

Our National Flag: Its History And Meaning

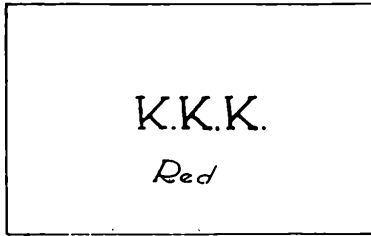


Fig. 1. The Katipunan War Standard
History of the Flag

DURING the rule of Spain, our forefathers had many troubles with the government. They were forced to work for Spanish officials. They were made to pay tribute. They were given very little freedom. These troubles caused them to fight against the Spanish government. In these contests against the government, our forefathers used several flags to represent different parts of the country. But none of these flags stood for the Philippines as a nation.

The first flag intended to represent the whole nation was called the Katipunan War Standard. It consisted of a red rectangular field with three K's arranged in a row at the center. These letters stood for the "Kataastaasa't Kagalangalang na Katipunan ng Mga Anak ng Bayan" (Highest and Most Venerable Association of the Sons of the Country). See Figure 1. This flag was used by the members of the *Katipunan* in its secret meetings. It was also the flag that was used in the first general uprising against the Spanish government.

The first official change to this flag was made shortly after the Philippine revolution broke out. In place of the three K's in the middle of the red rectangular field, a sun with eight rays was substituted. In the center of the sun was placed the letter **I** (K in Tagalog script). See Figure 2. The sun stood for the "rising liberty" of the nation. The K in

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Tagalog script stood for Katipunan, and the eight rays stood for the eight provinces that first fought against Spain.

During the revolution, General Gregorio del Pilar, the hero of Tila Pass, made a flag for his battalion. The general outline of this flag was similar to that of the flag of Cuba which was at that time also trying to free itself from Spanish rule. It consisted

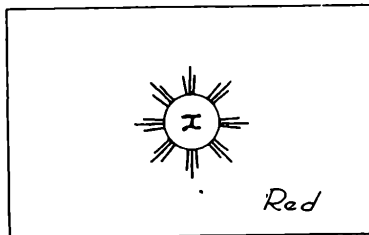


Fig. 2. The First Philippine Flag

of a rectangular field with a blue triangle close to the staff. The upper part was red, while the lower part was black. See Figure 3. Blue stood for justice, red for war, and black for death.

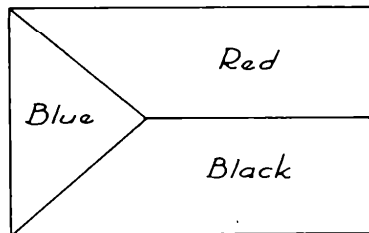


Fig. 3. Del Pilar's Tri-color Flag

Our first official flag (Fig. 2) was hauled down after the Pact of Biak-na-bato was signed. According to this pact, the Filipino revolutionary leaders were to live outside the country.

But it became clear that the Spanish government did not mean to live up to its promises. So, the Filipino revolutionary leaders returned to the Philippines to continue the fight. They brought with them a new flag, the

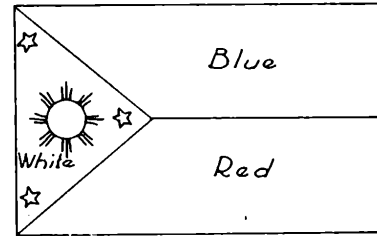


Fig. 4. The Present Philippine Flag

present National flag. It consisted of a white triangle, an upper red stripe, and a lower blue stripe. In the triangle is a gold sun with eight rays. In each corner of the triangle is a five-pointed star. See Figure 4.

The different colors and designs in our flag have different meanings. The red stands for Filipino courage that is second to none; it also stands for our blood which we are willing to shed in defense of our country. The blue stands for justice which we promise to uphold. The white stands for peace and the purity and sincerity of our actions. The three five-pointed stars stand for the three great divisions of the Philippine Islands, Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. The sun stands for liberty, and the eight rays represent the eight provinces that first revolted against Spain.

Significance of the Flag

Why is it that as soon as we see our flag floating in the air, we feel a thrill running through our veins? why does the mere sight of it make us forget our failures and we begin to put on more courage? Why do we lift our hats to it when it is carried in a parade? Why do we salute it when it is raised to, or lowered from, a staff? Why do we select the highest pedestal for our flag?

