FORGOTTEN PLACES,
FORGOTTEN FLAGS

WEIHAIWEI - FLAG OF THE MANDARIN DUCKS

by Kevin Harrington

In the province of Shantung, that port of Northeast China which serves as an extended lower lip of an imaginary mouth whose tongue is Peking, lies a protected and deep harbour known as Weihaiwei. This harbour had been captured by the Japanese in 1895 and held as a pawn for demands of indemnity. It was a time when the world major powers were jostling for positions of influence and control over China. Britain, seeking a counterweight to Russia which held Port Arthur on the opposite coast, settled the Chinese debt to Japan, and obtained thereby in 1898 the lease of Weihaiwei, its neighbouring territories and Liu-Kung Island. The lease was to run for so long a period as Port Arthur shall remain in Russian occupation. At about the same time, Germany had leased Kiaochow and France Kwangchowwan.

The area of territory leased was 285 square miles, not inconsiderable in size. Weihaiwei - the name is composed of three distinct characters meaning awesome, sea, fort - is on the river Wei. Its population reached 154,000 by 1921. Weihaiwei was a productive and attractive area. It exported cotton, yarn, fish, peanuts, eggs, sugar and salt. It was also a port of call on the main shipping lines of the North China Sea.

The British flog was raised May 24, 1898. The British Commissioner in Weihaiwei was soon given a flag, a British blue ensign defaced by the badge for the new territory in the fly. On a white circle appear a pair of Mandarin ducks, enas (or: aix) galerulata, feeding on the banks of a stream. The ducks appear in this natural setting in all their beauty of plumage, as in a Chinese watercolour, rather than a heraldic stylization. The Mandarin duck (Yuan yang) received this name because of the implied superiority to other species of duck in its beauty, 'mandarin' being a title of rank. The duck in Chinese symbolism is an emblem of felicity. A pair of ducks is a sign of conjugal fidelity. Representations of the badge of Weihaiwei are to be found in Gordon (1915), McCandless (1917), and in Flags of all Nations by the British Admiralty (1916).

The new flag replaces a flag that followed the most common pattern for city flags in Canada and the United States, a representation of the city seal (Fig. 1) on a plain field. In Charlottetown's case, the field was silver-grey, while the seal was surrounded by a white belt, edged in black and bearing black lettering. The seal appeared in full color. The word "incorporated" and the date AD 1855 were also in black on a white background.

The new flag (Fig. 2) is a very light grey (silver?) and bears green blocks forming a grid-like pattern; the four large squares represent city parks. In the center in the large green square is a representation of Queen Charlotte Sophie's crown. The city is named in her honor. The crown, appears in pink and in the same light grey as the field.

(Continued on Page 6)
As vexillologists, we are interested in flags and their origins. I have seen numerous volumes that attribute these origins to the Chinese, the Egyptians, and various other ancient civilizations. I have also read that the impetus for the development of the flag was frequently military - to identify the leader of an army, for instance, or to help archers compensate for wind speed and direction.

Some time ago, I wrote an article based on Jean Auel's use of flags by prehistoric hunters. In her book, *The Mammoth Hunters*, Mrs. Auel suggests that the flag was originally a hunting tool, basically used to intimidate herd animals that would not know if this strange flapping creature was dangerous. The animals could then be stalled by a small group of hunters while their comrades circled around or built a trap. Whether Mrs. Auel developed this idea on her own, or found some actual example of this practice in her research of primitive societies, is unknown to me. The suggestion remains, however, that the concept of the flag, if not its meaning, is far older than we think.

Regardless of the time, vexillogenesis could not occur without a prior invention. The device essential to any flag, the staff, is unquestionably far older. It is arguably one of mankind's first two weapons, the humble rock being the other.

The benefits of the staff to primitive men were manifold. It extended the reach, enhanced muscle-power, became a crutch to the lame, and provided a means of defense. With it, large objects could be levered out of the way; ground could be broken; fruit could be knocked out of trees. The staff allowed hunters to kill from a distance, either short or long, depending on whether it was held or thrown when sharpened to a point.

Staves were, and are, the basic building block of man-made shelter, providing the vertical strength needed to support a roof. In short, the staff, being far more versatile than rocks and stones, may have been early mankind's most potent discovery.

