

## I AM THE FLAG ~Ruth Apperson Rous

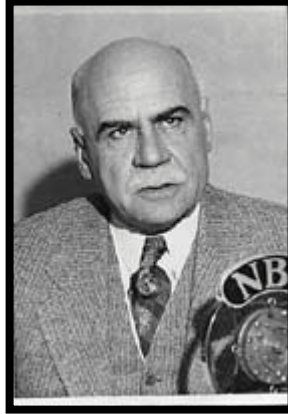
- \*I am the flag of the United States of America.
- \*I was born on June 14, 1777, in Philadelphia.
- \*There the Continental Congress adopted my Stars and Stripes as the national flag.
- \*My thirteen stripes alternating red and white, with a union of thirteen white stars in a field of blue, represented a new constellation, a new nation dedicated to the personal and religious liberty of mankind.
- \*Today fifty stars signal from my union, one for each of the fifty sovereign states in the greatest constitutional republic the world has ever known.
- \*My colors symbolize the patriotic ideals and spiritual qualities of the citizens of my country.
- \*My red stripes proclaim the fearless courage and integrity of American men and boys and the self-sacrifice and devotion of American mothers and daughters.
- \*My white stripes stand for liberty and equality for all.
- \*My blue is the blue of heaven, loyalty, and faith.
- \*I represent these eternal principles: liberty, justice, and humanity.
- \*I embody American freedom: freedom of speech, religion, assembly, the press, and the sanctity of the home.
- \*I typify that indomitable spirit of determination brought to my land by Christopher Columbus and by all my forefathers - the Pilgrims, Puritans, settlers at Jamestown and Plymouth.
- \*I am as old as my nation.
- \*I am a living symbol of my nation's law: the Constitution of the United States and the Bill of Rights.
- \*I voice Abraham Lincoln's philosophy: "A government of the people, by the people, for the people".

- \*I stand guard over my nation's schools, the seedbed of good citizenship and true patriotism.
- \*I am displayed in every schoolroom throughout my nation; every schoolyard has a flagpole for my display.
- \*Daily thousands upon thousands of boys and girls pledge their allegiance to me and my country.
- \*I have my own law—Public Law 829, "The Flag Code" - which definitely states my correct use and display for all occasions and situations.
- \*I have my special day, Flag Day, June 14th, is set aside to honor my birth.
- \*Americans, I am the sacred emblem of your country. I symbolize your birthright, your heritage of liberty purchased with blood and sorrow.
- \*I am your title deed of freedom, which is yours to enjoy and hold in trust for posterity.
- \*If you fail to keep this sacred trust inviolate, if I am nullified and destroyed, you and your children will become slaves to dictators and despots.
- \*Eternal vigilance is your price of freedom.
- \*As you see me silhouetted against the peaceful skies of my country, remind yourself that I am the flag of your country, that I stand for what you are - no more, no less.
- \*Guard me well, lest your freedom perish from the earth.
- \*Dedicate your lives to those principles for which I stand: "One nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."
- \*I was created in freedom. I made my first appearance in a battle for human liberty.
- \*God grant that I may spend eternity in my "land of the free and the home of the brave" and that I shall ever be known as "Old Glory,"
- \*The flag of the United States of America.

# THE AMERICAN'S CREED

~ William Tyler Page (1868 - 1942)

I believe in the United States of America as a government of the people, by the people, for the people, whose just powers are derived from the consent of the governed; a democracy in a republic; a sovereign Nation of many sovereign States; a perfect Union, one and inseparable, established upon those principles of freedom, equality, justice, and humanity for which American patriots sacrificed their lives and fortunes. I therefore believe it is my duty to my country to love it; to support its Constitution; to obey its laws; to respect its flag; and to defend it against all enemies.



William Tyler Page

Examples of documented phrases in The American's Creed:

- "The United States of America" — Preamble, Constitution of the United States.
- "A Government of the people, by the people, for the people" — Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address
- "Whose just powers are derived from the consent of the governed" — Declaration of Independence
- "A sovereign Nation of many sovereign States" — Drawn from Article IV of the Constitution
- "A perfect Union" — Preamble to the Constitution
- "One and inseparable." — Daniel Webster's famous reply to Robert Y. Hayne in the Senate in 1830
- "Established upon those principles of freedom, equality, justice, and humanity for which American patriots sacrificed their lives and fortunes." — Derived from Declaration of Independence.
- "I therefore believe it is my duty to my Country to love it" — In substance from Edward Everett Hale's "The Man Without a Country"
- "To obey its laws" — Compiled from Article VI, Constitution of the United States

