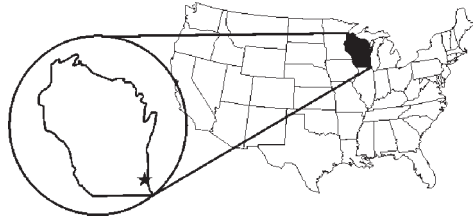


MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN



Population Rank: U.S. # 19
Wisconsin # 1

Proportions: 2:3 and 3:5 (usage)



Adopted: 21 September 1954 (official)

DESIGN: Milwaukee's flag has a field of medium blue. In the center is a large white gear, with black detail lines, its center divided into open quadrants showing the blue field. On a field of 2 by 3 units, the gear's diameter at the outside edges of its "teeth" is 1.125 units. In the upper hoist quadrant is the head of a Native American chief in profile looking toward the fly. His face is red, he wears a war bonnet of white feathers tipped in red, and his collar is white. The lower hoist quadrant shows what is intended to be a Service Flag, with three horizontal stripes of red, white, red. On the white stripe are two five-pointed stars, one blue (toward the hoist) and one gold (toward the fly). In the upper fly quadrant is an inverted black equilateral triangle bordered in white, with an

ancient lamp in gold in its center. The triangle serves as a base for the bust of a male figure in white. The lower fly quadrant does not have a self-contained image, but has the top half of a factory with three smokestacks in use that forms a part of a horizontal depiction of important elements in the city's history. This display extends about 2 units across the field, slightly more to the fly side than the hoist side.

Adjacent to the factory on the hoist side is the tower of Milwaukee's city hall superimposed over the very center of the gear, flying a small U.S. flag. To the hoist side of city hall is the city's former sports arena, and next to that, the county stadium. These figures are all black with white detail. To the fly side of the factory is a ship out of water, seen directly in front of its stern and more to the foreground, so the bottom of the hull appears lower than the rest of the scene; its hoist side is white; its fly side, red, with a white anchor hauled up. It has a single tall red mast with a white pennant bearing a red M, reaching to the top of the gear, so that the entire figure measures about 1.25 units in height.

Beyond the ship toward the fly, the city silhouette in black and white continues, showing a home, a church, and a school. Below the city scene are three wavy horizontal lines that appear to go behind the ship; black on the hoist side, and white on the fly side. Over the home, church, and school buildings are three white seagulls in flight, one above the other. At either end of this panorama are two vertical images. On the hoist side is a stylized stalk of barley in gold edged in red, about 1.125 units tall, and one-half unit from the hoist. On the fly side is **1846**, in red numerals edged in gold, about .875 units in total height, and one-half unit from the fly's edge. Below all this, running horizontally across the bottom of the flag for a distance of 2.5 units, is **MILWAUKEE**, in red letters edged in gold, the "M" twice the height of the other letters.

SYMBOLISM: The city describes the flag's symbolism: *In the center the City Hall, seat of local government, is superimposed on a giant gear, representing the industrial nature of Milwaukee. The gear in turn is divided into four quadrants bearing symbols of the City's Indian origin, her culture and libraries, her military service, and her great manufacturing.*

The plumes of smoke from her factories lead the eye to a great ship seen in profile [frontal] and riding the waves of blue Lake Michigan. This stands

for the city's great stature as a port, not only of the Great Lakes but now of the world.

The three buildings to the right remind us of Milwaukee's greatest treasure, her homes, her churches, and schools

The date 1846 marks Milwaukee's incorporation as a city, and it is balanced on the left by a stylized stalk of barley, symbolic of our city's best known industry [beer]. Next to the golden grain is our great new stadium pointing to the fame recently won by Milwaukee in the world of baseball and to her long history as a sports-loving community. Finally there is the Arena, home not only of sports and other entertainment, but of the many great conventions that are held yearly in 'the best governed big city in America.'

HOW SELECTED: In February 1950, Alderman Fred Meyer expressed the need for an official city flag for use in Civic Progress Week to be held in April of that year. It was decided that the art commission (now the arts board) would make design recommendations to the common council for the final selection. The art commission held a citywide contest with a \$75 prize for first place, \$50 for second, and \$25 for third. Over 150 entries were submitted; in addition to the three top prize winners, three received honorable mentions.

DESIGNER: No one design from the contest was entirely satisfactory, so Alderman Fred Steffan, a member of the art commission, incorporated elements from several of the winning designs.

MORE ABOUT THE FLAG: The small flag in the lower hoist quadrant appears at first glance to be a house flag for a shipping company, but in fact is supposed to depict a World War II service flag, which was usually oriented vertically, with a white field and wide red border. Blue stars indicated a family member in service; gold stars signified that the service person had died in the line of duty.

In late 2001, the common council conducted another contest for a new flag, believing that the current flag might be outdated. After reviewing all 104 designs, the arts board recommended in December 2001 that the common council not adopt any of them.