The power of the staff can be seen in the beliefs of the contemporary Wanano-Tukan Indians of the Amazon. Anthropologist Janet Cernea of Florida International University related an incident during her work with these people some time ago. Upon learning of her American citizenship, many questions were asked, among them, if these were the people who went to the moon. The Indians were so impressed by America's lunar voyage, as perplexed by the fact that we would leave the moon, that separate the sky realm from the Earth and the Underworld. The consequences, then, of such a pole on its own might be quite serious.

It is interesting to note that these South American Indians are not alone in ascribing specific power to the staff. Some years ago I was given to understand that the Chinese character representing the word "king", comprised of three horizontal lines connected by one upright, takes its etymology from the fact that the king is the "staff" that separates the heavens from the Earth, and the Earth from the Underworld. Without him, the three realms would crash together on one another, with grave consequences.

Referring again to Mrs. Auel's mammoth hunters, the relationship of the staff to power is repeated a number of times. In one instance, a staff is used in the end-of-winter ceremony. A large branch decorated with representations of spring's renewed growth and winter's icy grip is ceremonially broken by the tribal leader after the shaman informs him of the passing of the equinox. This ritual, referred to as the "back-breaking ceremony", is significant in depicting the victory of the Great Earth Mother, and through her, of mankind, over the malignant forces of nature. The power of winter has been graphically broken.

Another occurrence of the staff-as-power appears during a tribal meeting. Citizens are required to hold their peace while others are in possession of the elaborately decorated "speaking staff". The holder of the staff has the right to speak to his or her mind without interruption during the discussion. This practice is still seen today, if not in our own homes at least in the homes of various television families, where the staff frequently takes on the form of a baseball bat.

Who among us does not remember Teddy Roosevelt's admonition to "speak softly, and carry a big stick"? Some of us will also remember Yosemite Sam's reply, "Well, I speak loudy, and I carry a bigger stick." Both statements implicitly support the contention that might makes right, and it is therefore little wonder that the staff has come to represent power itself. In prehistoric times, and sometimes even today, the guy with the biggest stick was boss.

The change from kinetic power to representational was a major step on the path to the invention of the flag. The headman's club was carved into a scepter and decorated, which could only be done once his power was consolidated and bodyguards were in place with their own weapons. Tribal talismans in the form of totem poles were erected in public places to strengthen people's belief in their protective spirits or to nurture their loyalty to the community. Similar constructs might have been used to convey to other tribes that hunting grounds or water holes were reserved for the use of a particular group.

Due to the unwieldy nature of objects as large as totem poles, it is conceivable that smaller, more portable staves would come to be employed to mark territory. These smaller staves would bear the same carved images, correspondingly reduced, as a full size totem pole. Naturally, these smaller markers could be easily overlooked. In order to draw attention to them, they might then have added a small cloth to the pole to bring attention to it. While the flag would eventually come to be the symbol of sovereignty, at this point the flag itself had no meaning - the flag conveyed the message.

The importance of the finial cannot be ignored. Modern flags could seem bare without one, and the finials used are as varied as the societies whose flags they grace. In modern times, however, the choice of finials appears to be dictated only by tradition. Of the many governments that responded to my inquiries, only the Italian military claimed a flag prescribed by law. Most governments said that no particular finial is employed, but that a ball or spearhead were common.

Fiji traditionally employs (or employed, depending on the state of affairs there) a lion on a crown as its finial for military regimental colors, but nothing special for its other flags. They indicated that this was in keeping with British custom, although neither Britain nor any other commonwealth nation made any reference to this in their responses.

Finials with which we are probably familiar include the American bald eagle, in every form and variation. Indian flags commonly use a totem pole, and some incorporate animal heads, feathers and beads. In the Middle East, the Maple leaf for Canada's flagpoles, and the Mogen David on Israel's. Either a hammer and sickle or a star may appear on a hollowed-out teardrop shaped spearhead for the Soviet Union. Poland employs a eagle similar to that on their coat-of-arms, while Afghanistan stated tht its finial is a disc upon which appears the coat-of-arms from the flag. Japan specifically uses a ball, representative of the flag's sun symbol. Interestingly, the Japanese flag is properly displayed on a bamboo pole painted with black bands every few inches apart. Malawi suggested that I embark on a research mission to that country, since the embassy did not have the information I requested.

