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Story of The Designing of The Stars And Bars

By Theresa Meroney Thomas
Everyone is familiar with the story of the designing of the flag of the United States by George Washington, but comparatively few know the history of the creation of that other flag, cherished by all southerners, the 'Stars and Bars' of the Confederacy.

Orren Randolph Smith, designer of the Stars and Bars, was born in Warren county, North Carolina, December 18, 1827, and spent his boyhood and young manhood in much the same rounds of duties and pleasures as other young men of his age and period.

At the age of twenty young Orren Smith, born soldier that he was, hearing the sound of battle afar, became a member of Co. "H" First Regiment, North Carolina Volunteers in the war with Mexico in 1847. In 1853 he was made captain, in the U. S. Army, in Utah under Albert Sidney Johnston. He was a member of Co. "B", second North Carolina battalion, C. S. A., and was later made a major in the commissary department with headquarters in South Carolina.

After a life of devoted service and loyalty to, first the United States, then to the Confederacy, and finally a nation once again firmly united, he died on March 3, 1913, at Henderson, N. C.

In 1861 Orren Smith saw in a newspaper an advertisement that read "Flag Wanted." Immediately he set to work on his idea of what a flag should be. There were only seven stars on the original model that was sent to Montgomery, Ala. but later four more stars were added as other states seceded. The model was completed and sent to the "Flag Committee" at Montgomery on Feb. 12, 1861, and was adopted by the Provisional Congress of the Southern States March 4, 1861. The flag was first officially raised over the Capitol at Montgomery on the day of its adoption.

This banner was used by the Confederate forces for some time but at a distance or in the confusion of battle the two flags, the "Stars and Bars" and the "Stars and Stripes," with their identical colors and somewhat similar designs, were easily mistaken for one another. Therefore, after the first battle of Bull Run, Beauregard's flag, which displayed thirteen white stars on a blue St. Andrew's Cross superimposed on a field of red, was

chosen as the official battle flag, and was thereafter carried by Confederate regiments in the field.

In June, 1915, the claims of the family and friends of Orren Smith were investigated and approved by the United Confederate Veterans association at Richmond, Va., officially designating him as the designer of the first flag of the Confederacy. In 1917 the United Confederate Veterans appointed a committee which reported at Tulsa, Okla., reunion, Sept. 25, 1918, that "Major Orren Randolph Smith, of North Carolina, was rightfully entitled to the honor of its conception, design and execution as the original maker, designer and originator." The report of the Sons of Confederate Veterans in 1917 and the Stars and Bars committee both gave Major Smith full credit.

The story of the first flag is best told in Major Smith's own words. The following is the speech that he prepared in 1912 when he hoped to present a large silk flag to his old comrades. His health failed and he died in March, 1913. However, the speech was read in 1915 at the reunion at Richmond, Va., by General Julian S. Carr, Commander of the North Carolina division, U.C.V.:

"Mr. Commander, Women of the South, Friends all: "Fifty-one years ago, North Carolina gave to Dixie the first National Flag of the Confederate States of America.

"The representatives of the seven states which had seceded were gathered at Montgomery, Ala., when they decided to 'Go it alone' if necessary and organize a new country, with a new flag. They formed a constitution of the 'Native White Citizens,' and advertised for a flag.

"In 1856, I was living at Warren, Ohio, the headquarters of the underground railroad, and from that time, I kept in touch with all the great events that forced us into the war. I was an original secessionist.

"Having been with Taylor in 1846-48, in that war that gave the Southwest, from the Rio Grande to the Pacific, to the United States, and with Albert Sidney Johnston, in Utah in 1858, I knew that a soldier's flag should have the deepest, truest significance, not be simply a blending of bright colors. His flag is his inspiration. It stands for HOME, KINDRED, AND COUNTRY. It has so much meaning to me, I hoped my flag would tell its story to all who saw it. So when I read the advertisement, 'Flag Wanted' I was ready.

"In 1861, I was living in Louisville, N. C., and I went to an old friend, Miss Becky Murphy (now Mrs. W. B. Winborn, of Winston, N. C.), and asked her to put the stitches in a little flag for me, and I tore the Bars and the Stars while she sewed.

"The idea of my flag I took from Trinity. Three in One. The three bars were State, Church, and Press. Red represented State; Legislative, Judiciary and Executive; White for Church, Father, Son and Holy Ghost; Red of Press; Freedom of Speech, Freedom of Conscience, Liberty of Press, all bound together by a field of blue, the heavens over all, bearing a star for each state in the Confederation. The seven stars, all the same size, were placed in a circle, showing that each state had equal rights and privileges, irrespective of size or population. The circle having neither head nor foot, signified 'You defend Me and I'll protect you.'

If you had been in my place, would you not have wanted one of your flags to float in the breeze, whether the 'flag committee' accepted your design or not, when you had given so much time and thought, the best that was in you?

After the model was gone I asked Miss Murphy to make me a large flag, nine by twelve feet, and it was on Monday, March the eighteenth, 1861, that I raised this large flag of to the top of the pole one hundred feet high, on the corner of the court house square, in Louisville, the county seat of Franklin, North Carolina.

"The dress goods for both model and large flag I bought from

Barrow's store, and the two men that helped me the most and were the most interested in the flags, were W. J. Green, Colonel C. S. A., and Algy Strothers, now living in Louisburg.

"The pole I made by splicing two saplings, gotten from my mother's plantation, five miles from town.

"Over the large flag I had a long blue streamer, such as an admiral uses on his ship when homeward bound, and on this I had a star for the North State, for though she did not secede until May 20, I knew she was 'Homeward Bound.'

