

COWPENS BANNER AND ITS HISTORY

Dispute As To Which Is The Authentic Banner Seems To Have Been Settled To The Sat- isfaction Of Most Persons.

IN view of the John Eager Howard Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution making a replica of the famous "Old Glory" flag for the 1914 "Star-Spangled Banner" Centennial Celebration, the interesting discussion is recalled regarding the authenticity of the original, which arose at the time it was presented to the State of Maryland.

Through the courtesy of Mr. Francis B. Culver, a prominent member of the Maryland Historical Society, the Sons of the American Revolution and the "Star-Spangled Banner" Exposition Committee, THE SUN presents a picture of the flag and the facts concerning its history.

And several errors in regard to its history that the Society of the War of 1812, which presented the flag, tried at the time to clear up, seem still to obtain.

The renowned old banner, which is now being preserved in the State House at Annapolis, is the one which, it is said, William Batchelor, a soldier of the Revolution, carried in the battle of Cowpens.

Error No. 1 consists in the date which is usually given for this battle—1778, whereas according to the investigation conducted, as a result of the controversy, by an authority, Mr. J. Appleton, it was found that the battle was not actually fought in 1778, but some three years later—January 17, 1781.

Furthermore, it was stated that William Batchelor died on March 28, 1781. Of this fact Mr. Appleton could find no proof, and it was also claimed that William Batchelor, his son, was a member of the Twenty-seventh Regiment at the battle of North Point. This, according to the same authority, is absolutely untrue, since William, the son, was a member of the Fifty-first Regiment.

Second Flag Appears.

At the time that this discussion was

one and only true Cowpens flag.

In addition to his claim, Mr. William N. Batchelor said that in 1889 he presented to the Maryland Historical Society a flag carried by the old Defenders' Association which had been presented to them in 1861, and that this was probably the flag which had been given to the State as the Cowpens flag.

To quote Mr. Appleton on this subject:

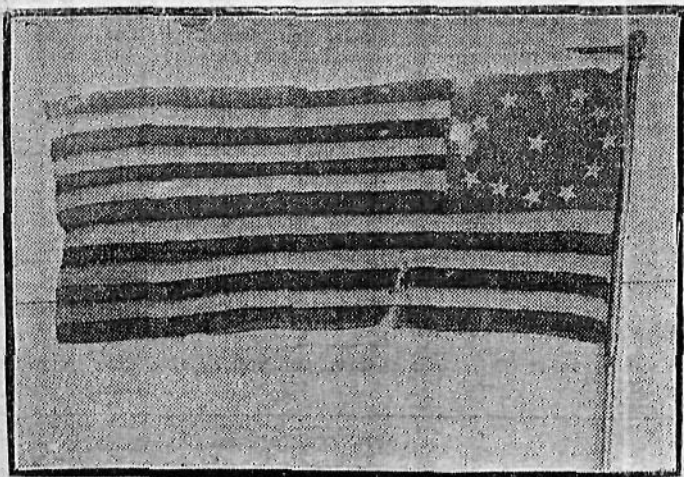
"The flag given to the Maryland Historical Society by W. N. Batchelor is still in their possession. He is quoted as saying that his grandfather was born in the barracks at Fort Mifflin, and was a drummer boy in 1812. At this date, however, he was actually a man 21 year old.

"He further states that at the battle of North Point, the ensign of the company in which his grandfather was a private was killed, and as he fell William Batchelor grasped the flag and continued to bear it, until the end of the battle, and that for this act of bravery it was presented to him. Mr. W. N. Batchelor has told me that he had this story from the lips of his grandfather. As a matter of fact, Ensign Kirby was reported as having been wounded and not killed.

Flag Has Too Many Stars.

"There is a flag in the Historical Society of silk, 3 feet 10 inches on the staff and 6 feet long. It has silk fringe cord and tassels and a brass spearhead on end of staff. It is in pretty good condition, but, strange to say, has 41 stars of gilt. There is also a flag belt of leather, with the name 'William Batchelor' marked on the inside.

"The donation book says that William



The Cowpens' battle flag.

being bandied back and forth, Mr. William N. Batchelor, 1101 South Curley street, in Baltimore, rose up and in a newspaper article discredited the gift. He and he alone, he claimed, was the possessor of the flag carried by William Batchelor, his grandfather, in the battle of North Point. All other banners claiming to be the Cowpens flag were spurious ones, said he.

Mr. Appleton immediately took up the cudgels in defense of the gift presented by the Society of the War of 1812, and a committee was appointed to help him in the work of vindicating the authenticity of this flag. He emerged from the investigation triumphant, secure in the conviction that the flag at Annapolis was the

N. Batchelor presented this flag on September 20, 1889, as 'the colors of the Old Defenders' Association of Baltimore.'

"If this flag is as old as 1861 it should have only 34 stars. Forty-one stars would place it as late as the year in which it was given. Mr. Batchelor says that this flag was carried for years by his grandfather and, when he was too feeble to carry it, the flag was displayed from the window of his house on September 12 as long as he lived."

This, however, was not, in the opinion of Mr. Appleton, the Cowpens flag, and in his voluminous and comprehensive report he proved to the satisfaction of everyone concerned the authenticity of the flag at Annapolis.