

Maryland State Flag

The flag of the State bears the escutcheon of the great seal—the Calvert and Crossland arms quartered. The device seems to have been adopted by common consent, as there was no formal adoption of any design as the official flag of the State until 1904. To Mr. James W. Thomas, of Cumberland, Md., the author of "Chronicles of Colonial Maryland," is due the credit of the passage of the Act of 1904, Chapter 48, "to formally adopt and legalize the Maryland flag."

That the Colony had a distinct flag or standard we know. The first recorded instance of the use of a Maryland flag occurs in Leonard Calvert's report of the reduction of Kent Island (February, 1638), in which he says that he and his force marched with Baltimore's banner displayed. At the Battle of the Severn, in 1655, where the supporters of the proprietary government, under William Stone, the Governor, were defeated by the Puritan party under Captain William Fuller, Stone's forces marched under the flag of Maryland, borne by William Nugent, "Standard bearer of the Province," while Fuller's party displayed the Flag of the Commonwealth, charged with the crosses of St. George and St. Andrew. It is also said that a Maryland flag was carried by the Marylanders who accompanied Braddock's expedition against Fort Duquesne (Pittsburgh), in 1755.

The Maryland Flag, like the great seal, was evidently designed and adopted by Cecilius, Lord Baltimore, and sent out by him with the Colony, as it was unfurled and officially used a few days after taking formal possession of the Province, when Governor Calvert, to more forcibly impress the natives, ordered the "Colors to be brought on shore" and a military parade. While there does not seem to be any distinct record of the design of the colonial flag of Maryland, it is believed to have been the same as the one now in use. Maryland is also as unique in her State flag as she is in her Great Seal, in that it, too, is strictly of heraldic design, and is an exact reproduction of the shield or escutcheon upon the reverse of the Great Seal of the Province. Apart from its historic interest, the Maryland Flag, as may be seen from the accompanying illustration, possesses marked symmetry and beauty. The parallel and diagonal lines of the Calvert quarterings being in singular harmony with the crosses and transposed colors of those of the Crossland arms. The combination, too, of the colors of the former—gold and black—while in brilliant contrast with those of the latter quarterings—silver and red—are both effective and pleasing. Silver being a white metal, the white color is substituted for silver in Maryland flags made of bunting or silk, and is so provided for in the Act of 1904, Chapter 48. When painted on panels or printed in colors, however, the rich heraldic colors, gold and black, silver and gules (blood red), should be adhered to.—[From booklet entitled Annapolis, History of Ye Ancient City and Its Public Buildings, by Oswald Tilghman.]