

# OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA



*Population Rank:* U.S. .... # 41  
California ..... # 7



*Proportions:* 2:3 (usage)

*Adopted:* April 1952 (official status uncertain)

**DESIGN:** Oakland's flag has a canary yellow field, with a green oak tree (including the trunk), wider than it is tall, centered on the middle third of the field. Above the tree, a shallow arch of green block letters proclaims **OAKLAND**. Centered below the tree and its patch of green ground is **1852** in green.

**SYMBOLISM:** The oak tree likely recalls the city's name. Green probably represents growth while the yellow refers to the riches of the city and region.

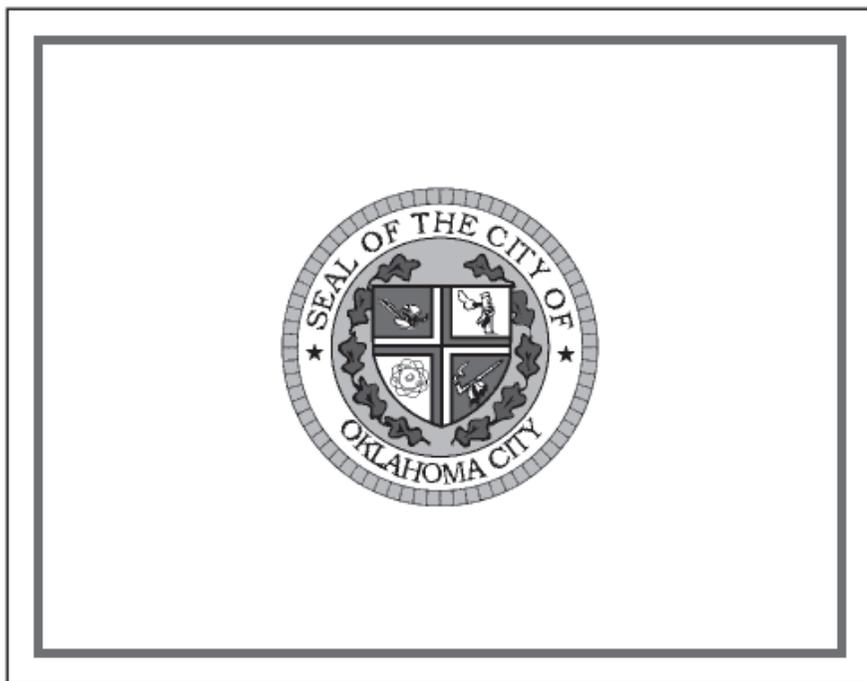
**HOW SELECTED:** Spurred by the city's approaching centennial, the flag was adopted after a design contest called for by Councilman William H. D. Clausen and approved by Mayor Clifford E. Rishell. The top prize of \$200 was awarded by a jury of representatives of the art departments of the University of California, Mills College, and the California College of Arts and Crafts, chaired by Eric Stearns.

**DESIGNER:** George W. Lasko, Jr., a San Leandro artist and a graduate of Northeastern University in Boston.

**MORE ABOUT THE FLAG:** David M. Lee, eleven years old, won the grammar school prize.

RM 

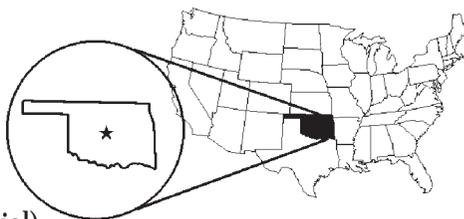
# OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA



*Population Rank:* U.S. .... # 29  
Oklahoma ..... # 1

*Proportions:* 13:17 (usage)

*Adopted:* 8 February 1994 (official)



**DESIGN:** Oklahoma City's flag has a white field of 13 by 17 units. A red-line border surrounds it, .5 units from the edges. The seal of the city, 6.5 units in diameter, is centered on the field. The outer edge of the seal is a robin's-egg blue, matching the Oklahoma state flag's field. Within that circle is a narrow white ring, on which **SEAL OF THE CITY OF** curves clockwise over the top and **OKLAHOMA CITY** curves counterclockwise below, all in black. Separating the two legends at 9 and 3 o'clock is a five-pointed black star. The inner field of the seal is the same blue as the ring's edge. Centered on the field is a shield,

divided quarterly, its first and fourth quarters in red and second and third quarters in white. A cross is superimposed over the quarters' inner edges, itself divided into four sections with their colors counterchanged (colors alternated) with the quarter they border; thus, white in the first and fourth quarters, and red in the second and third. Charged on the quarters are a plow, a hatchet hammering a stake, an atomic symbol, and a peace pipe. A green oak-leaf wreath borders the shield on either side.

