

Civic Flags of Ohio's Smaller Cities

John M. Purcell

As many of you know, since 1965, a special area of vexillological investigation for me has been the city flags of my home state of Ohio. I have undertaken to visit each of the cities that I discover have city flags to do research on site and to photograph the flag. Usually this means a visit to the city hall to talk to personnel there, but sometimes additional research is required, such as contacting other persons in the city who may have information about the flag, or searching throughout records in the local library.

Most smaller cities have only one flag, typically displayed either in the mayor's office or the city council chambers. At times, one finds that the flag is kept folded away in a cupboard, or a drawer somewhere, and sometimes it has been so long since the flag was used that the city personnel actually have to search for it. On the other hand, and more encouraging for the vexillologist, a surprisingly large number of cities fly their flags prominently and regularly. I seem to notice a trend toward more use of the flags in recent years as compared with, say, a decade ago.

Some cities keep good records about their flags, but others have no idea about who may have designed them or when they were adopted. It is not unusual for persons to work for years in the city hall and be totally unaware that their city has a flag.

To date I have documented about 100 city

flags in Ohio. About 30 of the 100 are flags of larger cities, with the remainder of small cities and villages. The flags I have chosen to present today are for one reason or another among the more interesting. I have grouped them arbitrarily according to the geographical location of the city in Ohio: northern, central, and southern.

In the north we begin with the flag of RICHMOND HEIGHTS, which utilizes the swallow-tail design typical of many Ohio civic flags, ostensibly in imitation of the shape of the state's flag. (The field of the flag is blue, with a white V-shaped triangle issuing from the center of the hoist. The flag was designed by Carol Ann Bigus, a secondary school student in 1969). (L m. 1, fig. 1)

Next is the village of ORANGE, whose flag was designed in 1976 as part of the nation's bicentennial observation. The unusual name of the city is reflected in the color of the letter "O" in a prominent position on the flag. (The blue-white-blue vertical tricolor with a wide center stripe somewhat like the Canadian tricolor has an orange "O" in the center surrounding a blue tree. The flag was designed by Mildred Woodell). (L m. 1, fig. 2)

ROCKY RIVER is a city named for the river on which it is found, and the bridge in the city seal is a city landmark that crosses the river. The city is also on the shores of Lake Erie, which is also depicted on the seal. (On a white field is the city

seal, depicting a light-blue sky, dark-blue water and grey bridge. The flag was designed by the city Chamber of Commerce in 1985). (L m. 1, fig. 3)

BAY VILLAGE, a near neighbor of Rocky River, is a city in spite of its original name that the citizens voted to retain. This flag is unusual for its color combinations rarely seen in vexillology. The receptionist at the city hall had worked there for twenty years and had no idea that the city had a flag. (The horizontal tricolor of light blue, white and chocolate brown has a silhouette and a sailboat in brown superimposed near the hoist on the top two stripes; the letter in the ribbon beneath is also in brown. The flag was designed in 1970 by Jean Tont). (L m. 1, fig. 4)

BRUNSWICK, my home city, follows the practice of many American cities of placing the name of the city on the flag. While not aesthetically pleasing, it does serve the practical purpose that the flag will be recognized, even, one may add, by the citizens it represents. The colors of Brunswick's flag, especially the beige field, are unusual. (On a beige field, the central design is outlined in green. The tree's trunk and the lettering are in brown. This flag was designed by Stanley Umpleby in 1987). (L m. 1, fig. 5)

TWINSBURG, a rather showy design, commemorates the twin brothers, Aaron and Moses Wilcox, who founded the city and gave it its name.

The city hosts an international gathering of twins each year. (On the blue field is a central yellow circle on which the silhouette of the twins' heads is shown in blue. The date is in white, as in the ribbon at the flag's top. The lettering is blue; the stars are yellow. The flag was designed by Franklin Hoon in 1978). (Làm. 1, fig. 6)

AURORA depicts the Latin origin of its name, "dawn", in a stylized sunrise in gold on green. (Dorothy Maxwell designed this flag in 1971). (Làm. 2, fig. 7)

The flag of STREETSBORO shows in a rather graceful design the unique pattern of streets in the city's center that gave the city its name. (On a white field, a medium-blue seal is circled in dark blue. The laurel wreath beneath is in gold, as are the two vertical "swaths" intersecting the seal. The horizontal "swath" is a dark green. The flag was designed by Dennis L. Wiengard in 1976). (Làm. 2, fig. 8)

