

PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA



Population Rank: U.S. # 52
Pennsylvania # 2

Proportions: 3:5 (official)

Adopted: 15 March 1899 (official)



DESIGN: Pittsburgh's flag is a vertical tribar of equal black, yellow, and black stripes. In the center is the city's coat of arms.

In heraldic terminology, the coat of arms is described: *Sable, a fess chequy Argent and Azure between three bezants, 2 and 1, each bearing an eagle rising with wings displayed and inverted Sable. For a crest, a triple-towered castle Sable, masoned and windows Argent.* (On the flag the triple-towered castle is Sable, masoned Or.)

In lay terms, the coat of arms is a black shield bearing a central horizontal band with an alternating pattern of white and blue squares. Three gold disks are placed two above the band and one below. On each disk is an eagle rising with outstretched wings outlined in black. Above the

shield is a black triple-towered castle with white masonry and windows (on the flag these are yellow).

SYMBOLISM: The French originally occupied this area and built Fort Duquesne. Later, in 1758, the English destroyed the fort and built another, naming it Fort Pitt after the English statesman, William Pitt, Earl of Chatham. The arms of the city are Pitt's but without the supporters (a lion and stag), the oak badge on the lion's shoulder, and the stork and anchor in the crest. The triple-towered castle denotes a chartered city.

HOW SELECTED: Unknown.

DESIGNER: Unknown.

MORE ABOUT THE FLAG: According to a letter of 18 May 1848, Judge Charles Shaler, who was on the bench of the Court of Common Pleas of Allegheny County, recounted information on the city seal: *After some discussion in which, I believe, everybody's taste was consulted, the armorial bearings of the Chatham family was made the basis of the device of our city seal (Fort Pitt having been originally named for the Earl of Chatham), and by the advice of Mr. Jones the crest on the Chatham arms was dispensed with and the castellated wall adopted in its stead, Mr. Jones conceiving that it was the proper device to designate a city, so that the device on the seal in heraldic language would read, City of Pitt.*

OTHER FLAGS: As in the case of Philadelphia, which had officially adopted a civic flag four years earlier, Pittsburgh adopted a city ensign, city pennant, and city streamer along with a civic flag. They closely resemble their Philadelphia counterparts.



The city ensign (merchant flag) is the same as the city flag, except in place of the coat of arms is the crest, or black triple-towered castle, surrounded by thirteen five-pointed black stars.

The city pennant has a triangular field of golden yellow and in the center is a black triangle bearing the city crest surrounded by thirteen five-pointed stars, all in golden yellow.

The city streamer has a golden yellow field of 2 feet in width and 15 in length. A black section next to the hoist is one-fourth the length of the flag and in its center is the city crest in golden yellow. JC 