

Fourth of July Celebration
Under the Statue of Liberty Replica – Warner Park - Madison, Wisconsin
July 5, 2014
Speech By Roger Boeker, President
Wisconsin Society Sons of the American Revolution

(Introduction of WISSAR President Roger Boeker by Parade Marshall)

(Boeker Introduces Madison Mayor Paul Soglin for comments.)

Boeker: I was asked to talk about the historical flags of the United States. Flags, banners, & pennants started as tall spears with cloth streamers attached. The motion of the cloth was to attract the attention of fighters. The addition of colors, patterns & increased size allowed even easier recognition.

But why do people need flags? In the dust and smoke of battle, flags raised above the fray pinpointed the location of the group leader & unit headquarters. If the flag was moving, it indicated the direction of movement that the group was and where the unit should follow.

In the American Revolution, the colonies had known no flag other than the Union Jack of Great Britain. You just could not tell the bad guys from the good guys if both sides used the same flag. Colonial militia and regular army of the colonies in revolt used more than 20 different flags to 'show their colors'.

Here are some of the flags carried by American troops:

- Bedford,
- Bennington,
- Brandywine,
- Cowpens,
- Culpepper Militia,
- Flag of Easton, Pennsylvania,
- Gadsden,
- George Rogers Clark,
- Grand Union Flag,
- Green Mountain Boys,
- Moultrie,
- Naval Jack,
- Flag of New England,
- Pine Tree,
- Serapis,
- South Carolina, and
- The Betsy Ross Flag

The Sons of the American Revolution is a patriotic, educational, and genealogical service association of men that have documented a direct relative that served in the American Revolution.

The color guard of the Sons that you see here today carries several of the most important flags of the Revolution we celebrate today, each of which will be unfurled as it is mentioned:

- Grand union - has the 13 stripes, one for each colony, with a union jack in the canton [that is the upper left corner]
- Gadsden - has the yellow field with black, coiled snake saying "Don't Tread On Me"
- Bedford - shows an arm in steel armor on a red field; it was used by the Bedford, Massachusetts militia
- Culpepper Minutemen – has a white field with the "Don't Tread On Me" coiled snake and the unit name for the Battle of Cowpens
- Sprit of 76 – also known as the Bennington Flag – note the 11 seven-point stars & arc pattern with two outlier stars in the corners
- Betsy Ross Banner – 13 stripes and 13 stars in a circle design is in much doubt:

 - Historical timeline does not fit the legend
 - No record that Washington ever met Betsy [Grandson's fictional story?]
 - There were 17 flag makers in Philadelphia employed in U.S. Flag manufacturing
 - The 'Betsy Ross' flag appears to have several artistic inputs and it evolved over time
 - Francis Hopkinson actually billed the Continental Congress for the design
 - Rebecca Young appears on the commissary general payment roster for flag manufacture.

After all these 238 years, we have arrived at our world-renowned, sometimes reviled but globally respected flag, our beloved 50 star spangled banner.

Long may she wave!

- "Commander of the color guard: present the colors!"
- [Star Spangled Banner is sung] by Annette
- Introduce Barbara Arnold for patriotic poem
- Announce nature walks at 12:30 and 1:30 pm

Go forth & enjoy the Madison's First Annual North Side Celebration of the Fourth!