

NO. 209 JANUARY — MARCH 2011

# NAVA News

The Quarterly Newsletter of the  
North American Vexillological Association

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Flags at the dock of the Schooner *Virginia*  
in Norfolk  
*James F. Babcock*



## The Year All on One Stick

Friends:

With the major winter holidays now just fond memories, many of us are resting from the festivities and figuring out how to rebuild bank balances spent spreading holiday cheer. I've been reading a book of early American (i.e., 1800s-1840s) slang, and one of my favorite entries so far is "all on one stick", meaning any sort of combination of things that don't quite go together. So I thought now is a good time to look ahead on the calendar and see what's in the works for 2011 all on one stick.

The highlight of the vexillological year is the Washington Flag Congress, held 1-5 August. The main Congress venue is the handsome and imposing George Washington Masonic



Memorial on the Potomac River's south bank in Alexandria, Virginia. NAVA is hosting the biennial international meeting of vexillologists—I've never been to an international congress and am looking forward to this one. Because the Congress will also

include the annual NAVA business meeting, we won't be meeting in October as we normally do—so this is the event to attend! All the information you need to plan your attendance is on the Congress's website, [www.washingtonflagcongress.org](http://www.washingtonflagcongress.org).

Because we have a "short" year between meetings this time, the work of the Nominating Committee must be completed sooner than usual. I would encourage any of you that are interested in serving on the executive board to please contact one of the committee members to discuss how you can help NAVA plan and grow. Being on the board requires a commitment of about two hours every other month for board meetings by conference call and just a few hours each month for the duties related to the position. The committee members are Peter Ansoff ([ansoff@alumni.vanderbilt.edu](mailto:ansoff@alumni.vanderbilt.edu)), Jack Lowe ([lowe69@verizon.net](mailto:lowe69@verizon.net)), and Pete Van de Putte ([petevdp@aol.com](mailto:petevdp@aol.com)).

Also, if you are interested in serving on the Nominating Committee itself, please let me know so that the Board may consider your name; the Board proposes the committee slate for approval by the members at the annual meeting and we are always interested to hear from prospective volunteers!

The Board will consider possible amendments to the Bylaws to be discussed by the members at the August business meeting. If you have thoughts or suggestions for changes to this governing document, please forward those to me using the e-mail address below.

Contact Hugh Brady: [pres@nava.org](mailto:pres@nava.org)

Practically all state legislatures are meeting this spring, and it seems that each new session brings at least one or two flag-related bills for vexillologists to review and comment upon. Most legislatures have websites that allow you to search for bills using keywords and track the progress of legislation. Please consider doing this for your state and sending along important information either thru the NAVA listserv, the NAVA Yahoo chat group, or to *NAVA News*. I can tell you from experience that one or two letters, e-mails, or phone calls can be considered a groundswell at the state legislative level, and committees are genuinely appreciative of citizen input and testimony. Government works best when we all participate, and I hope you will do your vexillological and civic duty this spring.

Regional vexillological associations provide a good way for us to meet between NAVA meetings and undertake work targeted to our home areas. Many of you, I have found out, live in an area that does not have a regional association. I would like to encourage you to consider starting one in your area—consider using the NAVA members list in the members' area of the NAVA website to find vexillological colleagues near you. The more the merrier!

As always, I like to hear what you think of your Association and how we can work to improve it. We are all volunteers, and it takes some time before I can reply, but I love hearing from all of you. Please don't be a stranger in 2011!

HUGH BRADY  
PRESIDENT

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**NAVA News 209**, (ISSN 1053-3338), Jan.-March 2011, Vol. 44, No. 1  
Published quarterly by North American Vexillological Association,  
1977 N. Olden Ave. Ext. PMB 225, Trenton, NJ 08618-2193.

A benefit of NAVA membership. Articles, letters to the editor, and inquiries about rates and permissions may be sent to the editorial office.

**Editorial Office:** *NAVA News* Editor, 1977 N. Olden Ave. Ext. PMB 225, Trenton, NJ 08618-2193. [navanews@nava.org](mailto:navanews@nava.org)

**Postmaster:** Send address changes to *NAVA News*, 1977 N. Olden Ave. Ext. PMB 225, Trenton, NJ 08618-2193.

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## MEETINGS

## The Washington Flag Congress August 2011

### NAVA's Annual Meeting and the International Congress of Vexillology in Washington, DC

Don't miss the 24th International Congress of Vexillology (ICV 24) this summer!

It will be a rare opportunity to meet the leading flag experts from around the world—the last congress in North America was in Victoria, B.C., in 1999; the last congress in the U.S. was in San Francisco in 1987.

The congress, held jointly with NAVA 45, will take place in Washington, DC, 1–5 August 2011 with some events occurring before and after. As it spans seven days rather than the usual NAVA meeting's three, you'll get more vexillology from the congress that you'd ever imagined.

Already over 140 people, hailing from 30 different countries, have registered or indicated they will come. See the full list on the website.

Find complete information on the Washington Flag Congress at [www.washingtonflagcongress.org](http://www.washingtonflagcongress.org) or [www.nava.org](http://www.nava.org). The program, venue, hotels, tours, and fees are described in detail. There will also be activities for "companions" (those accompanying the full registrants). You can reduce your costs by sharing a hotel room and choosing from four different pre-arranged hotels.

You have until 31 March to submit an abstract for a paper, presentation, symposium, workshop, or exhibit (see below).

And producing an ICV takes a significantly larger pool of volunteers than does a NAVA meeting. Members of the Chesapeake Bay Flag Association are the "presence on the ground" for the congress, but there are many opportunities for NAVA members to help from a distance. Please contact coordinator Ted Kaye at [treas@nava.org](mailto:treas@nava.org) to volunteer.

Consider your 2011 plans now!

If you wish to present a paper or set up a display at **ICV 24 / NAVA 45**, please mail the following information to 1st VP Gus Tracchia by **31 March 2011**:

- 1) Your name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address if available;
- 2) Title of your paper, presentation, symposium, workshop, or exhibit;
- 3) Abstract of your paper, presentation, symposium, workshop, or exhibit;



## EDITOR'S NOTE

## Editorial Musings

Dear *NN* Readers,

On page 12 of this issue, you'll find a short article about NAVA's Digital Library Project. This effort is spearheaded by 2nd Vice President Annie Platoff, and its goal is to make every issue of *Raven* and *NAVA News* available online in searchable PDF format. That's right—every issue—all the way back to NAVA's founding in 1967.