Nations are not alone in their use of specific finials. The American state of Texas commonly uses a Lone Star to top its staves. Kentucky has legislation commanding the use of a cardinal. Every picture I have ever seen of Mississippi's flag shows a battle axe, although I have no direct evidence that this is the preferred device.

Highly ornamented staves of all sorts have been with mankind for much of its known history. Roman vexilloids, kingly scepters, papal crooks, totem poles and other symbols of sovereignty and power are all the provenance of the staff.

*Sources*
A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT
SCOT GUENTER

Happy New Year! 1992 will be a year in which, again and again, throughout the United States, conferences will be examining and questioning the legacies we have inherited since Columbus "discovered" America half a millennium ago. The variety of flags used in the process of European settlement and expansionism across this continent — indeed, throughout this hemisphere — could be described as a target area of concern for vexillologists. Beyond simply reviewing the styles and designs of flags carried we might also probe the cultural functions flags held in the different societies that interacted, clashed, and continued to evolve as the various European groups moved in to dominate territory and change forever the ways of life of Native American peoples. We can learn something about these earlier cultural and historical events from the many discussions we will be hearing during this quincentennial year, and we can also take the opportunity to bring vexillology into the discussions, demonstrating to others how and why the study of flags can enhance our understanding of other peoples and cultures, and by doing so, also enhance our understandings of ourselves.

NAVA member Jon Rodel deserves our thanks for volunteering to chair the new Mailing Committee, which we hope will speed up delivery of NAVA News to you and save our non-profit organization some money in the long run. Jon will be assisted by committee members Dave Pawson and Nick Artimovich, representing the regional back-up of the Chesapeake Bay Chapter.

Discussion of the role and status of chapters and how they could and should relate to our organization will be an important concern for the By-Laws committee this year, and that committee is in the process of contacting the various chapters to get everyone's input on the pros and cons of making chapters "official". At issue here are how much control NAVA should have over structure and activities of local groups, how centralized authority should be, and if we make chapters "official", what repercussions and restrictions there might be to continue to ensure the legal status of NAVA. Personally, although I am the president of NAVA, I am opposed to a strong federal authority that dictates practices and requirements to the regional groups, and I don't see what's wrong with continuing to encourage chapters to flourish without imposing structure and rules on them from above. Others seem to feel strongly that chapter growth should be outlined, regulated, and brought under the control of our organization's by-laws and its executive board. The will of the people should be heard and done on this issue, so please share your thoughts with your chapter leaders and the members of the by-laws committee: Lee Herold, Lynn Knights, Charles Spear (addresses listed in your membership lists). Whatever your opinion, KEEP STUDYING THOSE FLAGS!

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4" x 6" CORNER

Don Healy
523 Centre Street
Trenton, NJ 08611-3017

This installment is a real brief one. NAVA member Glenn Nolan reports that the following are available in his area, and that he has extras he is willing to trade or sell:

Paintsville, Kentucky, Apple Festival
Woodford County, Kentucky
US Coast Guard, 200th Anniversary
Indianapolis 500 (auto race)

Creighton Kern reports that desk flags exist for the City of Charlotte-town, Prince Edward Island. For our US members, be advised that Canadian desk flags are 6\" x 10\", quite a bit larger than what we "southerners" are used to. The Charlottetown flags are both in the old and new versions.

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NAVA FLAG NOW AVAILABLE

Over the years, there have been numerous requests for full-size NAVA organizational flags. The NAVA flag consists of a white inverted chevron on a field of blue (within the chevron) and red. The dimensions are 2:3. The flag is depicted on the seal of the organization, as printed on the front page of NAVA News.

We are pleased to announce that NAVA flags are now available for purchase by our members:

Three by four-and-one-half foot printed nylon NAVA flags may be ordered by writing directly to the Treasurer, David Pawson. The price for each flag is $30.00 (includes shipping) for North American addresses, or $35.00 for overseas addresses. Orders will be shipped beginning in February. The printed flags will be made by Dettra.

For those who prefer, three by four-and-one-half foot sewn flags will be available at $40.00 to North American addresses ($45.00 overseas). However, these flags will be ordered as needed, requiring up to six weeks for delivery. Sew flags will be made by Dominin Regalia.

The flags are being made in proper proportions of 2:3, hence the unusual 3"x4½" size.

