**Flag Day**

**A thoughtful mind, when it sees a nation’s flag, sees not the flag only, but the nation itself; and whatever may be its symbols, its insignia, he reads chiefly in the flag the government, the principles, the truths, the history which belongs to the nation that sets it forth. *(Henry Ward Beecher, in The American Flag)***

**57% of Americans see the Confederate flag more as a symbol of Southern pride than as a symbol of racism, including 75% of Southern whites. 75% of Southern blacks say it's primarily a symbol of racism. Still, 55% of the public favors government property that isn't part of a museum. *(CNN/ORC, as it appeared in The Week magazine, July 17, 2015)***

**The current American flag was designed by a high school student. Betsy Ross, make way for Bob Heft. He sewed the prototype for a history project in 1958, the year before Alaska and Hawaii joined the Union. (His teacher gave him a B- because no one knew for certain that the flag would ever need updating.) Heavens to Betsy -- there's no proof that Ms. Ross even had anything to do with the original 13-star version of the flag. *(Marissa Laliberte, Ashley Lewis, and Jacopo Della Quercia, in Reader's Digest)***

**On September 3, 1777, the American flag was first flown in battle during the Revolutionary War. *(The Daily Chronicle)***

**A judge was about to swear in a group of new American citizens. He gave them his usual little talk about patriotism, about being an American and about the nation’s flag. When he got to the part about Old Glory he asked, “What is it that you see flying over the Courthouse every day?” Before he could go on, one eager applicant answered, “Pigeons, Your Honor.” *(Bits & Pieces)***

**A GIANT STEP FOR MANKIND: The flag that flew on the moon in July, 1969 was made of metal. It needed to withstand bombardment by dust and rock particles. (John & Claire Whitcomb, in Oh Say Can You See , p. 103)**

**The IWO JIMA FLAG: In World War II, the army classified thirty-three-year-old Joe Rosenthal as 4-F because he had one-twentieth normal vision, but he followed the fighting anyway as a war photographer. When the U.S. invaded the island of Iwo Jima under heavy Japanese fire, Rosenthal was there wearing his thick glasses and carrying two spare pairs. At the top of Mount Suribachi he caught the greatest picture of the war -- five marines and a navy corpsman raising the Stars and Stripes. Rosenthal became an immediate celebrity and his picture won the Nobel Prize, The flag-raising appeared on a three-cent stamp and broke all records for first-day-issue sales. On November 19, 1954, a seventy-five-feet-high sculpture of the raising was dedicated at Arlington National Cemetery. Three of the six men who had raised the flag died on Iwo Jima. (John & Claire Whitcomb, in Oh Say Can You See , p. 101)**

**There’s one benefit in going to Moscow, says actress Mary Tyler Moore. You come home waving the American flag with all your might. (Bits & Pieces)**

**A Dutchman was explaining the red, white and blue Netherlands flag to an American. “Our flag is symbolic of our taxes. We get red when we talk about them, white when we get our tax bills, and blue after we pay them.” The American nodded. “It's the same in my country, only we see stars too!” *(Bedside Bits)***

**NOT MADE IN AMERICA: For almost a century after the birth of the United States, all its flags were made overseas as no American company was set` up to make bunting. Finally Congress put a duty of over 400 percent on imported bunting, and in 1866, a Lowell, Massachusetts, company presented the Senate with a flag made from U.S. bunting. It was flown over the Capitol.**

**(John & Claire Whitcomb, in Oh Say Can You See , p. 102)**

**We call her Old Glory and the Grand Old Flag, yet there is cause to question whether "old" properly applie3s. My thoughts revert to a May morning 50 years ago, when, as a reporter for my high-school newspaper, I was assigned to interview a Civil War veteran, Sgt. John Mullen, who was taking part in a Memorial Day parade. For 15 minutes, I sat mesmerized as he recounted his experience at Gettysburg, including a close-up sighting of President Lincoln. As move-out time for the parade neared, I was signaled to wind down my interview. With near-reverence, I thanked Mr. Mullen, remarking, "You just cannot know what a thrill it has been for me to meet you." "On the contrary, sonny," he replied.. "I know precisely. You see, when I was a little guy, my grandpop took me to the Town Hall to meet an old chap of about ninety-five, which I am now. I sat at his feet bug-eyed and open-mouthed for an hour while he told me about his serving under General Washington at Valley Forge." Thus it is that a hand I have touched, touched the hand of founding patriot solider. Our Flag is not old. Our country is still young. And her days of greatest glory lie yet ahead. *(J. A. Vanderwoude, in Reader's Digest)***