ALLIANCE is proud to be a center for the cultivation of Ohio's state flower, the scarlet carnation, which is displayed prominently in the center. This is one of only a very few Ohio flags with borders around the edge. (On a white field is the scarlet carnation, proper, surrounded by a blue circle and white lettering over a red ribbon with white lettering. The flag is bordered in blue on its outside edge; in red along the inner edge of the blue border. Martha Crookshank designed the flag

in 1978). (Làm. 2, fig. 9)

The flag of LISBON is one of Ohio's oldest city flags, dating back to 1913. Recalling the better-known Lisbon for which the city is named, the design of the flag is based on the old royal flag of Portugal used between 1830 and 1910. (The flag is a vertical bicolor, blue at the hoist, white at the fly, with the white section somewhat wider than the blue in imitation of the Portuguese flag. The red shield, placed so that the dividing line of the blue and white colors runs vertically through its center, is charged with a green tree and its bordered in yellow. The Woman's Organization of Lisbon designed the flag). (Làm. 2, fig. 10)

A city not far from Lisbon is SALEM, whose flag is unique and controversial. The flag predates the present mayor of Salem who is said to dislike it, and I was told when I visited the city hall that I could not see it, let alone photograph it. I visited the local library, got the information there, and then wrote to the city's newspaper to wonder why the mayor kept the flag hidden away. The newspaper published my letter and the mayor, of course, declared that he had been misquoted. The reporter who followed through on the story managed to get a flag and made me a gift of it. A number of vexillologists on seeing it say that it reminds them of a stained-glass window. Certainly it is colorful! (The field of the flag is a horizontal tricolor of varying widths, blue over

yellow over green. The disk is yellow with an orange cross superimposed. The stylized trees on the disk are green. The border of the top half is green; the bottom half blue. The eight squares in the border are red. The flag was designed by Michael George in 1984). (Làm.2, fig.11)

Last of the northern cities is MAUMEE, which takes its name from the river of the same name. The words on the flag are in the Miami Indian language and mean "Beautiful River Valley". (The flag is blue with yellow lettering and a yellow central disk outlined in red. The scrollwork beneath the disk is also red. The feathers on the Indian's headdress are white tipped in black; the early United States flag behind the Indian's head is the customary blue canton, white stars, and red and white stripes. The flag was designed in 1958 by Ruth Thys. A version with a white field has also been used). (Làm. 2, fig. 12)

GAHANNA, in the central region of the state, has one of the state's most striking city flags and is obviously the work of someone who knows something about design. Gahanna is an Indian word meaning "Three in One": the small star represents the city, the larger, the state, and the largest, the nation. (This flag was adopted in 1984, but its designer is not known). (Làm. 2, fig. 13)

MINERVA PARK, a small village, has one of the more unusual flags. At the entrance to the

village is a picturesque gateway that is outlined on the flag, giving the flag the characteristic of an artist's sketch rather than a traditional flag design. (The field is white with the design in dark green. The flag was adopted in 1983; the artist unknown). (L m. 3, fig. 14)

NEWARK is situated at the confluence of two streams, known as the North Fork and South Fork, that form the Licking River. The streams are represented in the diagonal white lines that are part of the field. The arrowhead symbolizes the Indian heritage of the city's past. (The flag is white except for the upper triangle, which is blue, and the lower triangle, red. The flag was designed by Rod Conant in 1989). (L m. 3, fig. 15)

COSHOCTON is another city in the confluence of two rivers, the Muskingham and Tuscarawas Rivers, symbolized by the convergence of the two blue stripes into one. The red center of the letter "O" is a symbol from the state flag that suggests the nickname of Ohio as the "Buckeye State". (On a white field all the design is dark blue except for the large Red "C" of Coshocton, and the red center of the first letter "O". The date the flag was designed and by whom are unknown). (L m.3, fig.16)

BUCYRUS is a city in the agricultural section of the state, so the green and gold represent the pastures and grainfields. The white lines are to symbolize arteries of transportation, and

the gear, industry. The courthouse denotes that it is the seat of government for Crawford County. The hands of the clock are said to depict 12:03 A.M. to symbolize a new day and a bright future. (The flag's field is green at the hoist and yellow at the fly. The lettering and stripes are white; the gear, black with a cross that has a white vertical arm and a red horizontal one. The courthouse is grey; the clock, yellow with black hands. The designer and date of adoption are unknown). (L m. 3, fig. 17)

