



Introducing the Green Mountain Boys Flag

The flag of the Green Mountain Boys began as a regimental flag used by the Green Mountain Boys. A remnant of a Green Mountain Boys flag is owned by the Bennington Museum. It still exists as one of the few regimental flags from the American Revolution.

Today the flag is used as the regimental flag of the Vermont National Guard unit. The regimental flag, known also as a “battle flag” or war flag, accompanies the unit on battle assignments. The flag has a green field, an azure canton, and a constellation of thirteen five-pointed white stars arranged in a natural pattern.

The Green Mountain Boys were a militia organization first established in the late 1760s in the territory between the British provinces of New York and New Hampshire, known as the New Hampshire Grants (which later became the state of Vermont) headed by Ethan Allen and members of his extended family.

Some companies served in the American Revolutionary War, including notably when the Green Mountain Boys led by Ethan Allen captured Fort Ticonderoga on Lake Champlain on May 10, 1775. In early June of 1775, Ethan Allen and his then subordinate, Seth Warner, induced the Continental Congress at Philadelphia to create a Continental Army ranger regiment from the then New Hampshire Grants with financial support from the New York revolutionary Congress.

The Green Mountain Boys disbanded more than a year before Vermont declared its independence in 1777 from Great Britain “as a separate, free and independent jurisdiction or state”. The Vermont Republic operated for 14 years, before being admitted in 1791 to the United States as the 14th state.

The remnants of the Green Mountain Boys militia



were largely reconstituted as the Green Mountain Continental Rangers. Command of the newly formed regiment passed from Allen to Seth Warner. Under Warner the regiment fought at the battles of Hubbardton and Bennington in 1777.

The Green Mountain Boys mustered again during the War of 1812, the Civil War, and the Spanish–American War. Today it is the informal name of the Vermont National Guard, which comprises both the Army and Air National Guards.

The Vermont Republic: The term Vermont Republic has been used for the government of Vermont that existed from 1777 to 1791. In January 1777, delegates from 28 towns met and declared independence from jurisdictions and land claims of both the British colony of Quebec and the American states of New Hampshire and New York. The people of Vermont took part in the American Revolution, although the Continental Congress did not recognize the

jurisdiction. Because of vehement objections from New York, which had conflicting property claims, the Continental Congress declined to recognize Vermont, then called the New Hampshire Grants.

Vermont did not send or receive diplomats, but it coined a currency called Vermont coppers (1785–1788) and operated a postal system. While the Vermont coppers bore the legend *Vermontis Res Publica* (Latin for “republic” or “state”), the constitution and other official documents used the term “State of Vermont”. The 1777 constitution refers to Vermont both as “the State of Vermont” and, in the preamble’s last paragraph, the constitution refers to itself as “the Constitution of the Commonwealth”.

The Vermont Republic was called the “reluctant republic” because many early citizens favored political union with the United States rather than independence. While the Continental Congress did not allow a seat for Vermont, William Samuel Johnson, representing Connecticut, was engaged by Vermont to promote its interests. The members of the Convention of 1787 assumed that Vermont was not yet separate from New York; however, Madison’s notes on the Federal Convention of 1787 make clear that there was an agreement by New York to allow for the admission of Vermont to the union; it was just a question of process.

Founding: Following controversy between the holders of the New York grants and the New Hampshire grants, on January 15, 1777, a convention of representatives from towns in the territory declared the region independent, choosing the name the Republic of New Connecticut also known colloquially as the Republic of the Green Mountains. On June 2 of that year, the name of the fledgling nation was officially changed to “Vermont” (French, meaning the Green Mountains).

Constitution and Frame of Government: The Constitution of Vermont was drafted and ratified at Elijah West’s Windsor Tavern in 1777, and was the first written constitution for an independent state in North America. The settlers in Vermont,

who sought independence from New York, justified their constitution on the same basis as the first state constitutions of the former colonies - authority is derived from the people

During the time of the Vermont Republic, the government issued its own coinage and currency, and operated a postal service. The governor of Vermont, Thomas Chittenden, with consent of his council and the General Assembly, appointed commissioners to the American government seated in Philadelphia.

Symbolism of Fourteen: Much of the symbolism associated with Vermont in this period expressed a desire for political union with the United States. Vermont’s coins minted in 1785 and 1786 bore the Latin inscription “STELLA QUARTA DECIMA” (meaning “the fourteenth star”). The Great Seal of Vermont features a 14-branched pine tree.

Union: On March 6, 1790, the legislature of New York consented to the admission to the Union of the state of Vermont provided a group of commissioners representing New York and a similar group representing Vermont could agree on a settlement of numerous conflicting claims to real estate.

On October 7 the Vermont General Assembly authorized a convention to consider an application for admittance to the “Union of the United States of America”. On January 10, 1791 the convention approved a resolution to make an application to join the United States by a vote of 105 to 2. Vermont was admitted to the on March 4, 1791. Thomas Chittenden served as governor for Vermont for most of this period, and became its first governor as a member-state in the United States.

Vermont’s admission act is the shortest of all state admissions, and Vermont is the only state admitted without conditions of any kind, either those prescribed by the congress or the state from which it was carved. March 4 is celebrated in Vermont as Vermont Day. The 1793 Vermont state constitution remains in force with several amendments.