Oregon Flag Registry

By Ted Kaye

At our last meeting, we hit upon a great idea: launch a process to identify, document, and share flags in Oregon—an “Oregon Flag Registry”. With some recent brainstorming, we’ve developed a plan.

The OFR (oregonflagregistry.org) will be an online listing of all adopted flags pertaining to Oregon. Modeled after the Flag Institute’s small but important registry (of national, county, and local flags in the UK), http://www.flaginstitute.org/index.php?location=10, the OFR will go beyond state, county, and municipal government flags to include company, organization, and personal flags. Each listing will depict the flag image and include key information as available, including: full description, meaning, history, designer, adoption date, predecessor flags, and entity contact information (including web links).

This effort will help promote the design, adoption, and display of flags throughout the state and, incidentally, encourage good flag design. We, the Portland Flag Association, will sponsor the OFR, providing outreach to prospective registrants and design advice. Scott Mainwaring has volunteered to design and maintain the OFR website, which would be linked to the PFA website and to NAVA’s Good Flag, Bad Flag.

We expect registration in the OFR will be free of charge and open to all. The initial focus will be on Oregon cities and counties. Most of these are currently flagless; the PFA can assist with advice on the flag-design and flag-adoption process. While similar to a “College of Arms” as a provider and promoter of sound flag design, the OFR will function as a “registrar” rather than a “gatekeeper”.

We hope the beta version of the OFR will be available on-line before the end of this year, with listings for flags already known to PFA members, FOTW, and Elmer’s Flag & Banner. This may well be the impetus for widespread city and county flag adoption throughout the state over the next few years.

If you wish to compliment the editor, or to contribute in the future, contact John Hood at 503-238-7666 or vivijohn@comcast.net. If you wish to complain, call your mother.
The Neutral Flags Fraud:
How the new U.S. flag perpetuated the slave trade on behalf of the British Empire

By Patrick Genna

The practice of flying neutral flags to assure uninterrupted shipping is called a Neutral Flag Practice. However, the practice was so abused, as such, that all parties regarded it as a fraud. It was common during wartime and, as a consequence, led to an increase in the slave trade. This was a contentious procedure, disputed between anti- and pro-slavery groups in Britain and America. British warships were reluctant to stop and search European vessels registered in the new United States, and, as a result, most slave ships flew the U.S. flag.

A British anti-slavery advocate named William Wilberforce tried several times to get a slave abolition bill passed in Parliament without success. He and abolitionist friends were up against the many Members of Parliament who profited from the slave trade transport system. By that time, the British colonies in North America had become the United States of America. Its flag would be one means to continue the practice of abduction and transportation of African slaves to the Americas under the usual wartime rules of engagement with neutral nations. This would be known as the Neutral Flags Fraud. Many foreign ships would have a registry that would allow for the U.S. flag to be flown, thus avoiding any seizure by the British or French navies. Since this new nation, the United States of America, had inherited the practice of slavery, it would be a resource for shipping slaves under the new U.S. flag as a neutral ship side-stepping the war between Britain and France, or so it seemed until an Order in Council Act was applied.

Wilberforce’s efforts to legislate an anti-slavery act in Parliament in 1789 were shouted down by fellow Members who had a vested interest in the profitable slave transport system, but 1789 was a memorable year in Europe with the beginning of the revolution in France. In 1793 the new French Republic declared war on Britain and Wilberforce and his anti-slavery friends in Parliament were charged with sedition in advocating the abolition of the slave trade within the British Empire. The argument circulated among the Members of the House was that the new French Republic would take over the slave trade and thus its profits, so British abolitionists are traitors.

It was during the war between Britain and France that an effort to find a legal way to stop the trade was enacted. Using trickery and absence, Wilberforce and his allies decided to impede the flow of slave transport as opposed to stopping it outright. A clandestine meeting between Wilberforce and his fellow abolitionists decided on a technical maneuver of using a parliamentary procedure to affect a vote in a nearly empty chamber. The legal strategy by James Stephen, a fellow abolitionist, offered a clever application (an Order in Council) that would eventually abolish the slave trade.

An Order in Council is an order issued by the sovereign on the advice of the Privy Council, or more usually on the advice of a few selected members of the House thereof… It is opposed to the statute because it does not require the sanction of parliament; it is issued by the sovereign by virtue of the royal prerogative.

