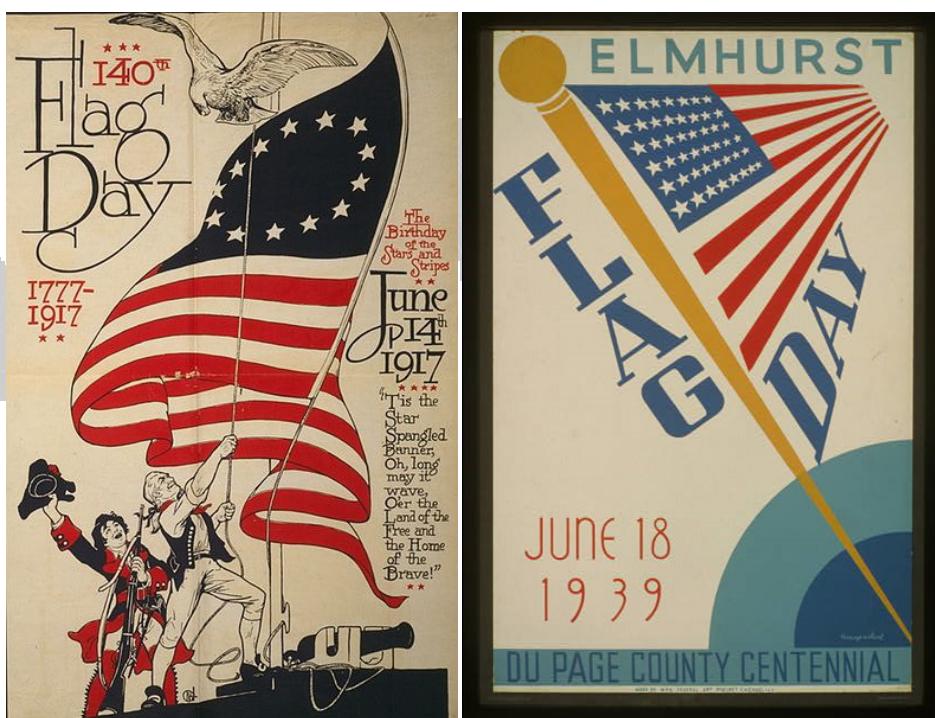


# Flag Day - I Pledge Allegiance - American's Creed

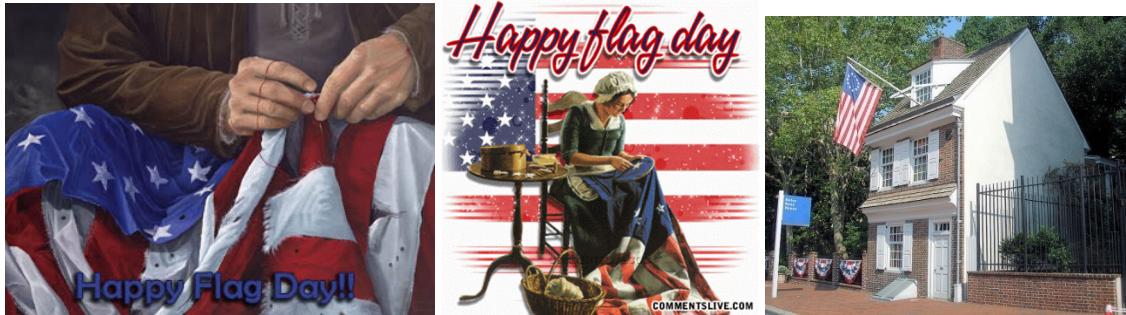


We celebrate the birth of our country on July 4<sup>th</sup> and our Flag on June 14<sup>th</sup>. Ever wonder where this annual national holiday came from?



National flags are not merely symbols of a country. Their colors and designs convey past history and future goals. Did you know that the United States did not even have a standardized flag until 1912! Called the "Stars and Stripes," or "Old Glory," the flag is one of the most complicated in the world. No other flag needs 64 pieces of fabric to make. The current flag has 13 red and white alternating stripes (representing the original 13 states) and 50 stars (each star represents one of the states of the Union) on a blue background.

