

Our First Flag: The Story of Betsy Ross

Question: Have you ever seen a flag just like this one?



This was once the flag of our country when we were first fighting against England for our freedom. Here is the story which is often told about the making of this flag.

Long ago when our country was new, George Washington wanted a flag that would represent the United States and rally the troops with pride. He wanted a flag that would belong to the United States alone.

People already wanted it to be red, white and blue. Leaders and patriots had tried a number of different designs, but they knew it should have 13 stars and 13 stripes because there were 13 states in the United States.

Question: But, who would make this flag?

It had to be someone who could make fine, even stitches. Colonel George Ross brought his friend and Commander in Chief of the US forces, George Washington, to his niece's upholstery and flag shop to see her work. Her name was Betsy Ross and she had been married to Colonel George Ross's nephew John who had died of illness he contracted making a poisonous bug killer. He should have stayed with his job in upholstery!

They asked the widow Betsy Ross if she could fashion a flag of the design they brought with them and she was sure she could. She liked the stars and stripes and the field of blue but they suggested a 6-pointed star to represent the states. Betsy told them she had a better idea, easier to cut, and very handsome - a five-pointed star! They wished to see why it was easier.

According to the story, Betsy took out her scissors, made a number of folds in the cloth...and all of a sudden...snip!!! Out came a 5-pointed star! They liked the star very much and decided that she was right and the 5-pointed star should be on the official design.

So, it is told, she delivered this flag a few days later and that flag design was used in a number of battles with the British on land and sea and was copied over and over.

Over time, some flag-makers thought it was difficult to make a perfect circle each time they made a hand-sewn flag and suggested it was easier to use ROWS.

Eventually, our flag adopted the idea of ROWS and that design has served us well as we added new states to the United States of America.

Today this round star design is still known as The Betsy Ross Flag!