

Flag Day – 14 June



It is believed that Flag Day originated in 1885. BJ Cigrand, a schoolteacher, arranged for the students in the Fredonia, Wisconsin, to observe June 14 as 'Flag Birthday'. He picked June 14 because our US Flag was adopted by the Second Continental Congress on June 14, 1777. Flag Day was established by the Proclamation of President Woodrow Wilson in 1916. While Flag Day was celebrated in various communities for years after Wilson's proclamation, it was not until August 3rd, 1949, that President Truman signed an Act of Congress designating June 14th of each year as National Flag Day. The week of June 14 is traditionally designated as Flag Week by the President and citizens are urged to fly the US Flag. Most of us believe that Betsy Ross created the first flag of thirteen stripes, alternate red and white with the union of thirteen stars white in a blue field representing a new constellation. My research has found this to be true and that early patriots George Washington, Robert Morris and George Ross were the members of the Continental Congress who asked her to make the flag. George Ross was the uncle of Betsy's late husband John Ross. Betsy was born a Quaker, however when she married John Ross, the son of an Episcopal rector at Christ Church, she was "read out" of the Quakers. Ben Franklin's son, William then Governor of New Jersey is the official listed on their marriage certificate.

Respect for the Flag is one of the topics covered by Vietnam Veterans of America presentations to local schools. My friend Larry Nicholson and I did our Cold War/Vietnam War presentation to Mary Dailey's seventh grade classes at Dilworth last week. I do the presentation on the Cold War which started following WWII and ended with the Berlin Wall coming down. Larry does the Vietnam part of our presentation. We ask the students to stand in respectful silence whenever the flag is presented or carried by a color guard in a parade. Larry and I really enjoy doing our presentation to classes because the students ask the best questions. All five classes knew that we have five rights in the first article of the Bill of Rights. The classes also have a name for the ruler of North Korea – Kim Jong Crazy. All of the classes were attentive, respectful and will become good citizens.

The Heritage Education Commission has completed several more transcripts of our Veterans oral history audio files. Please check them out at www.heritageed.com by clicking on the Oral History Projects tab. The Minnesota Historical Society and the Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Moorhead provided funds to complete the transcripts.