We are restocking 4"x6" NAVA flags (made by Annin). The cost of these is still $2.50 each, including postage.

Make all checks payable to the North American Vexillological Association and remember to send your orders to the Treasurer.

David Pawson
1429 Amherst Drive
Plano, Texas 75075-7203

Flags will be available throughout 1992, and prices cannot be guaranteed after this year, so please, place your order now!

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COAST GUARD ENSIGN OF ST. KITTS-NEVIS

by Creighton S. Kern

The small Caribbean island nation of St. Kitts-Nevis, its formal name since independence, does possess a special flag for use by its small Coast Guard.

After the invasion of Grenada, five Caribbean nations, St. Kitts, St. Lucia, Dominica, St. Vincent & the Grenadines and Antigua & Barbuda, were given coastal patrol boats by the government of the United States. The government of St. Kitts is the only one of the five states to adopt a special flag for use by these boats as for as can be determined.

The Governors-General of Antigua and Dominica have stated, in letters received by the author, that the national flag is used on their patrol vessels. No response has been received from either St. Lucia or St. Vincent.

The Coast Guard ensign of St. Kitts follows the general pattern of Commonwealth nations. It is a British white ensign bearing the national flag of St. Kitts in the hoist canton (see figure).

Although the four other nations have not, as best as can be determined, adopted special flags for use at sea, the other Commonwealth states of the Caribbean have done so. Jamaica, Trinidad/Tobago, Grenada and Barbados all follow the same pattern employed by St. Kitts. Should St. Lucia or St. Vincent adopt a coast guard ensign at some point in the future, regional patterns would almost guarantee what they would look like.

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As the supreme commander of the armed forces of the empire, the tsar was entitled to his own flag. His was the Imperial Standard (Fig. 1). The Imperial arms were adopted from the arms of the Byzantine Empire. The scepter and orb were replaced by nautical charts in the claws and beaks. It is from these arms that the Russian naval ensign is derived. As St. Andrew is Russia’s patron saint, this was seen as a good omen. It was used as the imperial standard from 1842-1858. Afterwards the scepter and orb were returned to the arms. Jane’s Fighting Ships, long considered an authority on naval equipment, shows the imperial arms bearing nautical charts. This may have been a naval version of the Imperial Standard for use aboard the Imperial Yacht “SHTANDART”.

The Minister of Marine is known to have had at least two distinct flags. The first (Fig. 2) was a smaller version of the naval ensign. The anchors were arranged to form a St. George’s cross. The flukes of the anchors pointed outwards.

The second version, which was used in the early 20th century, was also a smaller version of the ensign (Fig. 3). The jack, in turn, was charged with a small white rectangle which bore a small blue anchor.

The flag of the Admiralty (Fig. 4) was a white flag with four light blue anchors joined at the flukes to form a St. Andrew’s cross.

The Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Navy also had as his personal flag (Fig. 5) a smaller version of the ensign. The central emblem of the Minister of Marine’s flag was used as the canton of the Commander-in-Chief’s flag.

Sources
3. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
Like all other naval powers the Imperial Russian Navy had a number of flags for use by its officers. Rank or personal flags are indicative of command. This is why admirals are often called “Flag Officers.”

The highest rank may have been that of Grand Duke General Admiral (Fig. 1). A Grand Duke is the son or grandson of the Tsar. The flag was a small version of the naval ensign charged with a golden yellow disc upon which was borne the royal arms.

The flag for the rank of Admiral (Fig. 2) was simply a small version of the naval ensign. The flags of Admiral ashore (Fig. 3) were identical but had in the center a white rectangle charged with blue crossed anchors.

The flag of a Vice Admiral or “Vite Admiral” (Fig. 4) was similar to the Admiral’s flag but with the addition of a blue stripe across the bottom. For Vice Admirals ashore the flag (Fig. 5) was also charged with the white rectangle and anchors.

The Rear Admiral or “Kontr Admiral” (Fig. 6) flag was identical to the Vice Admiral’s flag except that the bottom stripe was red. Rear Admirals ashore (Fig. 7) also bore the center device of other shore based admirals.

A commodore is any officer below flag rank in command of a group of ships at sea. A Commodore in the Russian Navy used a broad pennant in the form of a gonfalon (Fig. 8). It was white with a blue St. Andrew’s cross in the hoist.

