

THIRTEEN STAR FLAG MIGHT BE AUTHENTIC

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A tattered, decrepit, moldy thirteen star flag hangs on display in the rural schoolhouse historical museum in Pine City.

The flag was discovered in 1968 neatly folded and tucked away in the back of the old safe located in the Royalton town hall.

"The question of whether that flag was authentic or a replica has always remained a mystery," Arnold Pangerl, Royalton town clerk said.

The Pine City Pioneer ran an article on the flag in January, 1968 in the hope that someone might be able to shed some light on its origin.

Twelve years later, Pangerl came up with another piece to the puzzle.

"Carl Meier told me he thought it belonged to old Joe Davis, a civil war veteran who was one of the first residents living on the Brunswick road," Pangerl said.

When Meier was contacted regarding verification of the story he said,

"I was a good friend of Harry Davis, Joe's son."

According to Pangerl and Meier, when a veteran of the Civil war was mustered out he was given 40 acres of land and a team of horses by the federal government.

Harry Davis served as Royalton town clerk and kept the safe containing the town records in his home.

"I used to go to the Davis home to get paid a bounty for wolves I had shot," Meier said. "I remembered Harry telling me about the flag his dad brought back from the Civil War."

Relatives of Davis were contacted but none of them

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could add to Meier's story.

Albrecht Erhart, Royalton township farmer initiated the original discovery of the flag.

Erhart remembered seeing a flag with 13 stars hanging over the town hall when he was a boy. Accused by his friends of having pipe dreams, Erhart was determined to prove the flag was not a figment of his imagination.

Although people ordinarily think of the stars being arranged in a circle formation on a 13 star flag, research reveals this was not always the case at the end of the 18th century.

It was not until almost a year after the Declaration of Independence that the Continental Congress adopted an official design for the national flag that is still used today.

A close examination of the flag reveals neat and solid stitching all done by hand. This indicates that the flag was carefully constructed by someone who took pride in their work.

Whatever the flag's origin, the frayed trailing edges and faded condition confirm the fact that it served its country well, proudly waving the colors in all kinds of weather.

Joe and Harry Davis are probably the only ones who could tell the exact story and they took it with them to their graves.

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