

Maryland



On 28 April 1788, Maryland became the 7th colony to ratify the U.S. Constitution by a vote of 63-11.

Officially adopted by law on March 9, 1904, the Maryland State Flag is the only state flag based on heraldic emblems. The design of the flag is taken from the shield in the coat of arms of the Calvert family, the colonial proprietors of the state of Maryland. The coat of arms adopted by George Calvert, the first Lord Baltimore, included a shield that combined the yellow and black colors of his paternal family and the red and white colors of his maternal family, the Crosslands. (NOTE: There is contention that the red and white colors identified as those of the Crosslands is a misrepresentation. It is said that the colors are those of the Mynne family, the family name of Anne Calvert, wife of George Calvert.)

The arms of the Calvert and Crossland (Mynne) families are displayed in diagonally opposing quadrants of the flag.

From the colonial period, before the revolution, the only mention of a Maryland flag describes it as a display of the yellow and black Calvert family colors. After the revolution, the use of the Calvert flag was discontinued and various flags and banners were flown to represent the state. Though no official state flag was designated, the most popular representation seems to have been that of the state seal on a blue background. Evidence shows that these flags were flown in the state until the late 1890's.

In 1854, a law was passed to create a new state seal based on the Calvert family colors and design. Yellow and black banners and flags started re-appearing across the state. These "Baltimore colors" or "Maryland colors", as they were called, were not officially adopted by the state but became very popular and a unique symbol of the state of Maryland.

After the election of Abraham Lincoln in 1861, Maryland, like many other states found itself torn between its allegiance to the Union and its sympathies with the southern states. Maryland, however, did remain in the Union.

It is thought that during this volatile time in the history of Maryland, the red and white Crossland colors began to gain popularity among the southern sympathizers in the state. As a symbol of resistance to the Union and President Lincoln, the red and white Crossland colors became the Maryland "secession colors" and were reproduced in banners and even children's clothing.

During the Civil War itself, the Crossland colors in the cross bottony configuration were used by Confederate soldiers to identify their birthplace.

The Civil War finally came to an end and the yellow and black Calvert colors and the red and white Crossland colors had become clearly representative of the state of Maryland. As soldiers returned to their home, a slow process of healing and reconciliation began for the people of war-torn Maryland.

A new symbol began to emerge displayed at public events across the state. A flag displaying the colors, that had once symbolized the divisions between the citizens of Maryland, came to represent the reconciliation and reunion of all of the citizens in the state. The designer and the date of origin of the current state flag incorporating four quadrants alternating between the yellow and black of the Calvert arms and the red and white of the Crossland arms is unknown. The design derived from the Calvert coat of arms was flown October 11, 1880, in Baltimore, at a parade celebrating the 150th anniversary of the founding of the city. It was also flown October 25, 1888 at the Gettysburg battlefield, in a ceremony dedicating monuments to members of the Maryland regiments of the Army of the Potomac.

In October 1889, the Fifth Regiment, Maryland National Guard, adopted a flag in this form as its regimental colors and became the first organization to adopt officially what is today the Maryland flag.