

The Confederate Flag

The flags of the Confederacy have a history of three successive designs. The flags were known as the "Stars and Bars", used from 1861 to 1863, the "Stainless Banner", used from 1863 to 1865, and the "Blood-Stained Banner", used in 1865 shortly before the Confederacy's dissolution. A rejected national flag design was also used as a battle flag by the Confederate Army and featured in the "Stainless Banner" and "Blood-Stained Banner" designs. Ironically, although this design was never the official national flag of the Confederacy, it is the most commonly recognized symbol of the Confederacy [shown below].

Since the end of the Civil War, private and official use of the Confederacy's flags, particularly the battle flag, has continued amid controversy in the United States. These include flags displayed in states; cities, towns and counties; schools, colleges and universities; private organizations and associations; and individuals. The battle flag was also featured in the state flags of Georgia and Mississippi, although it was removed from the former in 2001 and the latter in 2020. After the former was changed, the city of Trenton, Georgia has used a flag design nearly identical to the previous version with the battle flag.

An historical note: although most people today believe that the Civil War was fought over slavery, actually the two overriding issues were economics and states' rights. With the latter, for example, Northerners tended to believe in a strong national government, whereas Southerners tended to believe in strong state governments. The South also wanted to expand slavery into the western states; the North was against it. The election of a Republican, Abraham Lincoln, as President in 1860 without a single Southern electoral vote, was a clear signal to the Southern states that they had lost all influence.

Feeling excluded from the political system, they turned to the only alternative they believed was left to them: secession, a political decision that led directly to war. [<https://www.pbs.org/opb/historydetectives/feature/>]

