

Textile Preservation Associates, Inc.

P.O. BOX 606 • SHARPSBURG, MARYLAND 21782 • PHONE (301) 432-4160

ANALYSIS REPORT

Date: August 5, 1993

TPA#: 424

Object:

Client:

Phone:

DESCRIPTION Terminology used is taken from Madaus and Needham 1976.¹

Size: Leading edge: 49" Fly: 104"

The flag is constructed in the pattern of a Confederate First National color with thirteen stars applied to each side of the canton forming a 23" diameter circle. The blue canton is constructed of wool/cotton fabric while the red and white bars are cotton. The bottom bar has been pieced. The fly end is hemmed and the leading edge is missing so there is no information as to method of attachment. The flag is handsewn throughout.

EXAMINATION

- 4 photos were taken.
- 8 scale drawings were prepared, of the obverse and reverse.
- One particle sample enclosed.

The particle samples are an uncontaminated, vacuumed sampling of the particulate matter present throughout the surface of the flag. Do not open the container or they will be contaminated and lost. If the flag has never been washed, analysis of these particles often reveals soils, pollen, airborne contaminants such as salt spray or combustion products, and any other particulate matter the flag has been in contact with throughout it's history. Identification of the particulate matter requires a skilled forensic microscopist.²

METHOD OF CONSTRUCTION

1. The stars were applied to both sides of the canton.
2. The top red and white bars were flat fell sewed together then to the canton.
3. The bottom red bar was pieced together. The entire bar was flat fell sewed to the canton and upper bars.
4. The fly end was hemmed.

SAMPLING

The flag was examined and sampled using a JKH stereo microscope at 21x. Fiber identifications were made using a Leitz compound microscope at 270x.

Results are included in the report.

CONDITION

The flag is intact except for the leading edge which has no method of attachment. The fibers of the wool in the canton are relatively strong with two major tears, one along the leading edge and the other along the top. The center white bar has minor discoloration from staining and is slightly yellow from acidic degradation of the cotton. The cotton of the top red bar is weak especially along the top edge and the fly end. In the upper fly corner the cotton is torn and degraded. The bottom red bar also has minor tears at the fly end.

RESULTS OF THE EXAMINATION

The flag is intact as constructed. There is one major repair in the bottom red bar as described in the condition.

REPORTED HISTORY

The flag is documented as captured at Island #10 by Captain Edwin Sylla's Company during the Civil War.

CONCLUSION

The materials and techniques used in the construction of this flag and the condition of the flag support the reported history.

REFERENCES

1. The Battle Flags Of The Confederate Army Of Tennessee.
Howard Michael Madaus and Robert D. Needham, Milwaukee Public Museum:
Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1976.
2. The McCrone Associates, 850 Pasquinelli Drive, Westmont, IL 60559,
phone (708) 887-7100 contact: Dick Bisbing.

Fonda G. Thomsen

Fonda G. Thomsen, Director
Textile Preservation Associates;
Fellow, American Institute for Conservation

Aug. 5, 1993
Date

Textile Preservation Associates, Inc.

P.O. BOX 606 • SHARPSBURG, MARYLAND 21782 • PHONE (301) 432-4160

TREATMENT REPORT

Date: August 4, 1993

TPA#: 424

Object:

Client:

Phone:

DESCRIPTION

Size: Leading edge: 49" Fly: 104"

The flag is constructed in the pattern of a Confederate First National color with thirteen stars appliqued to each side of the canton forming a 23" diameter circle. The blue canton is constructed of wool/cotton fabric while the red and white bars are cotton. The bottom bar has been pieced. The fly end is hemmed and the leading edge is missing so there is no information as to method of attachment. The flag is handsewn throughout.

REPORT OF EXAMINATION

Documentation

Four photos were taken before, during and after treatment.
Eight scale drawings enclosed
One particle sample enclosed.

Analysis: The object was examined under a JKH stereo microscope at 4.2 - 21 x. Thread and fiber samples were examined under a heitz compound microscope at 270x. See attached report.

Condition

Present condition

The flag is intact except for the leading edge which has no method of attachment. The fibers of the wool in the canton are relatively strong with two major tears, one along the leading edge and the other along the top. The center white bar has minor discoloration from staining and is slightly yellow from soot/degradation of the cotton. The cotton of the top red bar is weak especially along the top edge and the fly end. In the upper fly corner the cotton is torn and degraded. The bottom red bar also has minor tears at the fly end. The bottom red bar has a 14" repair where the fabric has been drawn together and covered stitched. This repair is causing creasing and stressing the fabric.

RECORD OF TREATMENT

Documentation

1. The flag, as received, was photographed on both sides (see photos 1 & 2).
2. The fibers, fabrics, and sewing threads were analyzed. Scale drawings will be drafted, the pH measured and a condition report prepared. Particle samples were taken for the files.

Stabilization

3. The flag was vacuum cleaned to remove airborne particles and loose accumulations of soil. Creases were humidified and flattened. The stitches in the large repair on the bottom red bar were cut and the fabric flattened out. The fragments of the stitches were left in place as a record of the repair.

Preparation for Exhibition

4. A buffered, acid-free panel was prepared by laminating tycore honeycomb panel with single ply archivart board³ on either side. The finished panel was covered with nonwoven polyester batting² and a previously washed, unbleached, airwing grade, fine cotton fabric¹. The fabric was adhered on the back with Beva-D8 adhesive⁴.
5. The flag was attached to the padded panel with one row of stitching across the top using 3 ply Z silk thread.. The areas that are torn and weak were lightly stitched to the panel with single ply silk. The flag was photographed on the panel before framing (see photo 3).
6. Ultra-violet filtering Lexan⁵ was laid over the flag, applying a light pressure to the fabric. The entire unit was placed in a custom made two part fluted aluminium frame finished in light chestnut metallic. The border and color choice were confirmed by Ann Snyder of Catepetl.
7. A final photo was taken and the treatment report prepared (see photo 4).

PROGNOSIS

The object should be exhibited under light levels of less than five foot-candles. Because any light is damaging, it is recommended that the piece be rotated between exhibit and storage, or covered with a black cloth when not being viewed to reduce the total exposure to light. Care should be taken to avoid aiming lights directly on the case, which can cause a "greenhouse" effect, or heat build up within the unit.

2. Batting:

"Bonded Richfab Bat Garrett" a resin bonded polyester batting; Museum Services Corporation, 4216 Howard Avenue, Kensington, MD 20895-2418.

"Poly-fil Traditional Batting" a non-woven, needle punched batting; Fairfield Processing Corporation, 88 Rose Hill Avenue, Danbury, CT. 06810.

3. Corrugated Board, buffered, acid free; Museum Services Corporation, 4216 Howard Avenue, Kensington, MD 20895-2418.

4. Beva D-8, a thermoplastic binder by Gustav A. Berger; Conservators Products Co., P.O.B. 411, Chatham, N.J. 07928.

5. Lexan, a colorless cast acrylic sheet; Acken Sign Co. P. O. Box 1576, Bluefield, WV 24701

Items returned with report:

Touch up paint
Framed April 10, 1862 Daily Tribune
Framed August 27, 1960 letter
Framed print of Island #10
Framed museum label
Framed war records

To best preserve the object, the temperature and humidity level should be kept constant, with temperatures of less than 70 degrees Fahrenheit and a relative humidity of 50% plus or minus 5%. Avoid hanging the frame against an outside wall, or place spacers between the wall and the frame.

If the object is put in storage, lay the frame flat with the glazed side up, or to lean it at a slight angle against something that firmly and evenly supports the top edge, again with the glazed side up. We recommend storage in the frame, since it is part of the conservation treatment.

HANGING THE FRAME

There are two metal tabs along the top of the frame for hooking onto a screw or bolt. If it is ever necessary to remove the object from the frame, the screws around the perimeter can be removed with an allen wrench. A bottle of touch-up paint to repair damage to the painted surface will be included with the exhibit shipment.

CARE OF THE GLAZING

The Lexan is soft and will scratch easily so care should be taken in handling it. Lexan should not be cleaned with ammonia based window cleaners. Either plexiglas cleaner should be purchased, or water with a drop of liquid dishwasher detergent can be used along with very soft rags (diapers or gauze). If paper towels are used they should be extremely soft.

