

## 1846 California Bear Flag



Each month The California Museum will introduce a new artifact with accompanying information and questions, which will consist of three different difficulty levels to choose from. To be used as a sponge or opening activity, you can use the artifact of the month for your students to study, question and form ideas. You can also print the image and place it on each student's desk, have them work in teams or project the image for a class activity.

Use the provided questions to help your students learn more about the artifact and its importance to California -- or make up your own questions. Most importantly, have fun!

Be sure to check out our web site, [CaliforniaMuseum.org](http://CaliforniaMuseum.org) for other interesting and unique activities for your students.

## 1846 California Bear Flag

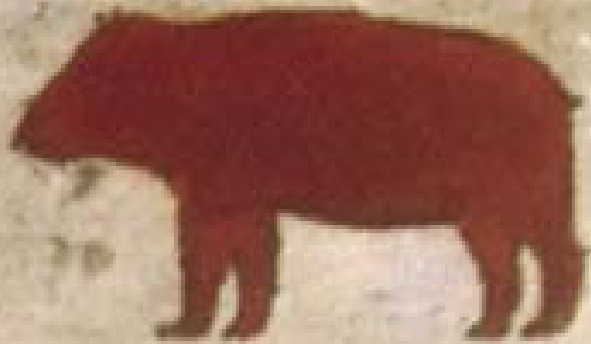


California became the 31st state on September 9, 1850 and the Bear Flag became the official state flag in 1911. This version of the Bear Flag was created in 1846 when a group of American men living in Mexican-controlled Alta California rebelled against their government.

They created a flag to represent their cause. It is said that William Todd, nephew of Mary Todd Lincoln, helped with the creation of the flag. The Bear Flaggers, as they would later be called, used a piece of cotton and placed a red stripe at the bottom. They then painted a red star, inspired by the Texas state flag, the words California Republic and a grizzly bear to symbolize their determination.

The flag was hoisted in the plaza of Sonoma and California was declared an independent republic. Many people laughed at this flag and called it the "hog flag" referring to the animal on the flag as it looked more like a pig than a bear. The flag flew for less than a month when it was taken down and replaced with the US flag.

The original Bear Flag was eventually given to the Society of California Pioneers and was in their care until it was destroyed in the San Francisco quake and fire of 1906.



CALIFORNIA REPUBLIC

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#### Elementary

- 1) What does this flag look like to you?  
Does it look like something you see around school today?
- 2) What are some of the objects on this flag and do you think they represent California? Why?
- 3) What year did the Bear Flag become California's official state flag?

#### Middle

- 1) Why are the words California Republic on this flag?
- 2) What do the words California Republic mean?
- 3) Where did the original flag fly for less than a month?

#### High School

- 1) What was the Bear Flag Revolt?
- 2) What propelled California toward statehood?

Color Your Own Bear Flag!