The library will be a unique resource for researchers, and, with luck, it will encourage other vexillological organizations to consider similar projects. In your editor's humble opinion, this is one of the most important things that NAVA has ever done, and exemplifies the purpose stated in our Articles: "To promote vexillology as the scientific study of flags." Kudos to Annie, and also to Bill Trinkle, Carita Culmer, and others who assisted with the collection, scanning, and indexing of this material.

Jim Babcock's fine article about the Hampton Roads flag raises, indirectly, a curious point. As shown on page 3, and confirmed by your editor's personal observation, the image of the flag is widely used in the Hampton Roads Area, but use of the flag itself is rare.

I suspect that this is mostly a practical issue – businesses and homes that already display the U.S. and state flags don't have the resources to display another one as well. (Not many can manage the arrangement shown on the cover!) That's something to keep in mind when we pitch regional and municipal flag projects.

As you'll see on page 13, we've decided that it's time to part company with our old friend, Chumley the Vexi-Gorilla. We're very grateful to Michael Faul, our British counterpart, for allowing Chumley to entertain us for so long. In his place, we plan to include flag-related cartoons, and other humorous items, as a regular *NN* feature. Send us yours!

PETER ANSOFF  
EDITOR

Contact Peter Ansoff: [navanews@nava.org](mailto:navanews@nava.org)

- 4) Type and size of exhibit area and/or equipment needed, including tables, electrical requirements, audio/visual equipment.

Send materials to:

Don Gustavo Tracchia, 82-67 Austin St #205  
Kew Gardens, NY 11415 USA (718) 847-2616  
e-mail: [VP1st@nava.org](mailto:VP1st@nava.org)

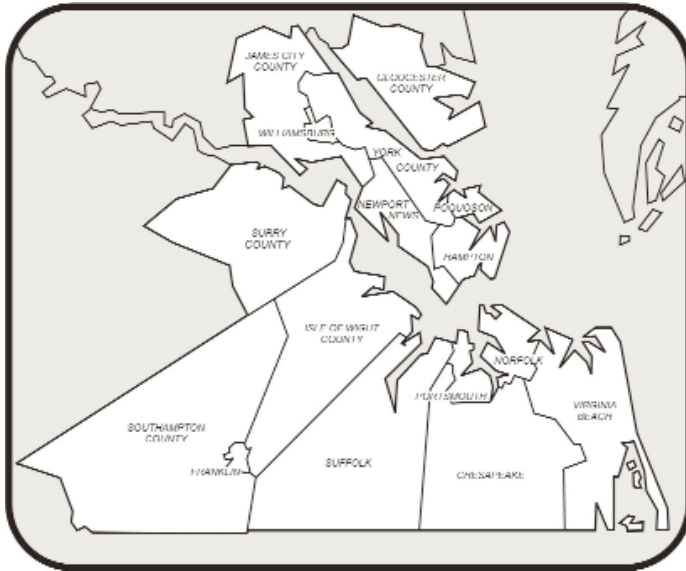
**See [www.nava.org](http://www.nava.org) for more information.**



# Helping Build Regional Cohesion: The Flag of Hampton Roads, Virginia

By JAMES F. BABCOCK

That flags are powerful symbols of national, city, tribal, or corporate unity is not news. But of interest may be the example of a new flag that has fostered unity for a metropolitan region and, beyond that, stimulated a rash of logos and allusions to the flag's colors.



Created in 1998, the flag of Hampton Roads is recognized by NAVA as the first flag ever designed for an American metropolitan area. Its sixteen stars represent the cities and counties of southeastern Virginia that are members of the Hampton Roads Planning District and the Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News Metropolitan Statistical Area. These entities were created by merging two previously hotly competitive planning districts and MSAs on either side of the James River.

Among several measures proposed for promoting regional unity, one I suggested was that a flag of Hampton Roads be created, through a public contest.

NAVA member Dory Wilgus, president of the local flag company, U.S. Flag & Signal, agreed to manufacture the new regional symbol, and I established a company, Wriothesley Virginia Ltd., to sell the flag to local governments, businesses, and individuals. Flag lapel pins were provided by TME Company, whose president, then-NAVA treasurer Peter Orenski, had acted as consultant to the design contest. The first flag was framed and hung on the wall of the Hampton Roads Planning District and it was also adopted by the Hampton Roads Partnership, Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce, Future of Hampton Roads, and other regional organizations.

In the twelve years since its creation, the flag's image and colors have become the basis for the logos and organizational colors of various regional agencies. In an especially notable example, when the local bus companies merged to form Hampton Roads Transit, the CEO fostered internal unity by buying flag lapel pins for all employees and having a modified version of the flag colors incorporated in the HRT logo and painted on its buses and trams.

The 1.7 million residents of Hampton

Roads and their sixteen local governments have made great strides toward regional cohesion. As intended, the regional flag has helped, as the images on the next page attest.

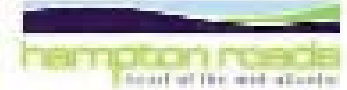


SOURCE: TME Company

James Babcock has been a NAVA member since 1998



Virginia's **HAMPTON ROADS**  
SmartRegion.org

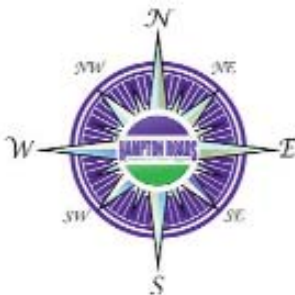


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## The Jonathan Fowle Flag Revisited

By WILLIAM M. BECKER

The Massachusetts State House holds a beautiful American flag supposedly made during the Revolutionary War. It is a 13-star, 13-stripe flag with 5-pointed stars in a 5-4-5 pattern. Known as the Jonathan Fowle or Fort Independence flag, it measures about 6 x 9 feet. If authentic, it would be the sole remaining specimen of a “pure”, stars-and-stripes flag from the 13-star era, according to an illustrated survey by Dave Martucci.<sup>1</sup> All other 13-star specimens are generally believed to be later creations—except for the Brandywine and Guilford Courthouse flags, which are not “pure” designs.



*Fort Independence Flag, attributed to 1781, used 1814*  
SOURCE: Mastai (see footnote 2)

Yet little attention has been devoted to this flag by vexillologists. The standard authorities—Grace Rogers Cooper, Whitney Smith, Milo Quaife, et al., William Furlong, et al, and the Mastais—do not attest it or do so erroneously. The Mastais treat it briefly with an actual photograph, but it is lost in a sea of other pretenders. Moreover, its story is misrepresented: “Flying atop Fort Independence (then Castle William) in Boston, Massachusetts, this historic banner ... received the first thirteen-gun salute tendered by a British man-of-war to the former rebellious colonies on May 2, 1791.”<sup>2</sup>

However, Boston’s State House claims no such thing. While the salute is a matter of record, the Fowle flag’s display placard claims only that it “was fabricated in 1781 for Jonathan Fowle of Jamaica Plain .... Upon its donation to the Commonwealth in 1906 Fowle’s grandson George stated that this was flown at Fort Independence (Castle William) in Boston Harbor during the time his father was posted there as a member of the Boston Rangers.” That, however, was during the War of 1812!

