

Betsy Ross & the American Flagⁱ

Betsy Ross is thought to have sewn the first American flag. Born the 8th of 17 children to a Quaker¹ family, Betsy learned to read, write, and sew² at an early age. While working at her job as an upholstering³ apprentice, Betsy fell in love with John Ross, another apprentice. Because Betsy was a Quaker and John was an Episcopal, Betsy's family disapproved of the marriage and the Quaker church disowned⁴ the couple. Interestingly, the couple was married by William Franklin, the son of Benjamin Franklin.



In 1775, two years after the marriage, the Ross' started their own upholstery business. With the start of the Revolutionary War, John joined the Pennsylvania Militia and was killed in 1776 by a gunpowder explosion. Betsy took over the business. According to legend (which has been proven to be not entirely true), Betsy received a visit from George Washington (whom Betsy attended church with), Robert Morris, and George Ross who presented her with a sketched image of a flag with six pointed stars. Betsy suggested five pointed stars and sewed it in her back parlor. Her flag first flew with the reading of the Declaration of Independence at Independence Hall on July 8, 1776.

1. Select the correct answer based on the text (6 points).

A. Betsy Ross had 17 kids.

True

False

B. Betsy learnt to sew when she was an old woman.

True

False

¹ **Quaker:** a Christian Cmmunity

² **Sew:** use a needle to join pieces of cloth

³ **Upholstering:** working with furniture

⁴ **Disown:** repudiate

C. Betsy's family disapproved Betsy and John Ross' marriage because:

- They did not belong to the same religion
- They were in a fight
- They did not have enough money to keep a family
- They were enemies

D. Who married Betsy and John Ross?

- George Washington
- Benjamin Franklin
- William Franklin
- Robert Morris

E. John Ross died in

- A gunpowder explosion
- The revolutionary war
- A hospital because of an illness
- Mourning after his wife died

F. The flag sewn by Betsy Ross was flown on:

- July 4th, 1776
- July 2nd, 1778
- July 10th, 1776
- July 8th, 1778

2. Complete the sentences with one of the words given in the text (2points).

- a. After John Ross' death, Betsy took control of the upholstery
- b. It is said that Betsy proposed five stars instead of six as it was by George Ross.

ⁱTaken from <https://mrnussbaum.com/betsy-ross-biography>