

Broad Stripes and Bright Stars

Act Four

Video online at: <http://americanhistory.si.edu/starspangledbanner/Videos/Stars4.asx>

Codes:

A = Actor (Mary Pickersgill)

“ “ =interrupting, pause

[] = not speaker's words

A = So we've seen the stars to our flag, but what is the flag yet missing? The stripes; precisely so. The girls are working on them back at the house, but I happen to have one here to show you so that you will have an idea of what a grand undertaking this has been for all of us. I'm just going to set one edge right there and unfurl this stripe. Oh dear, still going. Here I am. Here we go, all the way back. Hello! Well, this is one of the longer stripes. It will sit below the canton. This stripe is forty-two feet long. Major Armistead wanted to make certain that the flag would be so large and long, it could be seen from a very great distance. We are hoping that it keeps all of those pesky British sailors far, far at sea. By the time this flag is completed, we will have fifteen stripes to match our fifteen stars. Again, going back to the last approved design of Congress in 1795. That's how the gentlemen decided the fifteen states of the day should be represented. Each of those stripes will be as this one is: two feet wide. I know you were not anticipating arithmetic today but, if we have fifteen stripes, each of those stripes are two feet wide. Can you tell me how tall the flag will be; thirty feet precisely so! The completed size of our flag will be forty-two feet fly by thirty feet hoist. Much larger then this tiny little row house on Queen Street which is why I must remove myself to the malt house of Clagiots Brewery. When my mother sees our flag, for her it is a symbol of liberty and freedom from the tyranny of the English crown. My daughter Caroline sees the flag. For her, it is hope and promise of a bright new future. For me, it sends a thrill through my body to think that though I am but a woman of humble means. This flag may some day serve to inspire others to the greatness for which so many have fought

and sacrificed. Well, I'm afraid time has gotten away from me. I must check on the girls to see how they are coming with the rest of the stripes. In a few brief weeks, you will be able to look out over the harbor here in Baltimore, Maryland and see this very flag flying ninety feet above Fort McHenry and know that you have helped these stars to shine just a bit brighter for your efforts today. I am your most humble and obedient servant Mary Pickersgill. God speed to you all on your journeys today. Thank you.