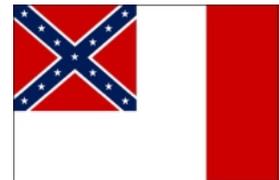


# Louisiana



On 30 April 1812, Louisiana became the eighteenth state to join the Union.

Almost fifty years later, Louisiana became one of a list of states that formally seceded from the Union and, for two months afterward and before joining the Confederate Union, Louisiana flew the flag of an independent nation. This flag, shown to the left, was a modified version of the national flag.

During the Civil War, Louisiana flew the two national flags of the Confederate States of America (CSA). The First National Flag (Stars and Bars) was used from 1861 to 1863. Concern over the similarity of the Confederate flag to the flag of the United States led to a change in design and the Second National Flag. Difficulty distinguishing the Stars and Bars from the Stars and Stripes from a distance, particularly in battle, was one reason given for the change.

The Second National Flag (Stainless Banner) was used beginning in 1863. As with the Stars and Bars, some saw shortcomings with the Stainless Banner. Though the official specification for the flag detailed in the Flag Act of 1863 described a flag whose length was twice as long as its width, the flag was often shortened to a more traditional dimension. Some have said this was to prevent the white flag for being mistaken for a flag of surrender.

In the late months of the Civil War, on March 4, 1865, CSA President Jefferson Davis signed a bill creating a third design for the Confederate National Flag, but it is not certain how many of these flags were made or if any were actually raised. This third flag's width was designated to be two thirds its length; a more traditional shape than the Stainless Banner. The field remained white but the outer half of the field consisted of a vertical red band.

The Louisiana flag originated from an 1800 design, but was officially adopted by the Louisiana State Legislature on July 1, 1912. It displays the state bird, the Eastern Brown Pelican, from the state seal, in

white and gold, on a field of blue. The mother pelican is shown tearing flesh from her own breast to feed her three young. Louisiana's motto, "UNION, JUSTICE & CONFIDENCE" is printed in blue letters on a white and gold banner below the pelicans.

The pelican has been a symbol of Louisiana since the 1800's and, in fact, one of the state's nicknames is "The Pelican State." Early settlers in the area found pelicans to be generous and nurturing birds and it was believed that, when food was scarce, pelicans would tear at their breasts with their beaks to feed some of their blood to their young.