*Historical Notes:* The American's Creed was a result of a nationwide contest for writing a National Creed, which would be a brief summary of the American political faith founded upon things fundamental in American history and tradition. The contest was the idea of Henry Sterling Chapin, Commissioner of Education of New York State. Over three thousand entries were received, and William Tyler Page was declared to be the winner. James H. Preston, the mayor of Baltimore, presented an award to Page in the House of Representatives Office Building on April 3, 1918. The Speaker of the House of Representatives and the commissioner of education of the state of New York accepted the Creed for the people of the United States, and the proceedings relating to the award were printed in the *Congressional Record* of April 13, 1918. It was a time when patriotic sentiments were very much in vogue. The United States had been a participant in World War I only a little over a year at the time the Creed was adopted.

The author of the American's Creed, William Tyler Page, was a descendant of John Page, who had come to America in 1650 and had settled in Williamsburg, Virginia. Another ancestor, Carter Braxton, had signed the Declaration of Independence. Still another ancestor, John Tyler, was the tenth president of the United States. William Tyler Page had come to Washington at the age of thirteen to serve as a Capitol Page. Later he became an employee of the Capitol building and served in that capacity for almost sixty-one years. In 1919 he was elected clerk of the House. Thirteen years later, he became clerk of the House of Representatives and held this position for the remainder of his life. Referring to the Creed, Page said: "It is the summary of the fundamental principles of the American political faith as set forth in its greatest documents, its worthiest traditions, and its greatest leaders."

# I AM THE FLAG

~ Lawrence M. Jones

**\*I am a composite being of all the people of America.**

**\*I am the union if you are united.**

**\*I am one and indivisible if you are undivided.**

**\*I am as strong as the weakest link.**

**\*I am an emblem of your country.**

**\*I am a symbol of a shadow of the real.**

**\*I am a sign pointing to past achievements.**

**\*I am a promise of greater things for the future.**

**\*I am what you make me.**

**\*I am purity if you are pure.**

**\*I am bravery if you are brave.**

**\*I am loyalty if you are loyal.**

**\*I am honor if you are honorable.**

**\*I am goodness if you are good.**

**\*I am hope if you are hopeful.**

**\*I am truth if you are true.**

**\*I am the Constitution.**

**\*I am law and order.**

**\*I am as tolerant or as intolerant as you force me to be.**

**\*I am liberty as you understand liberty.**

**\*I am as a pillar of fire by night,  
but you must provide the fuel.**

**\*I march at the head of the column,  
but you must carry me on.**

**\*I stand for greater and more glorious achievement  
than can be found in recorded history,  
but you must be my inspiration.**

**\*I am the Flag!**

# **NATIONAL SYMBOL**

~ Charles Evans Hughes (1862 - 1948)

**The flag is the symbol of our national unity,  
our national endeavor, our national aspiration.**

**The flag tells of the struggle for independence, of  
union preserved, of liberty and union one and  
inseparable, of the sacrifices of brave men and  
women to whom the ideals and  
honor of this nation have been dearer than life.**

**It means America first;  
it means an undivided allegiance.**

**It means America united,  
strong and efficient, equal to her tasks.**

**It means that you cannot be saved by the valor and  
devotion of your ancestors,  
that to each generation comes its patriotic duty;  
and that upon your willingness to sacrifice and  
endure as those before you have sacrificed and  
endured rests the national hope.**

**It speaks of equal rights,  
of the inspiration of free institutions  
exemplified and vindicated,  
of liberty under law intelligently conceived  
and impartially administered.**

**There is not a thread in it but scorns  
self-indulgence, weakness, and rapacity.**

**It is eloquent of our community interests,  
outweighing all divergences of opinion,  
and of our common destiny.**

# THE MEANING OF OUR FLAG

~ Henry Ward Beecher (1813 - 1837)



**If one asks me the meaning of our flag, I say to him: It means just what Concord and Lexington meant, what Bunker Hill meant. It means the whole glorious Revolutionary War. It means all that the Declaration of Independence meant. It means all that the Constitution of our people, organizing for justice, for liberty and for happiness, meant.**

**Under this banner rode with Washington and his armies. Before it Burgoyne laid down his arms. It waved on the highlands at West Point. When Arnold would have surrendered these valuable fortresses and precious legacies, his night was turned into day and his treachery was driven away by beams of light from this starry banner.**

**It cheered our army, driven out from around New York, and in their painful pilgrimages through New Jersey. This banner streamed in light over the soldiers' heads at Valley Forge and at Morristown. It crossed the waters rolling with ice at Trenton, and when its stars gleamed in the morning with a victory, a new day of hope dawned on the despondency of this nation.**