**SYMBOLISM:** The shield represents law and protection. The plow symbolizes pioneer agriculture in the Oklahoma Territory in 1889; it is also on the seal of the original Creek Nation in whose country Oklahoma City is located. The hatchet and stake recall the "89'ers" staking land claims in the Oklahoma Territory. The atomic symbol portends an industrial and scientific future. The peace pipe echoes the pipe smoked in Native American councils, and the pendant of eagle feathers suggests the great eagle in flight, signifying high aims. The wreath of post oak leaves symbolizes Council Grove, a site in Oklahoma City founded in 1858 by Jesse Chisholm where Native Americans, military, and trade councils met. That area was set aside in 1889 by the federal government to harvest its sturdy post oak timber for Fort Reno.

**HOW SELECTED:** Mayor Ron Norick asked for a new design after learning that residents in the sister city of Taipei, Taiwan, could not immediately recognize Oklahoma City in its former city flag.

**DESIGNER:** Mark McFarland, a man with cerebral palsy, who donated his design to the city.

**MORE ABOUT THE FLAG:** The city council gave McFarland a standing ovation at the session where the flag was adopted. Cognizant of legal actions taken against other U.S. cities (especially, in this case, Edmond, Oklahoma) where crosses on flags have been said to represent Christianity, McFarland maintained that the cross here merely serves as an "artistic divider" to provide sufficient distance among the various symbols.



**FORMER FLAG:** The first flag of the city might be termed an armorial banner, since it is really the blazon of the seal's shield extended into a rectangle. Unlike the current flag, the cross on the original flag is not counterchanged, but a solid white.

Mrs. Daniel C. Orcutt created the flag for the city's 75th anniversary and the city council adopted it officially on 20 July 1965. She was inspired by the design of the city's seal, adopted on 23 February 1965 (designer unnamed), and by Donald Hogland, a city resident expert in heraldry (and whose eight-page handwritten letter with carefully drawn illustrations to the council on the subject is officially appended to the ordinance of adoption). The flag's proportions are 2:3.

JP 

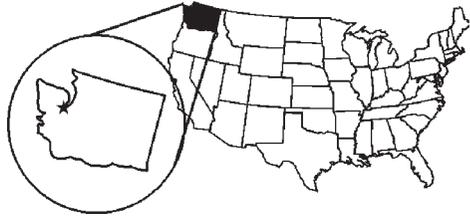
# OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON ★



*Population Rank:* U.S. ... # 810  
Nebraska.... # 18

*Proportions:* 2:3 (unofficial)

*Adopted:* 1988 (unofficial)



**DESIGN:** The field of Olympia's flag is white. In the hoist half is the city's ovoid logo, about 1 unit high and 1.5 units wide on a field of 2:3 units. The logo is divided more or less in half horizontally. The upper half shows Washington's state capitol toward the fly against snow-capped mountains in the background toward the hoist. A blue sky fills in the top of the logo behind the mountain peak and capitol dome. A charreuse sward runs from the capitol to the hoist in front of the mountains. Across the center of the logo in front of the capitol is a swath of bluish green suggesting the capitol grounds. Below, in the remainder of the logo, is a section depicting water in two shades of blue—across an azure blue field, two pairs of dark blue parallel lines, one near the top and the other near the bottom, running horizontally to suggest ripples

on the water. On the fly half of the field is centered *City of* over OLYMPIA, in slightly larger letters, all in dark blue.

**SYMBOLISM:** The logo depicts a picturesque view of the statehouse amid the natural beauty surrounding Washington's state capital, situated on the southern end of Puget Sound beneath the snow-capped Olympic Mountains.

**HOW SELECTED:** The flag was developed by the staff at city hall after the adoption of the logo in 1988.

**DESIGNER:** The logo was designed by CM3 Associates of Olympia, a graphic design firm. JP 

# OMAHA, NEBRASKA



*Population Rank:* U.S. .... # 44  
Nebraska ..... # 1

*Proportions:* 7:11 (usage)

*Adopted:* 18 March 1958 (official)



**DESIGN:** The field of Omaha's flag is dark blue with a Native American sun symbol in the center in gold. Its four sets of three conjoined gold rays emanate in the four cardinal directions, expanding slightly as they extend outward. The points of the rays differ: the central ray comes to a point at its center, while the outer rays come to a point at their outer edges. The diameter of the circle enclosing the sun symbol is 4 units on a field of 7 by 11 units. Overlaying the center of the sun symbol is a red disk, 1.5 units in diameter. Filling most of this disk is a covered wagon pulled by a team of oxen heading toward the fly, depicted in white with black shadings. A man leads the horses; two women are seated at the wagon's front.

