



This year Battery Park is again the focus of New York City's Parks & Recreation Department as petunias were planted at the rate of 7,000 a day to create a 40,000-flower Betsy Ross flag.

## A FLOWERFUL HISTORY LESSON

New York City is celebrating its role in American history by planting trees and flowers.

**F**ew places in the United States enjoy the rich American heritage that can be found in New York City. The Continental Congress designated New York as the country's first capital in 1788 and many of the critical events and battles of the War for Independence took place there.

More than 200 years later, the city's Parks Department is using trees and flowers to honor the people and events that shaped the city and, at the same time, our country.

Near Manhattan's Bowling Green, where an angry crowd pulled down a statue of King George III after a reading of the Declaration of

Independence, is City Hall Park.

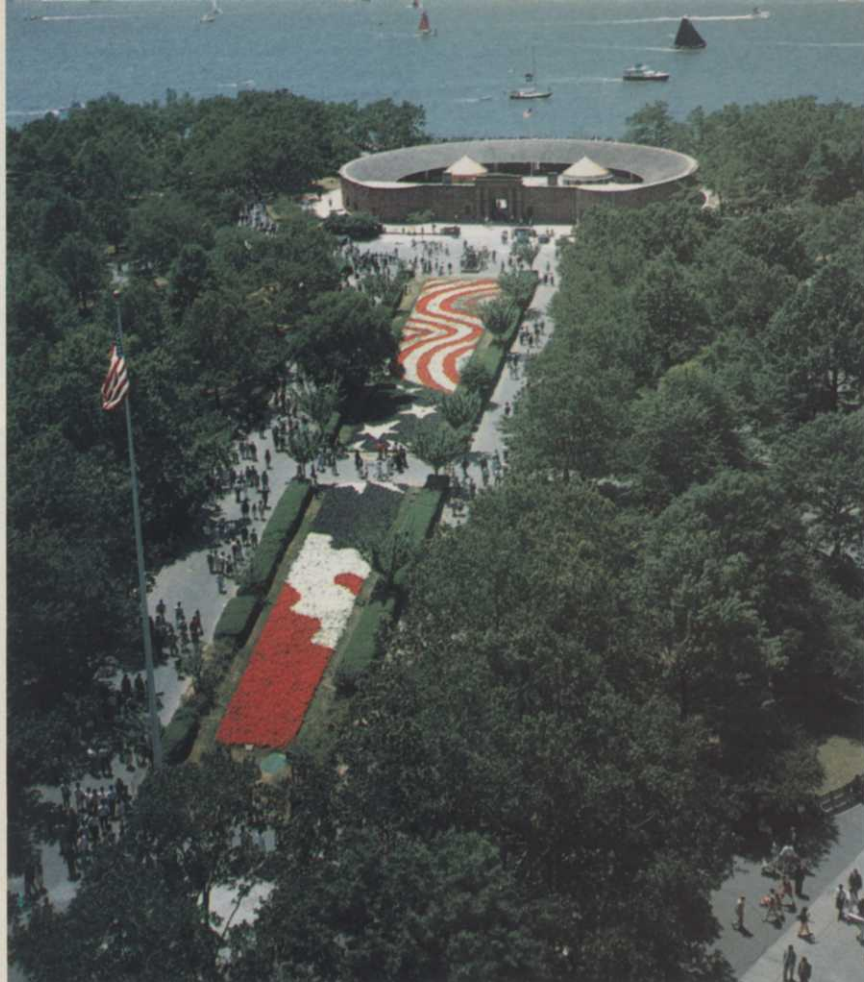
Although New York's present city hall wasn't built until 1811, on or near this site were military barracks, the area's first public school, an arsenal and other utilitarian buildings. In 1776 American fortifications bordered the area and Liberty Poles stood on the grounds. Later in the war, Nathan Hale was believed to have been hung from a tree there, as were other revolutionaries considered by the British to be seditionists.

Today the area is called City Hall Park and on this July Fourth celebration it will be decorated with ageratums and begonias arranged in

the patterns and colors of the American flag, thanks in part to the F.W. Woolworth Co., which sponsored the planting.

Nearby is Battery Park, named for the battery of cannon lining the shore. A special planting representing the French and American flags was planted for the 1986 centennial celebration of the Statue of Liberty, which is in clear view. There are 45,000 red, white and blue petunias planted by NYC Parks gardening crews in a 12,000 sq. ft. bed, symbolizing the unity of France and the United States.

In the past year the area was again planted in bold stars and



Battery Park was decorated with more than 40,000 red, white and blue petunias for the centennial celebration of the Statue of Liberty, which is in clear view from the park.

stripes. Petunias were planted at the rate of 7,000 a day to create a 40,000-flower Betsy Ross flag, and stars made of tulips were also added.

#### Historic trees

The Parks department also planted groves of 13 trees for each of the 13 original colonies at the site of historic houses in parks around the city. Native black tupelos were planted at Staten Island's Conference House (right), where on Sept. 11, 1776 Benjamin Franklin, John Adams and Edward Rutledge met with British Lord Admiral Richard Howe to negotiate peace (the British admiral offered to end the conflict if the colonies would return to British control. The Americans, of course, turned down Howe's offer).

Trees will be used to honor other famous houses, including the Linden trees at Van Cortland Manor in the Bronx, where the British held colonial patriots prisoner.

#### Historic parks

Franklinia trees were added to Thomas Paine Park in Manhattan,

once the front line of battle in the Revolutionary War. Groves of green mountain sugar maples were planted at John Paul Jones Park in Brooklyn and at Rufus King Manor in Queens, the former home of a drafter and signer of the Constitution.



Today it's a pleasant park in the heart of Manhattan where one can go to enjoy lunch. But only 200 years ago, City Hall Park was a hotbed of revolution, a site that hosted military barracks and Liberty poles. Ageratums, pansies and begonias planted this year bring the present and past together beautifully.

In Central Park's Strawberry Fields, a white pine was planted to commemorate the historic role of the Iroquois Six Nations, whose constitution served as a model for the U.S. Constitution. The Iroquois Six Nations are the oldest continual constitutional government on this continent. The first treaty George Washington signed with another government was with the Iroquois Nations in 1768, when the United States officially recognized Iroquois sovereignty. **LM**



At the southernmost tip of Staten Island is the Conference House, the site of a failed attempt to strike peace between the Americans and British in 1776. This year 13 native black tupelos were planted here, one for each of the original colonies.