**Our Flag carries American ideas, American history and American feelings. Beginning with the Colonies, and coming down to our time, in its sacred heraldry, in its glorious insignia, it has gathered and stored chiefly this supreme idea: Divine right of liberty in man. Every color means liberty; every thread means liberty; every form of star and beam or stripe of light means liberty — not lawlessness, but organized, institutional liberty— liberty through law, and laws for liberty!**

# **I AM “OLD GLORY”**

~ Master Sergeant Percy Webb, USMC.  
Originally Published in the 1933 World's Fair in Chicago

**I Am “Old Glory”:**

**For more than ten score years I have been the  
banner of hope and freedom for  
generation after generation of Americans.**

**Born amid the first flames of  
America's fight for freedom,  
I am the symbol of a country that has grown from  
a little group of thirteen colonies to a  
united nation of fifty sovereign states.**

**Planted firmly on the high pinnacle of  
American Faith my gently fluttering folds have  
proved an inspiration to untold millions.**

**Men have followed me into battle  
with unwavering courage.**

**They have looked upon me as a  
symbol of national unity.**

**They have prayed that they and  
their fellow citizens might continue to enjoy  
the life, liberty and pursuit of happiness,  
which have been granted to every American  
as the heritage of free men.**

**So long as men love liberty more than life itself;  
so long as they treasure the priceless privileges bought  
with the blood of our forefathers;  
so long as the principles of truth, justice and charity  
for all remain deeply rooted in human hearts,  
I shall continue to be the enduring banner of the  
United States of America.**

# **I AM WHAT YOU MAKE ME**

## **(The Flag Speaks)**

~ Franklin K. Lane (1864 - 1921) First published during World War I

**I am whatever you make me, nothing more.**

**I am your belief in yourself,  
your dream of what a people may become.**

**I live a changing life,  
a life of moods and passions,  
of heartbreaks and tired muscles.**

**Sometimes I am strong with pride,  
when workmen do an honest piece of work.**

**Sometimes I droop,  
for then purpose has gone from me,  
and cynically I play the coward;  
But always I am all that you hope to be,  
and have the courage to try for.**

**I am song and fear, struggle and panic,  
and ennobling hope.**

**I am the day's work of the weakest man,  
and the largest dream of the most daring.**

**I am what you make me, nothing more.**

**I swing before your eyes as a bright gleam of color,  
a symbol of yourself,  
a pictured suggestion of that big thing  
which makes this nation.**

**My stars and my stripes are your dream  
and your labors, they are bright with cheer,  
brilliant with courage, firm with faith.**

**Because you have made them so out of your hearts.**

**For you are the makers of the flag and  
it is well that you glory in the making.**

# PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

~ Judge Learned Hand (1872 - 1961)

I Am an American Day Speech, New York Central Park, May 21, 1944

We have gathered here to affirm a faith, a faith in a common purpose, a common conviction and a common devotion. Some of us have chosen America as the land of our adoption; many of the rest have come from those who did the same. For this reason we have some right to consider ourselves a picked group, a group of those who had the courage to break from the past and brave the dangers and the loneliness of a strange land.

What was the object that nerves us, or those who went before us, to this choice? We sought liberty; freedom from oppression, freedom from want and freedom to be ourselves. This we then sought. This we now believe that we are by way of winning.

What do we mean when we say that first of all we seek liberty? I often wonder whether we do not rest our hopes too much upon constitutions, upon laws and upon courts. These are false hopes; believe me, these are false hopes. Liberty lies in the hearts of men and women. When it dies there, no constitution, no law, no court can save it. No constitution, no law, no court can even do much to help it. While it lies there, it needs no constitution, no law, and no court to save it.

And what is this liberty, which must lie in the hearts of men and women? It is not the ruthless, the unbridled will. It is not freedom to do as one likes. That is the denial of liberty, and leads straight to its overthrow. A society in which men recognize no check upon their freedom, soon becomes a society where freedom is the possession of only a savage few; as we have learned to our sorrow.

What then is the spirit of liberty? I cannot define it; I can only tell you my own faith. The spirit of liberty is the spirit which is not too sure that it is right. The spirit of liberty is the spirit which seeks to understand the minds of other men and women. The spirit of liberty is the spirit which weighs their interests alongside its own without bias. The spirit of liberty remembers that not even a sparrow falls to earth unheeded. The spirit of liberty is the spirit of Him who, nearly two thousand years ago, taught mankind that lesson it has never learned, but has never quite forgotten; that there may be a kingdom where the least shall be heard and considered side by side with the greatest.