We know this from the governor’s response to the donation by Jonathan Fowle’s grandson, George Washington Fowle. It states: “In making the gift you were good enough to state that this flag ... was manufactured by your grandfather in 1781, that it was flown over Fort Independence in Boston Harbor during the war of 1812, when your father [George Makepeace Fowle], then a member of the Boston Rangers, was a part of the garrison of that post, and since your father’s death I understand that it has been in your possession.”<sup>3</sup>

Does this flag truly date from the revolutionary period—or is the family lore too good to be true? About such claims, Cooper cautions us, “Certainly, there was no original intent to defraud when a grandfather reported that his father had given him ‘his flag’ and told him it was ‘like the one’ under which his forefathers had fought for independence. In two generations, however, this story frequently changes and the flag becomes an original Revolutionary War flag ....”<sup>4</sup>

Requests to subject this flag to modern fabric analysis have been rejected.<sup>5</sup> Could such tests truly pinpoint the flag to the late 1700s? Dave Martucci believes so: “Fabric and dye analysis can and does establish ‘limiting’ dating for flags. It is an accepted and precise science ... We know from the technical literature when certain dyestuffs and weaving techniques were introduced and where. By looking at these fabrics and what substances they contain and how they were woven, we can, with near certainty, determine the oldest possible date for a fabric. These tests are not inexpensive, but they are quite accurate and they take the assumption completely out of the dating game.”<sup>6</sup>

Absent a fabric analysis, some wonder whether the Fowle flag was created later in the 1800s—especially since it resembles the larger sizes of later navy boat flags. Martucci disagrees for two reasons.

First, the Fowle flag bears a heading with two hand-whipped grommets—uncommon for boat flags. Second, it does not follow their official dimensions precisely enough (they were virtually 10:19; see vexman.net for charts).<sup>7</sup> Since boat flags in the 4-5-4 pattern were not made after 1870, and based on comparable prior sizes, the Fowle flag would date from the Civil War, and would either be significantly smaller (or larger) than a regulation size boat flag (either 5.3’ x 10’ or 4.2’ x 8’). Martucci adds: “known and dated flags from this period do not vary from the regulations by more than six inches, a variation that can be explained by aging. In my opinion, the Fowle flag is no boat flag.”

If not a boat flag, could the Fowle flag date to the early 1800s instead? Since it supposedly flew at Fort Independence during the War of 1812, might it have been created at that time? Cooper reminds us that 13-star flags were indeed used even during this period.<sup>8</sup> Although it was no longer official, one might imagine



a 13-star flag being commissioned to fly from the fort for patriotic purposes, since the very British with whom the nation were again at war, had in 1791 saluted the Stars and Stripes for the first time at that very fort—a flag that then had 13 stars. Perhaps 18th-century images of the fort provided an artistic basis for the flag commissioned during the War of 1812. For example, Martucci's survey shows two images of the fort preserved from 1787 and 1789. One clearly shows 5-pointed stars in three rows of 5-4-4.

Further grounds to speculate that the flag dates from the War of 1812 might come from Fowle family history.<sup>9</sup> Jonathan Fowle (1752-1828) was a carriage maker and land-owner in Boston. Why would he make or commission a very large flag at the close of the Revolutionary War when resources were probably scarce? Even General Washington had difficulty procuring flags. And why wait for over 30 years to fly it prominently? It might be more likely that his son, George Makepeace Fowle (1796-1874), required such a flag at Fort Independence. He was a Boston Ranger—a post-Revolutionary War military unit that served at the fort during the War of 1812. Might he have produced the 13-star flag for the fort? When the flag was donated in 1906 by his son (George Washington Fowle), the donor was 84 years old, and father and grandfather were long deceased. Was the flag's story handed on accurately?

Some confusion also surrounds the obverse and reverse of the canton. Martucci states that Amelia Fowler, an embroidery teacher and well-known flag-preserver who restored the original Star-Spangled Banner in 1914, conserved this flag in the 1920s such that the obverse side is sewn to a linen backing and cannot be seen.<sup>10</sup> The State House placard states: "an orderly pattern of stars was sewn on the reverse side of this flag whereas on the front side they appear much smaller and irregular. When the flag was conserved in the 1920s the more handsome side of the flag was preserved, which is why it appears 'backwards', with the stars in the upper right."

No further explanation is provided, but presumably it implies that on the original flag's obverse side the blue fabric was cut away from beneath the stars. Unfortunately, to Martucci's knowledge, there is no photo of that side; and he disputes the placard's assertion. "If it were to be proven true, then dating it would have to begin no later than the 1840s, but I have seen the flag and I do not believe it is true ... the stars are sewn separately onto each side, which would be the technique in the Revolutionary War period and later."

A smaller flag (by half or so) similar to the Fowle flag has also surfaced. It belongs to Jim Mooney, whose family displayed it in 1976 for the U.S. bicentennial. It was found in a Boston home acquired by a family member in 1902—four years before the Fowle flag was donated. Mooney's research determined that a member of the previous homeowner's family was an officer in the Revolutionary War who "may have acquired the flag". He suggests that it may date from the Revolutionary era as a twin of the Fowle flag. Press reports called it a second "Fort Independence Flag".<sup>11</sup>

Does the Mooney flag have any bearing on the Fowle flag—or vice versa? Made of worsted wool and linen, it was displayed in 2007-08 at the National Underground Railroad and Freedom Center in Cincinnati. A fabric analysis by Rabbit Goody of Cooperstown, New York, supposedly points to considerable antiquity for it, but details are lacking. Indeed, from published photos it appears to have longer proportions than the Fowle flag—more like those of a small boat flag of the mid-to-late 1800s. Moreover, the precise orientation of the stars diverges slightly from the Fowle flag; and there are multiple 19th-century examples of 13-star boat flags in the 4-5-4 pattern. Barring further details, its claim to 18th-century provenance seems doubtful.

Does the Jonathan Fowle flag truly date from the Revolutionary War ("fabricated in 1781")—or might it rather date from the War of 1812 when it reportedly flew at Fort Independence? Absent a fabric analysis, further historical scrutiny is welcome, since it is arguably the sole surviving claimant to being a revolutionary-era, stars-and-stripes flag. Critical analysis of State House archives concerning the donation of the flag, and precise details about its restoration and the original appearance of the canton's obverse side, might be a first step—along with Fort Independence's archives of any flag requisitions during the War of 1812.