**SYMBOLISM:** The circle enclosing the Native American sun symbol signifies continuous growth. The rays of the sun symbolize transportation on water, land, and in the air; the industries of agriculture, the livestock market, and manufacturing; city government as exemplified in the city's charter; and culture represented by education, religion, and fine arts. The covered wagon recalls the city's pioneer heritage.

**HOW SELECTED:** In February of 1958 the Omaha Girl Scouts thought that the city should have a flag. They contacted the mayor, John Rosenblatt, who concurred, and asked the girls to come up with a flag for an All-America City banquet just six weeks away. The troops did research and proposed two different designs. Elements from both were combined in the final flag, which was presented at the banquet.

**DESIGNER:** Heinz Rohde, an artist who combined the ideas into a final design.



**MORE ABOUT THE FLAG:** While the official flag has no lettering, words have been added at various times since, apparently unofficially. In 1963 **CITY OF** was centered horizontally above the sun symbol and **OMAHA, NEBRASKA** ran across the bottom, all in gold block letters.

The current *de facto* flag uses the same lettering, but omits the name of the state.

**FORMER FLAGS:** Records indicate that Omaha has had two other city flags, both unofficial. A 1927 flag had the seal of the state of Nebraska on a red, green, and yellow field with **OMAHA** in large letters. A later flag apparently placed the former city seal on a plain field, no colors known. Both flags have been lost, and no images of them remain.

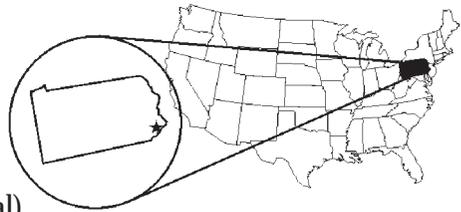
# PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA



*Population Rank:* U.S. .... # 5  
Pennsylvania ..... # 1

*Proportions:* 3:5 (official)

*Adopted:* 27 March 1895 (official)



**DESIGN:** According to Philadelphia's 1895 ordinance of adoption: *The Civic Flag, or Standard of the City, shall be as follows: Material shall be American made bunting or silk of the colors designated 10 feet in length and 6 feet in width, or in proportion thereto. The same shall be parted vertically (per pale) in three equal parts, the first and third to be azure blue, and the second or middle, pale golden yellow. Upon the latter pale shall be emblazoned the City Arms, as borne upon the City Seal.*

*In heraldic terminology the coat of arms can be described: "For a shield: Azure a fess between a plow in chief and a sailing ship in base, all Or; For a crest: A right hand and arm holding a pair of scales proper; For supporters: Dexter, the female figure of 'Peace' holding a scroll charged with an anchor, and sinister the*

*female figure of 'Plenty' upholds a cornucopia. For a motto: PHILADELPHIA MANETO (Let Brotherly Love Prevail).*

In lay terms, Philadelphia's flag is divided into three equal vertical stripes of blue, yellow, and blue. In the center of the yellow stripe are the city's arms, a blue shield divided in the center by a horizontal band, with a plow above and a sailing ship below, all in golden yellow. Above the shield is a right hand and arm upon a heraldic wreath, holding a pair of scales, in natural colors. Allegorical figures flank the shield: Peace on the left and Plenty on the right. Peace holds a scroll showing an anchor and Plenty holds a cornucopia. On a scroll below is **PHILADELPHIA MANETO**. The seal of Philadelphia, which contains the coat of arms, was established by the Ordinance of Councils of 14 February 1874.

**SYMBOLISM:** The plow and sailing ship also appear on Pennsylvania's arms, and together these two symbols reflect the early commercial interests of the city—agriculture and maritime commerce. Originally, William Penn had adopted the plow as a symbol for the crest of the coat of arms of Chester County, which was under his administration. The ship derives from the seal of the Society of Traders, organized in London to promote the settlement of Pennsylvania. Philadelphia is home to the world's largest fresh-water port and has a shipbuilding industry and government navy yard.

