



## Utah's Adoption of Two Legislative Measures Affecting the Utah State Flag

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### Abstract

This paper details and documents the issues, efforts and outcomes ensuing from the adoption of Utah House Concurrent Resolution 2 and Utah House Bill 490 and analyzing their effects.

In 2011 the 59<sup>th</sup> General Session of the Utah State Legislature met during a time of budgetary challenges and intense political controversy. Despite dealing with a heavy legislative schedule, the House and Senate considered and passed two measures concerning the Utah State Flag—House Concurrent Resolution 2, which urged that newly manufactured flags accurately reflect the statutory description, and House Bill 490, which provided for the annual commemoration of Utah State Flag Day.

The North American Vexillological Association has participated in efforts to redesign the state flags in Utah and Oregon. However, neither attempt resulted in legislative adoption. Nonetheless, the experience gained in Utah does provide valuable insights that could be useful in obtaining adoption of new flag designs. Issues were raised that should be considered in order to make adoption of flag-related legislation possible. Plans, procedures, and strategies were employed that could be useful in other venues. Additionally, there were other benefits gained that support vexillology as a scholarly discipline and raised its exposure.



The correct design of the Utah State Flag placing the numerals for the year "1847" in the correct position on the shield and using the original colors as described in Utah State Senate documents.

## Utah's Adoption of Two Legislative Measures Affecting the Utah State Flag

In 2011 the 59<sup>th</sup> General Session of the Utah State Legislature met during a time of budgetary challenges and intense political controversy. Despite a heavy legislative schedule, the Utah House and Senate considered and passed two measures concerning the Utah State Flag:

1. House Concurrent Resolution 2 which urges that newly manufactured flags accurately reflect the statutory description, and
2. House Bill 490 which provides for the annual commemoration on March 9<sup>th</sup> as Utah State Flag Day.

The legislation—an effort to correct a small error—resulted from vexillological research conducted decades before. The correction of the Utah State flag in 2011 creates a list of lessons learned that could prove valuable in other legislative efforts.

About 1985 I created a spreadsheet detailing editorial changes appearing in the description of the Utah State Flag. An effort made before the use of computer spreadsheets became common, this was a true spreadsheet hand-written on a large piece of graph paper. On the horizontal lines I copied the exact wording of the flag's description in succeeding editions of the Utah Code.<sup>1</sup>

One detail, repeated each year, did not match the design of the Utah flag as I knew it. According to the description, the year "1847" should appear on the shield immediately below the state's name. Instead, the pattern of the flag then in use clearly showed "1847" placed below the shield. Having determined that my reading of the description was correct, I determined to discover when and how the change took place.

Early examples of the Utah State Flag were not mass produced and they were not flown from stationary outdoor poles. Each of the early flags was fashioned as an individual artistic creation, made to fill a specific need. They were made for parades or exhibits, or as an indoor decoration. Because of this, the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers were able to list each of the approximate first two dozen flags. This led DUP President Kate C. Snow to write, "Each flag is a picture."<sup>2</sup>

From my research, I learned that the error in the placement of "1847" originated with a flag made in 1922. While only the third Utah State Flag made, this flag—with its error—served as the pattern for subsequent Utah State flags. Having discovered this error, albeit a very small one, I shared my discovery with local historians, state officials, and reporters. The usual response was a wry smile as if to say, "That is a curious bit of Utah trivia." None seemed to deem it a problem that needed to be fixed.

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<sup>1</sup> *Laws of the State of Utah 1911 and 1913* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Century Printing Company, 1911 and 1913), page 355 and page 232. Also, various editions of *Utah Code Annotated*, (Charlottesville, Virginia: The Mitchie Company).

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in "The Utah State Flag", *Heart Throbs of the West*, compiled by Kate B. Carter (Salt Lake City, Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, 1939), p. 15.



Detail from the 1922 Utah State flag digitally correcting the placement of the year "1847."



Detail from the 1922 Utah Flag with "1847" moved to the wrong place below the shield.