<sup>1</sup> David B. Martucci, "The 13 Stars and Stripes: A Survey of 18th Century Images", at <<http://www.vexman.net/13stars/>>.

<sup>2</sup> Boleslaw & Marie-Louise Mastai, *The Stars and the Stripes* (New York: Knopf, 1973), p. 48.

<sup>3</sup> William Cutter, *Genealogical and Personal Memoirs* (New York: Lewis, 1910), p. 2640.

<sup>4</sup> Grace Rogers Cooper, *Thirteen-Star Flags: Keys to Identification* (Washington: Smithsonian, 1973), p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> William Furlong & Byron McCandless, *So Proudly We Hail* (Washington: Smithsonian, 1981), p. 138.

<sup>6</sup> David B. Martucci, e-mails to author, October 2010.

<sup>7</sup> David B. Martucci, "US Navy 'Boat' Flag", at <<http://www.vexman.net/smalboat.htm>>.

<sup>8</sup> Cooper, p. 1.

<sup>9</sup> Cutter, pp. 2639-2643.

<sup>10</sup> See Furlong & McCandless, whose obverse image is likely digitally reversed, p. 138.

<sup>11</sup> Associated Press, "Revolutionary War Flag on Display at Center". *Youngstown News*, November 14, 2007, at <<http://alzd.com/news/2007/nov/14/revolutionary-war-flag-on-display-at-center/>>. Photo online at <<http://www.daylife.com/photo/07j82MIelYd4d>>.

# The Chickasaw Nation and the Civil War

By SARAH BRADY STRANGE

While researching the fate of the Chickasaw Indians after 1818 and their 1837 removal to west of the Mississippi River, in September 2010 I traveled to Oklahoma and visited the headquarters of the Chickasaw Nation in Ada and the Chickasaw Council House Museum in Tishomingo.

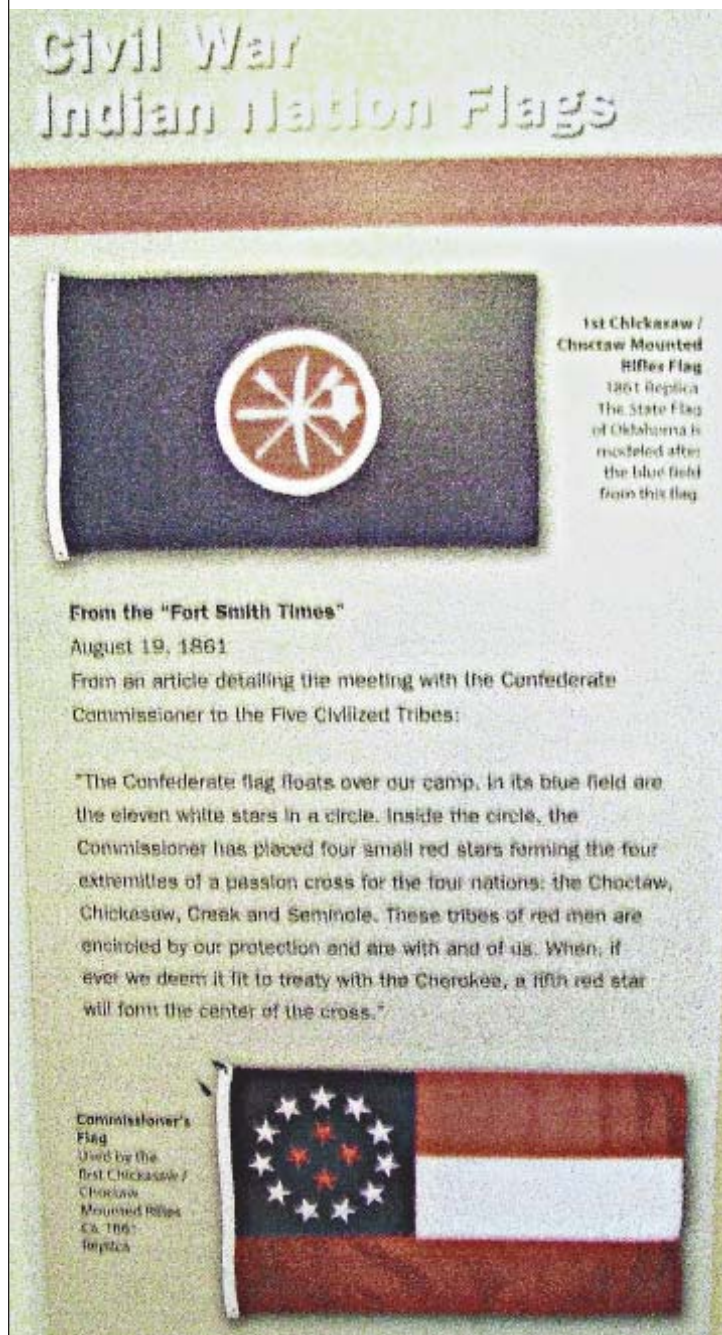
In the museum, a display entitled “Civil War Indian Nation Flags” depicts replicas of two flags carried by the First Chickasaw/Choctaw Mounted Rifles. The majority of the Chickasaws, as slaveholders, were secessionists as were the Choctaw, Creek, Seminoles, and Cherokee—the “Five Civilized Tribes”. In July 1861 the Chickasaw and Choctaw declared themselves allies of the

Confederate States of America. They served mostly in the First Chickasaw/ Choctaw Mounted Rifles under Douglas H. Cooper, who commanded the Department of Indian Operations under authority of the Confederate government. It is believed that the Confederacy created flags for its Indian allies (see *Raven* 3/4 and its accompanying poster).<sup>1</sup> (The current Chickasaw seal and flag were not created until the 20th century.)

Other Indian tribes and some Chickasaws remained loyal to the Union. But if they fought under flags or banners identifying them as Indian Union soldiers as did the Confederates, my research did not discover them.