HILLSBORO is the first of the cities from the southern section represented. The red circle in the center of the charge on the flag is another depiction of the buckeye symbol. The red spokes represent the roads leading to the city as seat of government for Highland County. The white triangles represent the seven hills of the city. The red and white colors represent the past and future interwoven. The date, 1887, commemorates the city's incorporation. (The flag is a bicolor, white over red. All symbols and lettering are either white or red. The flag was designed by Leland Pennington in 1982). (L m. 3, fig. 18)

MARIEMONT is an unusual tricolor with two shades of green. The device in the center is the carillon tower that is the landmark of this verdant village. (The hoist stripe, lettering and top segment of the shrubbery at the base of the tower and the tower outline are a dark green. The fly stripe and

trees at the base of the tower are a light green. The remainder of the flag is white, except for the yellow bells of the tower. The flag was designed by Carolyn Schwenkmeyer in 1979). (L m. 4, fig. 19)

The last of the flags to be discussed is that of ST. BERNARD, founded by the Franciscan monks. The flag retains the characteristic brown color of the Franciscans. Acting as a crest for the shield is the breed of dog that bears the same name as the city. (The flag is divided vertically into three stripes, brown, white and brown. The shield and devices on it are in brown and white except for the three gold stars and the reverse of the ribbon. The flag was designed in 1969 by four students, Frank Giser, John Gruenwald, Mary Moran, and Julie Wethingto). (L m. 4, fig. 20)