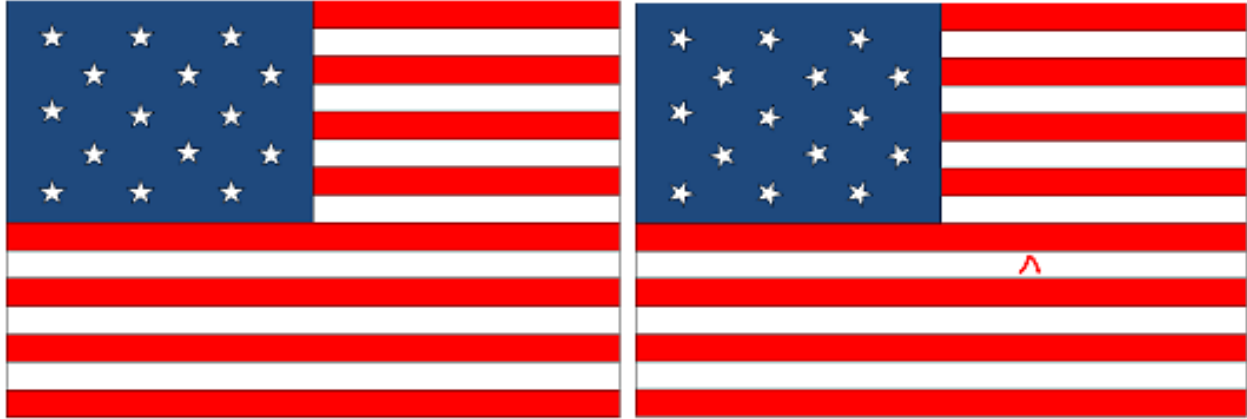
Even in this august body of vexillologists, there are likely some who would echo "That is a curious bit of Utah trivia" while feeling no strong wish to see the Utah State Flag corrected. The Utah State Flag fits into a common pattern of state flags which display a coat of arms or seal on a blue field. Seen as hackneyed designs that are difficult to recognize, there have been efforts to replace some of these state flags with stronger designs using guidelines detailed in the NAVA publication *Good Flag, Bad Flag*.<sup>3</sup> As a matter of fact, the *Salt Lake Tribune*, with the assistance of the North American Vexillological Association, held a competition in 2002 to produce an improved design as a replacement for Utah's "seal on blue" design.<sup>4</sup> Well planned and executed, the competition produced some beautiful and strong designs that were presented in a comprehensive report prepared by NAVA.<sup>5</sup> However, the contest did not result in any change of the Utah State Flag. One beautiful design has been pointed out to me repeatedly as the favorite of many NAVA members.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, some would see correcting the placement of "1847" on the Utah State Flag as the equivalent of rearranging the deck chairs on the *Titanic*.

<sup>3</sup> Ted Kaye, compiler, *Good Flag, Bad Flag*, North American Vexillological Association, 2006.

<sup>4</sup> "New Flag Contest", *The Salt Lake Tribune*, 6 January 2002.

<sup>5</sup> "The Salt Lake Tribune Utah Flag Design Contest: a Report from the North American Vexillological Association, March 2002," <http://www.nava.org/Flag%20Design/Utah%20Report.pdf> (accessed 26 April 2011).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* See No. 25, on page 7 of the report. "Utah's mountain peaks, presented abstractly in a design which inverted could show the state's symbolic seagulls."



The stars all point up in the generic illustration of a Fifteen-Star, Fifteen Stripe flag on the left. The Stars are rotated differently on the Star-Spangled Banner. The meaning of the inverted “v” is unknown.

While I support efforts to improve the quality of flag design, I also feel that as vexillologists we study and record flags as they exist. We document how they have been used historically and how they are used in the present. Details, even small details, are a critical part of our observation and documentation.

This illustration above is a correct 15-star, 15-stripe flag. To most observers it is the Star-Spangled Banner. Nonetheless, in 2001 the late NAVA member Harry Oswald noted that as a reproduction of the actual Star-Spangled Banner, the design is incorrect in one small detail, the orientation of the stars. He reported this to a surprised flag manufacturer.<sup>7</sup> In reality, the observation of small details is an important task of vexillology.

Although John C. Frémont’s Pathfinder flag still exists and has been photographed, many if not most illustrations of the flag are incorrect. The flag’s white union is usually shown in blue. Even when the union is shown correctly as white, the stars are sometimes depicted as solid blue rather than the correct white outlined in blue.<sup>8</sup>

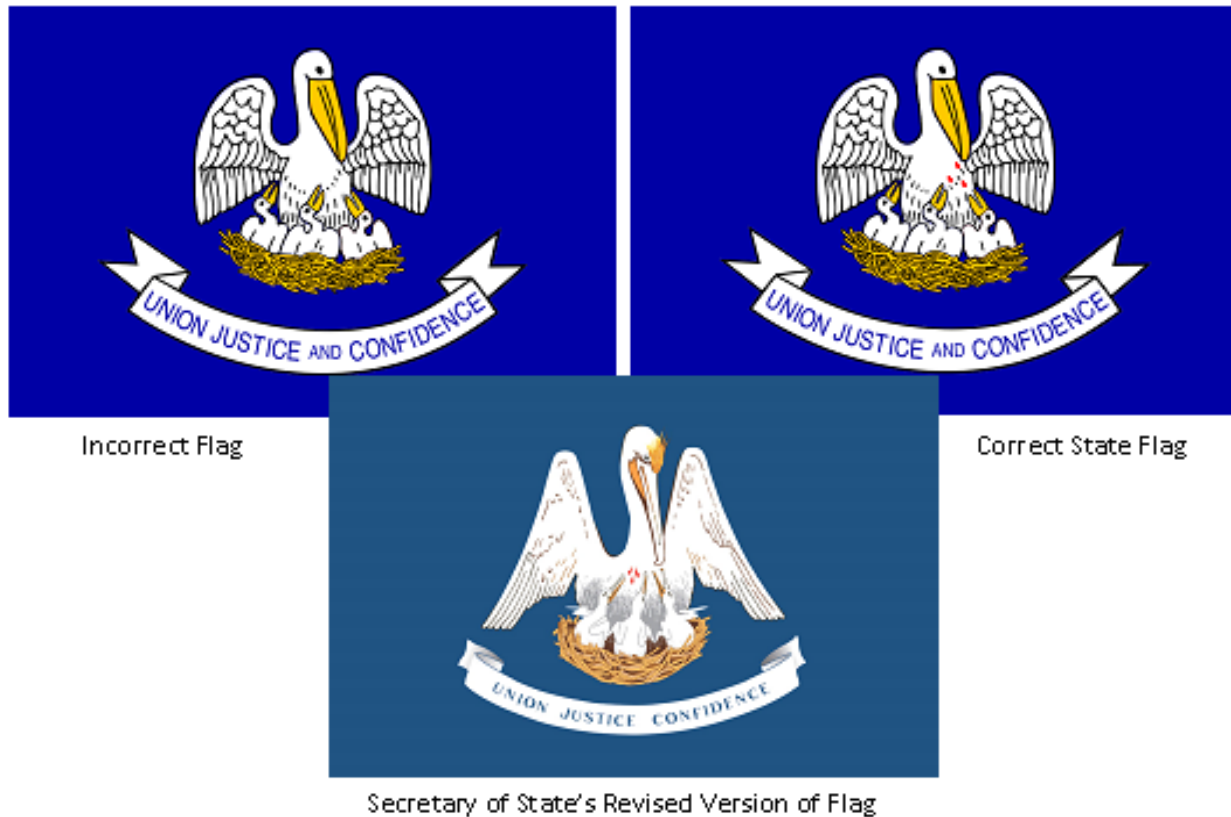
In another example, a Louisiana eighth-grade student noted that this illustration (below) of the Louisiana State flag was incorrect. The “pelican in her piety” failed to include three drops of blood necessary to prove the bird’s piety. Again this was a small detail that many individuals had failed to notice. The Louisiana State Legislature, when informed of the error, fixed it with legislation. Considering Utah’s experience, the Louisiana Legislature acted in record time. Still, the flag—as shown here—was rather ungainly, actually ugly. So, the Lieutenant Governor took the opportunity to provide an improved design.