Total treatment hours: 14

Signed: 

Fonda Ghiardi Thomsen, Fellow, AIC;

Director, Textile Preservation Associates, Inc.

Date August 5, 1993

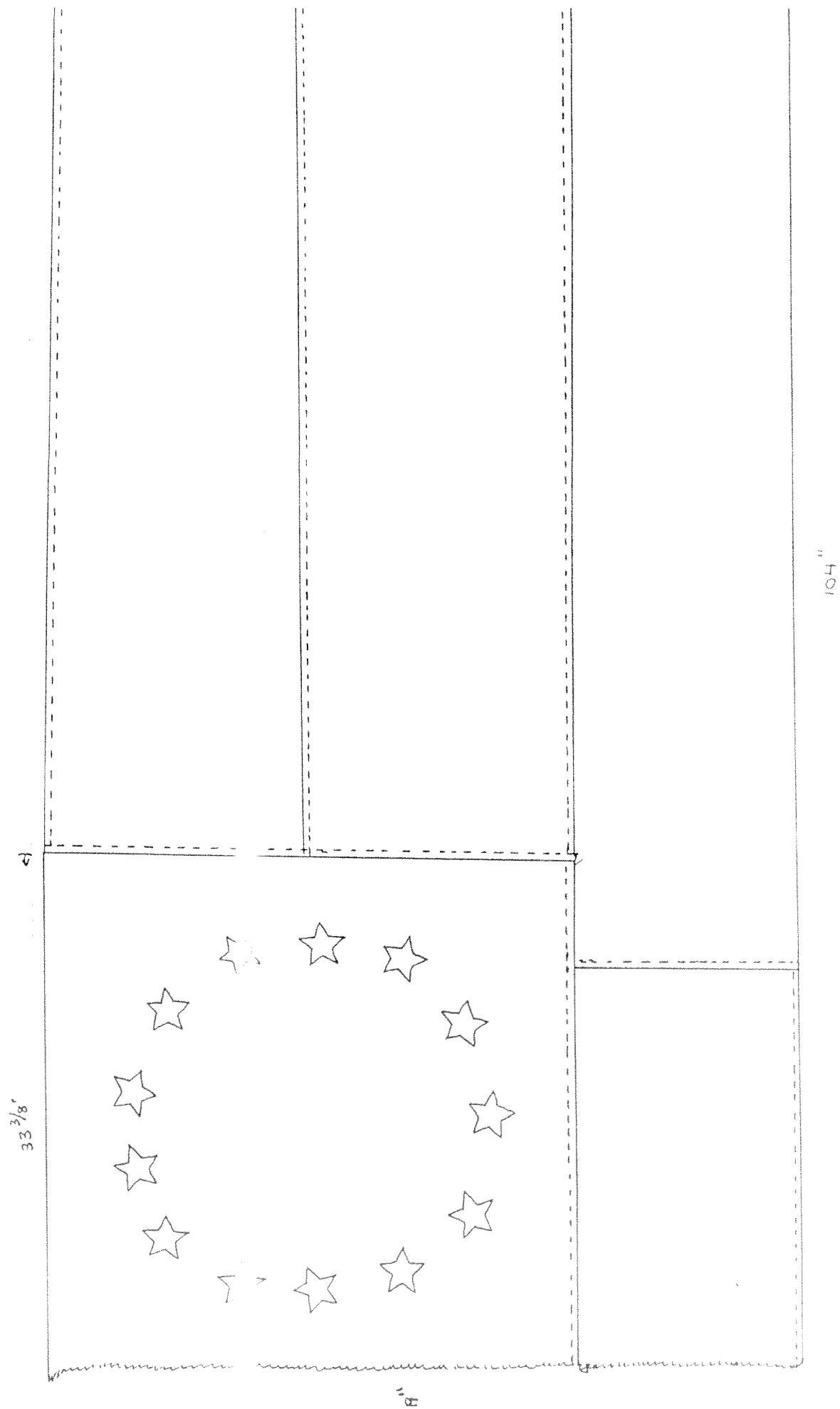
Work on the flag was carried out with the assistance of Cathy Heffner, Conservation Technician, Textile Preservation Associates, Inc.

REFERENCE

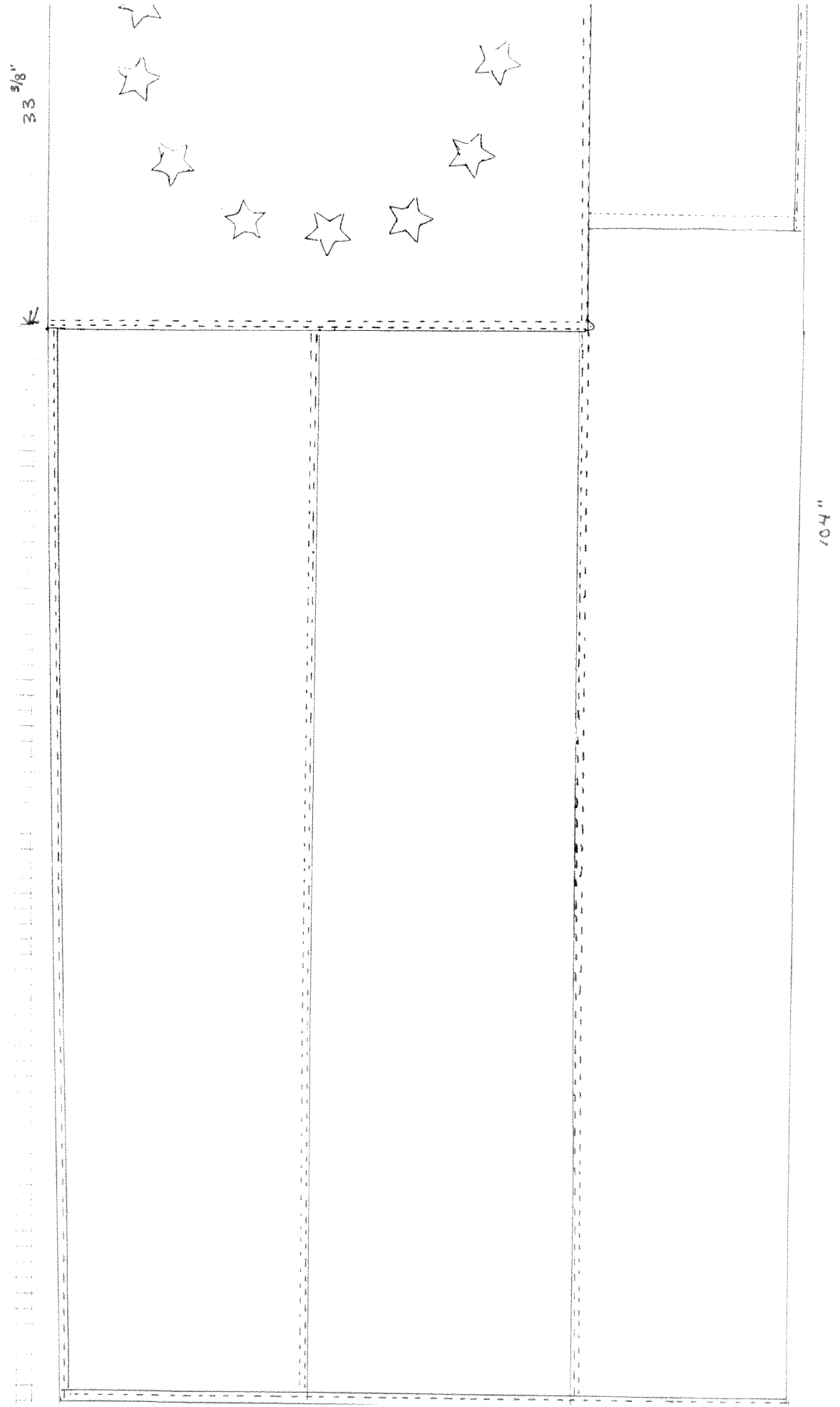
List of materials used in the conservation of this object.

