

RITUAL FOR A WORN OUT FLAG

Today our program is the RITUAL FOR A WORN OUT FLAG and for our ritual to be meaningful we must review a little of the history of our Flag.

On June 14, 1877 Congress resolved "that the Flag of the United States be 13 stripes alternate red and white, that the Union be 13 stars, white in a blue field representing a new Constellation." After this was passed our Flag looked different each time a new State joined the Union because a new stripe was added. The Flag soon required very tall flag poles so on April 4, 1818 Congress enacted: "that from the fourth day of July next the Flag of the United States be 13 horizontal stripes, alternate red and white; that the Union be 20 stars, white in a blue field, that on the admission of every new State into the Union, one star be added to the Union of the Flag and that such additions shall take effect on the fourth of July next succeeding such admission." As states were admitted the position of Stars were changed so that today we have stars in 9 rows: 5 rows with 6 stars and 4 rows with 5 stars.

We, as American citizens, respect our Flag even to seeing that it retains its original beauty, and when it is no longer a fitting emblem for use and must be destroyed, we do it in a dignified way by burning.

To set the mood for this deeply earnest ceremony, let us listen to the thoughts of Robert Frost in his poem THE GIFT OUTRIGHT. (Here you have a member to read this poem)

THE GIFT OUTRIGHT*

The land was ours before we were the land's.
She was our land more than a hundred years
Before we were her people. She was ours
In Massachusetts, in Virginia,
But we were England's, still colonials,
Possessing what we still were unpossessed by,
Possessed by what we now no more possessed.
Something we were withholding made us weak
Until we found out that it was ourselves
We were withholding from our land of living,
And forthwith found salvation in surrender.
Such as we were we gave ourselves outright
(The deed of gift was many deeds of war)
To the land vaguely realizing westward,
But still unstoried, artless, unenhanced,
Such as she was, such as she would become.

* From Complete Poems of Robert Frost, Published by Henry Holt and Company, New York

The leader says now " I will cut out the Union of the Flag, and when the Union is gone, the Flag is no longer a Flag." She cuts out the Union. As the leader steps aside to place it in the incinerator, 13 chapter members representing the 13 original colonies come forward in order 1 through 13, each dressed in costume representative of the costumes of their day. Beginning with the first colony, each reads (or recites from memory) her part. Then as each one finishes, she takes the scissors, and starting at the top of what had been our Flag, she cuts off one stripe and places it in the incinerator. After all stripes have been cut out, the fire is lit.

While the members watch the burning flag, the leader says; "Nothing is really ended until it is forgotten. Our Flag, the symbol of freedom for over 216, 000,000 citizens of our great land, and the banner under which countless millions have given their last measure of devotion in wars to protect our freedom, will never be forgotten. It is for us the living, in strength and unity, to love and respect our Flag. As we remember our Flag, we know that it represents the living country and it is a precious possession. So let us with pride continue to say –

“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. Let us bow for a prayer of dedication - Almighty God, Our creator, we are thankful that we may serve thee in freedom and peace; grant that we may realize the true meaning of liberty; give us the strength and zeal to keep our country, from sea to shining sea, free of violence and confusion. Direct us, we pray, in the paths of peace. In Thy name. Amen."

If possible for this part in the ritual, select a member who is from the state. The one selected recites (or reads) her part, pauses and asks "What State did we become?" pauses for someone to answer, and if she gets no answer, she gives the name of the State, and steps aside.

First Colony:

Our colony was settled first by Swedes and Dutchmen who landed in 2 vessels- the Key of Kalmar and the Bird Griffin in March 1638. We were joined later by thirty-two Finns and others, but the going was hard. We were taken over by stronger colonies and finally became English after our capture by Sir Robert Carr. We remained so until the American Revolution. Our 'Paul Revere' was Caesar Rodney who made it possible for us to be a signer of the Declaration of Independence. We were the first colony to join the Union. What State did we become? **DELAWARE**

Second Colony:

Our leader wanted to name our colony "New Wales" or "Sylvania", but King Charles II would have neither. We Quakers came to the New World in 1681 because of religious persecution. In our colony if we owned land and believed in God, we could vote. We grew faster than any other colony thanks to the leadership of our first governor. We were the second colony to join the Union. What State did we become? **PENNSYLVANIA**

Third Colony:

We started out as 2 separate colonies - one on the Hudson River and the other on the Delaware. We were settled by Quakers, Dutch, Swedes, Finns, English and others. In 1702 we were united into one colony, and some important battles of the American Revolution, such as the battle of Trenton, were fought on our soil. We were the third colony to join the Union.

