

# INDEPENDENCE DAY

## American Flag That Flies Over Nation Has Seen Many Changes

### FORERUNNERS OF THE U. S. EMBLEM

THE American flag, which waves from every flagpole in the land on Independence Day is a very old flag, as such things go—older than the tricolor of France, for instance, or the flag of Germany.

But the stripes are older than the stars.

Delving into the early history of Old Glory is a fascinating task.

Congress adopted the present flag—13 red and white stripes, with one white star for every state in a field of blue—on July 14, 1777, and Betsy Ross promptly won herself immortality by making out to that order. But before that date there had been many American flags—all of them faintly like the present one, but none of them very much like it.

THE colonists took naturally to the idea of stripes in their flag. The New Englanders had, many of them come to the New World via Holland, and there they had become familiar with the flag of the Dutch republic—a flag containing seven horizontal stripes, alternately green and white. The colonists who came over later often were transported on Dutch ships, and hence were familiar with the striped ensign.

Those who did not come in Dutch ships usually came in vessels of the British East India company, which flew a striped flag all its own.

The British flag of that period

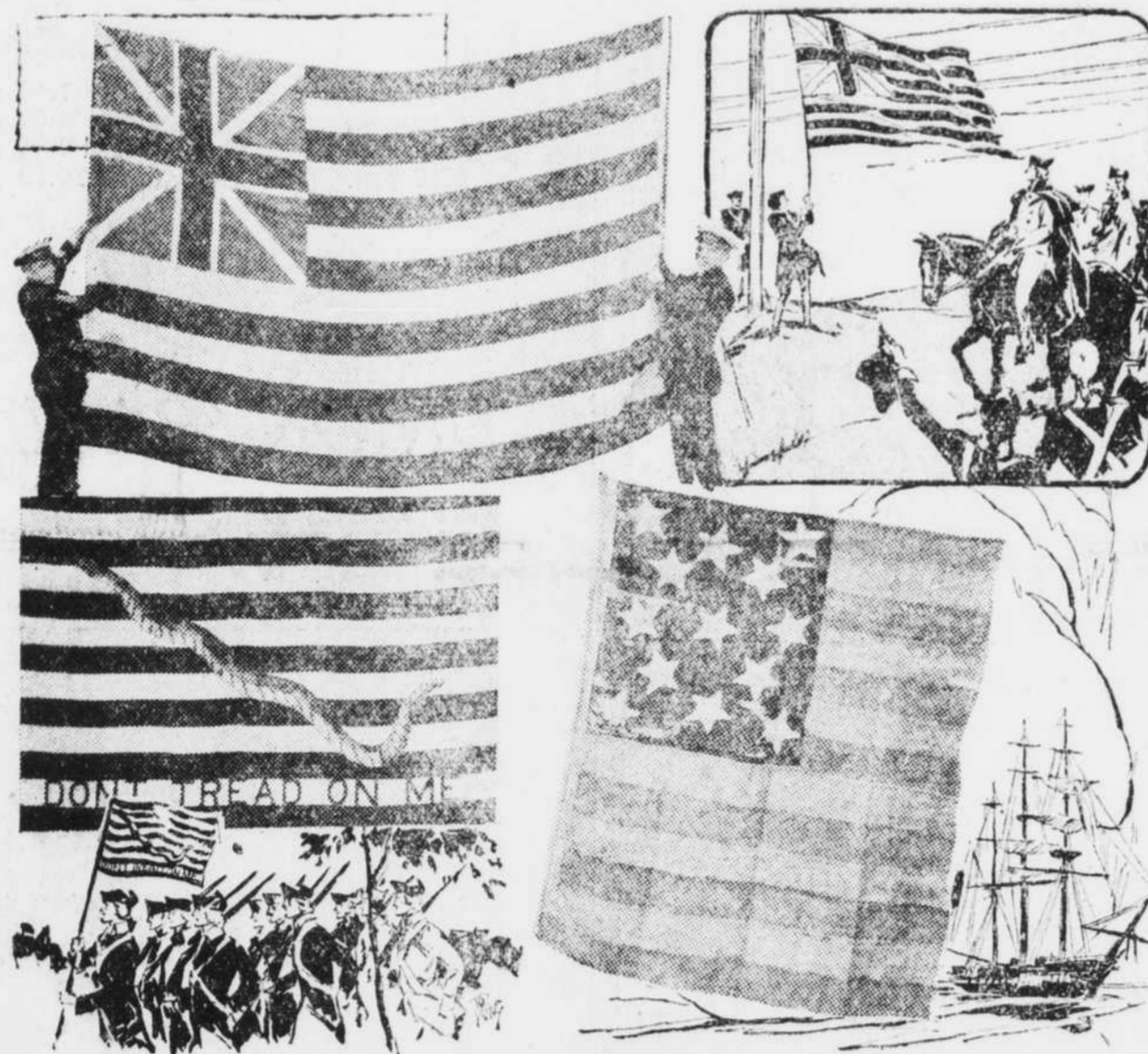
was a solid red banner with the cross of St. George in a white field in the upper left hand corner. So that their ships could identify one another easily, the East India company modified this flag by running white stripes across the red part.

Thus, when the colonists began casting about for a distinctive flag, the striped flag was one they would naturally think of.

A DISTINCTIVE flag was more of a necessity for ships at sea than for troops on land, who could usually recognize the nationality of any forces they encountered. So, in 1775 and 1776, we find American the famous rattlesnake flag—a flag of 13 alternate red and white stripes with a rattlesnake across them, bearing the words, "Don't tread on me."

