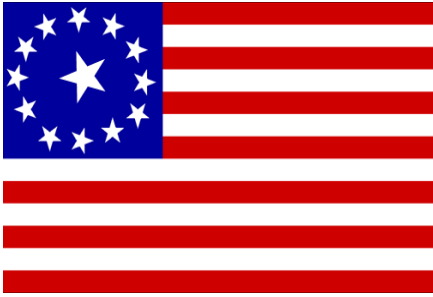


Battery Park Flags - Evacuation Day 1783



Tradition tells us that John Van Arsdale climbed the greased flag pole in Battery Park (New York City) on November 25, 1783, to remove the British Flag nailed to the pole and raise the new American Flag. Now called Evacuation Day, this event marked the last vestige of British authority in the United States when its troops in New York departed from Manhattan.

Tradition also claims the last shot of the American Revolution was fired the same day by a British cannon on one of the departing ships, whose shot fell well short of the shore, but was still aimed towards the crowd gathered to see the departure. Since no contemporary accounts survive of the event describing the flags involved, it is left up to historical speculation on the star pattern used, or which British flag was removed.

As for the US Flag used to replace the British flag, there was no such thing as a "typical" United States Flag in this era, but several designs were fairly popular during this period. One possible version would include a 3-2-3-2-3 horizontal star arrangement, which was common on many U.S. flags of the era. Another version could be a 4-5-4 horizontal arrangement, also popular.

One version is a flag with a circular design of twelve stars in a circle, and the thirteenth placed in the center, also based on several questionable 19th Century illustrations. Several second-hand descriptions of this flag being used do exist, dating from the 1800s, which show the circular pattern of stars with a single larger star in the center, but like the Betsy Ross flag, they are not based on any real documentation or historical evidence. Obviously, the flag image and its size ratio shown here is also speculative. The point is, all of these flags have to be speculative, and unless some as yet undiscovered documentation surfaces, we will probably never know for sure.