

Kentucky



Kentucky's State flag was authorized on March 26, 1918. The 1918 act specified that the flag be made of "...navy blue silk or bunting, with the seal of the Commonwealth of Kentucky encircled by a wreath of goldenrod, embroidered, printed or stamped on the center thereof."

Dimensions of the flag were not specified but were allowed to vary. Evidently, the law was not specific enough to produce a satisfactory flag, but it wasn't until 1962 that this was remedied.

In 1917, the U.S. War Department selected Louisville as the site for a huge military camp. [Camp Zachary Taylor](#), a training camp for soldiers heading off to the Great War (World War I), opened 90 days later. It was one of sixteen national army camps in the U.S. Camp Zachary Taylor trained over 125,000 men during World War I. It was closed in 1920, after the war.

The first State flag was made in 1920 for a ceremony at Camp Zachary before the property was sold. Nobody was pleased with the flag and, after the ceremony, a committee was formed to review it and offer suggestions for improvement. Unfortunately, the work of the committee was lost or forgotten on its way to the Governor for his approval. The Camp Zachary flag eventually ended up in the custody of the Kentucky Historical Society in Frankfort. It was several years before the issue of a State flag was addressed again.

Governor Flem D. Sampson was sworn in as Governor of Kentucky in 1927. The forgotten State flag was required for another military ceremony.

Without reference to the early committee work, the Secretary of the Kentucky Historical Society, Jouett Cannon commissioned Frankfort art teacher, Jesse Cox Burgess to provide the design work from which a State flag could be fashioned. Three flags were made from Burgess' ink and oil artwork by a Philadelphia company. Only two of these flags ever made it back to Frankfort however. The other was lost during use in a Chicago ceremony.

In 1961, Kentucky Adjutant General, Major Taylor L. Davidson launched a project to codify a specific design for Kentucky's flag. In the interest of finalizing the flag design, research was completed on the history and design of the earlier State flags and artist Harold Collins produced three color designs that were presented to Governor Bert T. Combs for his approval.

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Once Governor Combs had selected a design, a template was created and a detailed bill was drawn up by Major Davidson for introduction in the Kentucky Legislature. To eliminate future uncertainties about the design, detailed drawings were included with the bill.

In 1962, these amendments to the 1918 law were adopted by the Kentucky Legislature, going into effect on June 14, 1962.

State Representative Brent Yonts of Greenville introduced House Bill No. 743 in 1998 to "Amend KRS 2.030 to permit, rather than require, that the emblem of a Kentucky cardinal be at the head of a flagstaff used to display the state flag." The amendment changed the word "shall" in 2.030, section 3, was changed to "may." House Bill No. 743 died in committee.

The Kentucky State flag, longer than other State flags, displays a rendition of the [Seal of the Commonwealth](#) centered on a field of blue.

Kentucky's official seal was adopted in 1792, six months after Kentucky gained statehood. The seal is a simple rendition of two men, one in buckskin, and the other in more formal dress. The two men are facing each other and clasping hands. The outer ring of the seal is adorned with the words "Commonwealth of Kentucky", and within the inner circle is the motto "United we stand, Divided we fall."

The official act of the General Assembly in December 1792 stated: Be it enacted by the General Assembly, that the Governor be empowered and is hereby required to provide at the public charge a seal for this Commonwealth; and procure the same to be engraved with the following device, viz; "Two friends embracing, with the name of the state over their heads and around about the following motto: United we stand, divided we fall."

The two men on the seal haven't stood still for two centuries, however. Various versions have pictured both men dressed in buckskin, or both men in formal dress, men with and without hats, men with beards, men with wigs, and hand clasps that have ranged from simple handshakes to full embraces.

Sources:

http://www.netstate.com/states/symb/flags/ky_flag.htm

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