

# Mississippi



Mississippi became the 20<sup>th</sup> state in the union on 10 December 1817. It has a storied history with many flags. The current flag is listed above. The flags that have flown or been proposed as flags for the state of Mississippi are depicted below with the historical perspective in the paragraphs which follow.



"Bonnie Blue Flag"



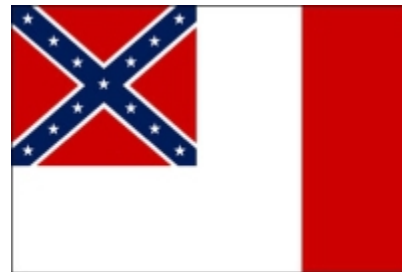
Sovereign Republic of Mississippi flag



First National Flag: Stars and Bars 1861



Second National Flag: Stainless Banner 1863



Third National Flag of the Confederacy



# Mississippi

## 2001 Flag proposal

When Mississippi seceded from the union on January 9th of 1861, the Confederate States of America did not exist. And so, like other southern neighbors, Mississippi became a sovereign State.

After secession, Mississippians of the six coastal counties reverted to a flag flown over the short-lived Republic of Florida back in 1810. The Republic of Florida flag depicted a single white star on a blue field. This flag was the "Bonnie Blue Flag" referred to in a [popular marching song](#).

In a couple of weeks however, on January 26, 1861, the Mississippi secession convention adopted an official flag for the Sovereign Republic of Mississippi. Referred to as "The Magnolia Flag" the flag depicted a Magnolia tree on a white field, sometimes with a red fringe or bar on the [fly](#). This flag also incorporated the Bonnie Blue image in the canton corner. Though Mississippi flew the flags of the Confederate States of America from 1861 to 1865, the Magnolia Flag actually remained the "official" flag for 33 years.

During the Civil War, Mississippi 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 legislation that led to the adoption of an official State flag was approved on February 7, 1894. The legislation authorized a committee to design a State flag and authorized that this flag should become the State flag. The committee recommended a flag

"...with width two-thirds of its length; with a union square, in width two-thirds of the width of the flag; the ground of the union to be red and a broak blue saltier thereon, bordered with white and emblazoned with thirteen (13) mullets or five-pointed stars, corresponding with the original number of States of the Union; the field to be divided into there bars of equal width, the upper one blue, the center one white, and the lower one, extending the whole length of the flag, red--the national colors; the staff surmounted with a spear-head, and a battle-axe below; the flag to be fringed with gold, and the staff gilded with gold."<sup>1</sup>

Mississippi had a new flag to replace the "Magnolia flag" adopted in 1861. The official description of the flag is quite interesting providing some food for thought.

The [canton](#) of the flag, sometimes referred to as the Confederate battle flag, is actually referred to as the "union square" in the original description.

The thirteen stars, sometimes said to represent the number Confederate States and those that might have been Confederate, are said to represent the "original number of States of the Union;" in the original description.

The [field](#) of the flag consists of the same three bar theme as the "Stars and Bars" but the top stripe is blue. The colors of these three bars are said to represent the "national colors."

# Mississippi

This flag served the State for 107 years when, in 2001, Governor David Ronald (Ronnie) Musgrove signed House Bill No. 524 on January 12, 2001.

AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR A STATEWIDE SPECIAL ELECTION FOR THE PURPOSE OF SELECTING THE OFFICIAL FLAG OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI; TO SET THE DATE OF APRIL 17, 2001, FOR THE STATEWIDE SPECIAL ELECTION; TO ALLOW THE ELECTORATE TO VOTE FOR ONE OF TWO FLAG DESIGNS; TO SPECIFY THAT ONE OF THE DESIGNS SHALL BE THE 1894 FLAG DESIGN AND THAT THE OTHER SHALL BE A PROPOSED NEW DESIGN; ...

This bill was precipitated by a series of design proposals intended to remove the representation of the Confederate battle flag from the canton corner of the current State flag. Some Mississippians were offended by the official design and proposed a new design they thought would be more acceptable to the entire populace of the State. The legislature and the Governor decided to put an end to the controversy over the State flag and passed a law that would put the design of the Mississippi State Flag to a vote. This vote would determine whether the State flag that had flown over Mississippi for 107 years would continue to fly over the State or whether a new design would be raised over the State capitol. The vote was scheduled for April 17, 2001.

The new State flag design was similar to the 1894 design except that the canton corner color was changed from red to blue and the representation of the Confederate Battle Flag was replaced with 19 small white stars surrounding one large white star. The 19 small stars represented the number of states that were already part of the Union when Mississippi joined in 1817. The large white five-pointed star in the center represented the State of Mississippi.

When all the votes were counted the message was clear. The 107 year old Mississippi State Flag would continue to fly over the State. The vote, nearly 2-1, sent a clear message that most Mississippians valued the historic symbolism of the 1894 flag

Source: [http://www.netstate.com/states/symb/flags/ms\\_flag.htm](http://www.netstate.com/states/symb/flags/ms_flag.htm)