

APPEAL TO HEAVEN

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This is part of our new series – Texas Eagle Forum Devotionals (#TEFDevo)

The American Revolution was beginning in 1775. The British, the most powerful military in the world, was occupying Boston and problems in the colonies were rising. George Washington and the Continental Army were besieging British held Boston at the time. The British troops were trapped in the city and the only way to receive food and supplies was by sea. Washington wanted to harass and capture as many ships bringing supplies to the troops in Boston as possible, so he formed a small squadron of ships, outfitted at his own expense, for the task. Each schooner was to have a special flag flown from its mast. All boats were to have “*An Appeal to Heaven*” flags upon them. This flag, also known as “*Washington’s cruiser flag*.” was a white flag with an evergreen tree in the middle and the words “*An Appeal to Heaven*” stitched across.

On November 29, 1775, the USS Lee captured the British brigantine Nancy. Captain John Manley was given command of a schooner named the *USS Lee*, after General Charles Lee. The brigantine *Nancy* was a massive 250-ton British ship bringing supplies to Boston. Unknown to Captain Manley and the crew of the *USS Lee*, the ship was carrying



tons of ammunition and weapons. The prize was so great that it was said our country would have taken well over a year to produce. Not only was this the greatest capture of the entire Revolution, it also inspired all the founding fathers and the birth of our country's United States Navy as we know it today. The original schooners bearing the “*Appeal to Heaven*” flags continued capturing British ships and performing special services for the remainder of the war as our new Navy was being formed. In addition to the schooners, the flag was also flown on floating batteries, river banks, in towns, battlefields like Bunker Hill, and even places of most importance like our nation's capital in Philadelphia.



The Pine Tree, also known as the “*Tree of Peace*” has been sacred by the Iroquois Indians for over a thousand years in America. At a very troubling time in their history, a peacemaker united six great tribes from the Great Lake areas and established unity. This great treaty was symbolized by burying their weapons

under a pine tree and this tree was to be guarded by a bald eagle at its peak clutching six arrows.

The truth is, our founding fathers and early settlers were very much influenced by the Iroquois Indians. Just around the time of the signing of The Declaration, The Iroquois attended a Continental Congress meeting in Philadelphia. This meeting was one of the many where the Indians would inspire our founders to unite with them in their ways of living, laws, and style of government. It was just after this that the “*Tree of Peace*” became known as our new “*Liberty Tree*” and it would show itself on flags of all kinds, especially those in the fight for our freedom.

The phrase “*An Appeal to Heaven*” comes from John Locke from England. Locke was one of the great philosophers of his time. He, like other English Philosophers, was also influenced by the Iroquois in America. “*An Appeal to Heaven*” comes from his studies on “*Natural Laws*”, a system of right or justice common to all humankind and derived from nature rather than from the rules of society and the only judge is that of our Creator. Thomas Jefferson penned it well in our Declaration of Independence:



When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

As Texans and Americans, let us boldly make our Appeal To Heaven in this hour.

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