**HOW SELECTED:** Unknown

**DESIGNER:** Dr. Henry C. McCook.

**MORE ABOUT THE FLAG:** Throughout the years a variant flag has flown without the coat of arms.

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

The city ensign (merchant flag) is the same as the city flag, except in place of the coat of arms is just its crest (the arm holding the balance



upon a heraldic wreath) surrounded by thirteen five-pointed azure blue stars, and its proportions are 2:3.

The city pennant has a triangular field of golden yellow and in the center is a blue triangle bearing the city crest surrounded by

thirteen five-pointed stars, all in golden yellow; its proportions are 4:5.

The city streamer is a golden yellow field 2 feet in width and 15 in length. A blue 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

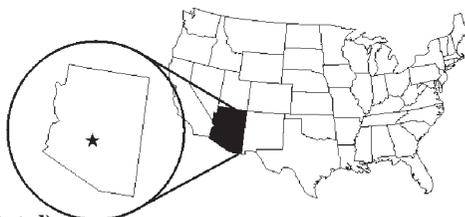
# PHOENIX, ARIZONA ★



*Population Rank:* U.S. .... # 6  
Arizona ..... # 1

*Proportions:* 5:9 (usage)

*Adopted:* 14 February 1990 (official)



**DESIGN:** The flag of Phoenix has a purple field with the head, breast, and wings of a stylized phoenix centered in white. The phoenix faces the hoist with its wings curved upward, so that the figure is shown within an imaginary circle with a diameter of one-third of the flag's length.

**SYMBOLISM:** The phoenix, from which the city derives its name, is the mythological bird that was consumed in flames and rose from the ashes. The flames are suggested in the central figure by the appearance of ruffled feathers. In ancient Greek, *phoenix* meant "purple," and thus also suggests the color of the flag's field.

**HOW SELECTED:** The city council adopted the central figure as the official logo of Phoenix in 1987 after a public vote. It was placed on a flag in 1990.

**DESIGNER:** The flag's logo was designed by a graphic design firm of Smit, Ghomlely, Sanft, winners of a design competition for an official city logo. The logo is protected by copyright and trademark law.

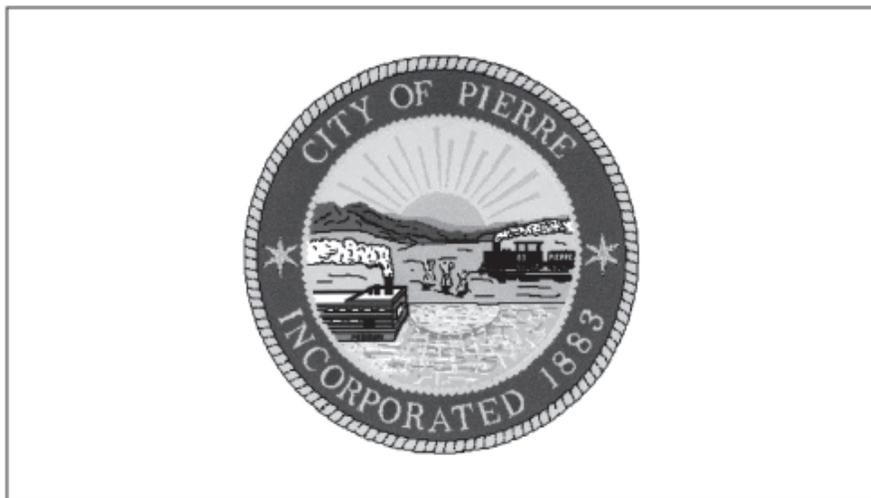


**FORMER FLAG:** The first flag of Phoenix is more elaborate. In 1921, the Phoenix Chamber of Commerce held a public contest for an appropriate design for a city flag. The winner of that contest is lost to posterity, as the design was considered too ornate for a flag. The second-place winner,

Frederick C. Green, Sr., saw his design selected and made into a flag by a San Francisco company for \$175. This flag was carried in the city's combined Industrial Week and Armistice Day Parade, 11 November 1921, and adopted by the city council at its meeting of 23 November 1921.

Second place or not, the design of this flag is also ornate. The first flag was 52 by 66 inches, made of embroidered silk. Later versions were made in proportions of 5:6. The field of the flag is blue, with a gray phoenix, head facing the fly and wings outstretched, rising from a gold sun with 48 short pointed rays (the wings, extending outward from the sun toward the top corners of the field, obscure about six of the rays on either side). Below the phoenix, in the lower quarter of the field is an elaborate white heraldic ribbon inscribed **CITY OF PHOENIX ARIZONA**, in gold.

