



Nathaniel Ames

This flag's unusual hand-written inscription is thought to have been made by Nathaniel Ames (1761-1863), born in Killingly, Connecticut. He joined the New London County Militia at the outbreak of the Revolutionary War and, as a 17-year-old, helped in the building of Fort Griswold in Groton, Connecticut. He later joined the Connecticut Continental Army and served under Washington at Morristown during the harsh winter of 1780. Ames went on to join the crew of a 16-gun brig and privateer, Marquise de Lafayette, and traveled to Holland and the West Indies, returning home in mid 1783. At the end of that year, Ames signed onto another merchant ship sailing to Bermuda—this time under an English captain. On the voyage home, the ship was captured and taken to Bermuda where the crew was thrown in prison for three months. It is during this captivity that Ames most likely signed and dated the flag. It is also possible that he was impressed (forced to serve) onto a British ship for three more years at sea.

The flag itself is a wonderful revelation of science, history and geography. The red dye has been identified as cochineal, and the blue dye as "Prussian" blue—both in common use in England and North America by the end of the 18th-century. The inscription ink was identified as thin Oriental smoke-black ink in a gelatin binder, probably mixed with sea water—also appropriate for the late 18th-century. An analysis of the fiber and dye content of the flag's materials and ink inscription on the hoist has been completed and accompanies this lot.

Ames eventually became a farmer and Methodist minister in Oneida County, New York until the age of 75 when he then moved to a farm in Wisconsin. This flag is accompanied by photocopies of Ames's pension records from the National Archives; correspondence relating to his years of military service; a number of accounts of his life, along with photographs and transcribed interviews with Ames from December 11, 1832 and June 28, 1833, recounting his Revolutionary War service. Also included is a photocopy of "A Sketch of the Life of Nathaniel Ames as Dictated by him, the R.P. Main, Oregon, Wis.," and an article from *The Saturday Globe*, March 5, 1898. Nathaniel Ames died in Oregon, Wisconsin at the age of 102, making him the last serving revolutionary war soldier.

From the hands of a Revolutionary War patriot and naval adventurer, to the possession of a Delaware County weaver and draper, to its years of "imprisonment" in a family's trunk, this unique emblem of the United States is now poised to begin a new chapter in its long and rather circuitous route through Freeman's to a new home.

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Rare thirteen star American Revolutionary Flag

Hoist inscribed, "natt. ames. of england, march. 26 1784",
Comprised of blue wool canton with thirteen 5-pointed cotton stars in a 4-5-4 pattern applied on both sides, thirteen white and red wool stripes, cotton hoist, all hand-sewn with linen thread.
21 1/2 in. x 38 3/4 in.

NOTE:

An analysis of the fiber and dye content of the flag materials and ink inscription on the hoist has been completed and accompanies this lot. The red dye has been identified as cochineal and the blue dye as Prussian blue, both in common use in England and North America by the end of the 18th century. The inscription ink was identified as thin Oriental smoke black ink in a gelatin binder, probably mixed with sea water—also appropriate for the late 18th century.

\$175,000-\$250,000