Probably the first use of stars in the American flag was also at sea. Late in 1775 the armed American schooner Lee hoisted a white flag which had an anchor and the word "Hope" in the middle, with 13 stars in the union, in the upper left corner. Flying this flag, the Lee captured the British transport brig, Nancy, thus carrying the starred flag into action for the first time. Later this flag was carried by colonial detachments at Brandywine, Trenton and Yorktown.

The rattlesnake flag, however, was the first used, and it remained the most popular until Washington



The Grand Union flag, raised by General Washington when he took command of the Continental army on New Year's Day, 1776, is shown at the top. Below are its predecessors, the "Rattlesnake flag," used by the colonists, and the flag of the frigate Constitution.

took command of the army on New Year's Day, 1776, when he hoisted the famous "grand union flag" over the headquarters of the Continental Army.

THIS grand union flag was a direct descendant of the British ensign; and it shows, incidentally that at that time the colonists still desired to remain in the British empire, if they could get parliamentary representation.

In the upper left corner it bore the British union—the crosses that symbolized the union of Scotland and England but the remainder of the flag was composed of 13 horizontal red and white stripes, representing the 13 colonies.

There remained, however, a large number of kinds of flags in service; and since these often caused confusion at sea, congress was asked to adopt one uniform flag. Accordingly, on June 14, 1777, congress passed this resolution:

"Resolved, that the flag of the 13 United States shall be 13 stripes alternate red and white; that the union shall be 13 stars, white in a blue field, representing a new constellation."

This flag, it is to be noted, was an easy transition from the grand union flag. All that had to be done was substitute the field of stars for the British cross in the upper left corner of the ensign.

The position of the stars in the

field often varied with the taste of each individual. Betsy Ross, it is said, arranged the stars in each flag she made in accordance of the wishes of the persons for whom she was making the flags.

ONE of the most interesting American flags in existence is one flown by the famous old frigate Constitution. It has its 13 stars arranged in a circle, with one star in the center and four stars outside the circle in the corner of the union.

In 1795 Kentucky and Vermont were admitted to the Union, and the flag was then revised to contain 15 stars and 15 stripes; and it was this flag that flew over Ft. McHenry during the British attack on Baltimore and inspired the writing of the "Star Spangled Banner." In 1818, however, it was seen that a new stripe could not possibly be added for every new state, so Capt. Samuel Reid of the navy, a hero of the war of 1812, was asked to design a flag. He designed the flag now in use—13 stripes, representing the original 13 colonies, and a star in the union for every state.

The last stars were added by President Taft when Arizona and New Mexico were admitted to the union. The 48 stars in the present flag, incidentally, were arranged in the order in which we see them by Admiral Dewey, hero of Manila Bay.

For twenty-two years an Elk, and one of the charter members of the Las Vegas lodge, Judge William E. Orr, present exalted ruler of the local organization, is one of the lodge prominent of the State of Nevada.

He was one of the pioneers who put over the work of establishing the present headquarters of the lodge; he has held various offices in the lodge before his election to the position of exalted ruler last March.

Judge Orr joined the Tonopah Elks lodge in 1907, at which time his home was in Pioche.

"They went over and got a class of thirty or forty and we stopped off in Las Vegas to pick up a few more," said Judge Orr. "Doctor Martin, Johnny Horden and F. O. McIntosh were among those from Las Vegas who joined at that time."

"We took the old B. and T. to Goldfield and from there went over to Tonopah, where the ceremonies were held."

Judge Orr was a charter member of the Las Vegas lodge, when it was formed seven years ago, being a member of the first board of trustees, along with Arthur Anderson and Dr. R. F. O'Brien. These three men were responsible for the establishment of the present Elks' lodge rooms.

Brother Orr held the offices of Esquire and Leading Knight in the earlier days of the Las Vegas chapter, and at the time of the Elks' convention in Reno two years ago won the cup for the Esquire's part in the ritualistic work.

He was elected exalted ruler of the lodge in March 1929, and took office in April, succeeding C. V. T. Gilbert to the position.

Judge Orr's chief interest in Elkdom now, looking

### Distinguished Jurist Heads Las Vegas Lodge of Elks



Hon. William E. Orr, Exalted Ruler  
Las Vegas Lodge No. 1468

to the future, is the pushing of the work toward the building of the new Elks' home in Las Vegas.

"I want to see everything possible done to bring about the solution of the problem of financing the new structure, looking to the erection of the home within a year," he stated a short time ago. "We expect to go into the matter of financing early in the fall."

Harley A. Harmon is head of the committee in charge of this with A. W. Ham, James Cashman, John T. Watters and Ed Von Tobel as other members of the committee.

The present Elks' club rooms are being leased by the lodge.

Judge Orr is essentially a native Nevadan, for, although he was born in Frisco, Utah, just over the line from Nevada, he was brought to this state to live when yet a small child, being put through school in Pioche.

He attended the University of Nevada from 1900 to 1903 and then, before Lincoln and Clark counties were separated, while together they comprised Lincoln county, he was county clerk for four years.

Following this he was elected county treasurer, which position he held for two years.

He was admitted to the bar and, after practicing law for two years, was elected district attorney of Lincoln county. This position he held for six years, being elected district judge of the Tenth Judicial district in 1918, which post he has occupied since.

It was in January, 1919, that he moved to Las Vegas.

Judge Orr succeeded Charles Lee Horsey to the bench, having been since re-elected twice. His present term will extend to December 31, 1930.