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<sup>7</sup> Email received from Ted Kaye to John Hartvigsen on 1 March 2011.

<sup>8</sup> William J. Trinkle, “So Long, NAVA 44!”, *NAVA News*, No. 208, Oct.–Dec. 2010, page 2. Note: Frémont’s Pathfinder flag is shown on the cover of the issue.

## The Louisiana State Flag

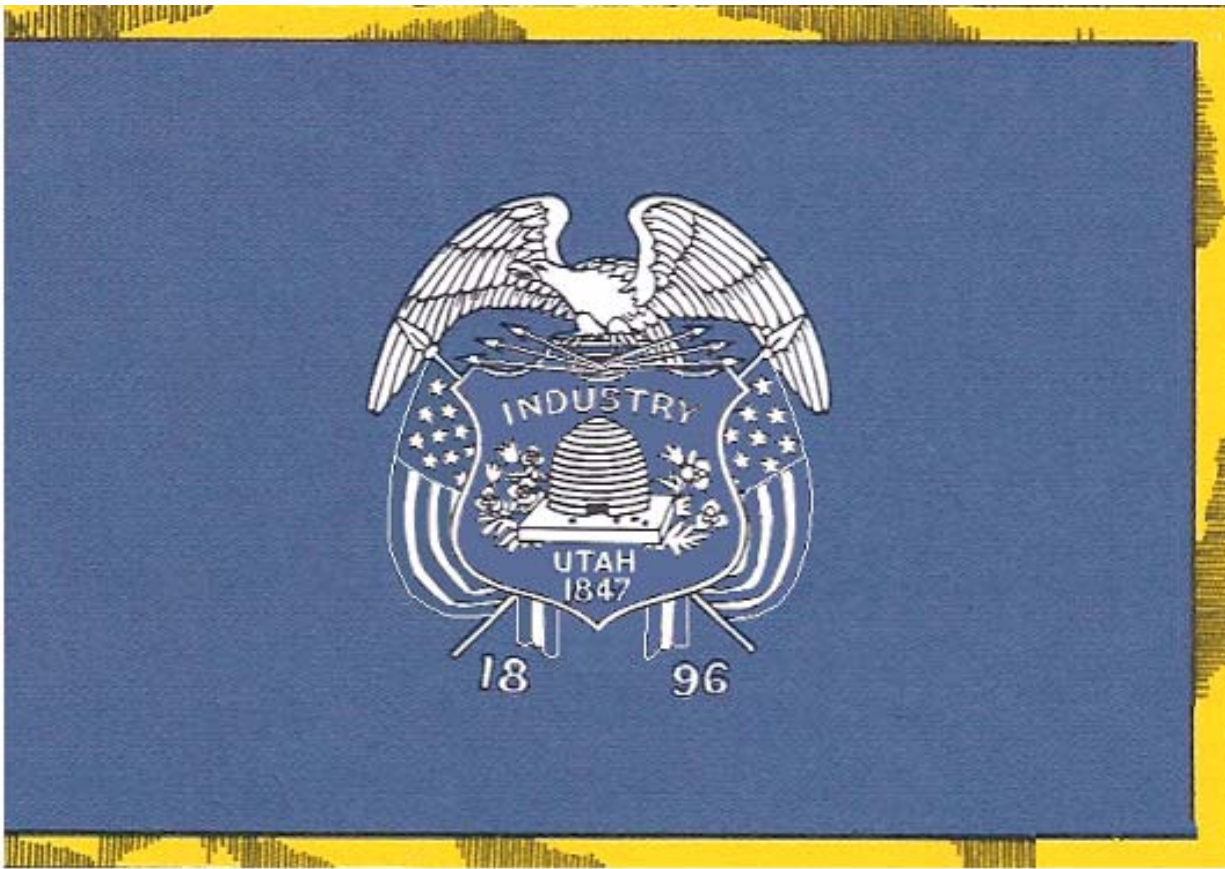


To explain the Utah State Flag Legislation of 2011, I present a timeline of events as they relate to the story of Utah flag's story.