1. Cotton, a 100% airwing grade fabric;
Reeves Brothers Inc., 1271 Avenue of the Americas, N.Y. 10020

Obverse Drawing I Construction



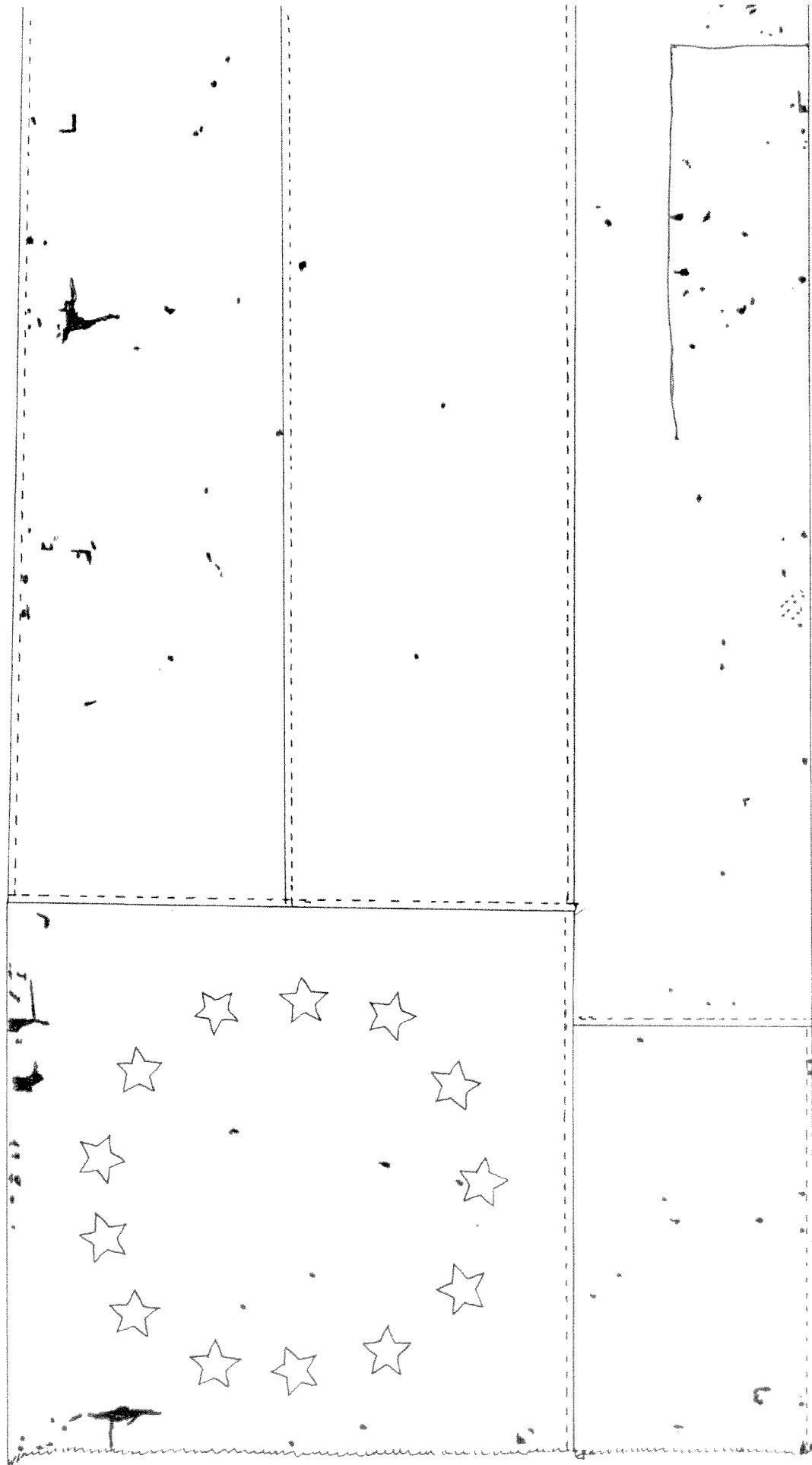
Reverse Drawing II Construction



Drawing III Condition

Obverse

33 3/8"

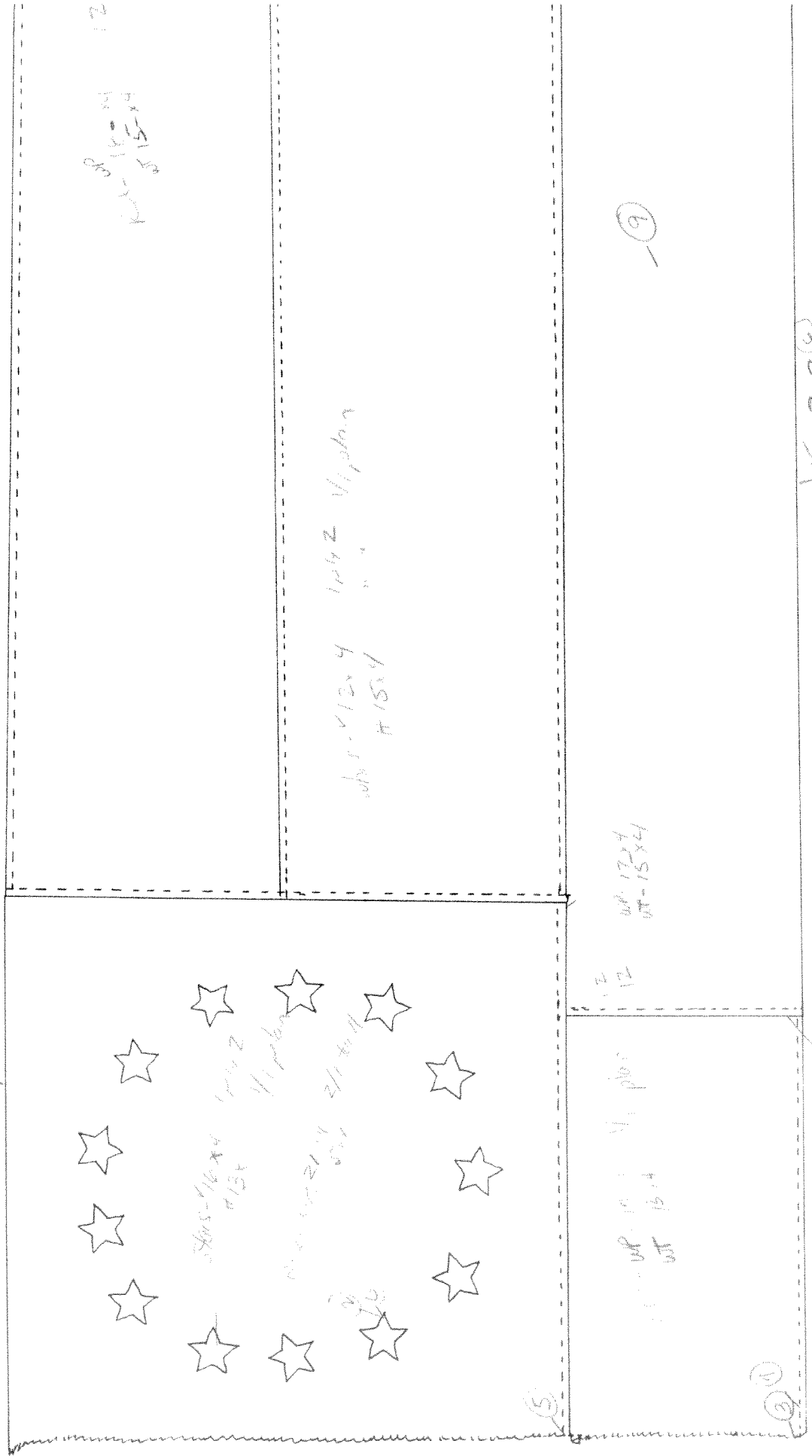


104"