"March 18th, 1861, was a great day for Louisburg, the town was filled with people from miles around.

"This is the story of the 'old Secesh Flag,' the Stars and Bars, the flag that led the men in gray through the most difficult warfare and against the greatest odds ever told of in history.

"This was the first national flag, and, until after Manassas, when it was decided to use Beauregard's flag in battle, it was the only flag of the Confederate States of America.

"It is the flag the United Daughters of the Confederacy have honored above all others, it will never be furled as long as there is a 'Daughter' to wear her 'U. D. C.' badge, and to keep alive the 'Stars and Bars.'

"Today it leads the Southern Memorial association and 'The Daughters' in all their great battles for the right, raising monuments to our dead comrades at Shiloh, Arlington, Gettysburg and all over the country where lie those who gave their lives for our cause, and by meeting with us upon such occasions as this, they bring to us, the days of pleasantness and peace."

"Women of the South, You Southern Queens, Queens of the World, did you know that the corner stone of your great organization, as well as your badge was a gift of the Old North State? It is true.

"The corner stone was laid when the women of Warren county (all men were at the front) began their monument to mark the grave of Anne Carter Lee, daughter of ~~George Washington~~ chieftain, who died at Jones Springs, 1862.

"James Barron Hope was the orator of the day. The monument was of Warren county granite, carved by a Warren county man detailed for this work, and the finishing touch, placing the capstone in position was done by the Warren county man before you.

"The South had more to do with the making of the Stars and Stripes than did the North. We, of Dixie, love Old Glory. Did not thousands of us march under her folds in the war with Mexico, ready to sacrifice ALL for her honor and glory?"

"That was why I wanted to use her colors in the flag for the South. I took the idea of adding a star for each state that joined the confederacy from that other southern man, Washington.

"We, people of Dixie, are rich in our southern man, Washington, brings to us the blessed dreams and memories of our youth, the Stars and Bars, the other stands for our country, to live for, if need be to die for, the Stars and Stripes.

"In the sixties, some Americans wore blue, some wore gray, now all our boys wear khaki, 'minute men' ready—at their country's call.

"The Stars and Bars is Dixie's flag alone. It is a precious legacy, comrades, torn and battered by shot and shell, darkened by the blood of our best and bravest. They gave their lives that it may be 'The Stainless Banner.' In memory of the little flag I sent to Montgomery, February, 1861, in memory of all

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that it means to me, I give this flag, Mr. Commandet, to you, will you take it in your hands for my old comrades? May I hope that it will be used at future reunions? Comrades, wherever you see this flag, won't you give a thought to the old, old man, gray of head as well as of uniform, who gave it, the best of his heart and brain, to you.

"When the man whom North Carolina, from Currituck to Cherokee, loves, honors and reveres, that man among millions, our Jule Carr, introduced me at the reunion at Norfolk as the man through whom the Old Bars to the Confederacy, I told the story as I have today. I may never tell it again, and though I did not die by shot or shell, I have tried to live, that it may be truly said, when I answer our Great Captain's call, 'Dead on the field of honor.'

"Comrades, I wish I could once more hear the old rebel yell, for my flag, your flag, our flag the Stars and Bars.

"Orren Randolph Smith". On November 16, 1920, a tablet was dedicated at Calvary Episcopal church, Fletcher, N. C. to the memory of Major Smith.

Of the many poems inspired by Orren Smith and his flag one written by Virginia Frazer Boyle, poet laureate, U. C. V. association, seems to symbolize Major Smith's own feeling for his flag: "They were wanting a flag at Montgomery, A standard, a truth—not a myth: And down from the blue of his mountains, He answered—the young Orren Smith."

He answered—the young Orren Smith."

New Miracles Of The Photoelectric Cell
By James D. Purdy
Director, Schools of Electrical Engineering, International Correspondence Schools

AN electric eye standing guard against smugglers is one of the unusual features of the new Free Port on Staten Island, New York. A 1000-watt light casts its beam across 2700 feet of water to a photoelectric cell at the opposite side of the entrance to the port. A launch or other vessel crossing the beam and shutting off the light from the cell, sets off a siren and causes the ringing of a bell to warn the custom guards on duty.

The photoelectric cell has been called into play to prevent lightning from interrupting the broadcasting of radio programs. If lightning strikes the antenna tower the flash is caught by a photoelectric cell trained on a discharge gap at the base of the tower. The cell sets up an impulse which through a complicated mechanism shuts off the transmitter's power for a split second, preventing the station's power from being drained off into the earth, as would otherwise occur. The interruption is so brief that it is imperceptible to the radio audience.

A new type metal-working lathe has been developed abroad, which is controlled by a photoelectric cell and is said to be capable of producing objects as shown by a drawing, without the intervention of the human hand. After the machine has been adjusted, the cell scans the drawing and automatically produces the object in the indicated shape and dimensions.

The stars and a photoelectric cell are utilized to regulate with absolute accuracy a new electronic clock installed for the Pope in Castle Gondolfo. When a certain star comes into the focus of the cell placed at the base of an astronomical telescope, the light of the star causes the cell to set up an impulse which corrects any slight inaccuracy in the clock's timing.

Reno, Nev.—James C. Clark, New York thread millionaire, won an uncontested divorce decree from Cubitt Clark of Melton Mowbray, England. He charged cruelty and desertion.

EX-PRINCE WANTS PENSION
Bucharest, Rumania — Nicholas, brother of King Carol but by royal decree no longer a prince and detained in his home because he refused to give up his commoner wife, awaited word on what name and income he shall have and where he will live.

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