

The story of the Lone Star Flag began in Spain's West Florida colony, a territory stretching from the Mississippi river eastward to the Perdido River which marks Florida's present day western border with Alabama. The territory was bounded on the South by the Gulf of Mexico and Lake Pontchartrain and to the North by the 31<sup>st</sup> parallel. This territory had been ceded to Britain by France in 1763 at the end of the French and Indian War but under the 1783 Treaty of Paris Britain ceded the territory to Spain.



In the early 1800s West Florida was inhabited by settlers of Scots-Irish and English descent whom the region's Spanish commandant described as “inclined to insubordination and prone to insurgency.” Many of them had been loyalist Tories that fled the American Revolution and sought refuge in the region when it was a British territory.

In 1804 a revolt against Spanish rule of West Florida was led by the Kemper brothers. The Kemper Rebellion was crushed by the Spanish but the English speaking people of the region continued to push for some degree of traditional English liberties under their Spanish rulers. In June of 1810 several meetings, both secret and public were held with the object of calling governor Don Carlos Duhalde de Lassus to hold a convention.

While pretending to agree to a convention and hear the grievances of his Anglo-Celtic subjects, governor de Lassus secretly sent word to East Florida to send troops to help put down what he believed to be a threat to his authority.

Upon learning of this treachery the Anglo-Celtic patriot's demands for a convention turned to cries for rebellion. The revolution began on 23 September, 1810 when the rebels led by Philemon Thomas marched on the Spanish fort at Baton Rouge. As their symbol of independence they carried a rectangular blue flag with a single white star in its center representing the new Republic. This flag had been sewn a few days earlier by Mrs. Melissa Johnson, wife of Major Isaac Johnson, commander of the West Florida Dragoons.

After a brief attack with 5 Spanish casualties and none to the rebels the Lone Star Flag was raised over Baton Rouge. Governor de Lassus was imprisoned and the President of the convention, John Rhea signed a Declaration of Independence on 26 September.

In its first act of imperial disregard for the sovereignty of nations, the United States saw that, with Spain out of the way, it could annex the Republic of West Florida with no harm to itself. President James Madison issued a proclamation on 26 October, 1810 claiming the territory for the United States. On 6 December of that year the United States entered the Republic's capitol of St. Francisville, lowered the Lone Star Flag and raised the Stars and Stripes. For 74 days the Lone Star Flag represented the Republic of West Florida as a sovereign and independent nation. 51 years later the Lone Star Flag was resurrected and given a new name, the Bonnie Blue Flag.



The Bonnie Blue Flag

Having been a part of the old Republic of West Florida might have inspired the new Republic of Mississippi to raise the Lone Star Flag over her state capitol of Jackson on January 9, 1861 when she seceded from the United States.

An Irish borne actor by the name of Harry McCarthy was so inspired by the sight of this flag waving over the capitol that he wrote a song titled “The Bonnie Blue Flag” which became the second most popular song in the Confederacy after “Dixie.”

On January 10<sup>th</sup> 1861, one day after Mississippi's secession, Florida seceded and quickly hoisted again the Bonnie Blue Flag as a symbol of her independence from the Union.

Florida's first unofficial State flag incorporated the Bonnie Blue Flag in its canton. Known as the Chase Flag after the commander of Florida State troops, Colonel William H. Chase, the above provisional flag of Florida was raised over the captured Pensacola naval yard. It has been said that Chase's troops cut the canton from a U.S. Flag and replaced it with the center of the Bonnie Blue.

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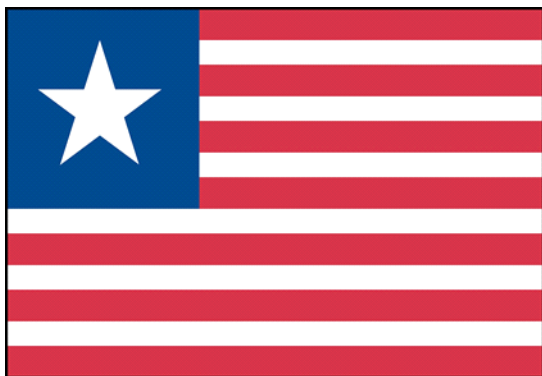


**Florida League of the South**  
Post Office Box 37338  
Jacksonville, Florida 32336



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Thus, the single star represented the State of Florida's separation and independence from the United States. This provisional flag was adopted on 13 January, 1861 and was used until an official State flag was adopted on 13 September, 1861.



The Chase Flag

Though the Bonnie Blue Flag was never adopted by the Confederate government it was adopted by the Southern people, serving as a symbol of independence and sovereignty for the seceding Southern States. Besides the above Florida example, it was incorporated into the State flags of 4 other Southern states to include Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas and North Carolina. To this day, Texas and North Carolina still retain the Lone Star Flag in their State flags.

With today's ever growing tyranny rising out of Washington, DC and irreconcilable differences between the liberal, Progressive Blue States to the North and West and the traditional, conservative Red States of the South, the Bonnie Blue Flag is being raised again by Florida nationalists. Resistance to tyranny is a trait of Floridians and the Bonnie Blue Flag is the flag of her patriots.

## **The Bonnie Blue Flag**



**Florida's Traditional Symbol  
of Freedom and  
Resistance to Tyranny**

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