What State did we become? **NEW JERSEY**

Fourth Colony:

We were the last of the colonies to be formed. James Oglethorpe thought that we, who were thrown into English prisons because we couldn't pay our debts, could pay if we came to the New World, and so we along with some other unfortunate people, after being carefully screened to make sure we were not criminals, landed in 1733. We were all Protestants with the exception of 40 Jews. We were the fourth colony to join the Union.

What State did we become? **GEORGIA**

Fifth Colony:

Our colony was set up without a royal charter. Maybe that is why we grew so peacefully from 1701 to 1774. We were made up of many theocracies. We were mostly farmers and did well. We exported our crops, along with tobacco which grew well, in our colony. Our famous settler, Israel Putnam, came to the aid of Boston just before our entry into the American Revolution. We were the fifth colony to join the Union. What State did we become? **CONNECTICUT**

Sixth Colony:

We were made up of people who had broken away from the Church of England and were known as Separatists, and others who were called Strangers, but all were seeking religious freedom and self-government. "The Mayflower" was our ship and we landed in the New World at Plymouth in 1620. Soon we became known as the Pilgrims. Next to our shores came settlers who were Puritans. They believed in education and were instrumental in founding Harvard in 1636. We were the sixth colony to join the Union.

What State did we become? **MASSACHUSETTS**

Seventh Colony:

Our leader was born a protestant, but became a Catholic and because of his friendship with a Protestant, James I, we did not have to give up our religion because of the Reformation. We came to the New World in 1634 and were granted all the rights of free Englishmen. Our leader intended to let people of all faiths settle in our colony, but his purpose was never accomplished as here the Catholics were persecuted almost immediately. However, our colony prospered - tobacco, which grew well here, was a money crop. We were the seventh colony to join the Union. What State did we become?

MARYLAND

Eighth Colony:

Our territory had been used as a trading post by the Spaniards 150 years before we came and the persecuted Huguenots from France had made a settlement here, but abandoned it too. So our group of about 140 persons mostly English settled here in 1670, and the luckiest day for us was the day Henry Woodward came to our struggling colony. He had lived in Barbados, and the first thing he did on his arrival was make friends with the Indians thus allowing us to trade supplies with them. We were the eighth colony to join the Union. What State did we become? **SOUTH CAROLINA**

Ninth Colony:

We had a strange beginning. The ship, Jonathan, in 1623 arrived at our shore under the command of David Thompson who had come to make money for a group in England known as the Plymouth Council. They were to catch fish and evaporate water for salt. But soon two London fish merchants with more men came to our colony and this time they settled here. Despite hardships we prospered and Daniel Webster who was born here said "Men hang out their signs indicative of their respective trades; shoemakers hang out a gigantic shoe; jewelers a monster watch; and the dentist hangs out a gold tooth; but up in the mountains of New Hampshire, God Almighty has hung out a sign to show that there he makes men." We were the ninth colony to join the Union. What State did we become? **NEW HAMPSHIRE**

Tenth Colony:

Two of our goals when we set out to settle our colony were: to find gold and the lost Roanoke Colony. The third one was to find a passage to the now Pacific Ocean. None of these were accomplished after we arrived in 1607. Had it not been for John Smith who shrewdly dealt with the Indians and got food, we might have starved to death. John Rolfe helped us also; he obtained tobacco seed from the West Indies that grew well for us and thus started an industry that made our colony prosper. We were the tenth colony to join the Union. What State did we become? **VIRGINIA**

Eleventh Colony:

Our ship was sent to the New World in 1624 loaded with 30 families, some of whom were Dutch, others French-speaking people who had fled from Holland. We were joined by more and more people until we soon became a melting pot with little religious persecution because of the number of different faiths. The name of our colony was at first New Amsterdam, but when we were taken over by the English in 1664, the name was changed. We were the eleventh colony to join the Union. What State did we become? **NEW YORK**

Twelfth Colony:

The physical features of our colony were very much like that of Virginia, but our first settlers were not from the Old World. They came from Virginia and were bent on making settlements in the wilderness where they would have freedom. By the year 1694 our population had grown because many French Huguenots came from Virginia to our shores and soon more settlers came from Europe. We were the twelfth colony to join the Union.

What State did we become? **NORTH CAROLINA**

Thirteenth Colony:

We, the smallest of all colonies, had for 2 years only one settler, William Blackstone, a minister of the Church of England, who was a hermit. Six years after the hermit who came in 1630, Roger Williams came to our colony from Massachusetts, in fact, most of our settlers were from that colony. Under him our colony grew and in 1655, the first Jews came to us and built the first synagogue in the American Colonies. You will remember that our Mr. Williams believed in separation of church and state. We were the thirteenth colony to join the Union. What State did we become? **RHODE ISLAND**