Obverse

Drawing IV: Sampling

33 3/8' SE 2(9) @ 2/2 12 @ 1/1



SE - 4-2-4-2-2-4-4 104" 58-3-2-6-4-4

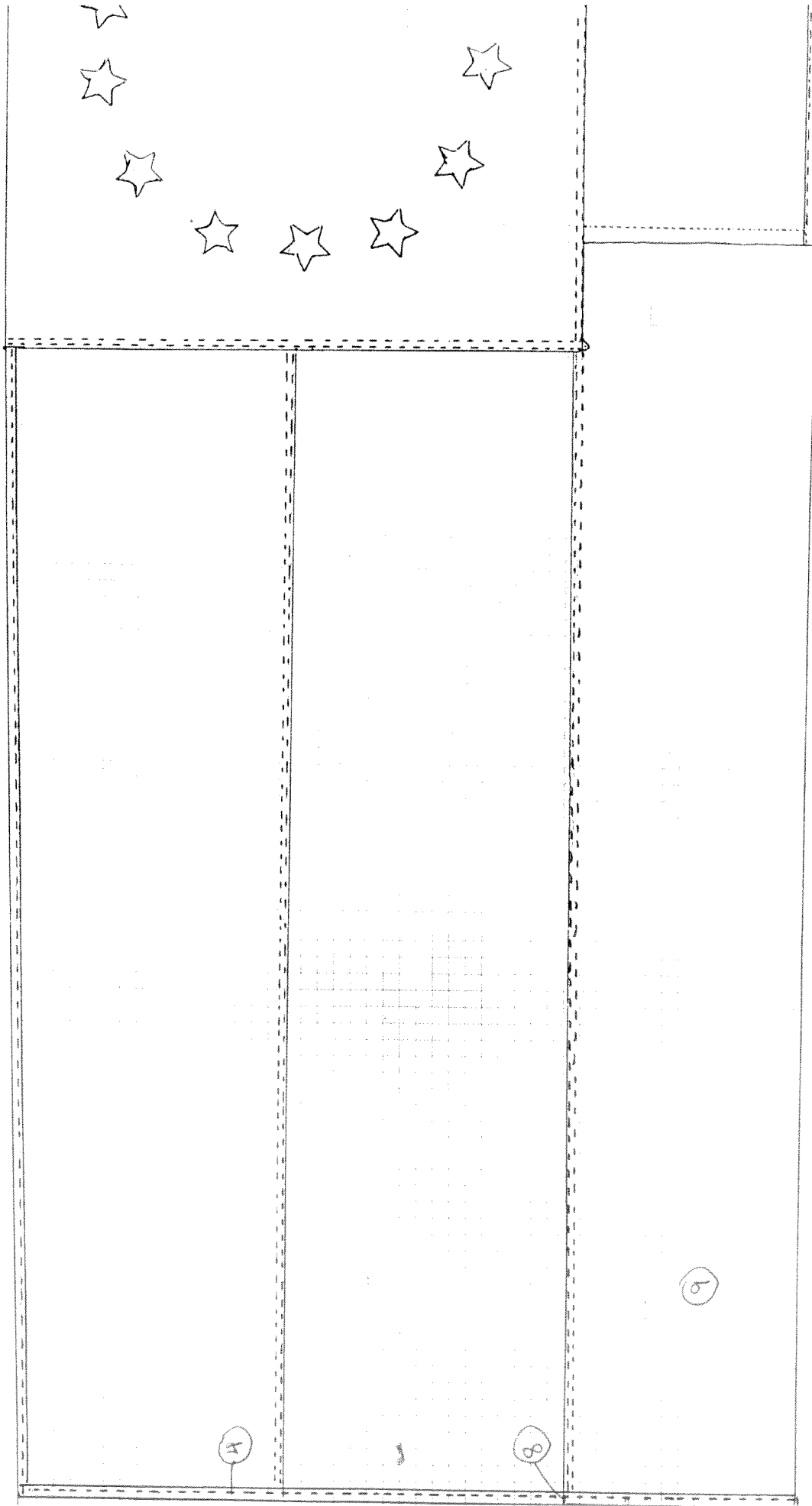
⑨

⑤

③

Reverse

Drawing IV Sampling



Drawing II Sewing threads

Obverse

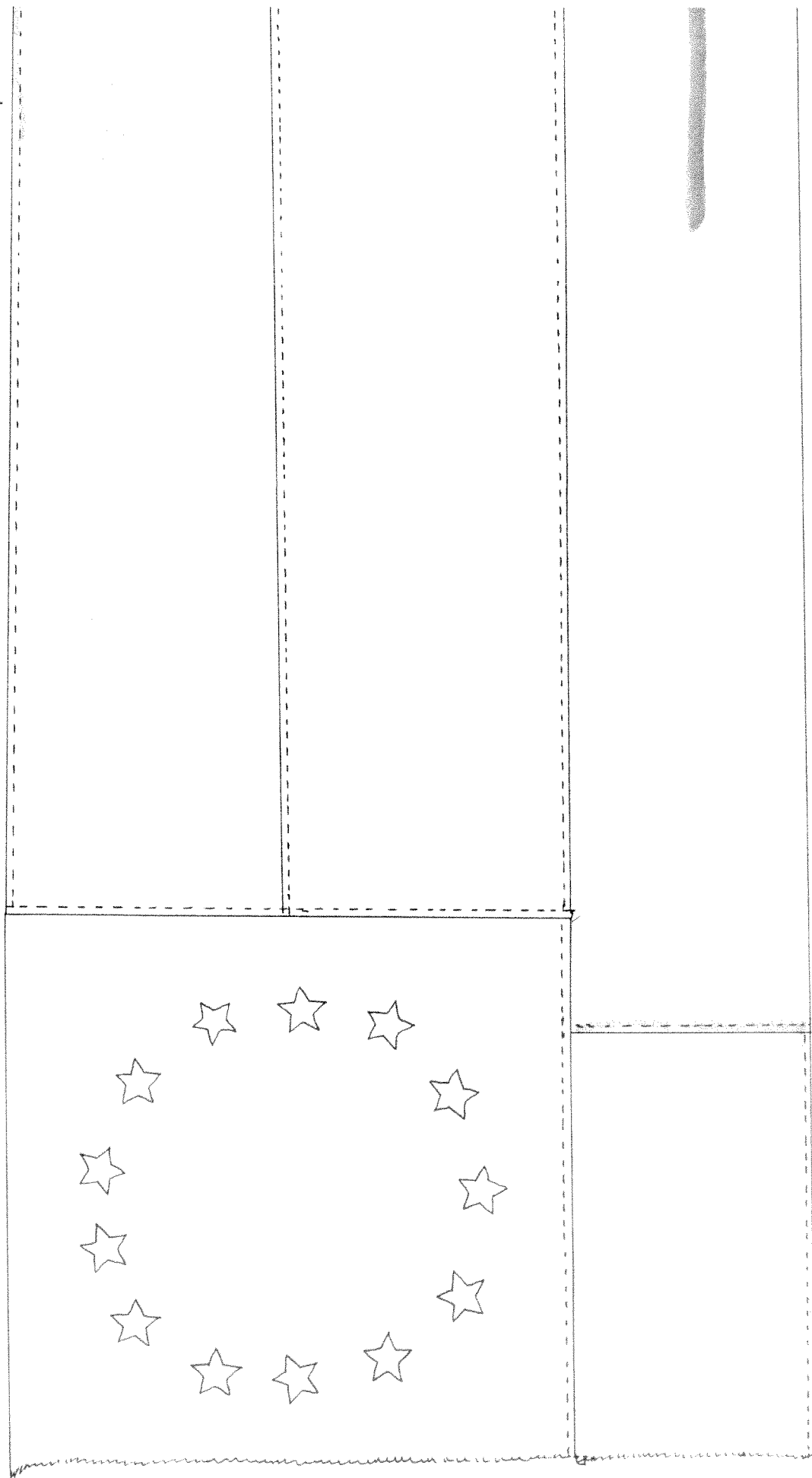
Type II

All of 44

vest Type I

repair this

33 3/8"



104"