The flag at the top of the display is identified as that used by the 1st Chickasaw/Choctaw Mounted Rifles. Dev Cannon’s book, *The Flags of the Confederacy*, describes it as the flag of the Choctaw Brigade.<sup>2</sup> The flag at the bottom of the display is identified as a “Commissioner’s Flag”. It is a “Stars and Bars” Confederate flag with a blue canton containing a cluster of four red stars within its circle of eleven white stars, two red bars, and one white bar. The display reprints a portion of an article in the *Fort Smith Times* of 19 August 1861 about a meeting with the confederate commissioner to the Five Civilized Tribes. It reads:

*The Confederate flag floats over our camp. In its blue field are the eleven white stars in a circle. Inside the circle, the Commissioner has placed four small red stars forming the four extremities of a passion cross for the four nations: the Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek, and Seminole. These tribes of red men are encircled by our protection and are with and of us. When, if ever we deem it fit to treaty with the Cherokee, a fifth red star will form the center of the cross.*



Council House Museum display placard, Tishomingo, Oklahoma  
SOURCE: Donna Webb, curator



Cannon describes a similar flag which adds to this Chickasaw/Choctaw flag the red star in the center and the words “Cherokee Braves” in the white bar.<sup>3</sup> Cannon determined that this flag, with the extra red star and the words added, was presented to Chief John Ross of the Cherokee by Commissioner Albert Pike on 7 October 1861, when their treaty was signed.

As a historical note, on 28 April 1866 the Chickasaw and Choctaw signed a treaty with the United States which provided an end to slavery,<sup>4</sup> the creation of a leased district for freedmen, payment of reparations to pro-Union Chickasaw/Choctaws, and granting of railroad rights-of-way through their nations. The annuity payments due these tribes under previous treaties were resumed.



Council House Museum

SOURCE: [www.chickasaw.net](http://www.chickasaw.net)

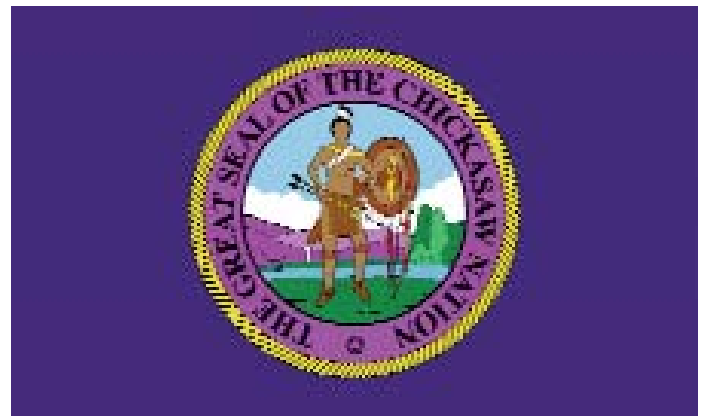
Atop the museum(left) flies the flag of the Chickasaw Nation. It has a blue field, darker than that of the flag of the state of Oklahoma,<sup>5</sup> with the Great Seal of the Chickasaw Nation in the center. In the seal's center is Tishomingo, the last war chief of the Chickasaw. The outer rim of the seal is gold and the inner rim is light purple. Tishomingo holds two arrows representing the two divisions of the ancient Chickasaw society and the four head feathers represent the four directions of the earth. The band crossing the chief's chest is known as the warrior's mantle, a traditional decoration for great warriors, and was made of swan feathers. The quiver represents the hunting prowess of the warrior and the bow the warrior's ability to provide for his people. The knee straps were a form of Chickasaw medicine; the shield signifies the protection of the warriors for all Chickasaw people. The river in the background is the Mississippi and the trees and plants are those generally found near the Mississippi, where the Chickasaw's original homelands were located. For in-depth discussion of the symbolism on this flag, and the Chickasaw Indian Nation itself, including its language, history, and culture, visit [www.chickasaw.net](http://www.chickasaw.net).

As I drove away from the Council House Museum, the image of that beautiful, three-story stone building appeared in my rear view mirror, and the thought crossed my mind that today was a trip of affirmation, that we, mankind, are more alike, under our variously-colored skins, than not.



Cherokee Braves, 1861

SOURCE: TME Company



Chickasaw Nation: seal adopted 1907; flag adopted pre-1989

SOURCE: TME Company

Sarah Strange joined NAVA in 2008

<sup>1</sup> Donald T. Healy, *Flags of the Native Peoples of the United States* (Raven 3/4, NAVA, 1996-97).

<sup>2</sup> Devereaux D. Cannon, Jr., *The Flags of the Confederacy, an Illustrated History* (St. Luke's Press, Memphis, Tenn., 1988), p. 65, color plate Figure 64.

<sup>3</sup> Cannon, p. 64, color plate Figure 63.

<sup>4</sup> Slave life under Indian “ownership” is vividly described in *The WPA Oklahoma Slave Narratives*, T. Lindsay Baker and Julie P. Baker, eds. (University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Oklahoma, 1996).

<sup>5</sup> The fields of the Oklahoma State flag and the Chickasaw flag are both blue, but they are not the same shade. The first is officially “French Blue” (Pantone 285c), while the second is “Indigo Blue”, a much darker shade comparable to the blue backgrounds of many other state flags. The difference is clear in photographs on the Chickasaw website, which show the two flags flying together. Similarly, the caption in the museum placard for the Mounted Rifles flag, which states that “... the state flag of Oklahoma is modeled after the blue field from this flag”, is actually somewhat misleading, since the field of the Mounted Rifles flag shown on the placard is also dark blue. See the Chickasaw entry in *Flags of the Native Peoples of the United States* and Don Healy, “Symbols of the Chickasaw Nation”, *NAVA News*, March-April 1989, p. 6.

## Lesser-Known Symbols of Minor U.S. Possessions

### Part 3. Pacific Ocean—Johnston Atoll

By ROMAN KLIMEŠ

Johnston Atoll is a 140-sq. km. island group in the North Pacific Ocean about 1,400 km. west of Hawaii.

It comprises Johnston, Akau, Hikina, and Sand Islands. Two of its islands are natural; two were formed by coral dredging. Its total area is 2.7 sq. km. and the highest point, at 13 m., is Summit Peak. It is an unincorporated territory of the United States, administrated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service of the Department of Interior as part of the United States Pacific Island Wildlife Refuges and counted as one of the United States Minor Outlying Islands.

Its namesake was Capt. Charles J. Johnston, commander of HMS *Cornwallis*, who discovered and claimed it for Great Britain on 14 December 1807. Both the United States and the Kingdom of Hawaii claimed it in 1858. The Atoll's guano deposits, mined by U.S. interests under the Guano Islands Act, were depleted in about 1890. In 1926 it became a federal bird refuge under the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture. In 1934 control passed to the U.S. Navy to establish an air station and to the Interior Dept. to administer the bird refuge. In 1936, the Navy began developing a seaplane base, an airstrip, and refueling facilities on the atoll; in 1941 it was designated a Naval Defensive Sea Area and Airspace Reservation. The Japanese shelled Johnston Atoll during World War II.

