

300th Committee's Historic Flags for Nottingham Square

In honor of Nottingham's 300th anniversary, it was decided to fly historical flags in the vicinity of Nottingham Square to commemorate some of the battles that Nottingham patriots participated in. In the summer of 2019, students at the Nottingham School Summer Institute were challenged to research what flags would be appropriate. We appreciate their work.

Flags are fragile items and most did not survive warfare and wear, so there is no definitive answer to where, when and who flew these flags. Some though perhaps of a later vintage, have come to represent a particular battle or group, so they have been included as well. Various people and organizations have stepped forward to sponsor specific flags and their names are included here with our thanks.

Here are the ones the 300th Committee chose from the Summer Institute students list in order of appearance on Route 156 coming up from the center of Nottingham towards Raymond:



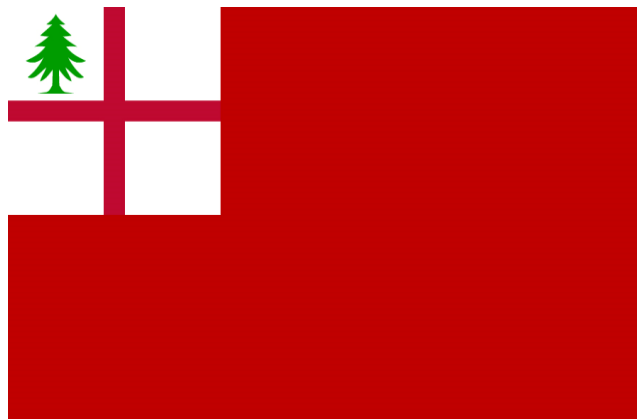
Flag of the First Rhode Island Regiment- The 1st Rhode Island Regiment consisted of African Americans, both free and enslaved, American Indians and white colonists. Originally slaves were offered their freedom if they enlisted but this offer was rescinded four months later. During that four month period over 100 free and formerly enslaved African Americans enlisted. The group had segregated companies but were slowly integrated. Thomas Bartlett of Nottingham fought with the Colonial Whipple Regiment in the Battle of Rhode Island in 1778 along with the First Rhode Islanders.

Sponsored by the Copp Family



Bennington Flag- This flag has the 13 stars and stripes, representing the 13 colonies and the 76 referring to the year the Declaration of Independence was signed. Current thought is that the Bennington Flag was created for an occasion commemorating the Battle of Bennington sometime in the 1800's but was not flown at the actual battle. However, this flag has come to represent the battle, the American victory there being considered a turning point in the War of Independence. Answering an appeal from the Green Mountain Boys, John Stark raised a militia of 1,500 NH Militiamen in six days. Benjamin Langley from Nottingham was one of them. They marched to Bennington and assisted in the battle.

Sponsored by Nancy Frost



Bunker Hill Flag – There is some dispute whether a flag actually was flown at the Battle of Bunker Hill and if so what it looked like. The colonials did fly a flag like this, the Pine Tree representing New England, so we have chosen to go with this design. When receiving news that hostilities had broke out between the Colonists and the British at Lexington and Concord, a group of local minutemen met at Nottingham Square and under the direction of Henry Dearborn marched to the Boston area. They arrived after the fighting had ended but some stayed, including Henry Dearborn and fought at Bunker Hill. William McCrillis from Nottingham died at Bunker Hill.

Sponsored by Rose Breslin-Dawson

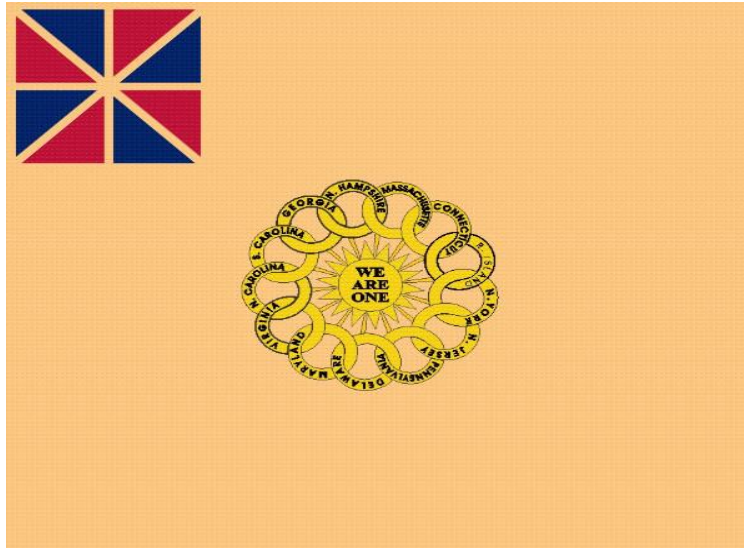
Nottingham School grade 4 teacher 1974 – 2019



