

The History of Flag Education

The original concept was to write an article on just The History of Flag Education. As I began the research it was obvious that there were other historical facts that were deeply entwined with Flag Education. Flag Day and The Flag Code were synonymous with Flag Education and so in order to have Flag Education you need that definitive document The Flag Code and a National Flag Day as a reason to have the proper display and respect for the flag.

The history of Flag Day is believed to have been originated by BJ Cigrand in 1885. Cigrand, a schoolteacher in the Fredonia, Wisconsin public schools arranged the school to observe June 14th 1885 as the 108th birthday of the U.S. Flag.

In 1889 George Balch a kindergarten teacher in New York City planned and had Flag Day ceremonies on June 14th. On June 14th 1891 The New York State Board of Education adapted his idea of observing Flag Day. In Philadelphia in that same year The Betsey Ross House held a Flag Day celebration.

After these events there were a large number of cities and organizations taking part in some Flag Day ceremonies or commemorations. This popularity brought forward The American Flag Day Association. This organization was formed to promote the purpose of Flag Day exercises. Their first Flag Day celebration was held in Chicago with a number of schools participating. There were 300,000 participants!

In 1894 the Governor of New York directed that all public buildings fly the American Flag on June 14th The Flag Resolution of 1777 was officially established by proclamation of then President Woodrow Wilson on May 30th, 1916. It wasn't until August 3rd, 1949 that president Truman signed an act of Congress designating June 14th of each year as National Flag Day.

Previous to Flag Day June 14th 1923 there was no state or federal regulations governing the display of The American Flag. As of this date The National Flag Code was adopted by the National Flag Conference. The Flag Conference was attended members of the Army and Navy who evolved their own procedures and some 66 other National groups. All organizations accepted the document at that time. One year later they assembled again and a few minor changes were made. It wasn't until June 22nd, 1942 that Congress passed a joint resolution and then amended on December 22nd, 1942 to become Public Law 829, Chapter 806, and 77th Congress Second session. This code is a guide for the handling and display of the United States Flag; it does not impose penalties for the misuse of the flag. The federal government left penalties to the states, with the District of Columbia under Federal Law.

There were Flag Protection Acts in place, in particular The Flag Protection Act of 1989. All Acts were deemed unconstitutional by the Federal Supreme Court.

As you can see we can now sum up The History of Flag Education. Flag Education was started by 1885 and probably prior to that. You can see by the history that it took many years and a long and winding road to have a definitive object (The Flag Code) to be able to put together proper Flag Education Programs. Like many good things it takes time to perfect and time to gain support for our National Flag Code and a National Flag Day.

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National Americanism Commission

The Sons of The American Legion

Resources:

History of Flag day usflag.com

The United States Flag Code usflag.com