



CLAUSEN FLAG COLLECTION

Most older Hanoverians will remember Wilfred (Will) Clair Clausen (1908-1972) for his Flag Collection which appeared in many programs, displays, articles in the Evening Sun and parades in Hanover. Upon the death of his wife, Harriet Clausen, their daughter, Carolyn Clausen Harrell, gifted the Collection to the Hanover Area Historical Society, PA, on June 14, 1993 (Flag Day).



Will Clausen preparing for a 1971 display of the collection for the Historical Society.

In the mid 1960's, the flag faced some of its most trying challenges. Aroused by both domestic and foreign issues, some Americans denounced, defaced and burned the flag. It was in response to this flag desecrating that Will Clausen conceived and began his positive response in 1965.

He felt if people understood the history behind our flag, there would be fewer who would desecrate a flag, and many others would raise theirs higher. Will felt that if more people could visualize the role that flags have played in our nation's history, there would be no question of their value as a symbol of human dignity and liberty.

This collection of 78 hand-made reproductions of historical American flags offers an opportunity to view American history in an exciting and unique way.

The flags trace the important periods and events in American History:

- The Exploration Period from the time of the Vikings
- The Colonial Period and a carving of the nation from the wilderness
- The Revolutionary War
- The War of 1812
- The Civil War
- The Expansion and Growth of our country to 50 states
- Both World Wars

Reproducing the Flags

Will's goal was to create a display for the Hanover Heritage Days. Hanover Heritage Days began in 1965 to celebrate the bicentennial of the founding of Hanover and continued through the final celebration in May 1966. Between September of 1965 and May of 1966, he researched and reproduced 27 flags at his home at 8 N Penn Street in Hanover, PA. Will was 58 at that time.



To make his flags, he found the earliest book references to that particular flag. He then used an opaque projector at one of the public schools to project the picture on to a large sheet of wallpaper to get an accurate design of the flag and any lettering on it. The pattern that was thus created was then pinned to cotton material and cut out. Kress's Bargain Barn on Pleasant Street in Hanover ordered the materials. Many times materials were ordered from other parts of the country.

It is to be noted that Will used cotton in all his reproductions. However, the original historic flags were made from a variety of materials. Also Will's replicas were not the exact sizes as some of the originals, which are still in existence and which can be viewed in museums around our country.

Will enlisted the talents of two Hanover ladies to do the machine sewing. Mrs. Elizabeth Botterbush (pictured above) of 1 N Penn Street, and later, Mrs. Lily (Ralph) Wherley of 26 George Street, pictured to the right. Some original flags had hand-painted designs and Will's reproductions were also hand-painted by him.



Programs and Honors



This first display was set up around the then Hanover Square and was seen by the Congressman from the 19th District of Pennsylvania, Congressman Neiman Craley. He asked that the 27 flags be displayed in **Statuary Hall in the United States Capitol in Washington, D.C.** for June 14th, 1966, the 50th anniversary of Flag Day (pictured left).

By June of 1967, the collection had grown to 44 flags, and, again, it was displayed in Statuary Hall at the request of then Congressman George Goodling and Speaker of the House, John McCormack. The display remained for several weeks and was viewed by thousands. Will and his displays in the Capitol have been mentioned twice in speeches published in the *Congressional Record* of 1966 and 1967.

Although these two programs achieved national fame, Will Clausen spoke to groups both small and large, including young children, scouts, school groups, senior citizens and civic groups. His flags were displayed in the town square, in schools and in public halls. A few of his reproductions have flown over the Capitol building in Washington, DC, and over Fort McHenry in Baltimore, MD. Twelve were autographed in 1967 by state governors.

His goal of 200 flags for the 1976 Bicentennial was severed by his untimely death from cancer in 1972, just 22 days before his 64th birthday and four years before the Bicentennial celebration for our country. The 78 reproductions provide a colorful and impressive memorial to the Stars and Stripes and to Wilfred Clair Clausen.

After his death, his wife, Harriet, loaned the collection many times to groups, in particular displays at the capitol of Pennsylvania in Harrisburg. His daughter, Carolyn, and her husband carried out his wish to use the flags during the Bicentennial in 1976. In cooperation with Adelphi-Dowling College on Long Island, NY, and several of the public schools on Long Island, the flags were exhibited in programs and displays. After the death of Mrs. Clausen in 1992, the flag collection was donated to the Hanover Area Historical Society (HAHS), which came into being in 1965, having been originated by a small group of individuals with a keen interest in history.

One of the last showings of the collection in its entirety was in July of 2005 during Dutch Days in Wirt Park and the Residences at Hanover Shoe in an event sponsored by the Hanover Area Chamber of Commerce.

Source: Hanover Public School District [website archives](#).

[Jerry Harrell's photos](#) of the 2005 exhibit also includes JoAnne Hentz's photos of the exhibition and Barbara Chronister's photos of the 2005 annual meeting.

[2005 Dutch Days Flag Exhibition Program](#)

(Date unknown) [Self-Guided Tour of the Wilfred C. Clausen Historic Flag Collection Program](#) (with quiz and answers)

The Clausen flag display was handmade by Will Clausen during the 1960's to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Flag Day. His vision was to tell the history of how America was shaped through flags of historical importance. The flag collection is designed to be displayed in a timeline in an historical context. History is a compilation of good and bad events. It is important to tell the whole story and not gloss over negative historical events. The collection was on display at the Pennsylvania State House in 2016 for the 100th anniversary of Flag Day. There was some controversy surrounding one flag in particular. Now, as then, we do not intend to cause offense to anyone by presenting this historical display.*

*[President Woodrow Wilson's Flag Day Proclamation from 1916](#)

[Carolyn Clausen Harrell's "Talk Given to the Hanover Area Historical Society at Annual Dinner, October 13, 1993](#) (handwritten and transcribed versions)

View the Collection!