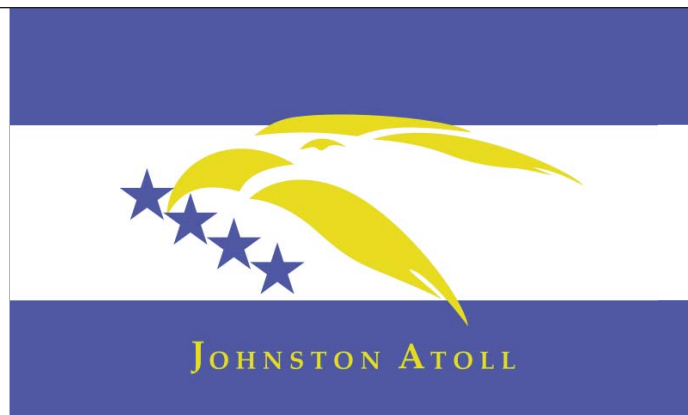
Beginning in the 1950s Johnston Atoll was used to dispose of chemical and nuclear waste in a large incinerator facility managed by the Defense Nuclear Agency. By the end of 2003 jurisdiction transferred to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. All structures and facilities were removed by 2004. On 6 January 2009 it became part of the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument.

The flag of the Defense Nuclear Agency is white with the agency seal in the center, 2/3 of the hoist height. The seal has a light blue shield with three gold arrows in the center. The shield, representing the Department of Defense, is its official "defender's blue".



The arrows represent the tri-service nature of the Defense Nuclear Agency. The gold chain represents an atomic chain reaction. The "diapered" background surrounding the shield shows atomic mushroom clouds in white, interspersed with atoms and orbital electrons in gold. The dark blue field is the blue used in presidential colors. On the white circle is "DEFENSE NUCLEAR AGENCY • UNITED STATES OF AMERICA •" in blue.<sup>1</sup>

Johnston Atoll now has a flag of its own. It was chosen in a flag design contest among the 1,200 residents, organized by the Air Force.<sup>2</sup> The winning design, by Cheryl Velk, comprises horizontal stripes of blue/white/blue in proportions of 2:3:2. In the central white stripe are four 5-pointed stars in blue and a stylized double bird in gold, holding the stars. In the lower blue stripe is "JOHNSTON ATOLL" in gold. The double bird denotes the Air Force and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service; the four stars symbolize the four islands. The abstract bird represents Johnston wildlife in general. White stands for coral and blue (Air Force blue) for the surrounding ocean. The designer meant the flag to reflect the atoll itself and not any one organization or generation.<sup>3</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Defense Nuclear Agency, Field Command, Kirtland Air Force Base, New Mexico. Letter to the author dated 24 May 1991.

<sup>2</sup> Information leaflet compiled by Skip Wheeler, Hawaii, sent with a letter to the author, 22 February 2002.

<sup>3</sup> E-mail from Cheryl Velk, the designer of the flag of Johnston Atoll, to Rob Raeside, Wolfville, Nova Scotia, Canada, dated 2 February 2000.



# The State of Absaroka?

By FRANK JACOBS, submitted by DAVID B. MARTUCCI

This article is an excerpt from "Look At the State You're In: Absaroka", blog entry #301 by Frank Jacobs, 25 July 2008, on "Strange Maps" <<http://bigthink.com/blogs/strange-maps>>

In 1939, the proposed 49th U.S. state of Absaroka (pronounced ab-SOR-ka) managed to acquire quite a few trappings of statehood in its short-lived attempt at existence. A governor and capital were selected, Absarokan car license plates were issued, and even a Miss Absaroka 1939 was selected (the first and only one). The King of Norway also visited, apparently—although he might not have believed it was a state visit.



Dorothy Fellows, "Miss Absaroka" (on the left), with A. R. Swickard, "governor of Absaroka", and Esther Aspaas. The ladies hold the proposed flag for what could have been the 49th state.

posed of similarly-feeling parts of Wyoming and two other states: Montana and South Dakota. The state was the brainchild of a group of aggrieved locals, but mainly of one A. R. Swickard, Absaroka's self-appointed governor.

The *New York Times* reproduced a map of Absaroka based on one sketched out by Swickard and his co-conspirators in Sheridan, Wyoming—the 'capital' of Absaroka.

"It was 90 miles of dirt road to the county seat. There was just nothing there. What Swickard did was exciting," Mr Johnson quotes local resident Helen Graham (89). Things are really bad when secessionism is the only freely available form of decent entertainment.

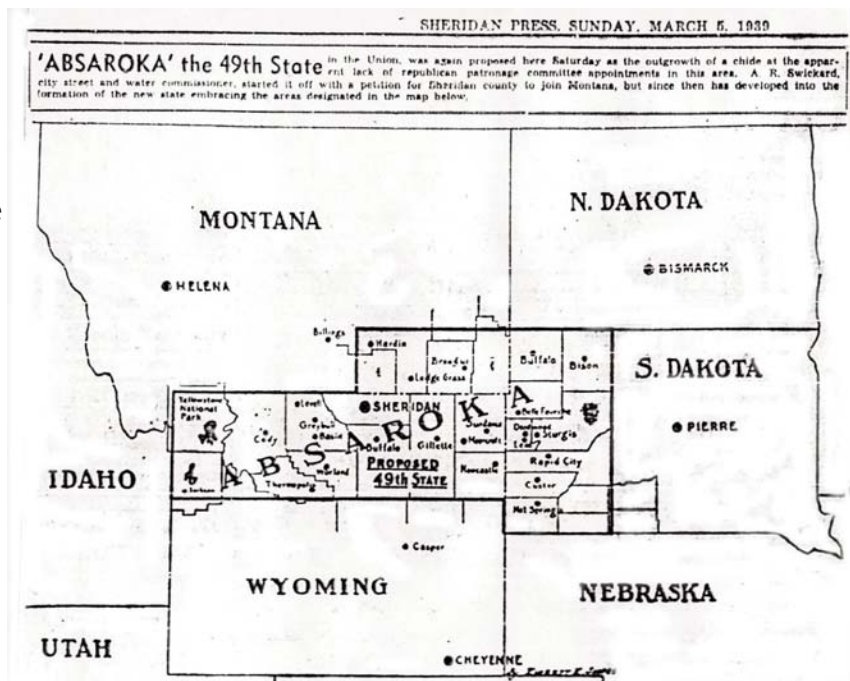
It remains unclear how serious the clamor for Absarokan statehood really was, or when and how it ended. Anyone with more information is asked to contact the editor.

On another continent or in another era, all this might have qualified Absaroka for total independence. But alas, in 1930s America, with its by-then well-established administrative divisions, even statehood proved to be beyond the Absarokans' grasp. The fledgling state might have faded from history entirely, had it not been recorded by the Federal Writers' Project, eager to include it as an example of cowboyin' *couleur locale*.

