

# FLAG

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The following article is taken from the publication entitled Louisiana, Volume 1, page 406-407, Edited by Alcee Fortier, LIT. D, Professor of Romance Languages, Tulane University, Century Historical Association, 1914

Prior to the War Between the States Louisiana had no state standard, but on February 11, 1861, the state convention adopted a state flag. It has been described as “consisting of a red ground, upon which appears a single star of pale yellow. The ground is crossed by bars of blue, white and red, making of the three colors thirteen stripes.” On the occasion of its adoption the chairman of the committee, J. K. Elgee, of Rapides parish, spoke as follows: “We dedicate the thirteen stripes upon our flag to the memory of those whose unconquerable love of freedom has taught us, this day, how peacefully to vindicate our rights and protect our liberties. The committee, too, could not forget that another race, bold, warlike and adventurous, had planted the first colony of white men on the shores of Louisiana; the name of our state, that of our city, nay, even the morning roll-call of the convention, as it summoned us to our duties, bade us remember that some tribute was due to the children and descendants, of the founders of the colony—the blue, the white, the red, emblems of hope, virtue, and valor, to the memory of those who first on this soil laid the foundation of an empire. Still another race and another nation remained, who equally demanded recognition in a flag destined to be national. If to France we are indebted for the foundation of the colony, Spain merits an acknowledgment at our hands, for by her was the infant structure built up. Her mild and paternal rule is yet spoken of by the oldest inhabitant, whilst the great body of our law stands this day a monument of her wisdom. To the children of Spain we dedicate the colors of red and yellow, which we have woven into our plan. The star cannot fail to remind you that Louisiana has arisen to take her place in the political firmament. Uniting, then, our three distinct nationalities into one, we present a flag which carries with it a symbol dear to every American, whether it is at the last hour of dissolution, or the dawn of a new birth—it is the badge of Union.”

On the 12th the flag was formally inaugurated with dramatic ceremonies at New Orleans. Two brigades of troops were drawn up in Lafayette Square, and at 11 o'clock a.m. they stood at “present arms” while the new ensign was hoisted over the city hall. The bells of the city rang out a joyful peal, the multitude responded with cheers, and the Washington Artillery fired a salute of 21 guns. Had the Confederacy been successful in establishing the independence of the south, this flag would have doubtless remained the state standard, but since the war, by common consent it would seem, the blue flag is usually displayed as the emblem of Louisiana. Both were glorified in song and story during the war.