

# Opinion: It's time to dump the Bear Flag

By Alex Abella, Los Angeles Times

One hundred and sixty nine years ago in a frontier town, a band of thieves, drunks and murderers hoisted a home-made flag and declared themselves in revolt from a government that had welcomed them. Instigated by an expansionist neighboring power, the rebels aimed to take over completely and impose their language, culture and mores on the land. The revolt succeeded beyond anyone's expectations.

That frontier town was Sonoma, the land was California, and the rebels, American settlers spurred on by promises of help from U.S. Army Captain John Fremont. The rebel standard, the flag of the so-called California Republic, became the California State Flag. It's time California dump that flag, a symbol of blatant illegality and racial prejudice. Like the Confederate cross of St. Andrew, the Bear Flag is a symbol whose time has come and gone.

When the Legislature voted to adopt the rebel standard as the state flag in 1911, California was in the grip of a racist, jingoistic fever.

**Read the whole story**