1896—Utah, after a 49-year effort, finally achieves statehood. No state flag was adopted, but “The Great Seal of Utah” was designed. It is an example of faux heraldry which shows that the committee had little understanding of the rules and traditions of heraldry. Since the Utah State Flag would later be designed following the seal's pattern, several weaknesses in the flag's design had genesis in the design of the seal. However, that is a presentation for another day. Still, it is important to note that the seal's design is a product of the time. It gives us insight into how these Utahns viewed themselves and how they wanted those outside the state to view them.

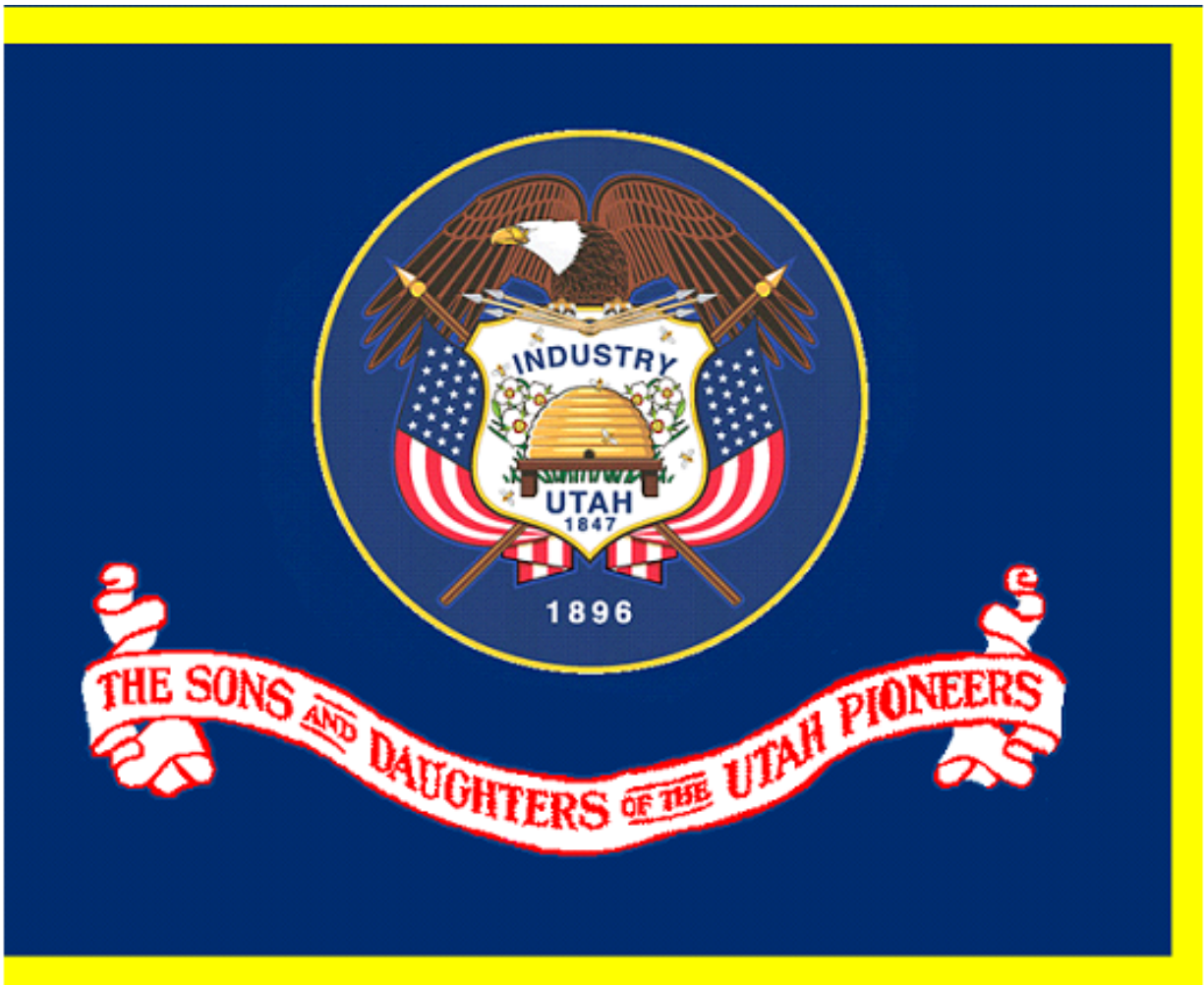
1903—The first unofficial Utah State Flag was created for display at the St. Louis World's Fair. It placed a white line drawing of the seal, minus the designation ring, on a blue field. Note that in 1903, the shield appears to be blue because of the line drawing design. Note also that the year “1847” appears, as on the seal, on the shield immediately below the beehive. The name of the state, which appeared on the designation ring of the seal, is absent from the original design of 1903. This flag was sometimes called the state flag and sometimes the governor's flag. In fact, it followed the general design of a military flag described in the 1896 edition of *Laws of Utah*. However, its use from 1903 until 1911 was unofficial.