## Flag Day - I Pledge Allegiance to the Flag - American Creed - Continued



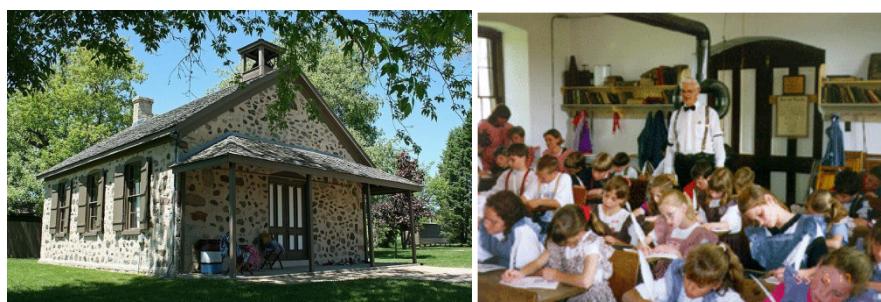
The American flag has also changed designs more than any other flag in the world. The first flag, called the Grand Union, was first flown at the headquarters of the Continent Army on January 1, 1776. Betsy Ross, a seamstress, is said to have contributed to this design. She had an upholstery business which made flags for navy ships in Pennsylvania. According to legend she showed George Washington how to make a five-pointed star and suggested thirteen stars in a circle for the first flag. Her descendants claimed that she offered the design. George Washington did design the Grand Union but an often-quoted remark attributed to him might not be true:

*We take the stars from heaven, the red from our mother country, separate it by white in stripes, thus showing that we have separated from her...*

On June 14, 1777, the Continental Congress proposed that the United States have a national flag instead of the British Union Jack. The 13 stars of the flag represented the 13 new states. There were few public ceremonies honoring the Stars and Stripes until 1877, when on, June 14, it was flown from every government building in honor of the centennial of the adoption of a national flag. Schools had unfurled American flags over their doors or outside the buildings long before this; but in 1890, North Dakota and New Jersey made a law that required their schools to fly the flag daily.



The first *official* Flag Day was observed in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1893. New York also proclaimed June 14 as Flag Day 1897. Other states were slow to follow. Some people thought that the day was too close to Memorial Day and Independence Day.



According to legend however in 1885 BJ Cigrand, a 19 year old schoolteacher, arranged for the pupils in the Fredonia, Wisconsin Public School, District 6, to observe June 14 (the 108th anniversary of the official adoption

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of The Stars and Stripes) as 'Flag Birthday'. In numerous magazines and newspaper articles and public addresses over the following years, Cigrand continued to enthusiastically advocate the observance of June 14 as 'Flag Birthday', or 'Flag Day'.



On June 14, 1889, George Balch, a kindergarten teacher in New York City, planned appropriate ceremonies for the children of his school, and his idea of observing Flag Day was later adopted by the State Board of Education of New York. On June 14, 1891, the Betsy Ross House in Philadelphia held a Flag Day celebration, and on June 14 of the following year, the New York Society of the Sons of the Revolution, celebrated Flag Day.



Following the suggestion of Colonel J Granville Leach (at the time historian of the Pennsylvania Society of the Sons of the Revolution), the Pennsylvania Society of Colonial Dames of America on April 25, 1893 adopted a resolution requesting the mayor of Philadelphia and all others in authority and all private citizens to display the Flag on June 14th. Leach went on to recommend that thereafter the day be known as 'Flag Day', and on that day, school children be assembled for appropriate exercises, with each child being given a small Flag.



Two weeks later on May 8th, the Board of Managers of the Pennsylvania Society of Sons of the Revolution unanimously endorsed the action of the Pennsylvania Society of Colonial Dames. As a result of the resolution, Dr. Edward Brooks, then Superintendent of Public Schools of Philadelphia, directed that Flag Day exercises be held on June 14, 1893 in Independence Square. School children were assembled, each carrying a small Flag, and patriotic songs were sung and addresses delivered.



In 1894, the governor of New York directed that on June 14 the Flag be displayed on all public buildings. With BJ Cigrand and Leroy Van Horn as the moving spirits, the Illinois organization, known as the American Flag Day Association, was organized for the purpose of promoting the holding of Flag Day exercises. On June 14th, 1894, under the auspices of this association, the first general public school children's celebration of Flag Day in Chicago was held in Douglas, Garfield, Humboldt, Lincoln, and Washington Parks, with more than 300,000 children participating.



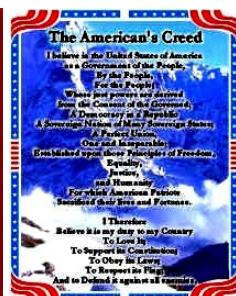
Adults, too, participated in patriotic programs. Franklin K. Lane, Secretary of the Interior, delivered a 1914 Flag Day address in which he repeated words he said the flag had spoken to him that morning: ***"I am what you make me; nothing more. I swing before your eyes as a bright gleam of color, a symbol of yourself."***



Inspired by these three decades of state and local celebrations, Flag Day - the anniversary of the Flag Resolution of 1777 - was **officially** established by the Proclamation of President Woodrow Wilson on **May 30th, 1916**. While Flag Day was celebrated in various communities for years after Wilson's proclamation, it was not until **August 3rd, 1949**, that President Truman signed **an Act of Congress designating June 14th of each year as National Flag Day**.