An Order in Council measure was introduced that would allow for the seizure of neutral ships flying the American or any neutral flag that were trading with ports under French control. With most of the Members of the House at the racetrack, having been given free complimentary invitations, the Stephen-inspired action accomplished through the backdoor what could not be done head-on. Not only would this hurt French trans-Atlantic shipping with the British being at war with Napoleon, but Stephen knew well its implications: it would reduce slave trade profits by nearly 80%.

Under this act, the Royal Navy could seize or attack (slave) ships of a neutral country that were shipping supplies to the slave-holding Caribbean colonies using the American flag for protection. This action not only put a stop to much of the slave trade, the act itself appeared patriotic in the war against the French Republic, contraindicating the earlier accusations of sedition against Wilberforce and his anti-slavery group by his fellow Parliamentarians.

The ramifications of this inauspicious act was that the United States would suffer the seizure of many American-flagged ships but, unfortunately, it would eventually bring about what would become the War of 1812.

It is noteworthy that the flag we Americans always identify with freedom had been used to ensure the transport of those deprived of freedom. Not until the end of the American Civil War in 1865 did the United States take an active part in the campaign against slavery. At that time, U.S. naval squadrons were sent to the west coast of Africa to aid in British interception of the declining slave trade.
Flags in the News and Elsewhere

was under a lockdown and all the students were in their classrooms. He said that the 800 to 1000 students were from neighboring school districts, such as the El Rancho Unified School District and the Whittier Union High School District. They marched to Montebello High School, lowered the flags, replaced the school flag with a Mexican flag, flew the U.S. flag upside down, and stole the California flag that had been on the pole.

Summary of the eRumor:

Several pictures said to be from Montebello high school in Montebello, California that show students raising the Mexican flag with an American flag flying below it and upside down. The email also includes commentary about the future of American, but the main feature of the email is the pictures of the flags.

The Truth:

The pictures are true. They were taken at Montebello High School on Monday, March 27, 2006. The students were part of a walkout aimed at influencing Congress, which was debating immigration policy and the potential of cracking down on illegal immigrants in the country. Although the flag-raising took place at Montebello High School, officials of the Montebello Unified School District were quick to point out that the protesters were not students from Montebello High School. Asst. Superintendent Robert Henke said the high school

September Meeting

The next meeting of the Portland Flag Association will be at 7 p.m., Thursday, November 11, 2010, at Scott Mainwaring’s new place, 3850 N. Mississippi St., telephone (971) 998-7331. See the map below.

We look forward to seeing those of you who have been otherwise committed, see some different flags, and have some provocative discussion about the flag registry.

Some Flag Related Websites

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<td>NAVA</td>
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<td>Portland Flag Association</td>
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<td>Flag Institute (United Kingdom)</td>
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<td>Flags of the World</td>
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<td>Elmer’s Flag &amp; Banner</td>
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<td>Darwin, Northern Territory (Australia)</td>
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September 2010 Flutterings You Need to Know

Even though we are meeting every other month now, there still seems to be a lot to talk about each time. This meeting was lively, with several new topics that will be addressed elsewhere in this newsletter, and will be further discussed in future meetings.

Ted Kaye had advanced copies of the latest NAVA News in which Michael Orelove’s flag flowers are featured. Having been deeply involved in the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial, Ted was privy to the development of a book he showed us, published by The Circle of Tribal Advisors, Enough Good People: Reflections on Tribal Involvement and Intercultural Collaboration. It is a picture book that brings together all the tribes that touched The Corps of Discovery and acknowledged their contributions. He also told us about a survey that is planned for the flags of Canadian cities, a complement to the Survey of U.S. City Flags of 2004. NAVA 44 is coming up next month in Los Angeles and Ted had the special lapel pin of crossed California Flag and Nava 44 Flag—very striking. A bus service cancellation caused quite an uproar and at the TriMet meeting, Ted proudly displayed the neighborhood flag! He also showed us a finial he made for our association’s flag. Since the hypocycloid was a runner-up in the flag design contest, he felt it should have its place in the sun. A true hypocycloid comes to points, but points are dangerous for a flag on a windy day, so he lifted the design directly from the Portland City Flag.

