

Flag designs submitted to the Confederate States Congress

Devereaux Cannon, 11 July 1998

Most of these proposals were sent to the Congress in February 1861. The first flag of the Confederate States of America was adopted on 4 March 1861.

For each proposal I will include, if known, the name and place of residence of the designer, and the date the design was sent to the Congress.

Each design is given a designator number, such as . The number <4> indicates the number assigned to the submission in the archives of the Confederate States Congress Committee on Flag and Seal (currently to be found in the National Archives of the United States). The letter designator indicates that it is the first of several designs proposals submitted by the same person.

CS 1

Submitted by Robert Newman. A horizontal tri-bar of red/blue/white. The 15 white stars representing each of the States of the USA in which slavery was legal, which Mr. Newman hoped would eventually compose the Southern Confederacy.

CS 2

Submitted by "A Gentleman of Louisville, Kentucky." This is a design theme which will be seen in a number of submissions. The colors of the U.S. Stars and Stripes are reversed. The "gentleman" says that the 7 blue stripes represent the first seven States forming the CSA. The number of white stars is to increase as new States join the CSA.

CS 3

Submitted by M. P. O'Connor of Charleston, South Carolina in a letter to Congressman Wm. P. Miles, dated 12 Feb. 1862. Miles represented Charleston in the CS Congress, and was also chairman of the Committee on Flag and Seal. Mr. O'Connor did not send a drawing, but suggested that the new flag "reverse the colors of the old U.S. flag. Blue and white stripes with red union and white stars in the Union." The result is a flag very similar to CS 2.

CS 4A

Submitted by A. Bonand of Savannah, Georgia on 16 Feb. 1861. Mr. Bonand submitted two designs. This first one, featuring a saltire, might have influenced the design by Congressman Miles of the flag which became the Confederate Battle Flag.

CS 4B

Also submitted by A. Bonand. Obviously influenced by the U.S. flag. The six points of the stars were to represent the six States which organized the CSA on 8 Feb. 1861. (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina.) The seven stripes represent the seven States in the CSA at the time of the flag's adoption, the first six plus Texas. The number of stars was to increase as new States were admitted.

CS 5

The designer of this flag is unknown. The placing of a yellow sun in part over a white field is a good example of why the rules of heraldry discourage placing color on color and metal on metal.

CS 7

The unknown designer of this flag has obviously borrowed from the Stars & Stripes. The seven stripes would represent the original seven States of the CSA, and the number of stars would increase as new States were admitted.

CS 9A

Submitted by Wm. T. Riddle of Eutaw, Alabama on 21 Feb 1861. The plant in the second and third quarters of the shield is a cotton plant. The stars in the first quarter represent the original seven States. Presumably the stars in the fourth quarter would represent additional States admitted to the CSA.

CS 9B

Also submitted by Wm. T. Riddle, but designed by Mrs. Irene Riddle. My guess is that the number of stars on the shield would correspond in number to the number of States admitted to the CSA.

CS 9C

Also submitted by Wm. T. Riddle. He added a note that the "Center Star may be red in a white square."

CS 10

This flag was submitted by Mrs. Aurelia W. Longmire of Csyha, Pike County, Mississippi, on 20 Feb. 1861. She wrote that the white was to represent innocence, the sky blue "Lasting love". The crescent was to represent the Confederacy, and of course, the stars are the member States. This is the first of a number of submissions featuring a crescent. I do not know the origin of the use of the crescent in the Southern States, but by 1861 it was well established. It can be found used as a sort of national icon, including use on flags, by South Carolina during the rebellion against King George in the 1770s. It is also to be found in the state seal of Missouri, and in New Orleans. There were be a number of other CS flag proposals using this feature, as you will see.

CS 13

This flag submitted by Samuel White is another one derived from the Stars & Stripes. Once again you see the crescent used.

CS 14

The author of this one is unknown. A very simple yet effective design, although I do not like having elements in the fly of a flag.

CS 15A

This design was submitted by L. P. Honour of the Charleston (South Carolina) Insurance and Trust Company on 2 March 1861. Except for the star arrangement, it is identical to **CS 7**.

CS 15B

Another design by L. P. Honour, perhaps inspired by the ensign of the United States Revenue Service.

CS 16

This flag was submitted by Robert C. Gilchrist of Charleston, who prior to secession had been Commission of the United States District Court and Commissioner of the United States Court of Claims in the U.S. Judicial District for South Carolina. This submission was made on 4 Feb. 1861, the day the convention which created the CSA began meeting in Montgomery, Alabama. The design, both because of its early submission, and because of the prominence of its author, received a bit of press coverage in South Carolina and perhaps elsewhere. This flag also generated some public objections. A letter addressed to South Carolina's delegation at the Congress by the Jews of Charleston requested that the new national flag not contain a sectarian emblem. Evangelical protestants of that day also objected to the use of crosses as being too "Romish".

CS 128A

This design was submitted by Julie Bounetheau of Charleston, South Carolina, on 24 February 1861.

CS 128B

This design was submitted by Julie Bounetheau of Charleston, South Carolina, on 24 February 1861.