Reverse

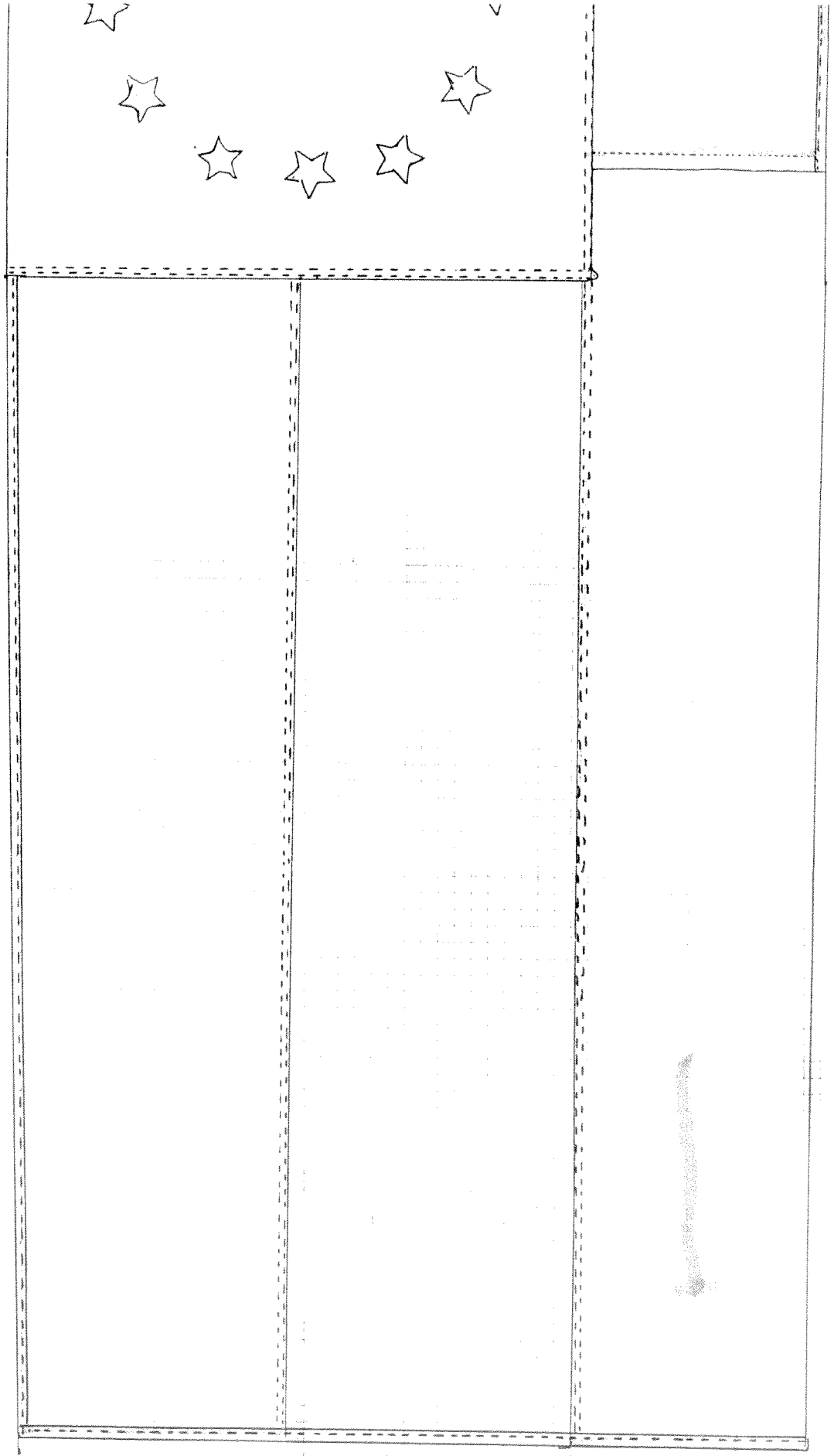
Drawing VII Sewing threads

Type II

All of 44

Type

repair 44



CONFEDERATE FIRST NATIONAL FLAG CAPTURED IN THE ISLAND NUMBER TEN CAMPAIGN – MARCH/APRIL, 1862 BY EDWARD SYLLA, 10TH ILLINOIS INFANTRY

Being offered for sale is a wonderful Confederate First National flag bearing thirteen stars captured in the Island Number Ten Campaign by a soldier of the 10th Illinois Infantry and descended through his family. This essay will delve into the flag's history and place it in context with other known flag captures from the Island Number Ten Campaign. Only a handful of Confederate flags taken in this campaign are located in museums today which adds to its rarity. Additionally, only a few more flags from the campaign are privately held; many taken have yet to be located but we know of their capture from various reports and accounts.

The Confederate First National flag

Upon the formation of the Confederate government in Montgomery, Alabama in February, 1861 and the seating of their Provisional Congress, the Committee on Flag and Seal was formed to deal with a national flag for the new nation. With a deadline of March 4, 1861 looming, the day of the inauguration of U.S. President Abraham Lincoln, the new nation wanted to have a symbol of their sovereignty on a flag pole.

The committee, chaired by William Porcher Miles of South Carolina (and featuring a member from each of the then seceded states), set about creating their new flag. Submissions were sent to the Congress and sessions featured models and letters describing them. The trickle of flag ideas became a torrent and soon the committee handled everything about them. Soon, two styles began to dominate the submissions in terms of designs. First, and the largest grouping, were flags inspired by the Stars and Stripes of the United States. Southerners had been part of the making of the American nation and had fought for her independence and helped sustain her from the War of 1812 through the Mexican War. It was not the U.S. flag that brought derision. The second largest group of submissions was flags of a unique design. Some of these were impractical for mass production.

Miles favored flags with the Cross of St. George, reflecting the South's predominant English heritage but received letters from fundamentalist Christian groups and Charleston's powerful Jewish community both not wanting to see a Christian flag in use. Miles, seeking to solve the problem, simply took the English cross (+) and tilted it on an angle (X), calling it a saltier of heraldry. This solved the religious objections but with only seven bars representing the then seceded states, the flag did not look symmetrical. Miles tabled his design – for a time.

With none of the submissions being "*suitable*," in Miles' words, the committee voted on four designs including his own. Chosen was a simple yet striking flag with obvious U.S. flag inspiration – a red bar over a center white bar in turn over a bottom red bar. The blue canton bore seven stars. The committee's provision was for more stars to be added as new states joined the Confederacy. Adopted by the committee, Miles made a report to Congress on March 4, 1861. Approved, a model of the flag was taken to a local sewing machine establishment and made into a flag. Later that afternoon, it was hoisted over the state capitol building in Montgomery, then serving as the meeting place for the Congress, by Letitia Tyler, granddaughter of President John Tyler. The deadline was met; a new flag for a new nation was born.

As more states seceded from the Union stars were added to the flag. The official count would be eleven after Tennessee's secession in June 1861. Later that Fall, two more were added with the seating of a Confederate delegation from Missouri (September) and Kentucky (November) ending with thirteen stars. There are examples in existence with a wide variety of star counts and star patterns; the most common for the latter are stars in a circle, again inspired by the first U.S. flag.

While conceived as a flag for the Confederate States of America, examples of the banner would see use as the first battle flags for the Confederate Army and Navy. In fact, of all of the battle flag patterns created during the war, the First National was the only one that saw use from the beginning until the very end of the war.

The 10th Illinois Infantry

The 10th Illinois Infantry had two incarnations. The first was the three months regiment formed in Springfield with four companies with three more infantry and three artillery companies soon joining. Captain John Pope, U.S. Army and a West Point graduate, mustered the regiment. Their first service was guarding strategic Cairo, IL. until July 29, 1861 when their terms of service expired.

On the same day, the regiment reorganized as a three years unit. Their first service was in the Cairo area including the January 1862 raid into Kentucky before being sent to Bird's Point, MO. right across the river from Cairo. Their first real combat came in the Island Number Ten Campaign of March 1, 1862 to April 8, 1862. From there they moved down the Mississippi River to Fort Pillow. After the April 6-7, 1862 Battle of Shiloh, the regiment moved to Corinth, MS as part of the Army of the Mississippi being called there to join with two other Federal armies for the first Corinth Campaign.

After some service in Mississippi, the regiment was recalled to protect Nashville from Confederate cavalry raiders. In mid-July, 1863, they moved to Murfreesboro, TN and after that they were sent to Bridgeport, AL to protect the vital railroad bridge over the Tennessee River. While operating in the Chattanooga, Tennessee, they engaged Joe Wheeler's rebel cavalry in the Sequatchie Valley in October before taking part in the fighting in and around Chattanooga itself.

