

Box 94
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REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE ADOPTION OF A FLAG FOR THE CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA.

Provisional Congress---First Session.
TWENTY-SIXTH DAY.

MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA, MARCH 5TH, 1861.

Mr. MILES, of South Carolina, submitted the following:

The Committee appointed to select a proper flag for the Confederate States of America, beg leave to report: That they have given the subject due consideration, and carefully inspected all the designs and models submitted to them. The number of these has been immense, but they may be divided into two great classes. First, those which copy and preserve the principal features of the United States flag, with slight and unimportant modifications. Second, those which are very elaborate, complicated, or fanatical. The objection to the first class is, that none of them, at any considerable distance, could readily be distinguished from the one they imitate. Whatever attachment may be felt from association for the "Stars and Stripes" (an attachment which your Committee may be permitted to say they do not all share), it is manifest that, in inaugurating a new Government, we cannot retain the flag of the Government from which we have withdrawn, with any propriety, or without encountering very obvious practical difficulties. There is no propriety in retaining the ensign of a Government which, in the opinion of the States composing this Confederacy, had become so oppressive and injurious to their interests as to require their separation from it. It is idle to talk of "keeping" the flag of the United States when we have voluntarily seceded from them. It is superfluous to dwell upon the practical difficulties which would follow from the fact of two distinct and probably hostile Governments, both employing the same or very similar flags. It would be a political and military solecism. It would produce endless confusion and mistakes. It would lead to perpetual disputes. As to the "glories of the old flag," we must bear in mind that the battles of the revolution, about which our fondest and proudest memories cluster, were not fought beneath its folds, and although in more recent times—in the war of 1812, and in the war with Mexico—the South did win her fair share of glory, and shed her full measure of blood under its guidance and in its defence, we think the impartial page of history will preserve and commemorate the fact more imperishably than a mere piece of striped bunting. When the Colonies achieved their independence of the "mother country" (which up to the last they fondly called her), they did not desire to retain the British flag, or any at all similar to it. Yet under that flag they had been planted, and nurtured, and fostered. Under that flag they had fought in their infancy for their very existence against more than one determined foe. Under it they had repelled and driven back the relentless savage, and carried it farther and further into the decreasing wilderness as the standard of civilization and religion. Under it the youthful Washington won his spurs in the memorable and unfortunate expedition of Braddock, and Americans helped to plant it on the heights of Abraham, where the immortal Wolfe fell, covered with glory, in the arms of victory. But our forefathers, when they separated themselves from Great Britain—a separation not on account of their hatred of the English Constitution, or English institutions, but in consequence of the tyrannical and *unconstitutional* rule of Lord North's administration, and because their destiny beckoned them on to independent expansion and achievement—cast no lingering, regretful looks behind. They were proud of their race and lineage, proud of their heritage in the glories, and genius, and language of Old England, but they were influenced by the spirit of the motto of the great Hampden, "*vestigia nulla retrorsum*." They were determined to build up a new power among the nations of the world. They, therefore, did not attempt to "keep the old flag." We think it good to imitate them in this comparatively little matter, as well as to emulate them in greater and more important ones.

The Committee, in examining the representations of the flags of all countries, found that Liberia and the Sandwich Islands had flags so similar to that of the United States, that it seemed to them an additional, if not in itself a conclusive evidence that we should not "keep, copy, or imitate it." They felt no inclination to borrow at second hand, what had been pilfered and appropriated by a free negro community, and a race of savages. It must be admitted, however, that something was conceded by the Committee to what seemed so strong and earnest a desire to retain at least a *suggestion* of the old "stars and stripes." So much for the mass of models and designs, more or less copied from or assimilated to the United States flag.

With reference to the second class of designs—those of an elaborate and complicated character—(but many of them showing considerable artistic skill and taste)—the Committee will merely remark, that however pretty they may be when made by the cunning skill of a fair lady's fingers in silk, satin, and embroidery, they are not appropriate as flags. A flag should be simple, readily made, and above all, capable of being made up in bunting. It should be different from the flag of any other country, place, or people. It should be significant. It should be readily distinguishable at a distance. The colors should be well contrasted and durable, and, lastly, and not the least important point, it should be effective and handsome.

The Committee humbly think that the flag which they submit combines these requisites. It is very easy to make. It is entirely different from any national flag. The three colors of which it is composed, red, white, and blue, are the true republican colors. In heraldry they are emblematic of the three great virtues of valor, purity, and truth. Naval men assure us that it can be recognized and distinguished at a great distance. The colors contrast admirably and are lasting. In effect and appearance it must speak for itself.

Your Committee, therefore, recommend that the flag of the Confederate States of America shall consist of a red field with a white space extending horizontally through the center, and equal in width to one third the width of the flag. The red spaces, above and below, to be of the same width as the white. The Union blue extending down through the white space, and stopping at the lower red space. In the center of the union a circle of white stars, corresponding in number with the States in the Confederacy. If adopted, long may it wave over a brave, a free, and a happy people. May the career of the Confederacy, whose duty it will then be to support and defend it, be such as to endear it to our children's children, as the flag of a loved, because a just and benign government, and the cherished symbol of its valor, purity, and truth. Respectfully submitted,

WM. PORCHER MILES, Chairman.