
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY



THE ALASKA FLAG



EXCERPT FROM TERRITORY OF ALASKA SESSION LAWS, 1927

(P. 58, ch. 30; H. B. 91)

An act providing for the adoption of the winning design of the Flag Contest held by the American Legion, Department of Alaska, in the public, private, and native schools of this Territory as the official flag of Alaska.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the Territory of Alaska:

OFFICIAL FLAG FOR ALASKA ADOPTED

SECTION 1. That the winning design of the Flag Contest held in 1927 by the American Legion, Department of Alaska, in the public, private, and native schools of the Territory, be and the same is hereby adopted as the official flag of Alaska.

DESIGN

SECTION 2. That the design of the official flag is eight gold stars in a field of blue, so selected for its simplicity, its originality and its symbolism. The blue, one of our national colors, typifies the evening sky, the blue of the sea and of mountain lakes, and of wild flowers that grow in Alaskan soil, the gold being significant of the wealth that lies hidden in Alaska's hills and streams.

The stars, seven of which form the constellation Ursa Major, the Great Bear, the most conspicuous constellation in the Northern sky, contains the stars which form the "Dipper," including the "Pointers" which point toward the eighth star in the flag, Polaris, the North Star, the ever constant star for the mariner, the explorer, hunter, trapper, prospector, woodsman, and the surveyor. For Alaska the northernmost star in the galaxy of stars and which at some future time will take its place as the Forty-ninth star in our National Emblem.

SECTION 3. That the Governor shall cause the original design to be properly encased and placed in the Alaska Historical Museum and that due credit be given to Benny Benson, aged thirteen years, a student in the seventh grade of the Mission Territorial School, near Seward, Alaska, the designer of the flag herein described and adopted as the official flag of Alaska.

Approved May 2, 1927.



STORY OF THE CHIEF'S DAUGHTER

The characters on the totem are as follows:

1. The figure at the top of the totem is a daughter of the Indian chief, the third figure.
2. The second figure represents a fish known to the Indians as a bull head. In this story the fish represents the creatures of the world in which life exists.
3. The Indian chief, father of the daughter. The hat he is wearing is one which the chiefs wore when they were in great trouble.
4. The figure at the bottom is to represent a whale killer. In this story the whale killer acted as a messenger for the chief to find his daughter.

It was a custom in the old days for every tribe to have a chief. This chief gave advice and counsel to old and young. One of the things the people taught their children was never to tease or make fun of any of the living creatures. Of course, the children were told that something awful might happen to them if they did treat cruelly these innocent creatures.

The chief had one child, a daughter who had heard all of the things that might happen to a person for doing wrong things but she was not satisfied with what she heard. She wanted to prove these statements.

One day she went down to the beach, found a bull head and began to make fun of it by calling it names and trying to make it eat a stick.

The next day she went down to the beach again. While down there she met a man who told her to come with him. This man had power to change himself into a bull head fish and to do the same to the girl. Here he changed himself into a bull head and showed the girl how pretty he was and took her to his home out in the sea. The girl rode on the back of the bull head to his home.

For two days the chief hunted for his daughter and finally gave her up as dead. He then put on a coat of the finest of feathers which was used by the chief to signify that he was going out to die. As he walked along the beach in mourning he noticed some whale killers near in the water. He called to one to help him find his daughter. The whale killer came near the chief and told him to get on his back. It was not long before the whale killer arrived at the home of the bull head where they found the chief's daughter. His daughter had been turned into a bull head. It was too late for him to get his daughter. She had such beautiful designs that the chief decided to go home at once and make a bull head blanket for his wife in memory of his daughter.

STORY OF THE RAVEN

Characters which make up the totem pole beginning at the top:

1. The Raven is the good spirit. He is thought to have been the creator of the world, the maker of the creeks, trees, and all living things. Some of the very old Indians looked on the raven as a god.
2. Just beneath the raven is the daughter of the spirit of the creek. The daughter is a servant of the spirit of the creek at the bottom of the pole.
3. The bird below the daughter represents the creek watchman and is a servant of the spirit of the creek. This bird is a friend of man and the salmon. It warns the spirit of the creek of oncoming danger to the salmon from wild animals and frogs. In order to protect the salmon at spawning time it will fly over the water and cause it to rain. This raises the waters in the creeks and drives the bears and all other fish-eating animals away from the spawning grounds and thus protects the fish.
4. The fourth figure represents the spirit of the creek, spoken of above, and is also the father of the daughter. He has the spirit of the salmon in his ears. He is the ruler of the salmon and the creeks.
5. The frog in the mouth of the spirit of the creek; is an enemy of the fish, and, as you see, is being destroyed by the spirit of the creek. The frog is thought to lay a film of poison fluid over the eggs of the salmon, which destroys the eggs.

This story is an old legend supposed to have happened in or near the vicinity of Hydaburg, Alaska.

A raven one day was flying over this part of the country and came to a creek. As he flew near the water he thought he heard the laughter of children. Instead of children it was the splashing of the fish in the water. This to the Indians means that the fish are happy and are laughing.

The raven was getting hungry and wanted something to eat. He wanted a salmon but could not get it. Finally he decided to fly toward the source of the creek. It was not long before he came to a lady, the daughter of the spirit of the creek, who had risen from the water. On her hair, which had the appearance of water lilies, were hanging several fish. When the raven saw how beautiful this daughter of the creek was he asked her to marry him. This would give him a chance to get all the fish he wanted to eat with very little effort on his part. The daughter of the creek told the raven that he was too black to be her husband.

The raven was puzzled. After a bit he thought of a beautiful butterfly whom he knew to be a wonderful artist. He thought to himself, "I will hire this butterfly to paint my breast and face with beautiful designs and then ask the daughter of the creek to marry me." The raven at once told the daughter of the creek that he would be back to see her the next morning.

The raven then went to the butterfly and asked it to paint his breast and face with beautiful designs. This the butterfly did and the raven went joyously on his way to meet the daughter of the creek.

When the raven arrived the next morning at the place where he promised to meet the lady, the raven looked so much prettier that she decided to marry him at once. After they were married they went down at the mouth of the creek and there they decided to build a fish smokehouse.

After the house was finished the raven would go down into the water and sockeye salmon were thrown out on the dry land. They got more than they needed. In cutting the salmon to clean them they used clam shells for knives.

It was not long before they had the house full of fish to dry. As the raven went back and forth in the house he would occasionally touch his head against the fish hanging overhead. This made the raven very angry and he began swearing. When the daughter of the creek heard the raven swear she felt very bad about it and decided to teach the raven a lesson. She at once went down into the water and all of the fish that they had put into the fish house became alive and went back into the water. The only thing the raven had to eat was some fish eggs that he had buried.

Not long after that the little birds, servants of her father, came to her and took her back where she was when the raven met her in the creek.