That record was one of the sources for an article on Absaroka by *New York Times* journalist Kirk Johnson ('A State That Never Was In Wyoming', *NYT*, 24 July 2008).

Absaroka means 'children of the large-beaked bird', the name given to the Crow Indians by their relatives, the Hidatsa. It is also a local mountain range.

What kicked off the secessionist movement was independent-minded ranchers' opposition to President Franklin D. Roosevelt's interventionist New Deal. Absaroka was to be com-



SOURCE: Sheridan (Wyoming) Press 3/5/1939

## CBFA at Winterthur

In December 2010, members of the Chesapeake Bay Flag Association (CBFA) gathered at the Winterthur Museum, near Wilmington, Delaware. As reported in *NAVA News* 207, the museum was hosting a special exhibit—"Betsy Ross: The Life Behind the Legend". Linda Eaton, co-curator, led the group on a special tour of the exhibit and regaled us with interesting background information.

The exhibit include variety of artifacts and documents related to the life and career of Elizabeth Griscom Ross Ashburn Claypoole, and an intriguing collection of items related to her iconic place in American mythology. The primary draw for us, however, was a splendid collection of historic flags and related artifacts. They included the 3rd Virginia colors captured by the British at the Battle of Waxhaws, the standard of Sheldon's Horse—2nd Connecticut regiment, the Philadelphia Light Horse Standard, and the purported standard of General Washington.

There were also some unexpected highlights: the original paintings of the *Serapis* and *Alliance* flags, painted by a Dutch artist in 1779, and the officers' sword belt tips which depict American artillery flags and were found at the 1778-79 Pluckemin (New Jersey) artillery cantonment site of the Continental Army. These are among the earliest known depictions of the flag of the United States, and it was a thrill to see them "in the flesh".

All enjoyed a fascinating tour of the Winterthur Museum and grounds and a behind-the-scenes look at the museum's state-of-the art conservation facility. The event closed with a short presentation by Peter Ansoff on the development of regimental colors, and a short CBFA business meeting. It was a splendid day.

Special kudos go to CBFA President Jack Lowe for organizing this event and to Linda Eaton for serving as our enthusiastic tour guide and point of contact. A tip of the hat to Dave Breitenbach and Rich Monahan of the Great Waters Association of Vexillology (GWAV), who journeyed all the way from their Midwestern homes to join us.



*The Betsy Ross Exhibit at Winterthur Museum*  
SOURCE: [www.winterthur.org](http://www.winterthur.org)



*Members and friends of CBFA and GWAV (with the CBFA Flag) enjoy the Betsy Ross Exhibit at Winterthur Museum*



**NORTH AMERICAN VEXILLOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION****Budget Summary  
(U.S. Dollars)**

	<b>2010 BUDGET</b>	<b>2010 ACTUAL</b>	<b>2011 BUDGET</b>
<b>INCOME</b>			
Dues	12,800	13,850	12,800
Driver Award	250	250	250
Misc. Sales	800	318	500
Contributions - General	1,000	1,048	1,000
Contributions - Cons./Res.	---	545	---
Contributions - <i>Raven</i>	---	---	2,500
Interest	375	38	---
NAVA Meeting	8,500	8,070	30,000
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>23,725</b>	<b>24,118</b>	<b>47,050</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
<b>Publications</b>			
<i>NAVA News</i>			
Layout	---	---	---
Printing	5,300	4,099	4,600
Mailing	3,100	2,484	2,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,400</b>	<b>6,583</b>	<b>7,100</b>
<i>Raven</i>			
Layout	1,600	1,400	2,000
Printing	2,500	2,139	4,600
Mailing	500	838	500
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,600</b>	<b>7,423</b>	<b>7,100</b>
<b>WEBSITE</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>2,200</b>
<b>DIRECTORY</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>---</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Meetings (Annual Mtg.)</b>	<b>8,000</b>	<b>4,337</b>	<b>30,000</b>
<b>Administration</b>			
Post Office Box	450	555	450
Mailings/Officer Postage	300	189	300
Supplies	100	---	100
Bank Fees	300	259	300
Telephone	75	---	75
Driver Award	250	250	250
Transfer to Cons./Res.	---	545	---
Contingency	1,000	---	625
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,475</b>	<b>1,799</b>	<b>2,100</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>23,725</b>	<b>17,313</b>	<b>48,550</b>
<b>CHANGE IN RESERVES</b>	<b>---</b>	<b>6,805</b>	<b>(1,500)</b>
<b>UNRESTRICTED FUND BALANCE</b>		<b>41,043</b>	<b>39,543</b>

## TREASURER'S REPORT

**NAVA Finances:  
Strong and Consistently  
Positive Results**

In 2010, NAVA ran a surplus for the fourth year in a row, exceeding our budgeted goal of breaking even. We are in solid financial shape with strong and growing reserves.

**2010 Results**

There were several reasons for last year's positive results:

- 1) NAVA membership remains steady and most members are paying their dues promptly or in advance.
- 2) NAVA 44's success delivered a significant surplus.
- 3) We've realized economies in printing and mailing *NAVA News* and *Raven*.
- 4) Contributions from generous donors helped underwrite several NAVA programs.

**2011: A Sound Budget**

The 2011 budget (approved by the budget committee and the board, and adopted at the 2010 NAVA annual meeting in Los Angeles) calls for a reduction in reserves for a special website project, otherwise it's a conservative, steady-state budget.

There are three significant changes from last year:

- 1) Because we will combine NAVA 45 with ICV 24, the income and expense for the NAVA Meeting are both much higher—but still net to zero.
- 2) We plan a special *Raven* in 2011 (*Canadian City Flags*), with higher production costs and related fund-raising to cover them.
- 3) Our planned website upgrade will cost \$2,000, funded by taking \$1,500 out of our reserves (past surpluses) and reducing our contingency by \$500.

We also hold \$2,899 in our Conservation and Research Funds, not having made grants since 2007.

**Current Challenges**

Maintaining and growing membership in a difficult economic climate means that NAVA should continue to call on all members to help recruit and retain fellow flag-enthusiasts.

Please contact me or any board member with any questions, concerns, or suggestions.

Contact Ted Kaye: [treas@nava.org](mailto:treas@nava.org)

## Announcing NAVA's Digital Library

For the past two years NAVA has been working to create an online library of its publications, to make available on its website all issues of *NAVA News* and *Raven: A Journal of Vexillology*. Issues more than two years old will be accessible by any visitor; the most current issues will be available to NAVA members only.

All issues of *NAVA News* from the first issue published in 1967 through the end of 2009 are now available online in PDF format. Early issues not created digitally were scanned with optical character recognition (OCR) software to enhance the ability to search issues. Tables of contents have been added to each PDF so that users can easily select articles with a mouse click.