*Continue on for the Pledge of Allegiance and America's Creed*



# The Pledge of Allegiance



On **September 8, 1892** a Boston-based youth magazine "*The Youth's Companion*" published a 22-word recitation for school children to use during planned activities the following month to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Columbus' discovery of America. Under the title "**The Pledge to the Flag**", the composition was the earliest version of what we now know as the PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.



Students swearing the Pledge on Flag Day in 1899

### Flag Day - I Pledge Allegiance to the Flag - American Creed - Continued

The October 12, 1892 Columbus Day celebration of the 400th Anniversary of the discovery of America was planned for years in advance, and anticipated much as modern Americans look forward to and plan for the advent of a new century. The United States had recovered from most of the effects of its Civil War that began 30 years earlier, and people from around the world were flocking to the "Land of Opportunity". The previous year almost a half million immigrants had entered the United States through the Barge Office in Battery Park, New York and on New Years day of 1892 the new Federal Bureau of Receiving's station at Ellis Island had opened.



*Students pledging to the flag with the Bellamy salute.*

Two men interested in both education and planned Columbus Day celebrations around our Nation's 44 states were *Francis Bellamy* and *James Upham*. To this day it is still unknown which of the two men actually authored the words that were to become the Pledge of Allegiance. It was published anonymously and not copyrighted. *James Upham* was an employee of the Boston publishing firm that produced "The Youth's Companion" in which it first appeared. *Francis Bellamy* was an educator who served as chairman of the National committee of educators and civic leaders who were planning the Columbus Day activities. *What we do know for certain is that the words first appeared in the September 8, 1892 issue of "The Youth's Companion", and a month later more than 12 million school children recited the words for the first time in schools across the nation.* Our Pledge of Allegiance was born, but like anything new, it took many years to "reach maturity", and underwent several changes along the way. That first Pledge of Allegiance read:

I pledge allegiance to my Flag,  
and to the Republic for which it stands:  
    one Nation indivisible,  
With Liberty and Justice for all.

**October 11, 1892**

After the Columbus Day celebration the Pledge to the Flag became a popular daily routine in America's public schools, but gained little attention elsewhere for almost 25 years. Finally, *on Flag Day - June 14, 1923, the Pledge received major attention from adults who had gathered for the first National Flag Conference in Washington, D.C.* Here their Conference agenda took note of the wording in the Pledge. There was concern that, with the number of immigrants now living in the United States, there might be some confusion when the words "My Flag" were recited. To correct this the pledge was altered to read:

I pledge allegiance to **my the**  
**Flag of the United States,**  
and to the Republic for which it stands:  
    one Nation indivisible,  
With Liberty and Justice for all.

June 14, 1923

The following year the wording was changed again to read:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag  
of the United States **of America**,  
and to the Republic for which it stands:  
    one Nation indivisible,  
With Liberty and Justice for all.

June 14, 1924

The Pledge of Allegiance continued to be recited daily by children in schools across America, and gained heightened popularity among adults during the patriotic fervor created by World War II. **It still was an "unofficial" pledge until June 22, 1942 when the United States Congress included the Pledge to the Flag in the United States Flag Code (Title 36).** This was the first Official sanction given to the words that had been recited each day by children for almost fifty years. **One year after receiving this official sanction, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that school children could not be forced to recite the Pledge as part of their daily routine.** In 1945 the Pledge to the Flag received its official title as: The Pledge of Allegiance

**The last change in the Pledge of Allegiance occurred on June 14 (Flag Day), 1954** when President Dwight D. Eisenhower approved adding the words "under God". As he authorized this change he said:

*"In this way we are reaffirming the transcendence of religious faith in America's heritage and future; in this way we shall constantly strengthen those spiritual weapons which forever will be our country's most powerful resource in peace and war."*

This was the last change made to the Pledge of Allegiance. The 23 words what had been initially penned for a Columbus Day celebration now comprised a Thirty-one profession of loyalty and devotion to not only a flag, but to a way of life....the American ideal. **Those words now read:**

*I pledge allegiance to the Flag  
    of the United States of America,  
and to the Republic for which it stands:  
    one Nation under God, indivisible,  
With Liberty and Justice for all.*

June 14, 1954

Recap of Official version changes (changes in ***bold italics***)

**1892** "I pledge allegiance to my flag and the republic for which it stands: one nation indivisible with liberty and justice for all."

**1892 to 1923** "I pledge allegiance to my flag and **to** the republic for which it stands: one nation indivisible with liberty and justice for all."

