

Iowa



Iowa was admitted as a State of the Union on December 28, 1846.

Iowa was never in a hurry to adopt a state flag as Iowans felt, after the Civil war, that the stars and stripes appropriately represented all of the United States. And so it was not until 1921, almost seventy-five years after the admission of Iowa into the Union, that a state flag was finally adopted by the Legislature.

Like many State flags, the Iowa flag began life as a regimental banner for State National Guardsman.

The impetus for adoption of the banner originated with Iowa National Guardsmen stationed along the Mexican border during World War I. The Guardsmen saw that units from other states carried identifying banners and the Iowans felt that they should possess a unique banner of to identify their origins. When Governor William L. Harding was made aware of this, he ordered that a banner be sent immediately to the Guardsmen, but soon found that Iowa did not have a State banner.

The Iowa Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution (D.A.R.) and its flag committee, headed by Mrs. Lue Prentiss of Knoxville, came to the rescue.

A design contest of sorts was held by the D.A.R. flag committee and in May, 1917 several design proposals, including at least two by members of the D.A.R., were offered to Governor William L. Harding and the State Council on National Defense by Mrs. Dixie Cornell Gebhardt, Organizing Regent of the Mary Marion Chapter D.A.R. in Knoxville, Mrs. Lue Prentiss, and others.

The flag design selected by Governor Harding and the State Council on Defense on May 11, 1917, was a design by Mrs. Gebhardt.

Mrs. Gebhardt wrote that "Iowa's banner should embrace the history of its domain from the time of its occupation by the Indians to discovery by the French and purchase from Napoleon by Jefferson, to its admission into the Union, down to the present time. All this should be represented in a design so simple that school children and adults can recognize its symbolism and know that it meant Iowa."² The colors offered other significance as well. White was chosen to symbolize the unwritten page of history at the state's beginning, when the first Native

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Americans lived on Iowa's prairies and represents purity. Blue represents loyalty, justice, and truth and red stands for courage.

An eagle is displayed on the white center stripe of the flag. The eagle carries in its beak blue streamers with the [state motto](#), "Our liberties we prize, and our rights we will maintain", inscribed on it in white letters. The State name "IOWA" is printed in red letters below the eagle. "Mothers feel that "Iowa" in the color of blood is a symbol of sacrifice our boys may make for us."²

After the selection was made, another committee was organized to prepare flags to present to each outgoing regiment of Iowa as well as those already in the field. The D.A.R. provided the funding for eight of these flags. One was sent to the "old Third Iowa, somewhere in France. Seven were presented by Governor Harding to the Iowa Units at Camp Cody."²

Early flags were manufactured by Annin and Company of New York City. Ten percent of every sale was donated to the American Red Cross for war relief purposes.

The Iowa Regimental Flag was adopted by the Iowa General Assembly as the State flag on March 29, 1921.

Iowa's Centennial was marked in 1946. On December 28 of that year, a three-cent stamp depicting the Iowa State Flag was issued, along with a first-day commemorative envelope with a picture of Gebhardt holding the original flag. The flag was also incorporated as part of the design for the Iowa State Centennial Seal.

The 75th anniversary of the adoption of the Iowa State flag was celebrated on March 29, 1996. A monument to honor the flag and Dixie Cornell Gebhardt was erected at 217 South Second Street in Knoxville. It was determined by the Iowa Sesquicentennial Commission that the site was the home of Gebhardt when she designed the State flag.

Gebhardt died on October 16, 1955, in Knoxville, and is interred at Graceland Cemetery.

The original flag design, in crayon, is on display in the Marion County courthouse.

The city of [Knoxville](#), County Seat of Marion County, calls itself the "Birthplace of the Iowa Flag."

Source: http://www.netstate.com/states/symb/flags/ia_flag.htm