As the name implies, the Senior Officer Present is the Senior Officer (usually afloat) in any given area. The flag of the Senior Officer Present (Fig. 9) is like the Commodore’s, but is flown like a normal flag.

The Commission Pennant (often called the “Pendant”) is not a personal flag, but is generally regarded as symbolic of the ship’s commanding officer. It is used when no other flag officer or commodore is embarked. It was a very long whip pennant with a St. Andrew’s cross in the hoist (Fig. 10).

Sources
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Signalman 3 & 2, Ch. 9, p. 8.
13. Ibid.
15. Signalman 3 & 2, Ch. 9, p. 10.
NAVA CHAPTERS

GREAT WATERS MEETING

Minutes of the meeting, Saturday, November 11, 1991, Cleveland, Ohio. Submitted by John Purcell, Secretary.

The meeting was held on the campus of Cleveland State University, and hosted by John Purcell. In attendance were David Breitenbach, Glenn Compton, John Horton, Peter Kinderman, and John Purcell. The meeting was called to order by President Glenn Compton at 1:45 p.m.

Inasmuch as the minutes of the previous meeting had been published in NAVA News, the minutes were not read aloud, and were approved as published. Glenn Compton reported a balance of $23.56 remaining in the treasury after paying postage costs, but the payment of dues by a new member, John Horton of Rocky River, Ohio, raised the treasury balance to $28.56. (The chapter now has seven paid members.) Glenn presented new members with the large size lapel pins of the NAVA and Great Waters Chapter flags that he has made for the members. (Glenn also provided a 5" x 7" table flag of the chapter for display at chapter meetings.)

There being no Old Business, the agenda proceeded to New Business. The first item of business was to establish a time and place for the next meeting. John Purcell told the group that he had been informed by Lynn Knights, President of the New England Chapter, that there was some interest in the Great Waters Chapter hosting the 1995 NAVA meeting, possibly in Cincinnati, where NAVA has not met previously. Discussion centered around what is involved in hosting a meeting, what a tour might include in the area, and a consideraton of Dayton and Wright-Patterson Air Force Base as options to include. Glenn thought a tour of Wright-Patterson (which does have a collection of military flags) might make a bit too long from Cincinnati. Peter volunteered to start investigating hotel accommodations and tour possibilities as a topic for our meeting in May. If the results look favorable, the chapter might make a proposal at the NAVA meeting in October in San Antonio.

John Horton raised the point that interested members cannot always attend meetings for a variety of reasons, but like to keep informed. He suggested that the chapter think in terms of an eventual publication, especially to make available talks given at the meetings. John Purcell responded that the idea was a good one, but felt that until membership grows somewhat, it may be premature to undertake new responsibilities.

The business portion of the meeting was adjourned at 3:05 p.m., after which the group enjoyed refreshments while John Purcell presented a slide program on Ohio's municipal flags. After the program, members who had brought items for display explained them. John Purcell gave each of the attendees a small Cleveland city flag as a souvenir, and the gathering concluded about 4:15 p.m.

FORGOTTEN PLACES... Continued from Page 1

In 1922 negotiations were entered into by Great Britain at the Washington Conference to surrender the lease. Unrest in China postponed the return of Weihaiwei to the Peking government until 1930. It was reported that some Weihai people requested that the British retain the territory, an interesting parallel with the present-day situation in Hong Kong. Speaking of the British Empire, Fairgrieve, making an analogy with an 'imperial forest', says: Some parts, such as the Ionian islands which were voluntarily given back to Greece, or Wei-hai-wei which was restored to China, have been very much less missed, but down to the smallest leaf, every part had and has duty to perform, a duty whose fulfillment is for the good of the whole' (p. 625). Weihaiwei's duty, it would seem was to allow the Balance of Power in world politics to stay even. It also provided a sanatorium for the British navy. Indeed a contingent of 1200 Chinese recruited from Weihaiwei assisted the Allies against the Boxer rebels, in which case there may be a regimetal colour yet to be revealed.

The flag of Weihaiwei flew then for 32 years. That is to say, if it really was flown. Photographs published in some historical, diplomatic and political accounts of the time fail to show this flag even in official ceremonies and receptions. The texts do mention the raising and the lowering of the British flag, which we assume meant the Union Jack. Atwell mentions that the last British Commissioner Johnston, "insisted that both the British and the Chinese flags be flown together until sunset when the Union Jack would be discreetly lowered" (p. 172).

NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER HOSTS NAVA 27

NAVA 27 - Portland, Maine, Columbus Day Weekend 1993

The site of NAVA's twenty-seventh annual meeting will be the lovely sea-coast city of Portland, Maine.

NAVA members are invited to submit proposals for the NAVA XXVII flag. All entries are to be submitted on a 3" x 5" index card in full color. The deadline for submitting entries is March 1, 1992. Entries are to be mailed to Mr. Lynn Knights, P.O. Box 333, Milford, NH 03055. A Complete symbolic interpretation of submitted proposals should be listed on the back of entries.

PORTLAND, MAINE, FLAG

Agenda for the New England Chapter NAVA meeting 11/10, 1 p.m. lunch at Bili Richardson's house in Milford (sandwich, soup and salad). Discussion of the Minneapolis NAVA XXV meeting. Discuss our plans to host NAVA XXVII. Remember to bring something of vexillological interest with you to discuss (we always have time for new flags and items of interest). Please make every effort to attend this important meeting.

Submitted by John Szala and James Croft

CONTRIBUTORS

James Croft Kevin Harrington Dave Pawson
Don Heely John Purcell
Scot Guenter Creighton S. Kern
John Szala

Source List
Gordon, W.J., Flags of the world, past and present... London, 1915.
Great Britain, Admiralty, Drawings of the flags in use at the present time by various nations, London, 1916. (Flags of all nations).
Dear Editor:

The article “AESTHETICS IN FLAG DESIGN” in the September/October 1991 issue of NAVA News caught my eye. I thought someone had discovered something new to relate to the Vexillological world. I read the article with complete understanding and appreciation since it is something that I deal with almost on a daily basis. Then to the last paragraph, which is the area that you all know I deal with extensively, U. S. City Flags. I was amused at the statements “most of which are patterned after many state flags” and “My dream is for a small municipality to adopt a fairly simple, highly symbolic flag without any wording at all.”

I would like to say to the author of the article, your dreams have indeed been realized. In my research of U. S. City Flags, I find that there are probably more municipalities that have a “colorful, fairly simple, highly symbolic flag without any wording at all” than are patterned after their state flag. Altho’ I must admit most city flags of the U. S. are very poorly designed. Percentage wise the State Flags of the U. S. are probably worse in design than are the City Flags. However, if we had more people like Lee and Bobb Herold of Minnesota we might even see more State Flags come up to some equitable standard of GOOD design.

Anyway, thanks for your opinion. If it did nothing more it did get me to write a response to the NAVA News.

Rich Kenny
Collector and Researcher
of U. S. City Flags

P. S. After Minnesota the collection of (3 x 5” and up) U.S. City Flags stands at 398, with pictures illustrations and/or information of probably over 1,000 flags.

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SAN ANTONIO’S FLAG
by John H. Gamez

San Antonio is a beautiful city with a rich and unique history. The San Antonio river was called “Yanaguana” by the Payaya Indians inhabiting the site that would become one of America’s great cities.

On 13 June 1691 Spanish explorers encountered this enchanting site and named the river San Antonio de Padua because they had reached it “on his day”. Mission San Antonio de Valero was established in the area on 1 May 1718. The Presidio de Bejar (later Bexar) was established on 4 May of the same year. On 9 March 1731 the Canary Islanders arrived after a long, arduous trip to establish the Villa de San Fernando. Along with four other missions these combined to form what is now the City of San Antonio.

San Antonio is probably the most conquered city in the western hemisphere. Invaders and defenders have conquered and retook the city thirteen times between 1812 and 1865.

San Antonio has also served under many flags. The flags of Spain, Hidalgo, Republican Army of the North, The Mexican Empire, the Mexican Republic, the flag of the Mexican Federalists, the Republic of Texas, the United States, and the Confederacy.

Despite all this San Antonio’s own flags only date back to 1917. The idea for a city flag was presented by Arthur J. Storms to the city commissioners on 18 January 1917. It was formally adopted on Tuesday, 3 April 1917.

