

USA. 1. The Nation. Comments to slides

Comment to slide 4

The name “Old Glory” was first applied to the U.S. flag by a young sea captain who lived in Salem, Mass. On his twenty-first birthday, March 17, 1824, Capt. William Driver was presented a beautiful flag by his mother and a group of Salem girls. Driver was delighted with the gift. He exclaimed, “I name her “Old Glory.” Then Old Glory accompanied the captain on his many voyages.

Comment to slide 7

Betsy Ross was a seamstress who, according to legend, fashioned the first flag of the United States. Her husband was killed in 1776 while serving in the militia, and Ross took over the upholstering business he had founded. According to her grandson, William Canby, in a paper presented before the Historical Society of Pennsylvania in 1870, Ross was visited in June 1776 by George Washington, Robert Morris, and George Ross, her late husband’s uncle. The story is that they asked her to make a flag for the new nation that would declare its independence the following month. A rough sketch presented to her was redrawn by Washington incorporating her suggestions. Betsy Ross then fashioned the flag in her back parlor – again, according to the legend. It is known that Ross made flags for the navy of Pennsylvania, but there is no firm evidence in support of the popular story about the national flag. There is, however, no conflicting testimony or evidence, either, and the story is now indelibly a part of American legend.

Comment to slides 8&16

“Star-Spangled Banner” is also the U.S. national anthem. It was written in 1814 by Francis Scott Key, an American lawyer, as he watched British ships trying without success to capture Fort McHenry in Maryland during the War of 1812 between Britain and the U.S. (One of the main causes was the British action of forcing American sailors to serve on British ships). He wrote the words and added the music of an old British song.

Comment to slide 11

Symbolically, the seal reflects the beliefs and values that the Founding Fathers attached to the new nation and wished to pass on to their descendants. The shield, or escutcheon, is “born on the breast of an American Eagle” without any other supporters to denote that the United States of America ought to rely on their own Virtue. The number 13, denoting the 13 original States, is represented in the bundle of arrows, the stripes of the shield, and the stars of the constellation. The olive branch and the arrows “denote the power of peace & war.” The constellation of stars symbolizes a new nation taking its place among other sovereign states. The motto *E Pluribus Unum*, emblazoned across the scroll and clenched in the eagle’s beak, expresses the union of the 13 States. The reverse, sometimes referred to as the spiritual side of the seal, contains the 13-step pyramid with the year 1776 in Roman numerals on the base. At the summit of the pyramid is the Eye of Providence in a triangle surrounded by a Glory (rays of light) and above it appears the motto *Annuit Coeptis* (approved of (our) undertakings). Along the lower circumference of the design appear the words *Novus Ordo Seclorum* (a new order of the ages), heralding the beginning of the new American era in 1776.

Comment to slide 14

Both sides of the Great Seal also appear on the reverse of a one-dollar bill.

Comment to slide 15

While the eagle has been officially recognized as America's national bird, there have been dissenters who feel the bird was the wrong choice. In January of 1784 elder statesman Benjamin Franklin registered his own disapproval of the eagle as our National bird when he stated:

"The bald eagle...is a bird of bad moral character; like those among men who live by sharpening and robbing, he is generally poor, and often very lousy... The turkey is a much more respectable bird and withal a true original native of America."

Comment to slide 17

Uncle Sam is the imaginary person who represents the U.S. and its government. He became an official symbol in 1961. Uncle Sam has a white beard and wears red, white and blue clothes, with stars on his tall hat. During both world wars, a picture of Uncle Sam appeared on posters telling young men that they should join the armed forces.

Comment to slide 18

The Liberty Bell has these words from the Bible on it: "Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof."

Comment to slide 27

The place was chosen by George Washington in 1790, and since 1800 the main departments of the U.S. government have been there.

Comment to slide 28

The Big Apple is a popular name for New York City. The name was first used by jazz musicians to mean the "big time", or success.

Gotham is a popular name for New York City. The name "Gotham" was first attached to New York City in 1807 in "Salmagundi" satirical periodical by American writer Washington Irving who created it in the 19th century. Salmagundi lampooned New York culture and politics. The name "Gotham" comes from the name of an English village whose inhabitants were known to be very stupid ("Wise men of Gotham" – in this English legend, wise fools, villagers of Gotham, Nottinghamshire, Eng. The story is that, threatened by a visit from King John (reigned 1199–1216), they decided to feign stupidity and avoid the expense entailed by the residence of the court. Royal messengers found them engaged in ridiculous tasks, such as trying to drown an eel and joining hands around a thornbush to shut in a cuckoo. Hence, the king determined to stay elsewhere).

New Yorkers speak in a very direct way which can seem rude to people from other parts of the U.S. Some have little patience with visitors who are not used to the fast pace of the city. But for many visitors, meeting real, rude New Yorkers is part of the attraction of going to the city.

Comments to slide 30

Hollywood Bowl is a modern amphitheatre used primarily for music performances. Beverly Hills represents one of the most expensive housing markets in the U.S.A.

Comment to slide 31

Poet Carl Sandburg hailed Chicago as the “city of the big shoulders” (*широкочечий город*), cunning and cruel, yet creative and strangely attractive because of a lot of workers living in the city at that time. It was the “toddling’ town” of the 1920s tune, and Frank Sinatra famously proclaimed it “my kind of town.” New York writer A.J. Liebling belittled its provinciality in a stinging series of magazine articles, collected in the 1952 book *Chicago: The Second City*. Chicagoans eventually forgot the book, but the adopted epithet stuck. Under the regime of the late mayor Richard J. Daley, efficient municipal services made it the “city that works.” Chicagoans still like to refer to it as the “city of neighbourhoods,” even though that description can carry connotations of segregation by race, ethnicity, and social class.

The Sears Tower is the fifth-tallest building in the world after Burj Dubai (818 m, United Arab Emirates), Guangzhou TV & Sightseeing Tower (610 m, China), CN Tower (553 m, Canada) and Ostankino Tower (540.1 m, Russia). It has 110 floors. It was engineered by Fazlur R. Khan.

Comment to slide 32

Statue of Liberty was designed by Frederic Auguste Bartoldie and given to the U.S. people by France in 1884.

Comment to slide 38

The heads carved in the rock are each about 18 metres high and were designed and carved by Gutzon Borglum between 1867 and 1941.

Comment to slide 44

Native Americans were ousted to regions where no white man would like to live. Indian reservations mostly occupy the mountainous and desert territories in the western part of the country.