The design of the Utah State Flag adopted on 9 March 1911 was the design of the 1903 unofficial flag with the addition of the word “Utah” added between the base of the beehive and the numerals “1847.” “Utah” was also added to the only existing 1903 in large letters below the central emblem. No correct example of the flag adopted in 1911 was made, rather the incorrect 1903 flag continued to be displayed.

1911—On 9 March the Utah State Legislature adopted language for the first official Utah State Flag. It described the 1903 flag with one addition. The name of the state “UTAH”, which had disappeared with the seal’s designation ring, was placed on the shield between the beehive and “1847.” There was no room on the shield to add “UTAH” to the existing 1903 flag, so it was added in large block numerals below the flag’s device. This meant, however, that the only existing 1903 flag did not follow the 1911 adopted description. There was, therefore, still no correct authorized Utah flag then in existence, but the incorrect 1903 flag continued in use.



An illustration of the Utah State Flag made for presentation to the battleship USS *Utah*. It follows the pattern of the only known black and white photograph of the flag and uses the colors from a descriptor found in Utah State Senate documents. The flag includes a presentation scroll that was not part of the official description adopted by the Utah Legislature in 1912 and 1913. After presentation to the ship, the flag never returned to the state. Framed and hung in the *Utah's* Ward Room. It is not known if the flag survives, or if it went to the bottom of Pearl Harbor when the USS *Utah* sank on December 7, 1941.

1912—The State of Utah was asked to present a “stand” of three flags to the battleship USS *Utah*. The stand included a U.S. Color and an Infantry Naval Battalion Color to be used by the crew when standing in formation and when deployed as a shore party. The third flag was to be a framed Utah State Flag. State officials decided that this state flag should be embroidered, not in blue and white as described in law and following the 1903 design, but rather in full color.<sup>9</sup> The presentation flag was ordered from the William H. Horstmann Company of Philadelphia, with one unique addition. As the flag would be presented by the Sons and Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, an appropriate presentation scroll was

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<sup>9</sup> William H. Horstmann Company, letter dated 27 December 1909 to Adjutant General E. A. Wedgewood, William Spry Papers, Utah State Archives.

added below the flag's central emblem on that one embroidered flag. The color design, less the presentation scroll, was adopted into law before the framed flag was received from Philadelphia.

1913—The flag arrived basically as ordered but with one addition—the central emblem was circled by a thin gold ring. The Horstmann Company, not wishing to change the flag, insisted that it had made the flag in the manner that state flags were correctly made. The Legislature, likely not wanting to delay the presentation of the flag to the battleship further, modified the description to include the gold ring. Following the 1930 naval treaty, the USS *Utah* was reclassified as a “target vessel” and lost its status as a ship of the line. After the flag's presentation to the USS *Utah* in 1913, it never returned to the state. It is not known if this presentation flag survived. Possibly it either went down with the *Utah* at Pearl Harbor or it was removed to some unknown storage when Utah was refitted as an auxiliary vessel in 1931. No other Utah State flag was made in 1913 reflecting the legally authorized design. The only known picture of the 1913 flag was published in a newspaper report describing the flag's display in Salt Lake City before its presentation to the *Utah*. Although the black and white photograph is of poor quality, we can see that the shield was white and the year “1847” appears on the shield just below “UTAH.” Utah State Senate documents also disclose the colors chosen and used in 1913.<sup>10</sup> Nonetheless, the incorrect 1903 flag continued in use.

1917—An illustration of the Utah State Flag is included in “Our Flag Number” of the *National Geographic Magazine*, no. 345 on page 334. The paragraph of explanation reads in part, “At the bottom of the shield is a green field bearing the date 1847, with the word ‘Utah’ above it.”

1922—When a request arrived to send the Utah State Flag to New York for a parade of states, Utah's governor was surprised to learn that a correct Utah State Flag did not exist anywhere in the state. He asked the ladies' auxiliary of the Grand Army of the Republic to donate a state flag that could be sent to the parade in New York. The women hired Dollie McMonegal, a local seamstress and embroiderer, to produce the flag. Since the flag presented to the USS *Utah* was at sea, Miss McMonegal likely had only the modified 1903 flag as a pattern. Not too surprisingly, she made the shield blue following the 1903 flag. It would have required considerable embroidery stitching to have made the shield white, even if she knew that the shield on the 1913 flag was correctly white.

Nevertheless, the surprising change made to the flag's design was not in the colors. Rather, for some reason, she left off the year “1847” entirely. We know this from a newspaper photograph showing the ladies of the GAR presenting the completed flag to Governor Mabey. Again, the photograph is of poor quality, but we can clearly see “UTAH” placed below the beehive, and we can see the year “1896” below the central emblem. “1847” however, is clearly missing.<sup>11</sup> We don't know exactly what transpired after the presentation, but we know that “1847” was added to the flag afterward. There not being enough room on the shield, the numeral were tucked in neatly below the shield. The GAR flag was not completed in time for the New York parade, but it was displayed for many years in the Utah State

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<sup>10</sup> “Beautiful Emblem to be Presented by the Sons and Daughters of the Utah Pioneers”, *Deseret Evening News*, 19 February 1913, page 3.

<sup>11</sup> “Utah Acquires Official Flag”, *The Salt Lake Tribune*, 6 May 1922, page 18.



Capitol and is now in the collection of the Utah State Historical Society. Note, however, that the flag did not follow the colors as used in the 1913 flag, and the placement of “1847” made the flag incorrect.

