

**OUR NATION'S
FLAG IN HISTORY
AND INCIDENT**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649665242

Our Nation's Flag in History and Incident by Nicholas Smith

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NICHOLAS SMITH

**OUR NATION'S
FLAG IN HISTORY
AND INCIDENT**



"Old Glory"—1903

OUR NATION'S FLAG

In History and Incident

BY

COLONEL NICHOLAS SMITH

AUTHOR OF

*Stories of Great National Songs, Hymns Historically Famous, and
Songs from the Hearts of Women.*



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THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED TO
Mrs. FRANCES SAUNDERS KEMPSTER
CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE
TO PREVENT
THE DESECRATION OF OUR COUNTRY'S FLAG
OF THE
NATIONAL SOCIETY
DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN
REVOLUTION

FOREWORD.

THE FLAG of our country was ordained one hundred and twenty-six years ago. During this period it has been unfurled in five memorable wars besides sixteen wars with Indians. My fellow-countrymen cannot fail to be deeply interested in the story which tells how this flag came into being and the great events connected with its evolution.

Historical sketches of "Old Glory" in newspapers and magazines are abundant but fragmentary. Not including the present volume only eight or nine books have been written on the flag. This is a small number when the greatness of the theme is considered. General Schuyler Hamilton was its pioneer historian, his small but valuable volume appearing in 1852. Admiral George Henry Preble published his exhaustive work on the flags of all nations twenty-five years ago. He gives much space to the American flag, but the bulk of the volume and the peculiar style in which it was compiled and edited make it more suitable as a reference book for public libraries than for popular reading. Other books put forth since Preble's monumental work was issued are small, and, while in some degree meritorious, are not sufficiently comprehensive in scope and treatment.

My purpose in preparing this volume was to supply much that is lacking in other books on our Nation's flag. The story here given of the many banners used in the early part of the American Revolution, and of the first Stars and Stripes, is concise, straightforward

and, I firmly believe, reliable. Tradition is not accepted as history.

A feature peculiar to this volume is the synopses of the debates in the American Congress relative to the alterations of the flags of 1795 and 1818. There is nothing more curious and interesting in the history of the Star Spangled Banner than those debates which have never before been published in any work on the flag.

A chapter of special value is the one giving the work being done by the Daughters of the American Revolution to save the flag from desecration.

I invoke the attention of the reader to sections Five and Seven as giving more valuable historical incidents with which the starry banner has been associated and more eloquent apostrophes to, and paragraphs about, the flag than all other books on that subject combined. Those seeking for important flag history and noteworthy incidents, and splendid "salutes" to the great emblem of human freedom, will find much that is useful and inspiring.

I am under obligation to United States Senator Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts; United States Senator Albert J. Beveridge of Indiana; General John C. Black, commander-in-chief of the Grand Army of the Republic; General John B. Gordon; Colonel Henry Watterson; the Rev. H. Clay Trumbull; Mr. Jacob A. Riis; Mr. James Whitcomb Riley; Mr. Ogden Hoffman Fethers; Mr. C. P. Farrell, owner of copyright of Robert G. Ingersoll's works; Mrs. Catherine Gansevoort Lansing, Albany, N. Y.; the *New York Tribune*; and others, who have generously responded to the call for a helping hand in the preparation of the book.

NICHOLAS SMITH.

Milwaukee, Wis., September 28, 1903.