No man, either living or dead, has received such an honor. Is it because it has beautiful designs and attractive colors? Men may

(Please turn to page 133)

Overnight Camping . . .*(Continued from page 127)*

have a swim. We spent the rest of the time until six o'clock, swimming and eating the fruits we had picked during our interesting exploration. I passed two scouts who took the test in swimming and life saving.

Up again in our camping place, we again started to get busy preparing our supper and also cutting dry wood for the camp fire. When supper was over a camp fire was built. Everybody gathered around the fire and a program previously planned was given. The program was well prepared and consisted of story telling by several of my scouts, declamations by two and singing and cheering. The Camp Fire Program ended at about 8:15 P.M., after which we all went to bed—that is after bidding each other good night.

Early the next morning, William and I, prepared the breakfast. The rest of the group were busy breaking up camp, for we were to go home after breakfast. We then hiked back to Antipolo along the same road we passed going to camp, and from Antipolo, we took the bus to Manila.

We certainly enjoyed the overnight camp in Antipolo. We are again planning to go camping to some other place. During our previous camping, many of my scouts passed their tests and also learned many new things about the out-of-doors. It was really a glorious change from city life and city pleasures.

Our National Flag . . .*(Continued from page 124)*

wear clothes of more brilliant colors and of more costly materials, but they will never receive so much honor and respect as is given to the flag.

It is what the flag stands for—not what it is—that makes it worthy of the greatest respect that we can give. It stands for

Ernesto's Excursion . . .*(Continued from page 114)*

"Yes, son, birds can perform difficult acts and make things without having to learn how. The young birds can fly without being taught."

"Why do I often hear people say that birds teach their young to fly?" asked the boy.

"The father and mother bird lead the little birds away from the nest when their wings are strong enough. This is necessary sometimes because little birds are afraid or are unwilling to leave the nest. When the parents believe that they are old enough to take care of themselves, they even push the young out of the nest. The little ones flap their wings and just fly. They are not given lessons in the actual use of the wings."

"Father, can't I see some birds' nests?" Ernesto asked eagerly.

"We shall look for some empty ones that have been deserted."

the ideals for which our forefathers fought and died—it stands for liberty, honor, equality, and fraternity. It stands for the Government that maintains schools for us, protects our property, and promotes our happiness. It stands for every town and province in our country. It stands for Lapulapu and Soliman who fought the first European invaders. It stands for Rizal, who risked his life in order that his countrymen might see how they were oppressed. It stands for Bonifacio who started the first general uprising to overthrow the ruling power. It stands for the countless men and women who fell in the battlefields in order that our country might be free. It stands for the courageous Filipino soldier who died in Europe to help "keep this world safe for democracy." It stands for the uncomplaining fathers who work day and night to support their families. It stands for the self-sacrificing mothers who give their all in

"Among the thick, tall grass, they found a small nest as large as the hollow of a man's hand. As Ernesto gazed at the nest with wondering eyes, his father said,

"Nest weaving is another wonderful work that birds can do without being taught. Young birds, mating for the first time can make perfectly good nests of the usual type found among their kind. Even young birds reared by hand in artificial nests will later build the proper kind of nest for their species. The tailor-bird takes leaves and sews them together. The house-martin collects mud or clay and constructs a cup against the side of a cliff or a house."

"How interesting! Tell me more about birds, Father."

"Yes, son, let us walk on. Use your eyes well and I shall tell you about the feelings of birds."

order to make of their children true and patriotic Filipinos. It stands for the brave Filipino boy scout who, at the risk of his own life, saved a child from being run over by a train. It stands for all true men and women, boys and girls, who now live or have ever lived in our dear Philippines.

Books! Books! Books!*(Continued from page 130)***THERAS AND HIS TOWN**

This book is a story of a little seven year old boy from Athens. It tells all about his everyday life and his school days. Boys and girls from seven to ten years old will find this little Grecian story quite entertaining.

DOWNRIGHT DENCEY

This is a breezy story of Quaker life on Nantucket—about a lively young girl, Downright Dencey, herself. For girls from eleven on up to fifteen.

E.M.L.