

CLEVELAND, OHIO



Population Rank: U.S. # 33
Ohio # 2



Proportions: 2:3 (usage)

Adopted: 24 February 1896 (official)

DESIGN: Cleveland has a vertical tribar of red, white, and blue stripes, with a shield with the city's coat of arms centered on the white stripe. According to the ordinance of adoption: *The middle stripe shall bear the American shield with the word **Cleveland** in blue, across its center, and the figures 1796 in red, at its base encircled by a [green] laurel wreath. The outline of the lower half of the shield shall be in red and the upper in blue. In the upper left-hand corner [as seen by the viewer] shall stand an anvil, hammer and wheel, and in the upper right-hand corner an anchor, windlass and oars. Under the shield, in black letters, shall be placed the words **Progress and Prosperity**.*

SYMBOLISM: The colors are those of the United States flag. (Cleveland's flag predates the Ohio state flag, adopted in 1902, which uses the same colors.) The devices on the shield represent Cleveland's status as an industrial city and a commercial port on Lake Erie. Moses Cleaveland founded the city in 1796. It was named for him, although the spelling has been altered.

HOW SELECTED: The Cleveland *Plain Dealer* sponsored a contest to commemorate the city's centennial in 1896. After a great deal of deliberation, a committee of the city council selected the winning entry from among a large number of designs because of its "dignity, simplicity, and appropriateness".

DESIGNER: Susie Hepburn, an 18-year-old art student.

MORE ABOUT THE FLAG: Miss Hepburn later married the *Plain Dealer's* reporter, Robert Beach, who had delivered the winning prize of 50 silver dollars to her. Initially some citizens opposed to the idea of a city flag, believing it would compete with the revered national flag, so to dispel any controversy the city council referred to the flag as the "city banner" in the ordinance of adoption.

Manufactured versions of the flag evidently rarely follow the ordinance's specifications for the motto under the shield. The letters are often shown in blue (likely to save expense), and the word "and" between "Progress and Prosperity" is sometimes shown as an ampersand or even a large dot. Some versions of the flag also make the white center bar wider, to accommodate the shield more comfortably. Cleveland police officers wear the flag as an arm patch and it appears on the logo of police cars.



OTHER FLAG: Cleveland is one of the few U.S. cities with a sub-municipal flag, in this case, the area known as Ohio City, which was an independent city from 1836 until its annexation to Cleveland in 1854. Although there was no flag for the independent Ohio City,

there was a city seal. In October 1983 John Nosek, a resident of the area, thought a distinctive flag would be a source of neighborhood pride, and he persuaded a business associate, Leon Stevens, to design a flag based on the old Ohio City seal. The flag is pennant-shaped, in proportions of 1:2, and has a blue field with a red canton shaped like a pie slice, the curved edge next to the blue field. One large white five-pointed star, pointed toward the upper hoist corner, is in the hoist corner of the canton. Along the canton's inner edge, and curved to match it, is **OHIO CITY** in white. On the blue field are 25 white five-pointed stars arranged in rows of 3, 3, 3, 3, 6, and 7. The stars represent the 25 states of the Union when Ohio City was incorporated. The flag has become popular in the area, and metal versions of it grace the street signs.

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