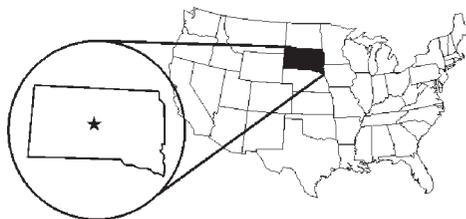
# PIERRE, SOUTH DAKOTA ★



*Population Rank:* U.S. #2,728  
South Dakota..... # 8

*Proportions:* 9:16 (usage)

*Adopted:* 1989 (unofficial)



**DESIGN:** Pierre's flag has a white field with a large city seal in color in the center. On a field of 9 by 16 units, the diameter of the seal is 7.3 units. The outside edge of the seal, in gold, is beveled. Within it is a gold concentric beaded circle with a diameter of 5 units. The ring between the two circles is green. At 3 and 9 o'clock is a gold six-pointed star, with green shading to make it appear three-dimensional. Curved clockwise around the top part of the ring is **CITY OF PIERRE**, curved below, counterclockwise, in slightly smaller letters, is **INCORPORATED 1883**, all in gold. The central field of the seal shows a Missouri River scene from the early days of Pierre. The blue river runs across approximately the lower third of the field. Steaming from the hoist side is an old-fashioned flatbed steamboat, gray and white with

black markings, its two smokestacks sending smoke toward the hoist. In small black letters on the starboard side of the boat is **MISSOURI**. The remainder of the seal shows a green plain with dark green hills in the background. A gold sun sets behind the hills, its gold rays extending into the blue sky and reflecting on the surface of the river. In the center foreground are three sheaves of wheat in gold. Approaching the center from the fly is an old gray steam locomotive and coal tender, smoke from its smokestack flowing toward the fly. A small white **83** is on the side of the locomotive, and **PIERRE** appears in miniature letters on the coal tender.

**SYMBOLISM:** The city describes the symbolism:

*We can only assume that the sunset over the hills depicts the city of Pierre being the gateway to the west. Pierre sits directly on the east shore of the Missouri River, the hills being the rolling hills of the west river terrain. The shocks of grain and grasslands are representative of the agricultural economy of our state and community. Pierre and Ft. Pierre were a trade center and gathering place for the early trappers and settlers to meet and trade with the Native Americans. The train and riverboat are symbolic of a growing and moving mechanization of the west. The river in the foreground is the Missouri River that was and is an integral part of Pierre's quality of life.*

**HOW SELECTED:** Mayor Grace Petersen decided the city should have a new flag, and city hall personnel concurred that it should be the newly colored seal on white. The seal, uncolored, had been adopted officially on 12 April 1883. On 22 August 1989, the city commissioners adopted colors for the seal. A local artist, John G. Moisan, was commissioned to paint the seal as specified. Upon the seal's completion, the flag was developed (apparently also in 1989).

**DESIGNER:** The name of the seal's original designer is not available. Mayor Petersen and staff designed the flag using John Moisan's colored seal.

**MORE ABOUT THE FLAG:** The seal on the flag is less striking than the colored seal Moisan created. The flag manufacturers did not reproduce all the details of the seal accurately, and so the seal on the flag is an

approximation of the original. For example, Moisan's seal shows the locomotive and coal tender as black, but they appear on the flag as gray, and the lettering around the seal is smaller and in a different font from that on the flag.



**FORMER FLAG:** Pierre's earlier flag was officially adopted on 25 May 1937. That flag, designed by Henry M. Reed of Pierre, has a green field with a scarlet border. Its proportions are 2:3. In the center in white is a three-dimensional front

view of the state capitol. Centered and arched over the capitol is **PIERRE**, and curved below, slightly smaller, is **THE CAPITAL CITY**, all in white. In the upper hoist corner is a small 48-star United States flag; in the lower hoist corner, a small French flag. The upper fly corner has a small British flag, and the lower fly corner a former Spanish merchant flag. All flags are in the correct colors. The four miniature flags were sometimes omitted when the flag was mass-produced.

The green of the field symbolizes Pierre's parks and lawns; the scarlet is for the Native American heritage surrounding the area. The capitol marks Pierre's status as the state capital. The miniature flags on the four corners represent the four nations that have claimed the area. John Cabot claimed the entire continent for Great Britain in 1497, though the claim had no real effect on the land where Pierre is situated. The French (the first whites to arrive at what is today Pierre) claimed the territory in 1743, but it was ceded to Spain in a secret treaty in 1762. Spanish control reverted to France in 1800, then in 1803 the area was sold by France to the United States as part of the Louisiana Purchase.