Flag of the 2nd New Hampshire – This is a regimental flag that survived and is currently held by the NH Historical Society so there is no debate of its authenticity. It was captured by the British at Fort Anne, NY on July 8, 1777 by Lieutenant Colonial John Hill who brought it and another flag back to England. Both flags were eventually bought and returned to NH in 1913. The 2nd NH Regiment was formed with Enoch Poor as Commander and Joseph Cilley of Nottingham as Major. The 2nd took part in the siege of Boston, fought in Quebec, Saratoga and Fort Ticonderoga and later in Trenton and Princeton. John Whitehorn of Nottingham was wounded at Ticonderoga and lost the use of his knee. Joseph Merrill Thomas of Nottingham died at the second battle of Saratoga.

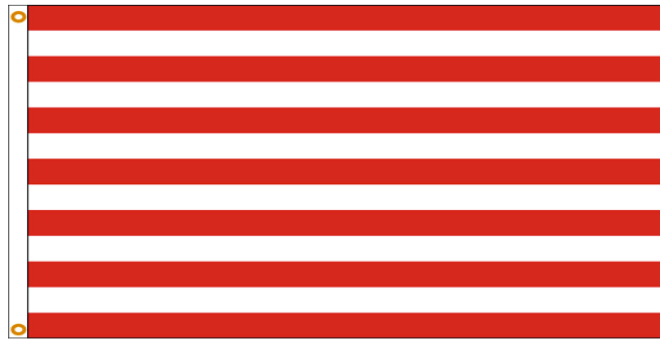
Sponsored by Richard and Beverly Mills

These flags are on Ledge Farm Road:



New Hampshire Regimental National Flag – This is the second flag that Lieutenant Colonel Hill brought home to England and has now been returned to New Hampshire. The current speculation is that the NH Regiments carried two flags with them, one a national flag and one a regimental flag, this one being the national flag. The interlocking rings with the thirteen colonies names and the “We Are One” sunburst are a design by Benjamin Franklin which was also used on Continental currency at the time. It is also thought that the original color may have been white and faded to buff over time. It is likely this flag was carried by the First NH Regiment as well as the 2nd.

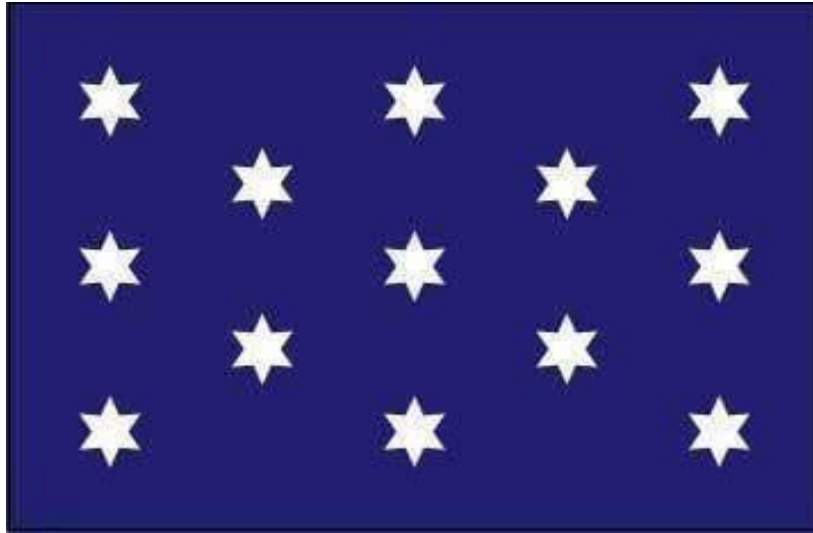
Sponsored by New Hope Church



Sons of Liberty – The original Sons of Liberty flag had vertical stripes but was outlawed by the British. So, the colonists reversed the direction of the stripes and kept using it. While Portsmouth has a Liberty Pole, there is no record that Nottingham ever had one or flew this flag. However, there was wide support of the Sons of Liberty in Town. Patriots from Nottingham including Joseph Cilley, Henry Dearborn and others participated in the Sons of Liberty action of storming Fort William and Mary and removing of gun powder from its stores and hiding it in houses on the Square and elsewhere in the Seacoast.

Sponsored by the Nottingham Democrats

This flag is on Deerfield Road:



George Washington's Valley Forge Headquarters Flag - Some people believe this flag to have been the standard that Washington flew over his headquarters at Valley Forge but it might not have even been a flag. Colonel Cilley's First NH Regiment was at Valley Forge with Washington in the winter of 1778. Many Nottingham soldiers were there as part of Cilley's regiment as well as some from Colonel John McClary's Regiment.

Sponsored by the Lapiejko family