

American Civil War Confederate Secession Cockades (Rosettes)

"Everywhere could be seen Southern Cockades made by the ladies and our sweethearts."

"The Kentucky girls made Cockades for us, and almost every soldier had one pinned on his hat."

"Staid matrons and gaily bedecked maidens..... pinned upon our lapels the blue cockades."

Cockade: A knot of ribbons worn in the hat as a badge; a rosette worn in the hat by the male servants of naval and military officers etc.

Rosette: A rose shaped ornament, knot or badge; a bunch of ribbons, worsted, strips of leather, etc. arranged concentrically more or less in the petals of a rose; a carved or painted ornament in the conventional form of a rose.

The wearing of cockades had started in the Revolutionary war as the Continental Army didn't have enough money to buy uniforms and from private to general there was no rank distinction. To solve this George Washington wrote, "As the Continental Army has unfortunately no uniforms, and consequently many inconveniences must arise from not being able to distinguish the commissioned officers from the privates, it is desired that some badge of distinction be immediately provided; for instance that the field officers may have red or pink colored cockades in their hats, the captains yellow or buff, and the subalterns green."

An anecdote from the time says that during the revolutionary war the British soldiers would wear fancy decorations on their hats, that were called cockades. The slang expression for the cockades being 'macaroni.' With the shortage of money by all American soldiers they were forced to use other identification other than cockades on their hats, so they would use animal tails, feathers, etc., thus the phrase from the song 'Yankee Doodle' is supposed to have come from this "stuck a feather in his hat and called it macaroni."

Before secession people in South Carolina began to wear cockades and "Minute Men" are organizing in all the principal districts.....The badge adopted is a blue rosette—two and a half inches in diameter, with a military button in the centre, to be worn upon the side of the hat.' And with secession by South Carolina 'At 1:15 P.M. on 20th December...the blue cockade became general that

day, that color having been chosen as the national color of the new nation, the convention having adopted ... a blue flag with white Palmetto and Crescent ... as the national flag of the state.

The blue cockade was worn by almost every one, even the ladies and children joining in showing their devotion to the Palmetto State.'

And a letter from Mississippi stated "Not content with wearing the blue cockade themselves, the people put them up on wagons, carriages, riding horses, etc. At one place where I stopped, all the negroes had them on."

The Dallas Herald, 5 December 1860, tells us that 'Many of our citizens appear on the streets of Dallas wearing the cockade of our national colors, blue ribbon with a golden star. Some wear cockades of red.'

Both before and after South Carolina's withdrawal from the Union multitudes of palmetto cockades were to be seen in the streets of Charleston, it also became a fashion among other Southern States to do the same to show their support for secession, and then the Rebel Confederacy, by pinning their States 'Succession Cockade' to their hats and jackets. Many from South Carolina were made from the palmetto trees leaves.)

The wearing of the cockade wasn't appreciated by the Federal Government as even in September 1861 the people of Baltimore were still sported the cockade and the Philadelphia, Pa. 'Public Ledger' tells us 'The Government is determined to put a stop to the Secession cockades and other emblems which have been so unblushingly exhibited in Baltimore for months past and those found wearing them in the future will be arrested as traitors against the Government.'

Other emblems of support for the Confederacy were used: badges made of silver or ivory, as well as necklaces, bracelets and even bonnets: 'The Charleston Mercury gives the following description of a bonnet worn by a South Carolina lady: "The bonnet is composed of white and black cotton, and streamers ornamented with gold thread, while the feathers are formed of white and black worsted.'"

Another oddity, mentioned in the Dallas Herald, 13 March 1861, is a coin 'We were shown this morning a very pretty and well executed medal made here, either in commemoration of the secession of the Southern States, or suggested as a model for the coin of the future Southern Confederacy—we could not learn which.

The medal is the size of a five dollar gold piece. On one side

is a Palmetto tree, with cotton bales, sugar hogsheads, and a cannon at its based, beyond which appears the rays of the rising sun, and forming a semi circle immediately outside of the rays, fifteen stars. The motto "No submission to the North"—1860.

On the reverse rice, tobacco and cotton plants form a tasteful group around the graceful sugar cane, and mix their varied leaves. Around are engraved the words: "The wealth of the South—rice, tobacco, sugar, cotton."