

MANAGER'S DESK FOR MONDAY, JULY 5, 2021

WELCOME TO THE MANAGER'S DESK, I'M MIKE CORNELL.

WHILE ON OUR 2018 BUS TRIP TO WASHINGTON DC, I WAS ABLE TO SPEND SOME TIME IN THE SMITHSONIAN AMERICAN HISTORY MUSEUM. THE HIGHLIGHT FOR ME WAS SEEING THE ACTUAL FLAG THAT FLEW OVER FORT MCHENRY AND THAT INSPIRED THE WRITING OF OUR NATIONAL ANTHEM, THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER. HERE'S SOME INFORMATION I COLLECTED FROM WIKIPEDIA.COM.

The lyrics come from the **Defence of Fort M'Henry**,<sup>[2]</sup> a poem written on September 14, 1814, by the then 35-year-old lawyer and amateur poet Francis Scott Key after witnessing the bombardment of Fort McHenry by British ships of the Royal Navy in Baltimore Harbor during the Battle of Baltimore in the War of 1812. Key was inspired by the large U.S. flag, with 15 stars and 15 stripes, known as the Star-Spangled Banner, flying triumphantly above the fort during the U.S. victory.

In Baltimore's preparation for an expected attack on the city, Fort McHenry was made ready to defend the city's harbor. When Major George Armistead expressed the desire for a very large flag to fly over the fort, General John S. Stricker and Commodore Joshua Barney placed an order with a prominent Baltimorean flagmaker for two oversized American Flags. The larger of the two flags would be the Great Garrison Flag, the largest battle flag ever flown at the time. The smaller of the two flags would be the Storm Flag, to be more durable and less prone to fouling in inclement weather.

Available documentation shows that this flag was sewn by local flagmaker Mary Young Pickersgill under a government commission in 1813 at a cost of \$405.90 (equivalent to \$5,269 in 2018). George Armistead, the commander of Fort McHenry, specified "a flag so large that the British would have no difficulty seeing it from a distance".

The flag originally measured 30 by 42 feet. Each of the fifteen stripes is 2 feet wide, and each of the stars measures about 2 feet in diameter. After the battle, the Armistead family occasionally gave away pieces of the flag as souvenirs and gifts; this cutting, along with deterioration from continued use, removed several feet of fabric from the flag's fly end, and it now measures 30 by 34 feet. The flag currently has only fourteen stars—the fifteenth star was similarly given as a gift, but its recipient and current whereabouts are unknown.

SEEING THIS FLAG ON DISPLAY AT THE MUSEUM DEFINITELY SURPRISED ME. I HAD NO IDEA IT WAS STILL IN EXISTENCE.

I TRUST YOU ENJOYED THE 4<sup>TH</sup> OF JULY WEEKEND. THANKS FOR LISTENING.

OUR MAILING ADDRESS IS: WRVM, PO BOX 212, SURING WI, 54174

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THANK YOU FOR JOINING ME FOR THE MANAGER'S DESK, I'M MIKE CORNELL.