

IMAGES

...THEN AND NOW

From the Indian Hill Historical Society



**Buckingham Lodge
1861**

The Story of the Ohio State Flag

One of the symbols of the great state of Ohio is the state flag, which has a unique history and conveys the heritage of the seventeenth state to join the United States of America.

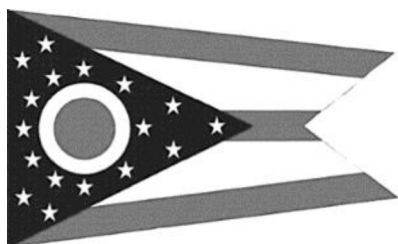
Though Ohio became a state in 1803, it did not have a legal state flag until 1902. One was designed and proposed in 1860, but because future President James Garfield believed that Ohio's soldiers would only fight under the national flag during the Civil War, that flag was not adopted. It was shelved. Throughout the late 1800s and 1900s, expositions were popular. These world fairs showcased the achievements of merit – from industry to culture to science. They encouraged agriculture, commerce, manufacturing, the arts, and inventions, and were open to the public for a period of months. The 1901 Pan American Exposition in Buffalo, NY attracted eight million visitors to the 350 acre fair over a period of seven months. Various states had buildings there including Ohio. The architect of the Ohio building was a Cleveland resident, John Eisemann. He created a flag with a complex design to fly over the structure he designed, and even had that flag patented in July, 1901. It was first displayed at the 1901 Pan American Exposition. President William McKinley (an Ohio native) visited the fair, touring the pavilions of various states and nations in September. His speech lauded the event, as he stated, "Expositions are the timekeepers of progress. They record the world's advancement... (and) quicken human genius." The next day President McKinley was assassinated by an anarchist. The following year (1902) the Ohio state legislature adopted Eisemann's flag, making it the official state flag ninety nine years after



1901 Pan Am Exposition, Buffalo, NY

statehood had been achieved.

Ohio's flag is the only non-rectangular U.S. state flag. It is shaped like a burgee, more specifically, a swallow tail burgee, reminiscent of a bird's tail. Normally burgees are used by yachters and boaters to convey messages, but Eisemann chose this shape to represent various aspects of the state.



The colors of the state flag are the same red, white, and blue of the U.S. flag, symbolizing unity with the nation. The large blue triangle represents Ohio's hills and valleys. The red and white stripes stand for Ohio's roads and waterways. There are thirteen stars near the circular **O**, which signify the original thirteen colonies, and the four stars at the right in the triangle designate the other states, indicating that Ohio was the seventeenth state to join the U.S. The white circle in the center suggests **O** for Ohio, and the red interior center is meant to be the shape of a buckeye seed, the state tree of Ohio. As an aside, the name "Ohio" meant "beautiful" to Native Americans. The flag is perfectly symmetrical in shape, which allows it to be flown or displayed in different orientations without affecting its legibility.

In 2002, the Ohio legislature approved a salute to the flag, to be recited after the Pledge of Allegiance. It states, "I salute the flag of the state of Ohio, and pledge to the Buckeye State respect and loyalty." This occurred 100 years after the flag's adoption in 1902. Then in 2005, a specific method of folding the flag was designated. This came about because of an Ohio Boy Scout who developed the procedure as his Eagle Scout service project. The flag folding act requires two people and involves seventeen folds, symbolizing Ohio's admittance into the USA as the seventeenth state of the Union.

The Ohio State Flag may be displayed at public buildings, fraternal organizations, schools, park districts, and private residences. It is regularly flown during football games by the Ohio State Marching Band. Tee shirts, hats and other clothing articles are available for sale with the Ohio State Flag embossed on them. Patriotic citizens of the Buckeye State can proudly wear these items to demonstrate their loyalty to their home state. The Village of Indian Hill displays the Ohio Flag in Council Chambers, and it is also visible at other locales like the Historical Society's Little Red Schoolhouse.