Patrick Genna pays attention to what happens in the newspapers, and had several articles about flags. One in particular deserved it’s own column in “Flags in the News”. Patrick also gave us his “puzzler”:

Max Liberman had a picture of a proposed redesign of the Alberta, Canada flag. Marc Pasquin, of Quebec, seems to be performing an academic exercise with provincial flags.

Max also correctly identified all the “face” flags in the flag quiz. He used the same method that was used to choose the flags—key words in Flags of the World! This brought up a serious discussion about how to better identify mysterious flags or elements of flags. There are several links in FOTW, such as “The Flag Identifier” and “The Flag Wizard”, but they are often less than satisfactory. Google

(Continued on page 5)
has recently speeded their search abilities by trying to guess what the customer is looking for. They have a cadre of cognitive psychologists to pursue this end. This happens to be the discipline of our own Scott Mainwaring, so the discussion became quite intense. David Koski would like to see a listing of some sort of personal flags and a way to locate or identify them. Ted Kaye said that he would write an outline of a proposal for a flag registry. (see page one). All of this because Max aced the quiz!

Scott Mainwaring acquired some new flags in his travels through the wilds of Arkansas. We have seen the Flag of Honor, with all the names of the fallen inscribed on the stripes before, but the Flag of Heroes, with just the names of the first responders, was new to most of us. He also had a 60’s Peace Flag that seems to be making a resurgence. These flags triggered another discussion about what is a U.S. Flag. Mike Hale pointed out that these are not actually U.S. Flags since they have been altered. In keeping with the spirit of the U.S. Flag Code, he does not sell any flags that have been altered with images, lettering or missing star patterns. Although he has sources, he chooses not to sell them because he feels it is disrespectful to alter the official symbol of the nation and its people for private interpretation.

Michael Orelove had 24 PFA tabletop flags made and, after the members at the meeting bought several, he has 13 left and for sale to PFA members. If you want one, send $10 to Michael Orelove, 2905 Palmquist Rd. #4, Gresham, OR 97080. The $10 covers the cost of the flag and postage. Michael also had a U.S. flag with a blank canton in anticipation of one or more additional states joining the Union. Members were
topic of how to tell time by the position of the asterism. Subsequent to the meeting, Michael provided a tip sheet on the subject. If anyone would like to renew their Boy Scout skills, contact the editor or Michael.

Mike Hale showed us another Native American flag—the Cayuse-Walla Walla-Umatilla Confederated Tribes Flag. As Ted Kaye has said that in every bad flag, a good flag is trying to get out—the three horses could well stand on their own.

David Koski had brought up the subject of personal flags, so John Hood showed a work in progress for his flag.

The flag displays the similar geography of Idaho, where John grew up and Oregon, where he now lives. The white snow for the Sawtooth Mountains and the Cascades next to the deep valleys of Hell’s Canyon and the Columbia River Gorge; the green for the forests; the blue for the Middle Fork of the Salmon and the Willamette rivers; the yellow for the gold mines of Idaho and the commerce of Portland, and finally the pairing of the snowflake of winters of youth and the rain cloud currently more common.

Vivian has always been partial to cats and rainbows, so we are working on a flag with those elements but the new graphics program is not yet cooperating. Her flag is really a work in progress!

There are a few personal flags in and about our group that will surely find their way to the Oregon Flag Registry when it is up and running.
What Was that Flag? Answers to the last quiz

Flags with faces—where are they from?

SAĞDUYU

PARTİSİ

Common Sense Party, Turkey

Known as the party of the Naksibendi Sect, lead by Nureddin Cosan.

한국민주노동조합총연맹

Korean Federation of Trade Unions

A pretty big and militant labor union in South Korea

Prior to 1962, Nepal had actual faces on the sun and moon of its pennants.

Penza Oblast, Russia

The Penza Oblast (Region) uses the image of “Saviour Nerukotvorny” (Divine Savior).

World Federation of Democratic Youth

This is an international organization of communist and socialist youth groups. The flag comes in various languages.

Answers to the Puzzler

1. The implication was that the company was the British East India Company.

2. The letters stand for “East India Trading Company”.

3. At the time of the American Revolution, the EIC flag would have been identical to the Grand Union Flag.

East India Company 1707-1815

These are early, and perhaps the first flags of various locations: