

"The Flag of Liberty" (lyric sheet)
A song of tribute to the Huntington Liberty Flag
In honor of
The Town of Huntington's
350th Anniversary Celebration

c 2003, JR Fretz

Chorus: Raise the flag of Huntington, the Flag of Liberty.
Fly it high throughout the town, so everyone will see,
That here upon this very ground, people took a stand,
To join the fight for what was right, freedom in our land.

Verse One: They were loyal British subjects, devoted to the Throne,
But the King collected taxes on the land they rightly owned.
So on the British flag, they wrote words of loyalty:
"George the Third" and on the other side was "Liberty."

(Chorus)

Verse Two: In the year of seventeen seventy six, on the twenty-second of July,
They heard the Declaration and the Independence cry.
They cut away the Union Jack and then the King's own name,
So the Flag and life in Huntington would never be the same.

(Chorus)

Verse Three: In August of the same year, the Flag went off to war,
In the Battle of Long Island, the British stormed our shore.
Although the Flag was captured, by the enemy,
It lives in us as we uphold our rights and liberty.

(Chorus)

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Chorus

Handwritten musical notation for the Chorus. The music is written on four staves in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 4/4 time signature. The notes are mostly quarter and eighth notes. Chords are indicated by letters above the staves: F, Bb, C7, F, Bb, C7, F, Bb, F, G7, C, Bb, C7, F. The lyrics are written below the staves.

Raise the flag of Hun-ting-ton the flag of Li-ber-ty.
Fly it high through-out the town, so ever-y one will see. That
Here u-pon this ve-ry ground peo-ple took a stand, To
Join the fight for what was right, free-dom in our land.

Verse One

Handwritten musical notation for Verse One. The music is written on four staves in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 4/4 time signature. The notes are mostly quarter and eighth notes. Chords are indicated by letters above the staves: F, Bb, C, F, C7, F, F, Bb, C, F, C7, F. The lyrics are written below the staves.

They were loy-al Bri-tish sub-jects, de-vo-ted to the throne, But the
King col-lect-ed tax-es on the land they right-ly owned. So,
On the Brit-ish flag, they write words of loy-al-ty:
"George the Third" and on the oth-er side was "Li-ber-ty." (to Chorus)

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Verse Two

Musical notation for Verse Two, featuring four staves of music in G major (one sharp). The melody is written in treble clef. Chords are indicated by letters above the staff: F, Bb, C, F, C7, F, Bb, C, F, C7, F. The lyrics are written below the staves.

In the year of seven-teen seventy six, on the twenty second of Ju-ly, They
heard the De-cla-ra-tion and the in-de-pen-dance cry. They
cut a-way the Union Jack and then the King's own name, So the
flag and life in Hun-ting-ton would ne-ver be the same. oh (to chorus)

Verse Three

Musical notation for Verse Three, featuring four staves of music in G major (one sharp). The melody is written in treble clef. Chords are indicated by letters above the staff: F, Bb, C, F, C7, F, Bb, C, F, C7, F. The lyrics are written below the staves.

In Au-gust of the same year, the flag went off to war, In the
Bat-tle of Long Is-land, the Bri-tish stormed our shore, Al-
though the flag was cap-tured by the en-e-my, It
lives in us as we up-hold our rights and li-ber-ty oh (to Chorus)

Notes on "The Flag of Liberty Song"

This original song tells the historic story of the Huntington Liberty Flag. The complete story of the flag's origin is included on the following page, prepared by the Huntington Historical Society.

Verse one refers to the fact that in colonial Huntington, the people were really loyal British subjects. The Liberty Flag first read "Liberty" on one side and "George III" (the King of England) on the other, representing the colonists' desire to remain British subjects with rights of representation.

Verse two describes what happened on the Village Green on July 22, 1776. The Declaration of Independence did not reach Huntington until this day. The people gathered on the Village Green to hear the Declaration read. They then took down the Liberty Flag, tore off the words "George III" as well as the British "Union Jack" (in the upper left hand corner). Thus, the solid red flag now bore only the word "Liberty" in large white block letters. The story goes on to say that the discarded flag parts were stuffed into an effigy of King George III that was hung on a gallows and burned.

Verse three explains that in early August of the same year, the Suffolk County Militia went off to Brooklyn to fight the British, carrying the Huntington Liberty Flag. The Battle of Long Island began in late August and ended in defeat for the Americans. The Huntington Liberty Flag was captured by the Hessian troops that were helping the British during this battle. The Town attempted unsuccessfully to reclaim the original flag during the bicentennial.

In 1775, the Huntington Liberty Flag was designated as the official flag of the Town of Huntington. A replica of the original flag hangs in Town Hall and on every Huntington Schools' flag pole this spring. May it wave proudly throughout the town as we celebrate our 350th Anniversary!

**Joan R. Fretz
Director of Performing Arts
Huntington Schools**

January 2003

Reading of the Declaration of Independence and Creation of the Huntington Liberty Flag (July 22, 1776) *Village Green, Huntington*

The July 22, 1776 reading of the Declaration of Independence on Huntington's Village Green, and the creation of the Huntington Liberty Flag that occurred later that day, are rightfully celebrated as significant milestones in Huntington's participation in the American Revolution. However, it is important to view this day's events in the larger context of the Town's progressive movement toward revolution.

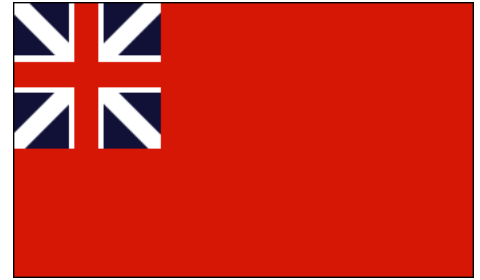
As was typical throughout the American colonies, most Huntingtonian's did not at first wish to end their allegiance to the British King. On June 21, 1774 a general Town meeting was held, presided over by Israel Wood, then President of the Town's Board of Trustees. The resolutions passed at that meeting have come to be known as Huntington's Declaration of Rights. First among these rights was "that every freeman's property is absolutely his own, and no man has a right to take it from him without his consent, expressed either by himself or his representative." Thus the levying of taxes by a Parliament in which the American colonies were not represented was seen as an unjust seizure of property and "a violation of the most essential rights of British subjects." However, despite these grievances, it was equally clear that those adopting this document still thought themselves to be loyal British subjects. Emblematic of this delicate balance between loyalty and liberty, was Huntington's modification of the British Red Ensign that also occurred in 1774. On one side of the ensign, the word "LIBERTY" was added in white block letters, while simultaneously "George III" (the British King) was sewn on the reverse.

However, by July 22, 1776 these delicately balanced feelings had clearly changed for most Town residents. As news of the Declaration of Independence reached Huntington, a hasty notice went out to inhabitants calling for a gathering on the Village Green. A public reading of the Declaration was followed by lowering of the modified British Red Ensign. The British Union Jack in the upper left corner was removed from the flag, as was the name "George III," creating what is now known as the Huntington Liberty Flag – a simple red ensign with the word "LIBERTY" in white letters on one side. The discarded flag elements were then stuffed into an effigy of King George III that was hung on a gallows and burned. All five companies of the Suffolk County Militia, numbering some 300 able-bodied troops, paraded past its officers, Lieutenant Colonel Gilbert Potter and Major Jesse Brush, and the assembled residents. There was little doubt as to the revolutionary intent of the majority of the Town's residents.

Unfortunately, the original Huntington Liberty Flag would have a short life. On the 30th of June, 1776, a British fleet of 130 ships landed an army of 10,000 on Staten Island, commanding New York harbor. By August 1st, the army had grown to 31,000 seasoned troops. The American army of only 28,000, both poorly trained and inadequately equipped, had prepared defensive positions in Brooklyn, Manhattan, and the nearby Jersey shore. In early August the Suffolk County Militia, carrying the Huntington Liberty Flag, mustered on the Village Green, drew an issue of gunpowder from the Arsenal (Job Sammis House) at its southern end, and marched to Brooklyn to augment the Continental Army. Early on the morning of August 22nd, 15,000 British and Hessian soliders and 40 pieces of artillery were landed on Long Island. The Battle of Long Island was fought from the 22nd to the 29th of August, 1776, resulting in a defeat for the Americans who effected a miraculous escape across the East River to Manhattan. During the battle, Hessian troops managed to capture the Huntington Liberty Flag. On September 1, 1776 British troops occupied Huntington, where they would remain until March 1783. In 1975, almost 200 years after it was created, the Huntington Liberty Flag was designated as the official flag of the Town of Huntington.

Portions excerpted from an essay by Reginald Metcalf, Sr.

*For more information contact the
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The British Red Ensign



Huntington's modified British Red Ensign (1774)



Modified British Red Ensign (reverse) (1774)



The Huntington Liberty Flag (1776)