

A John Shaw Flag for the Maryland State House

In 1983, the Maryland Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution worked with the Maryland State Archives to re-create the John Shaw flag for the celebrations of the bicentennial of George Washington's resignation as commander-in-chief and the ratification of the Treaty of Paris. The original flag had been made by Annapolis cabinet-maker, John Shaw, to fly over the State House while Congress met in the Old Senate Chamber. As America's first peacetime capital, the State House holds a special place in our nation's history and the John Shaw flag is an important symbol of that time.

The Archives had John Shaw's original receipts and, from these records, a design was created for the flag which was known to have flown over the State House in 1783/84 for the Continental Congress.



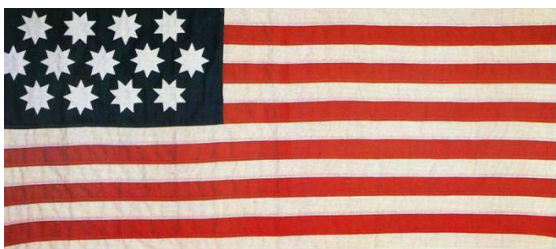
Historically accurate John Shaw flag

Shortly after the bicentennial celebrations were concluded, an image of Annapolis in 1794 was discovered at the Hammond Harwood House. The watercolor, by Cotton Milbourne, showed St. Anne's Church and the Maryland Inn with the State House in the background. Clearly visible on the flagpole of the State House was the John Shaw flag - with a different configuration than the one that had recently been designed and made.



Detail from Cotton Milbourne image of Annapolis in 1794

An Annapolis resident with a keen interest in historic flags, retired Reverend Richardson Libby, worked with Archives' staff on re-creating a new, historically accurate John Shaw flag. This flag now hangs in the dome of the State House.



The "old" John Shaw Flag of 1983/84 bicentennial celebrations

The Archives unveiled the "new," historically accurate John Shaw flag in the State House on Flag Day, June 14, 2009 at an old-fashioned Flag Day ceremony, followed by a concert of colonial patriotic songs.