

HISTORY OF THE FLAG COLLECTION

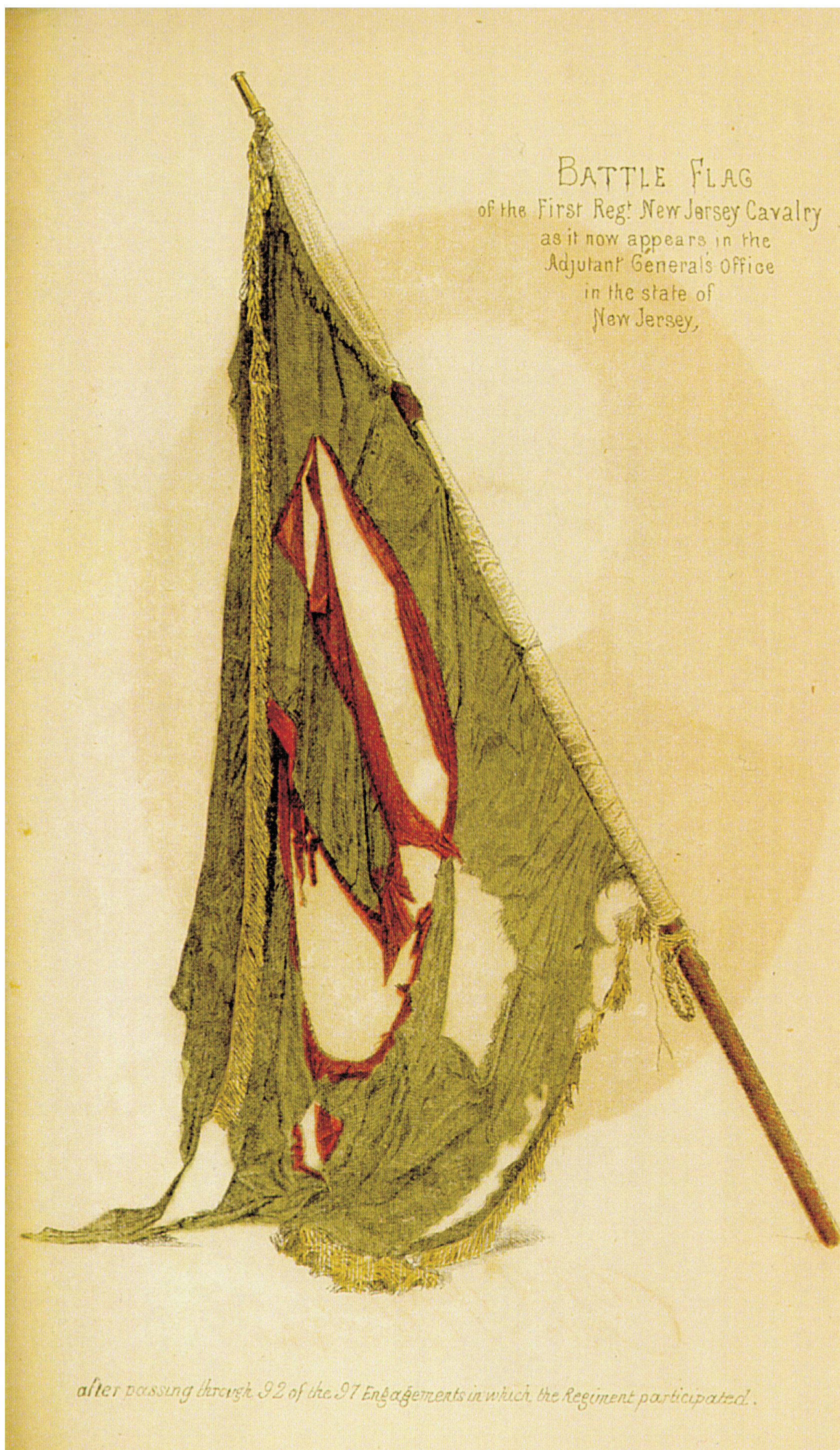
At the end of the Civil War, most regimental flags were proudly returned to the state capital and presented to the Adjutant General with fitting pomp and ceremony. These flags became the core of what we know today as the New Jersey State House Flag Collection. Some troops kept their flags, and some of these were later presented to local historical societies and other organizations.

Through the end of the 19th century, the Flag Collection was displayed in the State House. During a fire on March 21, 1885, the flags were rescued from the building. When the State House Annex was constructed in the 1920s, a special display area was installed in the lobby of that building.

About this time, the Civil War flags were conserved by a team of women who used a special method of sewing a grid of stitches across the weakened fabric to hold it together. On some flags the painted decoration was cut out and appliqued to a new backing fabric, and covered with netting and stitches to hold the existing bits in place. This treatment is no longer done because, in the long run, it further weakens the flag.

More than a century of display, exposure to light, and changes in temperature and humidity took their toll on the fragile flags. In 1985, the flags were removed for documentation and preservation by the State Museum while renovation was underway at the State House and Annex. Textile conservators made a condition survey of the collection; the flags were photographed, and then they were safely stored.

Today, New Jersey's Civil War flags are on display to the public once again. To protect the flags, the temperature and humidity in the gallery are controlled and the exhibition will change regularly to limit light exposure.



Regimental Color of the 1st Cavalry before restoration (Pyne, *The History of the First New Jersey Cavalry*).



No. 50 Fragment of National Color, 9th Infantry, showing netting used in the restoration process. This flag was made by Horstmann Brothers and was presented on October 8, 1861. The battle honors were added later.



No. 134 Confederate battle flag captured by the Second New Jersey Brigade at the battle of Chancellorsville on May 2, 1863. Most Confederate flags were made of cotton and have survived well to the present day. This flag, and most Union flags, were made of silk, which deteriorates badly over time.