

Arkansas

The current state flag is depicted below:



On 15 June 1836, Arkansas became the 25th state to join the union. As with many other states, the Arkansas state flag went through several variations.



The battleship U.S.S. Arkansas was to be commissioned and the Pine Bluff chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution voted to present an Arkansas State Flag to the ship. The committee dutifully sent a letter off to Secretary of State Earl W. Hodges to learn more about the flag. They received a reply to their letter explaining that Arkansas had no state flag.

The Pine Bluff Daughters decided that this situation had to be corrected and sponsored a statewide flag design contest. Secretary of State, Hodges chaired the committee to select the flag design and chose a distinguished group to assist him: Dr. Junius Jordan, the Chairman of Philosophy and Pedagogy at the University of Arkansas; Mrs. Julia McAlmont Noel, a member of the John McAlmont chapter of the D.A.R. in Pine Bluff; Miss Julia Warner, a teacher in the Little Rock school system, and Mrs. P.H. Ellsworth, a former president of the Arkansas Federation of Women's Clubs.

Sixty-five entries were received in different formats, from crayon drawings to miniature silk flags. Many of the entries featured the state flower, the Apple Blossom, in different settings. The entry chosen was a red, white and blue design by Miss Willie Hocker of Wabbaseka, a member of the Pine Bluff chapter of the D.A.R., where the idea for the contest originated.

The design depicted a large white diamond bordered by twenty-five stars on a blue band. A straight line of three blue stars was centered in the diamond. The flag committee thought the state's name should be on the flag. Miss Hocker agreed and suggested that the blue stars be re-arranged with one star above the name and two below.

The Arkansas Legislature adopted Miss Hocker's design as the official state flag of Arkansas. The U.S.S. Arkansas received this flag from the Pine Bluff chapter of the D.A.R....

Wait!... There's more.

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Trouble was brewing. The design committee had neglected to consider the role of Arkansas as a member of the Confederate States of America from 1861 to 1865. To correct this, in 1923 the Legislature voted to add another star above the state name. This fourth star was placed above the letter "R" in Arkansas and the original star above the name was moved to a position above the last "A" in Arkansas.

This time uproar came from those who claimed the addition of the fourth star compromised the original meaning and symmetry of the design. So, in 1924, the Arkansas Legislature addressed the design of the state flag again. The original three stars were moved below the state name and the additional star was centered above the state name. This is the way the flag is today.

The flag displays a white diamond on a red field. The white diamond is bordered by a band of blue containing twenty-five stars. The state name is centered in the diamond. Three stars are placed below the state name and one is centered above the state name.

The colors of the flag, red, white and blue associate the state with the United States of America. The three blue stars below the state name represent the three countries that the territory belonged to (France, Spain and the United States), the year (1803) that Arkansas was acquired by the United States as part of the Louisiana Purchase and that Arkansas was the third state created from the purchase. The two stars below and parallel to the state name represent the twin states, Arkansas and Michigan, both admitted to the union at about the same time: Arkansas on June 15, 1836 and Michigan on January 26, 1837. The single star above the state name represents Arkansas' membership in the Confederate States of America.

Twenty-five stars in the blue band represent Arkansas as the twenty-fifth state admitted to the union. The diamond signifies Arkansas as the only diamond-producing state in the nation.