1933—Utah’s Attorney General, upon the request of the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, gave his legal opinion concerning the design they were using in the making of Utah State Flags. He wrote “I have examined the photograph of the flag enclosed by you, and as far as I am able to determine it meets the specification provided by law, and is therefore, insignia of the State, and constitutes a State flag.<sup>12</sup> He apparently did not notice the error in the placement of “1847” below the shield.

1934—Mrs. Lilliebell Falck sold a painted Utah State Flag to Ogden City’s Mayor Peery. A photograph of the flag shows the year “1847” correctly placed, but the flag is incorrect in other details.<sup>13</sup> For example the arrows do not “piece the shield” but are held by the eagle at the top of the shield. It appears that the artist who painted the flag followed the design from “Our Flag Number” of the *National Geographic Magazine*.

1985—I discovered the error in the placement of the numerals “1847.” For the next 25 years I told state officials, historians, reporters, and anyone who would listen.<sup>14</sup>

2010—The discovery of the 1903 Utah flag, lost for about fifty years, sparked interest in the history of the Utah State Flag.<sup>15</sup> After discussing the error initiated in 1922 with a new acquaintance, Ronald Fox, we determined to make the attempt to correct the design of the Utah State Flag. Ron agreed to act as the legislative coordinator. He knew the system and had appropriate contacts in the legislative and executive departments. Accordingly he contacted State Representative Julie Fisher, who agreed to sponsor the legislation. She enlisted State Senator Mark Madsen to sponsor the legislation in the State Senate. When asked, I explained that the error could be fixed in one of three ways.

First option: Change the description of the flag in the Utah State Code to match the design in use. This would recognize the design in use for more than three quarters of a century. It could also be argued that the year 1847 is highlighted by its position below the shield. Still, it does not follow the historic precedence of the early flags and does not follow the design of the Utah State Seal, upon which it was historically patterned.

Second option: Return the numerals “1847” to their original and correct position. This would recognize the preeminence of the Utah Code. It follows the original intent of the 1911 and 1913 legislation. It more closely mirrors the design of the Utah State Seal. Nevertheless, if the year is moved to the correct position, what of the color combination to be used? Keeping the blue shield would be the easiest, but the historic colors follow the design of the State Seal and make an obvious change that can be readily seen and identified.

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<sup>12</sup> Quoted in “The Utah State Flag”, *Heart Throbs of the West*, compiled by Kate B. Carter (Salt Lake City, Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, 1939), p. 16.

<sup>13</sup> “Utah State Parade to Lead Parade”, *Deseret News*, 18 July 1934, p. 5.

<sup>14</sup> *Laws of Utah and Utah Code Annotated*, *ibid*.

<sup>15</sup> Michael A. DeGroote, “Utah’s First State Flag Finally Found”, *Deseret News*, 8 March 2010.

Third option: Adopt a new design. The NAVA report on the redesign of the Utah State Flag could still be used to replace the existing, but historic design, with a strong design. This, however, would undoubtedly meet with resistance from many, and if the whole question of design were thrown open in legislative hearings, it could result in a weaker design. (This happened with the 2001 redesign of the Georgia State Flag. With the help of NAVA members Ed Jackson, Whitney Smith, and Ted Kaye—that 2001 version was replaced—by a 2003 effort.<sup>16</sup>)

In another example of a flag redesign effort gone wrong, the old Salt Lake City Flag displayed a pretty emblem that made a poor flag. A contest to produce a better flag went terribly wrong as a result of political pressure. The resulting new flag is, to my evaluation, uninspiring and ugly. With all its faults, I would prefer the old Salt Lake City flag.<sup>17</sup>

The legislative sponsors conferred with the governor's office and option two was selected with a return to the original colors from 1912 and 1913. To accomplish this, a House Concurrent Resolution was prepared. The legal description, however, could not be changed by a resolution as that could only be accomplished with an enacted bill. Neither type of legislation, I was informed, could include an illustration. Reviewing the proposed House Concurrent Resolution, I made a few historical corrections and suggested that the language of the flag description be included with an explanation of the correction to the flag design which manufacturers were expected to make. State Representative Julie Fisher introduced HCR2 on January 24, 2011 in a Utah House Committee.<sup>18</sup>

The Colonial Flag Company agreed to produce a corrected design following the 1913 description and using the original colors as documented in the legislative records of 1913. State officials wanted to standardize the design. This would have to happen *de facto* and not *de jure*. Standardization was hampered by the Legislature's unwillingness to rewrite the legal definition as it appeared in the Utah Code or to include an illustration in the public record.

During the first week of February, 2011—Colonial Flag received the first twelve prototype 3' X 5' flags and, one prototype 4' X 6' flag, and one satin, one sided 3' X 5' flag intended for framing. Made following instructions from legislators, these flags followed the correct design under the current law and also used the pattern and colors as designed in 1913. These flags would be correct even if HCR2 failed to pass. While they could be flown at any time, Colonial flag held them in reserve.

On 9 February 2011—Ron Fox took one 3' X 5' prototype flag up to the Utah State Capitol to be shown to Legislators and state officials for their approval. The Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, and Legislators, through their words and actions, demonstrated supported for the new design.

