

This Day in History... September 8, 1892

Pledge of Allegiance First Published

On September 8, 1892, Francis Bellamy's Pledge of Allegiance was published in *The Youth's Companion* magazine to promote patriotism among children.

Francis Bellamy was raised in Rome, New York, where his father, David, was the pastor of the First Baptist Church. In 1885, Bellamy accepted a position with the Dearborn Street Church in Boston. While in Boston, Bellamy was part of a national committee that formed to foster patriotism in schools in conjunction with the 400th anniversary of Columbus' discovery of America. James Upham of *The Youth's Companion* magazine also saw the event as an opportunity to realize his goal – of placing flags in every school in America.



Issued in Francis Bellamy's hometown of Rome, New York, which is less than 20 miles from Mystic's home in Camden.



*Pledge Stamp
perforated 11 x 10*

Bellamy was tasked with writing a brief salute to be recited as the flag was raised. Though the result was just 23 words, Bellamy labored over every one of them, ensuring the final pledge would be both concise and meaningful. He penned the pledge on September 7, and it was published the following day:

“I pledge allegiance to my Flag and to the Republic for which it stands; one Nation indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for all.”

A month later, the pledge was recited for the first time by over 12 million school children on Columbus Day. The pledge soon became a daily exercise at most American schools, and in the decades that followed, it became commonplace in meetings and events throughout the country. The Pledge of Allegiance was officially adopted as America's national pledge on December 28, 1945.

Though its ideals are still the same, the wording has changed over the years. In 1923, the phrase “the flag of the United States of America” replaced “my Flag,” to distinguish it from the flags of other nations. The words “under God” were added in 1954, but have come under attack as the battle over the separation of church and state continues.



This “Red Pledge” was issued unannounced in 1993 and initially went unnoticed by collectors.

Perhaps the most unusual change came not in the wording, however, but in the salute that Bellamy devised to be used during the pledge. In 1942, this straight-arm salute was dropped when the Nazi Party in Germany began using it, and changed to placing a hand over the heart. The pledge, as it has remained since 1954, is “I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands: one Nation under God, indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for all.”

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