### Flag Day - I Pledge Allegiance to the Flag - American Creed - Continued

**1923 to 1924** "I pledge allegiance to **the flag of the United States** and to the republic for which it stands: one nation indivisible with liberty and justice for all."

**1924 to 1954** "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States **of America**, and to the republic for which it stands; one nation indivisible with liberty and justice for all."

**1954 to Present** "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation **under God**, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

In 1892, 1923, 1924 and 1954 the American people demonstrated enough concern about the actual words in the Pledge to make some necessary changes. Today there may be a tendency among many Americans to recite "by rote" with little thought for the words themselves. Let's examine these 31 words a little more thoroughly.

I Pledge Allegiance	I Promise to be faithful and true (Promise my loyalty)
to the flag	to the emblem that stands for and represents
of the United States	all 50 states, each of them individual, and individually represented on the flag
of America	yet formed into a UNION of one Nation.
and to the Republic	And I also pledge my loyalty to the Government that is itself a Republic, a form of government where the PEOPLE are sovereign,
for which it stands,	this government also being represented by the Flag to which I promise loyalty.
one Nation under God,	These 50 individual states are united as a single Republic under the Divine providence of God, "our most powerful resource" (according to the words of President Eisenhower)
Indivisible,	and can not be separated. (This part of the original version of the pledge was written just 30 years after the beginning of the Civil War and demonstrates the unity sought in the years after that divisive period in our history)
with Liberty	The people of this Nation being afforded the freedom to pursue "life, liberty, and happiness",
and Justice	And each person entitled to be treated justly, fairly, and according to proper law and principle,
for All.	And these principles afforded to EVERY AMERICAN, regardless of race, religion, color, creed, or any other criteria. Just as the flag represents 50 individual states that can not be divided or separated, this Nation represents millions of people who can not be separated or divided.

Thus it is that when you Pledge Allegiance to the United States Flag, You:

**Promise your loyalty to the Flag itself.**

**Promise your loyalty to your own and the other 49 States.**

**Promise your loyalty to the Government that unites us all,**

**Recognizing that we are ONE Nation under God,**

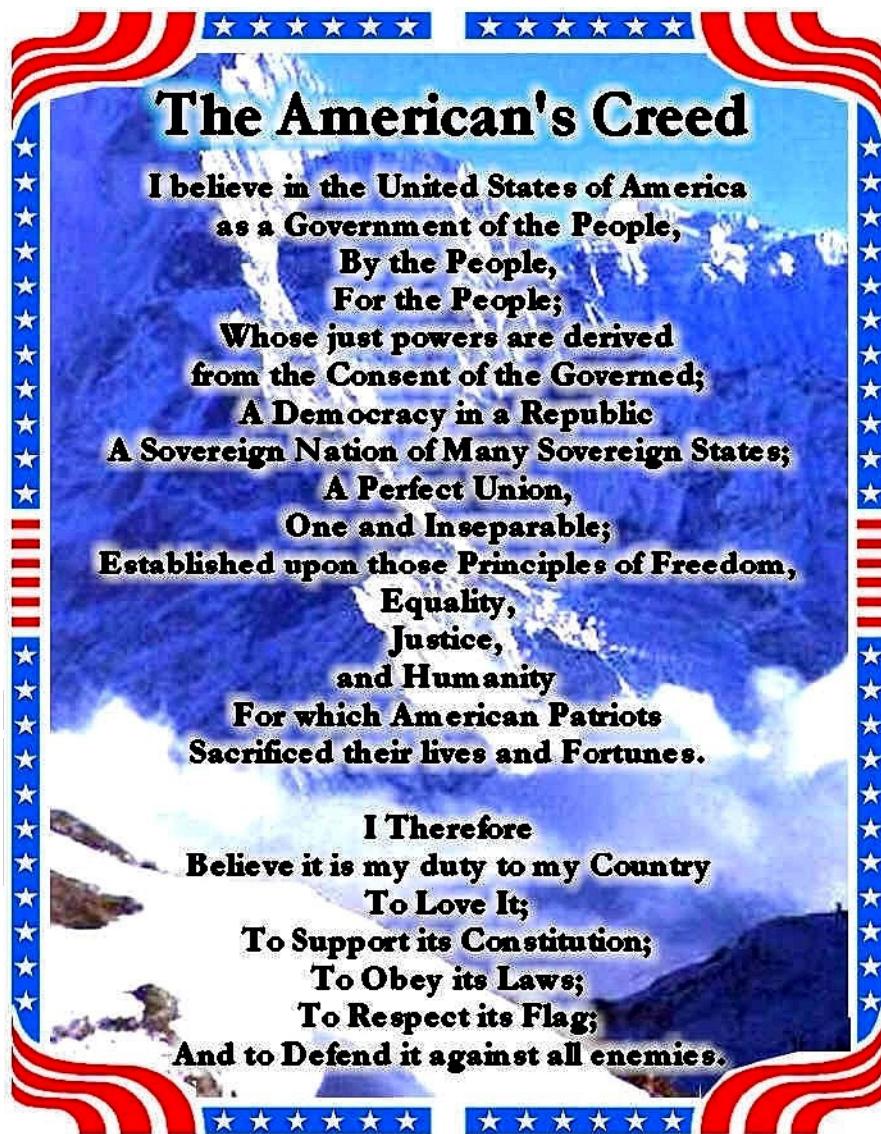
**That we can not or should not be divided or alone,**