**The only flag that can be flown above the U.S. flag is the United Nations flag.*(L. M. Boyd)***

**A 200-POUND FLAG: The flag that Francis Scott Key saw "by the dawn's early light" was hard to miss -- forty-two by thirty feet. It had fifteen stripes instead of fourteen and each one was two feet wide. It cost $405.90, required more than four hundred yards of cloth, and weighed more than two hundred pounds. Major Armistead, commander of Fort McHenry during the War of 1812, hoped the flag would be "so large that the British will have no difficulty in seeing it at a distance." They didn't. Even after an all-night bombardment of the fort, which guarded the Baltimore harbor, they could see that "our flag was still there." (John & Claire Whitcomb, in Oh Say Can You See , p. 99)The Pledge of Allegiance is not a verse composed by the Founding Fathers of our republic. It was written especially for children in the summer of 1892 to commemorate that year’s celebration of Columbus Day in public schools throughout the country. The pledge first appeared in print on September 8, 1892, in The Youth’s Companion, an educational publication. In its original form, it read: “I pledge allegiance to my Flag and the Republic for which it stands – one nation indivisible – with liberty and justice for all.” Its author was Francis Bellamy, an assistant editor of The Youth’s Companion, who intended it for a one-time recitation. But its immediate popularity transformed it first into an annual Columbus Day tradition and then into a daily classroom ritual. It became one of the earliest verses memorized by students. Since its debut, Bellamy’s pledge has undergone two major alterations. In 1923, the National Flag Conference of the American Legion replaced the somewhat ambiguously personal “my Flag” wording with the more explicitly patriotic “the Flag of the United States of America.” And in 1954, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed a bill that added the words “under God.” *(Charles Panati, in Extraordinary Origins of Everyday Things)***

**All flags fly under the same sky. *(Jim Rosemergy, Unity minister)***

**Today is Flag Day, commemorating the Flag Resolution made by the Second Continental Congress on June 14, 1777. The new American flag had 13 alternating red and white stripes and 13 white stars in a circle on a field of blue -- one for each state. *(The Daily Chronicle)***

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**Driving on a back road, I came across a road crew. A workman waved his orange flag at me and gestured that I should turn around and find another route. That evening, when I told my husband about the incident, he looked at me incredulously. “The guy waved his flag at you,” he said, “and you actually listened to him?” “Yes, of course,” I replied. “You know,” he said, shaking his head, “I've got to get a flag!" *(Kim M. Scheffler, in Reader's Digest)***

**Where waving the flag is now banned: Nicaraguan authorities have concocted a preposterous story to justify eight months of repression, said Sergio Ramirez. In April, tens of thousands of Nicaraguans took to the streets to protest President Daniel Ortega's plan to cut pensions and hike social security contributions. That movement morphed into a broader protest against Ortega after security forces launched a brutal crackdown on the opposition, killing more than 300 people to date. The anti-regime protests still rage weekly, some smaller, some larger. Experts from the United Nations and the Organization of American States say Nicaraguan authorities have conducted "crimes against humanity, including murders and arbitrary arrests." Ortega, though, "has invented an alternative truth. In his telling, the protests amount to a slow-moving coup. Nicaragua, in this fantasy, has been overrun by "thousands of terrorists in the streets, determined to undermine democracy." So, in the name of protecting democracy, Ortega has shut down civil society groups, arrested journalists, and impounded newsprint and TV news equipment. He has not only banned the display of the blue-and-white Nicaraguan flag, which has "become a subversives symbol," but he's also forbidden people from carrying blue and white balloons. Isn't it obvious what has happened? "The real coup d'etat has been against the citizens." *(The Week magazine, January 11, 2019)***

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**Teaching fourth- and fifth-graders American history, I asked who sewed the first American flag. A voice in the back of the classroom spoke up: “Martha Stewart?” *(Patricia McCartin, in Reader’s Digest)***

**The things that the flag stands for were created by the experiences of a great people. Everything that it stands for was written by their lives. The flag is the embodiment, not of sentiment, but of history. *(Woodrow Wilson)***

**In a conversation between George M. Cohan and a veteran who had fought at the Battle of Gettysburg during the Civil War, the veteran pointed to the American flag and commented, “She’s a grand old rag.” Cohan was struck by the phrase, and wrote a song entitled “You’re a Grand Old Rag.” Patriotic groups were outraged and barraged him with complaints over his references to the American flag as a “rag.” Cohan promptly changed the title, and the song is now the famous patriotic song, “You’re a Grand Old Flag.” *(Paul Stirling Hagerman, in It’s A Weird World, p. 111)***

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