

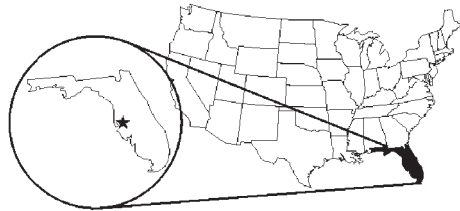
# TAMPA, FLORIDA



*Population Rank:* U.S. .... # 58  
Florida ..... # 3

*Proportions:* 3:5 (unofficial)

*Adopted:* 8 July 1930 (official)



**DESIGN:** Tampa's flag has a shape unlike any other U.S. city flag. It is a modified burgee with a shallow indentation between the two traditional end points, and a third point (suggesting the tongue found on some swallow-tailed war ensigns), about half as long, between the other two. At the hoist are three narrow equal vertical stripes—red, white, and blue—each .2 units wide on a white field of 3 by 5 units. Spaced evenly on the blue stripe are 7 white five-pointed stars. 1.6 units from the hoist are five approximately equal vertical stripes (three yellow and two red) that form a central bar .75 units wide. Centered on this red and yellow bar is the city's seal, 1.1 units in diameter. From the seal's fly midpoint, three stripes—red, white, red—each .2 units wide, bend in a

chevron oriented to the fly. At the end of the fly is a dark green stripe about the same width as the red stripes of the chevron and oriented in the same fashion. The top and bottom of the stripe have diamond-shaped red tips at the top and bottom points of the fly. The tongue between these two points forms a diamond, and is itself divided into four smaller equal diamonds; the top and bottom of these are dark green and meld into the green chevron, while the fly diamond at the tip of the tongue is red like its counterparts above and below. The hoist diamond is dark blue and displays a single white five-pointed star.

Extending across the center of the field horizontally from the blue stripe at the hoist, is another blue stripe .2 units wide that runs behind the seal and over the chevron stripes, stopping at the border of the green chevron at the fly's edge. Two white stars are on the hoist portion of this stripe, in line with the center star of the vertical stripe, and four more are on the fly side, evenly spaced. The blue diamond of the tongue with its lone star gives the impression that the blue stripe is overlaid by the green chevron. All of the stars on the flag are oriented point-upwards.

The seal is blue on white. The outer ring around the seal is edged in blue. The white field of the ring is divided into two semicircular bands with rounded ends, one above and one below, that do not quite meet at the center, where a small white star on blue separates them on both sides. Arched on the top band is **CITY OF TAMPA FLORIDA** and on the lower band, counterclockwise, is **ORGANIZED JULY 15, 1887**, all in blue. In the center of the seal is the steamer *Mascotte* on a blue sea headed toward the fly. Midway across the lower portion of the sea is a white horizontal stripe with **MASCOTTE** on it in blue. The seal was adopted in 1887.

**SYMBOLISM:** The designer suggested rather creative symbolism for his design. The colors are inspired by the national flags of the immigrants who settled the area: France, Great Britain, and the United States (red, white and blue); Italy (green, white, and red); and Spain (red and yellow). British contributions to the area (1763-1821) are also suggested by portions of the crosses of St. Andrew and St. George. Florida is acknowledged by the red and white colors of its state flag and by a

stylized “F”. A stylized “H” suggests Hillsborough County, of which Tampa is the seat of government. The seal superimposed on a stylized “T” commemorates the official birth of Tampa in 1855. (Some imagination is required to trace out the letters intended by the designer.) The Mascotte on the seal recalls the ship built for railroad magnate Henry B. Plant, which ran passengers and freight from Tampa to Key West, Florida, and Havana, Cuba, in the late 19th century, allowing Cuban cigar workers to travel inexpensively between factories in Florida and Cuba.

**HOW SELECTED:** Presented to Mayor D. B. McKay by the designer. The mayor recommended it to the board of representatives, who adopted the flag.

**DESIGNER:** F. Grant Whitney, a local industrial engineer.

**MORE ABOUT THE FLAG:** A photo in the *Tampa Tribune* of 24 February 1944 shows the flag with a white vertical stripe centered over the red vertical stripe behind the seal. Neither the original version nor the official version on file in the city shows that stripe, which was apparently added in error by the manufacturer.



**OTHER FLAGS:** Tampa is one of the few cities, including Cleveland and New York, with a sub-municipal flag, in this case the flag of Ybor City, which comprises Tampa’s Latin Quarter. Ybor City was founded as a village devoted to

cigar manufacturing in 1885 and was annexed to Tampa in 1887. There is no information available about the flag’s history or designer, but it is at least forty years old.

The flag is divided into four triangular quarters (per saltire), yellow at the hoist, green at the top, red at the fly, and blue on the bottom. Overlaying the center is a white disk resembling a seal, the outer edge of which has a white band bordered in gold. In the lower half of the disk

is a gold cigar slanting up from the hoist toward the fly, with a blue tip at the hoist end. Over the cigar in script is **Ybor**, in white outlined in blue. Below the cigar, in small blue letters, is **CITY**. A narrow white vertical stripe runs from the center edges of the disk to the top and bottom edges of the flag. The colors come from the flags of the original countries of the city's many ethnic groups. A rather comical "Pledge of Affection" for the flag reads, in "Spanglish":

*I pledge affection to the flag of Ybor Ciudad  
 The symbol of fame and fine calidad  
 It should always wave proudly arriba  
 With friendship and good will ever viva!  
 Yesterday, today and mañana,  
 My it always inspire our hazañas  
 We are españoles, italianos, and cubanos  
 But together we make americanos.  
 Salute our flag and alcalde  
 Trust them to always be salve.  
 Respect this ensign we demanda  
 Let's be gay when see it, caramba!*