**And understanding the right to Liberty and Justice belongs to ALL of us.**



Continue on to The American's Creed

# American's Creed



America's involvement in World War I was a difficult and divisive issue for our Nation. President Wilson had struggled for three years since the outbreak of hostilities in August, 1914 to maintain a position of American neutrality towards the European conflict. This effort to distance our Nation from European affairs was disturbed on May 7, 1915 when a German U-boat sank the unarmed British liner Lusitania killing more than 1,000 people including 128 Americans.

By 1917 it was becoming increasingly apparent that American neutrality could no longer be maintained. President Wilson went before Congress to request a Declaration of War with these words:

*"The world must be made safe for democracy. It is a fearful thing to lead this great peaceful people into war, the most terrible of wars. But the right is more precious than the peace, and we shall fight for the things that we have always carried nearest our hearts..for democracy...for the rights and liberties of*

#### Flag Day - I Pledge Allegiance to the Flag - American Creed - Continued

*small nations, for a universal dominion of right by such a concert of free peoples as shall bring peace and safety to all nations and make the world itself at last free."*

President Wilson's view of the United States as the stalwart of world democracy wasn't shared by everyone, however. Six of the 96 U.S. Senators voted against the declaration of war. The House of Representatives passed the resolution April 6, 1917, but only after 13 hours of emotional and heated debate. Forty-nine Congressmen and the only Congresswoman (Helen Rankin of Montana), voted against the declaration.

By mid-summer General John J. Pershing's American Expeditionary Force was landing in Europe. But even as Colonel Charles E. Stanton stood before the tomb of Revolutionary War hero Marquis de Lafayette's tomb in France to proclaim, "*Lafayette, we are here*"; trouble was brewing at home. Congress' new program of conscription under the Selective Service Act was mandating registration for military service by every American man between the ages of 21 and 30. Not since the Civil War had an issue arisen to so divide our Country.

While George M. Cohan wrote patriotic songs like "*Over There*" (actually penned on April 6, the same day Congress finally passed the Declaration of War), other citizens began to protest American involvement in "Europe's troubles" and the forced recruitment of soldiers under the Selective Service Act. ***By the summer of 1918 the war in Europe had forced the Government to take control of industry, railroads, and food and fuel production.*** Taxes were raised to fund the war, postal rates went up, and censorship of some mail was being officially conducted. ***In May Congress passed the Sedition Act which allowed war and draft protesters to be jailed.*** More than 2,000 Americans were already behind bars for interfering with the draft, including one former United States Congressman (Victor Berger of Wisconsin).

***In the midst of all this domestic turmoil and dissension, a Nation-wide essay contest was held to develop an American's Creed.*** The winning entry was submitted by *William Tyler Page* of Friendship Heights, Maryland. Mr. Page was a descendent of President John Tyler and former Congressman John Page who served in the House of Representatives from 1789-1797. William Tyler Page himself had also served in Congress -- as a *Congressional Page* in 1881. His winning essay established the American's Creed with the following words:

I believe in the United States of America as a Government of the People, by the People, for the People; whose just powers are derived from the consent of the governed; A democracy in a republic, a sovereign Nation of many Sovereign States; a perfect Union, one and inseparable; established upon those principles of Freedom, Equality, Justice, and Humanity for which American Patriots sacrificed their Lives and Fortunes.

I therefore believe it is my duty to my country to Love it; to Support its Constitution; to obey its laws; to Respect its Flag; and to defend it against all enemies.

**The American's Creed defines what it means to be American, both the need for FAITH in who and what we are as a Nation, and the RESPONSIBILITY we all have to love and respect our Nation and its Flag.** Its message is appropriate for each generation of Americans, but becomes even more meaningful when we understand the historical context of its origin...written during a time of conflict and turmoil at home and abroad.