In early 1864, the regiment was on veteran furlough for a month returning with the new designation 10th Illinois Veteran Volunteer Infantry. Taking part in the Atlanta Campaign from May into September, 1864, the 10th Illinois were selected to be part of William T. Sherman's Army of Georgia for the March to the Sea ending at Savannah, GA in December 1864. The regiment remained with Sherman ending the war in North Carolina in 1865 with the capture of Raleigh, North Carolina in April, 1865. The regiment took part in the Grand Review in Washington in June 1865 before mustering out on July 11, 1865.

Captain Edward Sylla

According to the documents that come with this flag, Edward Sylla, the soldier who captured this flag, enlisted for three years on August 28, 1861 at Camp Defiance (Cairo), Illinois. He was listed as a 1st Lieutenant and hailed from Sandwich, Illinois about 60 miles west of Chicago. Sylla did not serve out the war for on June 9, 1862, he resigned his commission as captain of

Company H for health reasons with a certificate signed by the regimental surgeon. During his time of service he was saw action in Kentucky in January, 1862 as well as the Island Number Ten Campaign before his resignation.

The Island Number Ten Campaign

Federal offensives in the Western Theater in early 1862 were focused on three rivers, all of which bisected Tennessee or bordered the state. These were interstate highways into the Deep South and became natural routes of invasion for the Federals and defense for the Confederates.

Confederate defenses consisted of earthen fortifications constructed at key points along the rivers. On the Cumberland River, forts were built west of Nashville, Clarksville and at Dover (Fort Donelson – the most powerful of the Cumberland defenses). The Tennessee River was only defended by Fort Henry, 12 miles west of Fort Donelson, and across the river in Kentucky, Fort Heiman. Concern for the Mississippi River, however, dominated Confederate planning and a series of forts were built from Memphis north to the Kentucky state line. These included Fort Randolph, Fort Harris, Fort Pillow and fortifications at New Madrid, Missouri. After the Federals violated Kentucky's declared neutrality in August, 1861, the Confederates in early September advanced to Columbus, KY to take hold of the high ground there. Here would be built the most powerful river defenses in the West; some 142 heavy guns on three levels.

Union General U.S Grant's offensive that captured Forts Henry and Donelson in February 1862 made the position at Columbus untenable and they were forced to fall back to a new position based on Island Number Ten and surrounding shores in Tennessee and Missouri. Here, the Mississippi River made a deep S curve back on itself and at the bottom of the curve sat Island Number Ten. Steamboat captains numbered the islands above and below the confluence of the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers. Island Number Ten was the tenth such position south of the confluence. Thanks to the ever-changing Mississippi, the island no longer exists today.

The Confederates built fortifications from New Madrid, MO to Tiptonville, TN. The island itself bore numerous heavy guns and supporting batteries along both sides of the river added to the defense. The guns that made up the forts had been brought down from Columbus. The Tennessee shore was dotted with swamps and Reelfoot Lake which helped block landward approaches. Backing these forts up was a small squadron of Confederate Navy wooden gunboats. Upwards of 7000 troops manned these sites many ill-armed.

The force tasked by the Federals under Maj. Gen. John Pope, was entitled the Army of the Mississippi. The troops were fully supported by several ironclad Union Navy gunboats, some of them veterans of the Henry-Donelson Campaign, plus mortar boats and timberclad gunboats.

Pope crossed the Mississippi River from Cairo, IL to Commerce, MO and began his campaign from there on February 28th, 1862 by marching to Benton and taking that town. The next objective was Sikeston to the south on the east side of a large swamp. As the Federals marched they encountered rebel cavalry under the command of Brig. Gen. M. Jeff Thompson, who was infamous to the Federals with a record of resisting Federal incursions into Missouri. Just outside of Sikeston, Union troops found Thompson across the road supported by six small one pounder cannons and a fight broke out. Thompson soon found out that his less than 100 men had taken on a Union brigade, the vanguard of Pope's forces, supported by cavalry and he was forced to make a break for it. The Federals pursued to within four miles of New Madrid

before breaking off. The affair was dubbed "*the Sikeston Races*." According to Missouri Civil War expert and author James McGhee, the troops Thompson commanded were from, "*his old 1st Division, Missouri State Guard*," and that several of his officers had been, "*organizing Confederate units at and around New Madrid at this time*." Included in this force was Captain Sam. Harris Battery who manned the one pounder guns, losing three of them in the fight.

The Missouri State Guard was the pro-Confederate state militia that was organized after the Camp Jackson Affair in St. Louis of May 10, 1861. Here, the pro-South forces loyal to Governor Claiborne Jackson were captured by a force of U.S. Regulars and the German citizens of St. Louis. Jackson was soon chased across the state and the Missouri State Guard, already enacted by law, came into the field under the command of Maj. Gen. Sterling Price. The state was divided into nine divisions from which State Guard regiments were formed. Thompson commanded the division from Southeast Missouri – the 1st Division or Military District. After losing the battle for Boonville, MO. but helping to win the key fight at Wilson's Creek (along with some Confederate troops and Arkansas State Troops), the State Guard enlistments began expiring in November 1861. Not all units had fallen apart by the Island Number Ten Campaign however while others were tendering service to the Confederacy forming Missouri volunteer regiments. Many guardsmen simply went home. Thus, at Sikeston, Thompson's force was probably in the transition into Confederate service.

This is important to the flag's story as in the fight at Sikeston it was known that Thompson displayed, "*a large staff flag*" where he posted his battery of artillery. The flag was captured by the 10th Illinois Infantry as Thompson fled and some of his guns were lost to the Federals. More about this flag later.

Eventually, Pope's troops and the U.S. Navy were able to subdue each component of the Confederate defenses around Island Number Ten done in several phases. First to fall was New Madrid on March 13th, 1862 where some flags were captured. After the ironclads ran Island Number Ten during a nighttime thunderstorm, the Confederate position became untenable and the island itself surrendered on April 4th, 1862. More flags were taken there. With gunboat protection (after driving off the Confederate fleet), Union troops were ferried across the Mississippi River and on April 8th, 1862, the last Confederate garrison at Tiptonville, TN surrendered. While the campaign ended with several thousand prisoners and over one hundred pieces of artillery captured, some Confederate units were able to escape. Towards the end of the campaign a Union brigade attacked Union City, TN, which held the far right flank of the defenses and bagged two Confederate regiments there, also taking flags.

This part of the Mississippi River was now open to the Union and Pope became a new hero. Sadly, the end of the campaign was overshadowed by the bloody Battle of Shiloh which took place as Pope's campaign came to its conclusion.

The Captured Confederate Flags of the Island Number Ten Campaign

This section will detail the captured Confederate flags from this campaign by its four phases: Sikeston/New Madrid; Island Number Ten; Union City and Tiptonville. None of the captured Confederate flags were ever sent to the U.S. War Department in Washington, a typical event of captures in the early war in the Western Theater.

Sikeston/New Madrid Phase

John Pope's report states, "*the colors of several Arkansas regiments,*" were taken at New Madrid after his forces besieged the fortified town and forced the Confederates to abandon it by removing their troops across the Mississippi River. The two forts were held by the 11th and 12th Arkansas Infantry and the Pointe Coupee Louisiana Battery at Fort Thompson and the 5th and 40th Tennessee Infantry with Baker's and Bankhead's Batteries at Fort Bankhead. The following flags have been confirmed as being taken in this phase:

First National - unknown unit/possible Jeff Thompson's flag – 10th Illinois Infantry near Sikeston (most likely the flag being offered)

First National, 15 stars – unknown unit – 47th Indiana Infantry capture from Fort Thompson and sent to Indianapolis (now missing)

11th Arkansas Infantry – possibly silk Polk Corps pattern (Madaus theory) – New Madrid capture by Michigan cavalry units. (The late Howard Madaus also postulated that a First National flag bearing 12 stars in the collections of the Arkansas Old State House Museum in Little Rock could be this flag. Its history states that it was taken "*in Missouri*" in 1862 by a Michigan unit and was sent back from Michigan to Arkansas in 1941. Arkansas flag historian and author Glenn Dedmond concurs with this analysis in his book on Arkansas flags. However, this flag could also be that of the 4th Arkansas Battalion or the 12th Arkansas Infantry. It has been thought that the latter flag was removed in the Confederate evacuation of New Madrid and taken later at Tiptonville.)