Five volumes of *Raven* (vol. 11-15, 2004-08) have been uploaded to the website so far. For each *Raven*, a table of contents has been posted with links to full-

text PDFs of each article. Work continues to convert earlier volumes from the various digital files used to create them.

Eventually, the most current issues of both publications will be posted and made available in the members-only section of the NAVA website. We are also working to convert the HTML index of *NAVA News* and *Raven* to a database. When this project is complete users will be able to search by author, title, or subject and then click on links to find the full text of articles.

Annie Platoff, NAVA's 2nd vice president and a professional librarian, chairs the Publications Committee and leads the effort to create the library: VP2nd@nava.org.

All of these efforts will make flag information published by NAVA more accessible to our members and to others who are interested in flags. New content will be added as available. Find the NAVA Digital Library at <http://www.nava.org/documents/library/index.php>.

## NAVA's Grant Programs

The **Devereaux D. Cannon, Jr. Grant for Research in Vexillology** supports original research in various aspects of flag design and usage. NAVA gives this grant, now \$500, on an occasional basis to individuals pursuing research which advances vexillological knowledge in North America.

NAVA actively promotes conservation, preservation, and restoration of historic flags by raising and granting funds for museums and other repositories, and by lending its name in support of these efforts, through the **Grace Rogers Cooper Flag Conservation Grant** of \$250–\$500.

See "Grants" at [www.nava.org](http://www.nava.org) for more details.

## NAVA News wants your articles and other vexi-news from around North America

Nearly all of the content of *NAVA News* comprises contributions from NAVA members and others in the vexi-community. We're always looking for short articles, news about members' vexillological activities, photos, pictures, and descriptions of new and interesting flags, etc. To submit an item for publication, please contact the editor, Peter Ansoff, at [navanews@nava.org](mailto:navanews@nava.org). The publication schedule is:

Issue No.	Deadline for Submissions	Approximate "In the Mail" Date
210	30 April	20 June 2011
211	31 July	20 September 2011
212	30 September	20 December 2011
213	31 January	20 March 2012

**Don't wait—get started now on that article you've been meaning to write!**

## Dues Reminder!

NAVA memberships run on a calendar-year basis, no matter when in a year a member joined.

All dues are payable 1 January for the full year; memberships lapse on 31 March if dues are not paid.

Please check your mailing label—it shows the year through which your dues are paid.

You can pay your NAVA membership dues via [www.PayPal.com](http://www.PayPal.com) to [treas@nava.org](mailto:treas@nava.org) (more and more members are choosing this option), or by check to the NAVA P.O. box, or go to [www.nava.org](http://www.nava.org) and click the "Renew" link in the upper right of the home page.

Dues for 2011 remain the same: Regular (active): \$40, Student (associate): \$20, Commercial (organizational) (\$60), Subscription: \$40. You can pay for multiple years at once and simplify your bookkeeping!



## FLAG HUMOR



From Annie Platoff's NAVA 44 presentation comes a 5-flag cartoon commenting on the belligerent situation in 2008 between Russia and Georgia over South Ossetia.

SOURCE: <http://imageshack.us>. The terms of service for this host site specifically exclude copyrighted material. To the best of the editor's knowledge this image is in the public domain

Note: Chumley the Vexi-Gorilla™ has retired after amusing us in over 40 issues of *NAVA News*. Send your entries to [navanews@nava.org](mailto:navanews@nava.org).

## NAVA Classifieds

**Unusual collection** of flag information and historical flags. The Flag Guys® [www.flagguys.com](http://www.flagguys.com)  
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## MEMBER FLAGS



**Peter Hans Van den Muijzenberg**—  
 Sneek, Friesland, The Netherlands  
 A "Blue Peter" (letter "P") in 2:3 proportions.

Members are encouraged to send in their personal flag designs for inclusion in the NAVA Member Flag Registry. Send your photos, drawings, and descriptions to [navanews@nava.org](mailto:navanews@nava.org), or mail to: Member Flag Registry, 1977 N Olden Ave Ext PMB 225, Trenton NJ 08618-2193 USA, or post them directly to the Member Database.



**Brent Robben**—Denver, Colorado  
 Brent Robben modeled his personal flag on the Colorado state flag. The "C" is replaced with a "1" and a "3" combined to make a "B". 13 is his lucky number and B is the first letter of his name. Red, black, and white are his favorite colors. The proportions are 2:3.



**North American  
Vexillological Association**

1977 N. Olden Ave. Ext. PMB 225  
Trenton NJ 08618-2193 USA

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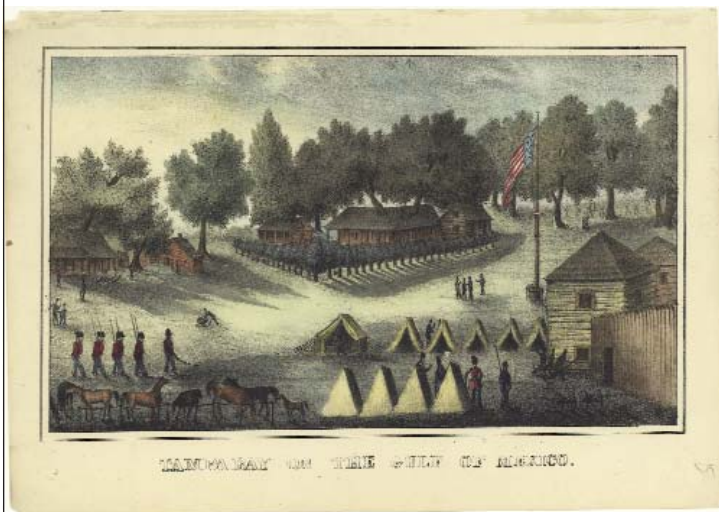
Pay your NAVA membership dues via  
[www.PayPal.com](http://www.PayPal.com) to [treas@nava.org](mailto:treas@nava.org) or  
by check to the NAVA P.O. Box.

**Thank you!**

## An 1837 U.S. Flag Variant?

This image shows Fort Brooke, Florida, during the Second Seminole War in 1835. The U.S. flag depicted has a canton that extends the full width of the hoist, similar to the "John Shaw flag" that was flown in Annapolis 41 years earlier.

(See Richardson A. Libby, "The Saga of the John Shaw Flag", *NAVA News* 203, pp. 2-3).



*"Tampa Bay on the Gulf of Mexico", hand-colored lithograph,  
published by Gray & James, Charleston, S.C., 1837*

SOURCE: Library of Congress image number LC-USZC4-4422