The first flag of San Antonio was white with a large blue silhouette of Texas centered on the flag. The name “SAN ANTONIO” was embossed across the state in white. The Alamo was placed to denote San Antonio’s geographical location within the state. It was rendered in buff and detailed in blue. The flag was fringed in a dark color. It was probably blue. It measured 48” x 65” (Fig. 1).

After some years of service as a municipal flag it seems to have disappeared. The flag turned up again in City Hall in August of 1929. After a time, the flag again disappeared.

Ignorant of the existence of a city flag, William W. Herring of the United War Veterans, presented to the city a proposal for a city flag. It was adopted by the City Commissioners on 18 April 1935. The flag is of 10:18 proportions and divided equally with blue at the hoist and red in the fly. In the center is a large white star with the Alamo in grey centered in the star. The name “SAN ANTONIO” in white block letters forms an arch over the Alamo. The name “TEXAS” horizontally below. The staff is adorned with gold tassels (Fig. 2).

Shortly after the adoption of the new flag the old flag resurfaced. It was then proclaimed that San Antonio had two official flags. In theory this is possible. The previous flag ordinance was not repealed and the new flag ordinance did not specifically state that it superseded the last.

Most people do not bother to reflect on what inspired the design of their particular city flag. Monocolor flags with city seals tend to be the norm. The first flag of San Antonio was, no doubt inspired by the history of Texas. The second flag is not as easy to analyze.

It would be easy to say that it was inspired by the colors of the flag of Texas. It could be sheer coincidence that the second flag bears a striking resemblance to the French colonial flag of Madagascar. The Alamo within the star device may have been inspired by a souvenir medallion struck for the International Fair and Exhibition held in San Antonio in the 1890’s.

True to San Antonio tradition this new flag appears to have been lost. In 1954 a lengthy search for a city flag revealed the old city records adopting the flag. The flag itself was not found. This led to the manufacture of a new flag.

The new flag had some differences from the previous flag. In this flag the Alamo is white and outlined in black. The name “TEXAS” was placed below the star in this version (Fig. 3).

Apparent this flag was also lost. On 8 July 1976 the city “adopted” the third version of the San Antonio flag. This flag has the star extending from the top to the bottom and the Alamo has reverted to gray. (See NAVA News, page 8).

Using Byron Ward’s suggestion for municipal flag simplification I have simplified the design of San Antonio’s flag. The design is basically the same except the names “SAN ANTONIO” and “TEXAS” have been removed. The Alamo is silhouetted in mouthful black. The simplicity of design will reduce production costs. Standardization of measurements will ensure continuity of design (Fig. 4).
With the New Year and the new volume of NAVA News, we have several items to remember:

Dues are payable as of January 1 according to the By-Laws. Dues are the same as last year. Individual reminders will be sent to each member, but you can save NAVA the cost of this mailing by sending your dues now.

Submit your entry for NAVA 26 flag design. Mail this entry to Pete Von de Putte, Host NAVA 26, P.O. Box 8618, San Antonio, Texas 78208. This entry should be mailed as soon as possible. Information about this meeting in San Antonio, October 9-11, 1992, is on page 5, November/December 1991 NAVA News.

A second opportunity to submit a design is for the NAVA 27 flag. Details of this are on page 6 of this issue. Design entries are requested by March 1, 1992. Mail these to Lynn Knights, P.O. Box 333, Milford, NH 03055. This meeting is being hosted by the New England Chapter.

Relative to the NAVA 27 meeting in 1993, Lynn Knights sent me an interesting brochure that many members might like to have. It is titled “Maine Vexillology” and was published by David Martucci, RR1, Box 334, Washington, ME 04574. It has three flag illustrations of Maine State Flags of 1901, 1909, and 1939, © by Whitney Smith. The brochure lists historic flags in Portland, Augusta, and other Maine locations. It also lists interesting Maine flags in collections outside Maine. There is an illustration of the Maine State Seal adopted in 1880. The cost of this tri-fold brochure was not included.

If you are interested in a 49-star casket flag in mint condition, write to Florence C. Bostwick, 1117 Lakemont Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15243, about the particulars.

This issue goes to the printer December 4. Deadline for copy for the March/April NAVA News is February 1.

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EDITOR’S NOTES...

First-Class Mail

Mr. Mark A. Liss
% Heritage Flag Co.
P.O. Box 31521
Houston, TX
77231