5th Tennessee Infantry, First National company flag – unknown company but bearing the slogan, "*Death or Victory – Conyersville, Tenn.*" This flag was brought back to Springfield, IL by two Illinois officers probably from Pope's staff and displayed in a local store. The flag is now missing.

Unknown Confederate flag, possible First National – captured by the 51st Illinois Infantry per the Chicago Tribune. Location unknown today.

Unknown flag fragment – *unknown pattern* – New Madrid Museum, New Madrid, Missouri

Island Number Ten Phase

The Confederate forces surrendered on April 4th, 1862. Its garrison consisted of the 1st Alabama Infantry and the 1st Alabama, Tennessee and Mississippi Infantry (later the 4th Confederate Infantry). Union reports noted flags flying over the various artillery forts on the island during the siege as well as a hospital flag. The known flag captures are:

1st Alabama Infantry - First National with seven stars and the state Coat of Arms in the blue canton. The flag bears the unit designation on the white bar and a battle honor for the fight at Pensacola, Florida in November, 1861. It was captured by troops under Union Gen. Eleazer Paine, who commanded a division in this campaign. It descended to his son who moved to Nebraska. Formerly held by the Grand Army of the Republic in that state, it was transferred to the Nebraska State Historical Society. Returned to Alabama in 2007 and now held by the Alabama Department of Archives and History

1st Alabama Infantry, unknown company – First National with 11 stars – taken by W.R. Townsend, 42nd Illinois Infantry – now in a private collection.

1st Alabama Infantry, Co. C, Perote Guards – First National variant with multiple stripes and 13 stars and the slogan "*Justice & Protection to each new partner or a new firm – Perote Guards,*" in the canton. The canton on the reverse side bears the Alabama Coat of Arms. The flag was taken by the 15th Wisconsin Infantry and sent to Wisconsin. The flag was sent back to Alabama in 1905 by the state.

1st Alabama, Mississippi and Tennessee Infantry – Co. I, Yचना Rifles – First National flag with 11 stars. The canton bears the slogan, "*Mississippi Devils – Our Rights – Presented by the ladies.*" This was a Mississippi company originally called the Yचना Rifles. The flag is arguably the most famous flag taken in the campaign as its slogan, "*Mississippi Devils,*" was quoted by numerous Northern newspapers as well as letters from Union soldiers. It was captured by the 15th Wisconsin and sent to the state by its colonel, Hans Heg. The flag was sent to Mississippi in 1943 and is held by the Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

Pointe Coupee Artillery, Louisiana Battery – First National with 13 stars. Captured by John Johnston, First Master of the ironclad gunboat USS St. Louis during the night raid of April 1, 1862 at Battery 1. In 1904 the flag was donated to the Museum of the Confederacy in Richmond, Virginia but was withdrawn in 1908. Its location today is unknown.

Hans Heg, colonel of the 15th Wisconsin Infantry, wrote in his letters to his wife that his troops also captured, "*three secesh flags found in a chair.*" These would be First National flags, often called "*secesh*" flags by the Federals.

If the 12th Arkansas Infantry's flag escaped from New Madrid to Tiptonville it would have been captured there.

Union City Phase

On March 31st, a Union brigade lead by Col. Napoleon Buford attacked the Confederate troops at Union City, Tennessee. The garrison there consisted of the 7th Tennessee Cavalry (then forming from the 6th Tennessee Cavalry Battalion) and the 21st Tennessee Infantry. Attacking at sunrise, Buford's troops stampeded the garrison capturing their camp equipment and more including flags. Buford stated, "*we captured three large flags and two guidons, all of silk...*"

21st Tennessee Infantry – First National flag. Their silk Polk Corps flag was either not there or was removed as the troops fled the town. The First National flag is missing today but the Polk Corps flag is in the Williamson County, Tennessee Museum.

7th Tennessee Cavalry – guidon, probably a First National design. This flag is still missing today.

7th Tennessee Cavalry, Co. B, Hill's Cavalry (formerly 6th Tennessee Cavalry Battalion, Co. C) – First National variant guidon with 11 stars and the slogan "*Victory or Death*" and "*CS*" and "*HC*" as well. Captured by the 15th Wisconsin Infantry and sent to Wisconsin by Col. Hans Heg, the flag was returned to Tennessee in 2003 where it is part of the Tennessee State Museum.

7th Tennessee Cavalry, Co. A, Memphis Light Dragoons (formerly 6th Tennessee Cavalry Battalion, Co. A) – probable First National guidon bearing the letters “M.L.D” per capture accounts. The flag is missing today.

7th Tennessee Cavalry, Co. D, Haywood Rangers (formerly 6th Tennessee Cavalry Battalion, Co. D) – probably a First National flag. Noted as being lost in the unit history of the 7th Tennessee Cavalry, the flag is missing today.

Tiptonville Phase

1st Alabama Infantry, Co. I, Wilcox True Blues – Blue flag bearing a painted cotton plant and coiled rattlesnake with the slogan “*Noli Mi Tangere*” on one side and a lady holding a flag bearing seven stars and the slogan “*Wilcox True Blues – Woman’s Offering to Patriotism.*” The flag was found in a home in Tiptonville, left behind by the regiment when it moved to Island Number Ten, by a Michigan soldier. The flag was discovered there in 1917 on display in the state capitol in Lansing. The flag was sent back to Alabama in 1921 and is held by the Alabama Department of Archives and History today.

Unknown artillery flag – taken by Lt. Lyman Allen of the 27th Illinois in a night raid on the Tennessee shore near Tiptonville. Missing today.

With the surrender of the remaining Confederates at Tiptonville on April 8th, 1862, it is probable that other flags were taken from the surrendered Confederates which included infantry and artillery units. No reports or accounts describing these flags have been found to date.

Miscellaneous flags taken in the campaign – unknown locations

Several other flags were taken in this campaign but the exact place of capture is unknown. As follows:

First National – 15 stars – unknown unit. This flag was presented to Gen. John Pope and later on presented to his alma mater, the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, where it resides today.

First National – 11 stars – unknown unit, now in a private collection

First National – 13 stars – unknown unit – The flag bears the slogan “*Victory or Death*” and was captured by Franklin Mott of the 27th Illinois Infantry. It is not 100 per cent conclusive that this flag was taken in this campaign but the odds are good that it was. Now in a private collection.

Recapitulation

Of all of the known flag captures listed, which number 21, only seven are in museums today. This assumes that the ID of the flag in Arkansas is indeed the 11th Arkansas Infantry. Only four flags above are in private collections, including the flag now being offered for sale by Julia’s Auctions.

The First National flag captured by Edward Sylla, 10th Illinois Infantry

As a flag historian, I track all known Confederate flag captures from the Civil War. My lengthy list is organized by state and by regiment within each state. Thanks to an article in the post-war *National Tribune*, I was able to note that the 10th Illinois captured at least one flag during the war. As stated in the article, "...chasing the rebel Gen. Jeff Thompson in the vicinity of Sykeston...We made the earth too hot for this rebel crowd and they were compelled to seek shelter under the rebel guns at New Madrid...but we captured all of their commissary stores...together with Jeff Thompson's headquarters flag." My research has yet to find another Confederate flag taken by this regiment although it is possible they did at some other point in the war. What matters is the time frame when Edward Sylla was with the regiment which ended in early June 1862. The only campaign that involved serious action for the 10th Illinois before June, 1862 was the Island Number Ten Campaign.

Historians Larry Daniel and Lynn Bock, in the only modern book on the campaign, covered the Sikeston event and declared, "*Thompson unlimbered his battery astride the road and marked the spot with his large staff flag.*" Thompson, in his memoirs, declared, "*I placed the guns at a cross road about one half mile from the picket, and marked them with my staff which was large enough for an army of twenty thousand men.*" The flag being offered measures 49 inches by 104 inches (roughly 4 feet by 8.6 feet) so it might be big enough to qualify for the flag that Thompson described assuming he was not engaging in hyperbole.