On 25 February 2011—I raised a prototype flag on my home's flagpole to document and photograph the first raising. As can be seen from the information presented above, this was likely the first time a correct and official Utah State Flag had ever been raised on an outdoor flagpole. It is also possible that

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<sup>16</sup> "New state flag endorsed by Georgia governor, lawmakers," *USA Today*, 4 April 2004.

<sup>17</sup> Brady Snyder, "Salt Lake Flag Designs just don't wow City Council," *Deseret News*, 4 February 2005.

<sup>18</sup> See Utah Directory of Legislative Action on line at <http://le.utah.gov/~2011/status/hbillsta/hcr002.htm> (accessed 26 April 2011).

the corrected prototype flags design could be the first correct authorized Utah State Flags ever made. A correct extant Utah State Flag, a photograph of a fully correct version of the Utah State Flag, or a fully correct illustration of the Utah State Flag has not been found.

On 16 February 2011—The Utah State House and Utah State Senate passed HCR 2 and a “ceremonial signing” ceremony was held with the 4th grade classes from Burton Elementary School and the general public. Small stick flags of the new flag were given to the school children. The Governor’s staff would not allow an actual signing as the passed bill needed to be “enrolled” and handled normally in the administrative process. The Governor assisted Ron Fox and me as we changed the flag in the Capitol’s Gold Room (official reception room) from the old to the new design.

On 17 February 2011—Encouraged by the passage of HCR 2 a second legislative actions, House Bill 490 was introduced to officially designate March 9<sup>th</sup> of each year as Utah State Flag Day.

During the week of 21 February 2011—Colonial Flag Company completed a 20' X 30' double-appliqué prototype flag. Owned by Colonial Flag, the large flag was intended to be flown at the Colonial Flag Company Headquarters for the first observance of Utah State Flag Day, 9 March. There was also consideration to display the flag at either the Capitol’s Rotunda or at the main hall of the Utah State Historical Society, if an appropriate ceremony was to be held in either venue. Nonetheless, Paul Swenson stated his preference to fly the flag at Colonial Flag on 9 March.

On 28 February 2011—HB 490 passed the House of Representatives and was passed to the Utah Senate for consideration.

On 9 March 2011—At the Governor’s last-minute request, the large flag was raised on the main flagpole in front of the Utah State Capitol under the personal direction of the Lieutenant Governor. The House had passed HB 490, but the Senate committee ran out of time and failed to act. A push was needed to get the Senate to suspend its rules and pass the bill. The point was made that 9 March was the one hundredth anniversary of the Utah State Flag’s adoption which the bill was crafted to honor. Legislators could see the large flag flying at the Capitol as a reminder. Still one local newspaper columnist used the display to write a satirical column criticizing the Legislature. *Salt Lake Tribune* columnist Paul Rolly suggested—tongue placed firmly in check—that the Utah State Legislature, in raising the large Utah State Flag, was in fact declaring the state’s independence as “the Republic of Utahkistan.”

On 9 March 2011—As one of the last actions taken that day, the Utah Senate approved HB 490 designating March 9<sup>th</sup> as Utah State Flag Day. The raising of the large Utah State Flag proved an important factor in the bill’s passage on that day.

On 16 March 2011—Governor Herbert signed HCR 2.

On 23 March 2011—Governor Herbert signed HB 490.

Colonial Flag Company had produced an initial run of 3' X 5' corrected Utah State Flags and the large 20' X 30' flag which would be raised at the Utah State Capitol on 9 March to encourage passage of HB 490. This prototype design fully followed the description in the Utah Code, and it returned colors of the 1913



Under the personal supervision of Utah's Lieutenant Governor Greg Bell, a twenty by thirty foot Utah State replaced the United States flag normally flown on the Utah State Capitol's main flagpole on the ninth of March in 2011. This encouraged the Utah State Senate to pass a bill designating March 9<sup>th</sup> as Utah State Flag Day. This was the first time that a correct Utah State Flag had flown over the Capitol.

design. Colonial Flag Company paid for producing this design, and Paul Swenson, the company's president, agreed to make the illustrator's pattern available to other flag manufacturers at no cost. Still, as Swenson reviewed the design before release, he felt that this presented a unique opportunity to refine the design and produce the best possible results. Colonial Flag's talented and experienced in-house flag designer, David Rindlesbach, had done an exceptional job following the legal description and the historical precedence. However, he had been limited by severe time constraints in order to meet the legislative calendar. Some elements of the design he gleaned from earlier flags were not as strong and clear as they could be. The eagle perched on the top of the shield, although it followed earlier precedent, looked weak and cartoonish. The sego lilies in early flags looked like deformed delft tulips. While greatly improved in the prototype design, they could perhaps be improved further. Paul Swenson felt the prototype design was a "home run," yet he wanted to produce a pattern that would clearly "knock it out of the park." He was determined that the design Colonial Flag Company would make available, would be the best one possible. He, therefore, took the extra step of hiring an artist to refine and strengthen the design. The prototype design, still correct and valid, would become the

Commemorative Centennial Utah State Flag. The few existing flags would thus be collector's versions that played a key role in the adoption of the 2011 legislation.