Many of the descriptions in the pages in the table were written by Carolyn Clausen Harrell in an effort to consolidate the collection. She used sources that were available from her father's original research. The Society has vetted the text portions presented for each flag. (There are a few flags for which we do not have a write-up or photo. They do not show up on the many multiple lists that have been developed over time.)

Clausen Flag #	Name	Year or Era
Exploration & Colonial Period		
C 1	Viking Flag	c. 1000
C 2	Christopher Columbus – Flag of Spain	1492
C 3	Christopher Columbus – Personal Flag	1492
C 4	Cross of St. George – England	1497
C 5	British Union Flag (Union Jack)	1603 (?)
C 6	Dutch East India Company	1609
C 7	Dutch West India Company	1621
C 8	British Red Ensign (“Meteor” Flag)	1707
C 9	Colonial Ensign – New England	1608
Expansion Period & Growth of the Nation		
E 0	Background – The War of 1812 – Hanover’s Involvement	
E 1	Pennsylvania Militia – National Colors	1802
E 2	Pennsylvania Militia	1802
E 3	Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry	1813
E 4	15 Stars & Stripes, 2 nd Congressional Flag, Star Spangled Banner	1794-1818
E 5	20 Star Flag (Flag Act established 13 stripes)	1818
E 6	21 Stars (Illinois added)	1819
E 8	Old Glory	1822-1836
E 10	26 Stars (John C. Fremont)	1842
E 18	34 Stars – Civil War	1861
E 19	35 Stars (West Virginia added)	1863
E 21	36 Stars – Pennsylvania Centennial	1876
E 21 A	37 Star Flag (see E 21)	1867-1877
E 27	48 Stars	1912
E 29	50 Stars	1960
E 29 A	Casket Flag, WW I & II	
Revolutionary War Period		
R 1	Gadsden, First Marine Flag – Commodore Hopkins	1775
R 2	Providence, Rhode Island – Artillery	1775
R 3	First Navy Jack, Continental Navy Jack (Striped Rattlesnake)	1775
R 3 A	Current U.S. Naval Jack	2002
R 4	South Carolina Navy Ensign	1776
R 5	Culpepper, Virginia – Minute Men	1775
R 6	First Battalion, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania	1776
R 7	George Washington’s Commander’s Flag	1777
R 8	George Washington’s Life Guards	1776
R 9	First Troop Philadelphia Cavalry – Philadelphia Light Horse	1775
R 10	Grand Union Flag, First Navy Ensign or Cambridge Flag	1776
R 11	Bunker Hill Flag	1775
R 12	Easton, Pennsylvania Flag	1775
R 13	John Paul Jones	1779
R 14	First Stars & Stripes Flag (Betsy Ross Flag)	1776 (?)
R 15	Third Maryland	1776-1814
R 16	Bennington, Vermont Flag	1776

Clausen Flag #	Name	Year or Era
R 17	Captain Hulbert, Long Island, New York	1776
R 18	Fort Whetstone, Baltimore, MD	1777
R 19	First Navy Flag (attributed to Francis Hopkinson)	1776-1777
R 20	Liberty Flag	1775
R 21	Texel Flag – Serapis, Bonhomme Richard	1777
R 22	Continental Army Flag	1775-1776
R 23	Washington’s Navy Ensign	1776
R 24	Liberty Tree Flag – Massachusetts Sea Service	1776
R 25	Massachusetts Navy Ensign	1776
R 26	Sons of Liberty – Merchant Privateer Ensign, Boston Tea Party	1765
R 27	The Bucks of America (First African-American Company)	1776
R 28	New Jersey	1776
R 29	Connecticut Webb’s Division	1776
R 30	Rhode Island	1776
R 31	Taunton Flag – Liberty Flag	1774
R 32	New England	1776
R 33	Green Mountain Boys, Vermont	1776
R 34	Second New Hampshire Regiment	1776
R 35	Bedford Flag, Massachusetts	1775
R 36	Col. Wm. Washington of Virginia	1776
R 37	Fort Moultrie	1776
R 38	Beaver, New York	1776
R 39	Tallmadge’s Dragoons	1776
R 40	Hanover (Pennsylvania) Associators – Hanover Associations	1774
R 41	Clasped Hands (or Linked Hands)	c. 1776
R 42	Count Pulaski	1778
R 43	France, Fleur de Lys	1500-1764
R 44	First Pennsylvania Rifle Battalion	1775
Civil War Period – Territorial & Confederate		
X 1	The Alamo, Texas	1824
X 2	Republic of Texas	1839
X 3	Kingdom of Hawaii	1898
X 4	California Republic	1845
X 5	Stars and Bars	1861
X 6	Southern Cross – Battle Flag of the Confederacy	1861
X 7	Bonnie Blue Flag – CSA	1861
X 8	Territory of Alaska	1925/26
X 9	Jolly Roger	c. 1812
Miscellaneous		
I 2	Background – The Stars and Stripes	
I 4	Military Units	
	The Battle of Hanover & The Picket	