In his official report of the campaign, Col. James Morgan of the 10th Illinois Infantry wrote, "*A running fight took place and resulted in the defeat of Jeff Thompson, the capture of three 1-pounder cannons, one flag...and a number of prisoners.*"

While it is possible that the flag taken by Sylla could have come from Island Number Ten itself or even Tiptonville, where the regiment was also actively involved in addition to Sikeston and New Madrid, it is interesting to note an 1864 Springfield, Illinois newspaper account published while the regiment was home on veteran furlough only mentioned one flag. The article featured a speech by a prominent citizen and in that he stated, "*You first tried your 'prentice hand' on that arch freebooter, Jeff Thompson, routing him at every point, stripping him of his guns, his flag – his own sword even...*"

The *National Tribune* article, already cited above, was published on October 5, 1905 and was written by M. J. Clerihan, a veteran of the 10th Illinois. The mention of this flag was important to his article, a history of the unit and published in a newspaper dedicated to Union Army veterans, and with no other flag was mentioned therein, makes this important evidence as well as to when and where it was captured.

This Springfield, Illinois article as well as that of the *National Tribune*, more than any other evidence, argues that the flag being offered was that taken from Jeff Thompson's troops near Sikeston, Missouri. Had the regiment captured other flags of note while Sylla was still with the regiment, or even after his departure, they would have been noted in the speech which covered the career of the 10th Illinois to February 1864 when the speech was given. Such captures would also have been reported in the *National Tribune* article. While it is still possible that the flag was taken somewhere else in the Island Number Ten Campaign by Sylla, it is far more likely that it came from the fight with Jeff Thompson. Whether it was his personal flag or the flag for the battery or other troops that were with him in this fight cannot fully determined. Thompson's own statements are not conclusive; certainly the Union accounts felt that it was his personal flag.

Provenance

According to the documents that come with this flag, as noted in the letter of August, 1960, the flag was captured by Edward Sylla who was the brother of William Sylla, the grandfather of the letter's author. William was a veteran of the 36th Illinois Infantry. Key to the letter and this flag is the statement, *"We are mailing you today a package which we hope will give you pleasure – our grandfather...was William F. Sylla, and it was his brother Edward Sylla's company which captured the Confederate flag we are sending you."*

The even more surprising statement came next, *"We have two of them and we would like to give one to you."* No word in the letter about the second flag and where it was taken although it could have been one that the 36th Illinois captured at Nashville in December 1864. I am not fully aware of William's service and if he was still with the regiment in late 1864 but according to the online Soldiers and Sailors System of the National Park Service, it seems that William Sylla also served in the 67th Illinois Infantry during the war. He was a private in the 36th Illinois and was promoted from private to Quartermaster Sergeant in the 67th Illinois. Most likely he mustered in during 1861 for three years, got out and enlisted in the 67th Illinois for the rest of the war. That argues against the second flag in the Sylla family being taken at Nashville by the 36th Illinois.

The letter goes on to list some other artifacts that were also part of the package and it was signed by Barbara Davey Johnson, William Sylla's granddaughter, living in Elgin, Illinois. Who the package was sent to has been removed from the letter's first page as well as from the envelope the letter was mailed in.

Edward Sylla's service record and his resignation letter are also part of the collection coming with the flag.

Flag Details

The flag measures 49 inches on the hoist by 104 inches on the fly. The blue canton is made of a wool and cotton blend while the three bars are cotton. The thirteen stars are cotton and measure 3 inches across the points. The flag shows wear and lacks a hoist edge which may be due to its being torn from its staff when captured. There are some tears and a small repair on the lower red bar. The flag is entirely hand sewn.

The flag has been examined in detail by noted flag conservator Fonda Thomsen whose report certified its authenticity in great detail. Her report accompanies the flag.

Conclusion

This is a wonderful First National flag taken in battle by the 10th Illinois Infantry in the Island Number Ten Campaign. The flag was brought or sent home during the war by Captain Edward Sylla before or when he ended his service later in 1862 and remained in his family until 1960. It was most likely taken from Jeff Thompson's troops in the skirmish near Sikeston, Missouri at the start of the campaign as stated in an official report, an 1864 newspaper article and a post-war article in the *National Tribune*. The flag is already framed and ready for display.

Gregory G. Biggs

Military Historian
February 24, 2016

Bibliography

Books and Essays

- Bartels, Carolyn M., *The Civil War In Missouri Day By Day 1861-1865* (Two Trails Publishing, Shawnee Mission, 1992)
- Bennett, L.G. and Haigh, William M., *History of the Thirty-Sixth Regiment Illinois Volunteers, During the War of the Rebellion* (Prairie State Press, Marengo, 1999, reprint)
- Bentley, H. Blair, "Morale As A Factor in the Confederate Failure at Island Number Ten," *West Tennessee Historical Society Papers*, Vol. XXX1 (October 1977)
- Daniel, Larry J. and Bock, Lynn N., *Island No. 10: Struggle For The Mississippi Valley* (University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa, 1996)
- Dedmond, Glenn, *The Flags of Civil War Arkansas* (Pelican Publishing Company, Gretna, 2009)
- Dyer, Frederick H., *A Compendium of the War of the Rebellion* (Morningside House, Dayton, 1979)
- Gertais, Louis S., *The Civil War in Missouri: A Military History* (University of Missouri Press, Columbia, 2012)
- *Civil War St. Louis* University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, 2001)
- McGhee, James E., *Voices Of The Swamp Fox Brigade: Supplemental Letters, Orders and Documents of General M. Jeff Thompson's Command, 1861-1862* Two Trails Publishing, Independence, 1999)
- Moore, Frank, Ed., *The Rebellion Record, Volume Four* (G.P. Putnam, New York, 1862)
- Mueller, Doris Land, *M. Jeff Thompson: Missouri's Swamp Fox of the Confederacy* (University of Missouri Press, Columbia, 2007)
- Mullen, Jay Carlton, "Pope's New Madrid and Island Number 10 Campaigns," *Missouri Historical Review*, Vol. LIX, No. 3 (April 1965)
- Robinson, Lucy K., *Confederate Battle Flags in the Collection of the Old State House, A Museum of Arkansas History* (Old State House, Little Rock, 1988)
- Thompson, M. Jeff, *Civil War Reminiscences of Gen. M. Jeff Thompson* (Morningside House, Dayton, 1988, reprint)
- Westover, Dr. John Glendower, *Evolution of the Missouri Militia into the National Guard of Missouri, 1804-1919* (Messenger Printing & Publishing, St. Louis, 2005)
- White, Lonnie J., "Federal Operations At New Madrid and Island Number Ten," *West Tennessee Historical Society Papers*, Vol. XVII, (1963)
- Civil War Centennial Commission, *Tennesseans in The Civil War: A Military History of Confederate and Union Units, Volume 1* (Civil War Centennial Commission, Nashville, 1964)
- Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies in the War of the Rebellion, Volume Eight (Government Printing Office, Washington, 1883)

Newspapers

Alton (IL) Weekly Telegraph
Chicago Tribune
Detroit (MI) Daily Tribune
Grant County (Lancaster, WI) Herald
Indianapolis (IN) Daily Journal
Janesville (WI) Daily Gazette
Louisville (KY) Journal
Madison (WI) State Journal
Nashville Dispatch
National Tribune
New Orleans Times Picayune
Portsmouth (OH) Times
Quincy (IL) Daily Herald
Springfield (IL) State Journal
Springfield (IL) Daily State Register
Williamsport (PA) Republican

Other Sources

Email, Ken Legendre to author, June 2001
Emails, Howard Madaus to author, June 2000, June 2001, February 2004
Email, James McGhee to author, February 2016
Email, Anthony Rushing to author, October 2004

Greg Biggs Flag Files, Clarksville, TN
Eleanor Brockenbrough Library, Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond, VA
Howard Madaus Papers, U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, PA

Soldiers And Sailors System, National Park Service - <http://www.nps.gov/civilwar/search-soldiers.htm>