Perry Van Shelt, a gifted commercial artist with more than twenty year's experience, agreed to polish the design. He has created artwork for numerous clients and is perhaps best known as the designer of the Utah Centennial license plate spotlighting Arches National Park's Delicate Arch. He submitted several revisions, with each receiving careful review to ensure compliance with the 1913 description and historical precedence. Multiple versions were submitted before Paul Swenson was satisfied. The final design incorporates a correct reading of the Utah Code and incorporates the original color design of the Utah State Flag. While this process slowed the release of the illustrator's file to manufacturers, Van Shelt's refinements resulted in a stronger design which was finally ready for release in early June.

While the Utah Governor's office was approached in an effort to make a colored illustration of the new design a part of the public record, other governmental and political expediencies seem now to consume the state's energy. While two legislative measures passed in 2011, it is significant that the success resulted from efforts spanning back about a quarter of a century. For now, there does not appear to be interest in pursuing the subject of the Utah State Flag's design further.



The correct design of the Utah State Flag placing the numerals for the year "1847" in the correct position on the shield and using the original colors as described in Utah State Senate documents.



I observed, in a *NAVA News* article about this endeavor, that “Vexillology is a patient pursuit”.<sup>19</sup> While my research of several decades ago may have set this all in this motion, it is not an effort that I have controlled. There are certainly things I would like to have had happen differently. Still, there is some gratification in the results. A junior high student came up to me one day asking, “Are you John Hartvigsen, *the John Hartvigsen?*” “Yes”, I admitted, wondering what would come next. “Well”, she said, “I gave a report at school about your research on the Utah State Flag, and it raised my grade in history from a C+ to an A!” I didn’t bother to explain that this was a team effort. It would not have happened without the work of others. I was just happy to bask in the light of momentary fame. It was a long time in coming.

### Lessons Learned

1. Don’t expect immediate success.
2. Know the history and symbolism of the existing flag.
3. Expertise as a vexillologist will not be enough. Being “right” will not carry the day. Virtually everyone agreed that the year “1847” was in the wrong place. People need to agree that some action is needed.
4. Learn what kind of legislation is required. How is the current flag supported in law? How could resolutions, bills or executive orders be used? Find out how the legislative process works in advance. The session before your effort, follow a legislative item that is expected to pass. Attend the hearings and watch the legislative process to identify potential problems and strategies.
5. Include a flag manufacturer in the design process. The design should be workable in various methods of flag-manufacture.
6. Have a professional and polished digital illustration. You want to impress.
7. Make up actual flags. An example of the flag will be more impressive than any illustration.
8. Have the language for a formal proposal drafted up. Use local lawyers or seek help from NAVA members who are lawyers to make sure the proposal is correctly worded. It is better to submit what you would like as a proposal than to see what staffers, who may not understand vexillological details, produce.

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<sup>19</sup> John M. Hartvigsen, “Correcting the Utah State Flag”, *NAVA News*, No. 210, April–June 2011, page 3.

9. Get someone experienced to act as the lobbyist and legislative coordinator. This may be the single most important thing. Someone is needed who knows the system and has appropriate contacts in the legislative and executive departments.
10. Involve school children as early and as often as possible. Have the proposal come from school children as a class or school project. Legislators are eager to draw students into the legislative process and allow them to see the legislature in action. Utah schools have a history of proposing successful legislation relating to “state symbols.” Elementary school students got an outdated state song re-designated as the Utah State Hymn to make room for a new Utah State Song preferred by the students. Who else could get a resolution approved to designate Jell-O as the Utah State Snack? However, since Jell-O was designated in a resolution and not a bill, it is not included in the Utah Code. However, the Dutch oven was included in a bill proposed by public school students and is now part of the Utah Code’s list of Utah symbols.
11. Perhaps a current state flag in some state could be re-designated as the state banner to make room for a new state flag.
12. Obtain strong and experienced legislative sponsors. Find out what aspects are important to them. For example, Rep. Fisher wanted to involve school students from her neighborhood and district. As a former PTA president, she had a particular school she especially wanted to make a part of the effort.
13. Obtain support from State Executive Officers. Make the Governor and his staff part of the process. Invite their participation in ceremonies and press events.
14. Be flexible. Plans will change and you will not be able to control the changes.
15. Have a media plan and use newspapers, television and radio to raise awareness.
16. Plan events and tie into anniversaries or current events to gain media attention. Emphasize the dramatic and use emotion. Include ceremonies and flag raisings. Have actual flags available. Make simple events into big productions.

## About the Author

Call John M. Hartvigsen a flag expert, a flag historian, or a vexillologist. The *Deseret News* called him “Utah’s Resident Flagman”. John has studied flags since he was a small boy. Before he learned to read, John studied the pictures of flags found in his family’s encyclopedia. His childhood interest has grown to obsession.

John has conducted original research focusing on the histories of U.S. and Utah flags and has delivered papers and talks detailing his research. He has written articles about flags for various publications and has an article on Utah’s gigantic statehood flag in the summer 2011 issue of the *Utah Historical Quarterly*. In 1982 and 2010, John received the William Driver Award from the North American Vexillological Association.

John works with the Colonial Flag Foundation in support of Healing Field Flag Display Memorials planned for dozens of locations around the United States this year. He also helped coordinate the Tenth Anniversary Sandy Healing Field Display in September 2011.

John graduated from Brigham Young University with a degree in Political Science. He also earned a secondary teaching certificate and a teaching minor in history at the University of Utah. He served eleven years as an officer in the U.S. Army’s Adjutant General’s Corps. He and his wife Deanna have five children and eleven grandchildren.

