 10

17. When the Flag is displayed in the body of a church, it should be from a staff placed in the position of honor at the congregation's right as they face the clergyman. The service flag, the state flag, or other flags should be at the left of the congregation. If it is displayed in the chancel or on the platform the Flag of the United States of America should be placed at the clergyman's right as he faces the congregation and the other flags to his left. See Figure 10 on preceding page.
18. No flag or pennant should be placed above the Flag of the United States. If displayed on the same level with other flags, our Flag should be at its own right.
19. When the Flag is carried with other flags in parade it should always claim the place of honor, to the right, or in the center when several are used. See Figures 11 and 12.

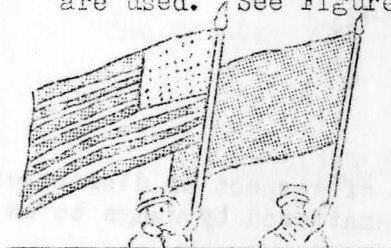


Figure 11

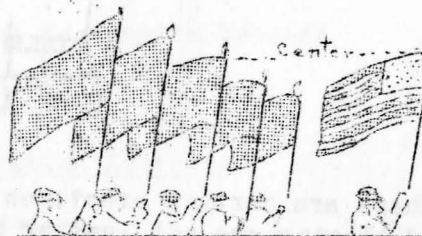


Figure 12

20. When the Flag is used in connection with the unveiling of a statue or monument, the Flag should form a distinctive feature during the ceremony, but the Flag itself should never be used as the covering for the statue.
21. When used to cover a casket the Flag should be placed so that the union is at the head and over the left shoulder. The Flag should not be lowered into the grave nor allowed to touch the ground. See Figure 13.

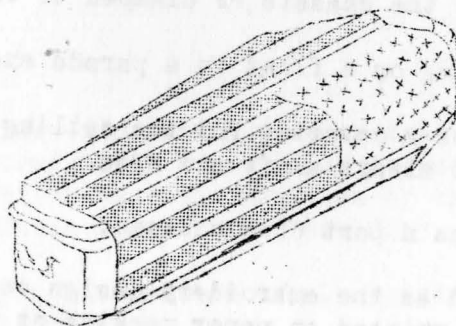


Figure 13

22. When the Flag is placed upon the grave, see that it is left in such a position so that it will not touch the ground.

23. A flag should never be buried with a deceased veteran or another person.
24. Whenever the Flag is passing in a parade, or in review, all persons present should face the Flag, stand at attention, and salute. Those present in uniform should render the right hand salute; when not in uniform men should remove the headdress with the right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart. Women should salute by placing the right hand over the heart. The salute to the flag in the moving column is rendered at the moment the flag passes. See Figure 14.

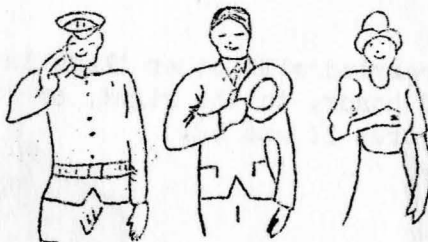


Figure 14

There are certain practices that are marks of respect or disrespect to the flag. The following are not laws or rules but are considered by usage to be right or wrong.

It is considered a mark of disrespect to have a pipe, cigar, or cigarette in the mouth when the hat is removed in respect to the Flag.

Do not use the Flag as drapery in any form whatever. Use bunting of blue, white and red.

Do not fasten the Flag in such a manner as will permit it to be easily torn.

Do not drape the Flag over the hood, top, sides or back of a vehicle or boat. When the flag is displayed on a motor car, the staff should be affixed firmly to the chassis or clamped to the radiator cap.

Do not display the Flag on a float in a parade except from a staff.

Do not use the flag as a covering for the ceiling and do not carry it flat or horizontal but always aloft and free.

Do not use the flag as a part of a costume.

It should not be used as the embroidery design on cushions, or handkerchiefs nor should it be printed on paper napkins or boxes.

It should not be used in connection with advertising in any way, nor should advertising be fastened to the staff along with the Flag.

When the Flag has been in service and is beyond repair it should be destroyed by burning without ceremony. No one should be present save the person charged with destroying it.

The custom of attaching fringe to the Flag is discouraged as nothing can add to its beauty.

Our Own Red, White, and Blue

"There are many flags in many lands,
There are flags of every hue,
But there is no flag, however grand
Like our own red, white, and blue."

--Anonymous.

"The safety of our Republic is to be found in the intelligence and patriotism of the common people."--Norma Jesk

"One Country, One Constitution, One Destiny!"--Webster

Suggestion for Flag Presentation Exercise

Presentation Speech

May the Flag that is given you today proudly wave. May we all honor its presence with the assurance that it does us honor.

Our Flag -- our own, our very own! "Every color means liberty, every form or star and beam or stripe means liberty; not lawlessness, not license, but organized constitutional liberty--liberty through laws, and laws for liberty."

Acceptance speech at the discretion of the person accepting the Flag.

Should be accompanied by music.

Acknowledgment for information used in this circular is given to Mr. Walter I. Joyce who furnished a copy of the Etiquette of the Stars and Stripes issued by the National Americanization Committee of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, 32 Union Square, New York City.

Acknowledgment for information is also given to the National Society of The Daughters of the American Revolution.

(Prepared by Rizpah Douglass, State Extension Agent, Home Beautification.)