LÀMINA 1

John M. Purcell: Civic Flags of Ohio's Smaller Cities



Fig. 1 - Richmond Hts, Ohio



Fig. 2 - Orange, Ohio

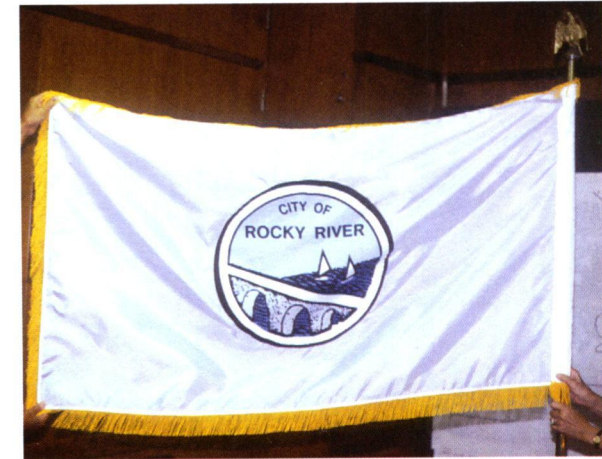


Fig. 3 - Rocky River, Ohio

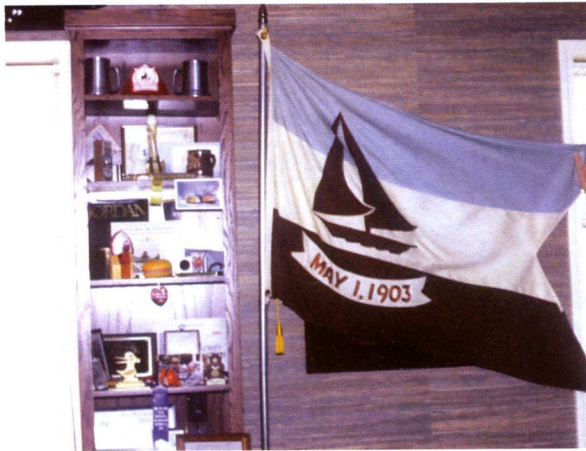


Fig. 4 - City of Bay Village, Ohio



Fig. 5 - Brunswick, Ohio

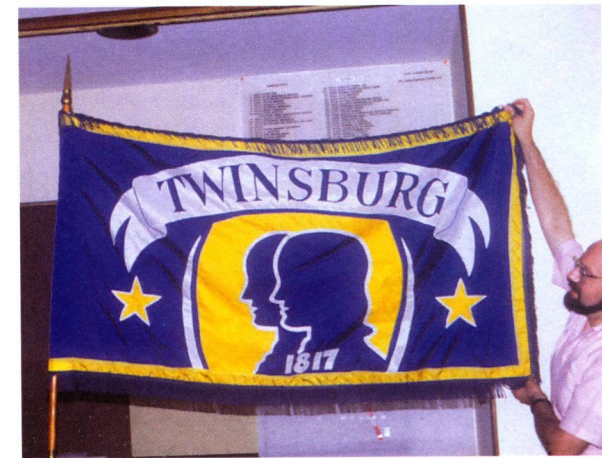


Fig. 6 - Twinsburg, Ohio



Fig. 7 - Aurora, Ohio

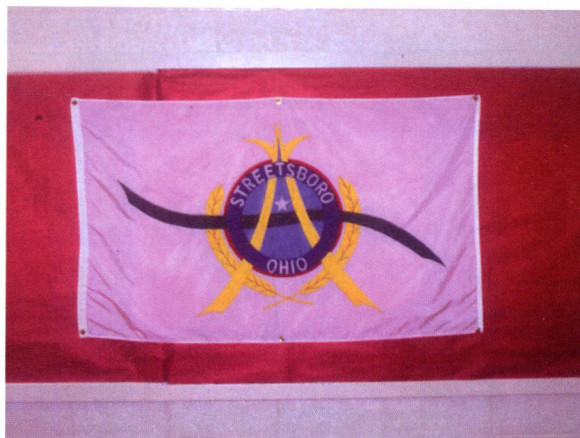


Fig. 8 - Streetsboro, Ohio



Fig. 9 - Alliance, Ohio



Fig. 10 - Lisbon, Ohio



Fig. 11 - Salem, Ohio



Fig. 12 - Maumee, Ohio



Fig. 13 - Gahanna, Ohio

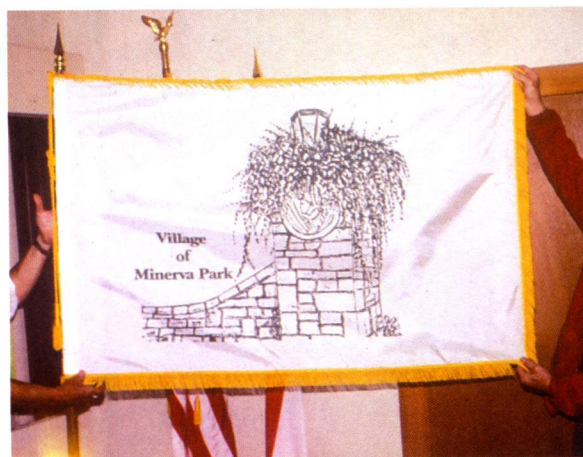


Fig. 14 - Minerva Park, Ohio



Fig. 15 - Newark, Ohio



Fig. 16 - Coshocton, Ohio



Fig. 17 - Bucyrus, Ohio



Fig. 18 - Hillsboro, Ohio

Alfredo Betocchi: Breve storia dei simboli della città di Firenze e degli standardi personali dei primi "Medici"

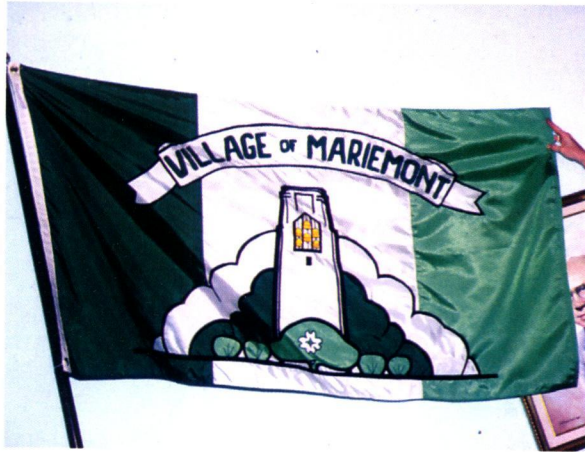


Fig. 19 - Village of Mariemont, Ohio



Stemmi dei "Sestieri" - XI secolo



Stemma del Quartiere di Oltrarno o di S. Spirito
con le insegne delle quattro pievi

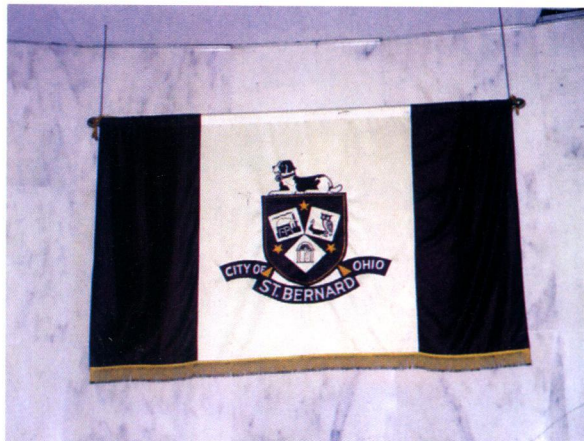


Fig. 20 - St. Bernard, Ohio



Stemma del Quartiere di S. Croce o S. Piero Scheraggio
con le insegne delle quattro pievi.



Stemma di S. Maria Novella o S. Pancrazio
con le insegne delle quattro pievi.