And now in that spirit, that spirit of an America which has never been, and which may never be; nay, which never will be, except as the conscience and the courage of Americans create it; yet in the spirit of that America which lies hidden in some form in the aspirations of us all; in the spirit of that America for which our young men are at this moment fighting and dying; in that spirit of liberty and of America I ask you to rise and with me to pledge our faith in the glorious destiny of our beloved country.

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.



**THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE –  
ANALYZED BY RED SKELTON'S TEACHER**  
~ Richard Bernard "Red" Skelton (1913-1997)

As a schoolboy, one of Red Skelton's teachers explained the words and meaning of the Pledge of Allegiance to his class. Skelton later wrote down, his recollection of this lecture. The following words were spoken by the late Red Skelton on his CBS television show, January 14, 1969, as he related the story of his teacher, Mr. Laswell, who felt his students had come to think of the Pledge of Allegiance as merely something to recite in class each day.

“I remember this one teacher, to me he was the greatest teacher, a real sage of my time. He had such wisdom. We were all reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, and he walked over. Mr. Laswell was his name. He said: "I've been listening to you boys and girls recite the Pledge of Allegiance all semester and it seems as though it is becoming monotonous to you. If I may, may I recite it and try to explain to you the meaning of each word?”

**“I —** Me; an individual; a committee of one.

**PLEDGE —** Dedicate all of my worldly goods to give without self-pity.

**ALLEGIANCE —** My love and my devotion.

**TO THE FLAG —** Our standard; “Old Glory” ; a symbol of Freedom; wherever she waves there is respect, because your loyalty has given her a dignity that shouts; Freedom is everybody's job.

**UNITED —** That means that we have all come together.

**STATES —** Individual communities that have united into forty-eight great states.

Forty-eight individual communities with pride and dignity and purpose. All divided with imaginary boundaries, yet united to a common purpose, and that is love for country.

**AND TO THE REPUBLIC—** Republic, a state in which sovereign power is invested in representatives chosen by the people to govern. And government is the people; and it's from the people to the leaders, not from the leaders to the people.

**FOR WHICH IT STANDS, ONE NATION —** One Nation, meaning, “so blessed by God.”

**INDIVISIBLE —** Incapable of being divided.

**WITH LIBERTY —** Which is Freedom; the right of power to live one's own life, without threats, fear, or some sort of retaliation.

**AND JUSTICE —** The principle, or qualities, of dealing fairly with others.

**FOR ALL —** For All, which means, boys and girls, it's as much your country as it is mine.”

“And now, boys and girls, let me hear you recite the Pledge of Allegiance:

**I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic, for which it stands; one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”**

“Since I was a small boy, two states have been added to our country and two words have been added to the Pledge of Allegiance: **Under God**. Wouldn't it be a pity if someone said that is a prayer and that would be eliminated from schools, too?”

# **I AM AN AMERICAN~ Elias Lieberman**

**I am an American.**

**My father belongs to the Sons of the Revolution;**

**My mother, to the Colonial Dames.**

**One of my ancestors pitched tea overboard in Boston Harbor;**

**Another stood his ground with Warren;**

**Another hungered with Washington at Valley Forge.**

**My forefathers were America in the making:**

**They spoke in her council halls;**

**They died on her battlefields; They commanded her ships;**

**They cleared her forests. Dawns reddened and paled.**

**Stanch hearts of mine beat fast at each new star in the nation's flag.**

**Keen eyes of mine foresaw her greater glory:**

**The sweep of her seas,**

**The plenty of her plains,**

**The man-hives in her billion-wired cities.**

**Every drop of blood in me holds a heritage of patriotism.**

**I am proud of my past.**

**I am an American. I am an American.**

**My father was an atom of dust,**

**My mother a straw in the wind,**

**To his serene majesty.**

**One of my ancestors died in the mines of Siberia;**

**Another was crippled for life by twenty blows of the knout;**

**Another was killed defending his home during the massacres.**

**The history of my ancestors is a trail of blood**

**To the palace gate of the Great White Czar.**

**But then the dream became the dream of America.**

**In the light of the Liberty's torch the atom of dust became a man**

**And the straw in the wind became a woman for the first time.**

**"See," said my father, pointing to the flag that fluttered near,**

**"That flag of stars and stripes is yours;**

**It is the emblem of the promised land,**

**It means, my son, the hope of humanity.**

**Live for it—die for it!"**

**Under the open sky of my new country I swore to do so;**

**And every drop of blood in me will keep that vow.**

**I am proud of my future.**

**I am an American.**