# 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 

## PLANO, TEXAS



*Population Rank:* U.S. .... # 78  
Texas ..... # 9

*Proportions:* 7:10 (usage)

*Adopted:* 25 August 1980 (official)



**DESIGN:** Plano's flag features a large **P** occupying the fly half of the flag, slanting to the right. A star shape forms the center of its loop. This star extends throughout the "P", to the top, side, and bottom edges of the loop of the "P". The stem of the "P" is red, and the loop of the "P" (the three sections segmented by the star) is blue. Centered in the hoist half is *plano* in a slanted, sans-serif font. Its baseline aligns with the bottom edge of the "P"'s loop and its height reaches the star's mid-point. The field of the flag and the star are white.

A formal resolution of the city council on 25 August 1980 enacted: *The logo approved by the City Council of the City of Plano on January 14,*

*1980 is hereby further approved and adopted as the official Logo of the City of Plano. This official logo shall be used on all City of Plano equipment, materials, and flags from this day forward ... (Ordinance No. 80-8-17).*

**SYMBOLISM:** The star, as well as the red, white, and blue colors, perhaps recalls the Lone Star State of Texas. The large P seems to say “Plano” with a large capital “P”, reflecting the pride of its citizens.

**HOW SELECTED:** Plano’s flag was selected through a flag design contest sponsored by the Plano Jaycees and the Plano *Star Courier* in September 1979.

**DESIGNER:** Jim Wainner’s design, over three others, won the contest and \$50.

RM 

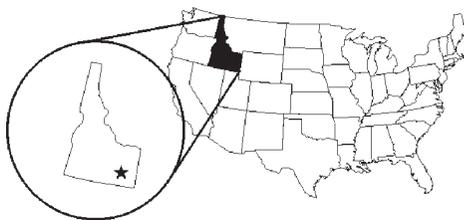
## POCATELLO, IDAHO



*Population Rank:* U.S. ... # 586  
Idaho ..... # 2

*Proportions:* 2:3 (usage)

*Adopted:* 5 May 2001 (official)



**DESIGN:** Pocatello's flag is unusual both in design and colors. The field of the flag is white. Running boldly across the field, and occupying most of the lower half, is the motto **Proud to Be Pocatello**. "Pocatello" is in black-shadowed orange letters about twice as big as the rest of the motto in a font suggesting Academy Engraved. It takes up about two-thirds of the lower half of the field, and is in a different font from the other words. "Proud to Be" is written in black-shadowed yellow letters in a Placard-Condensed-type font that rest directly on top of the city's name. "Proud" is over the "oca" of "Pocatello", "to" rests on the "t," and "Be" is between the "t" and the first "l". Above the "P" of "Pocatello", and over the "llo", are five narrow horizontal orange lines

aligned with the top of the “P” and “B”. Directly above this entire element, separated only by a narrow white space, is a purple figure that occupies the upper half of the field. This figure is composed of two overlapping triangles. The larger triangle is roughly 1.5 units at its base. The smaller is roughly 1 unit at its base; its lower left point aligns with the vertical center of the larger, 0.125 units above its baseline. Extending into each triangle are four pointed cuts, sloping downward and to the left from the upper right edge, each one-third of the length of the side of the larger triangle.

A copyright notice and a trademark symbol appear on the flag.

**SYMBOLISM:** The purple triangles suggest the rugged mountains of the Idaho terrain, especially the Sawtooth Mountains, 190 miles northwest of Pocatello. The other colors reflect those favored in the art of Native Americans of the region.

**HOW SELECTED:** The city of Pocatello adopted the chamber of commerce’s logo and motto for the flag.

**DESIGNER:** The design was created by the chamber of commerce, which has acquired a trademark and copyright for it.

**MORE ABOUT THE FLAG:** The city requested, and received, permission from the chamber of commerce to use the logo. The flag is now widely flown about the city.

JP 

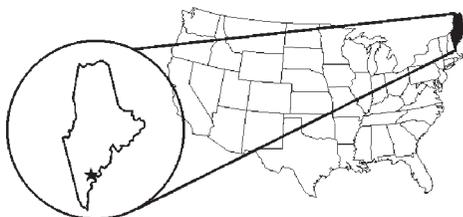
# PORTLAND, MAINE



*Population Rank:* U.S. ... # 428  
Maine ..... # 1

*Proportions:* 3:5 (usage)

*Adopted:* Unknown (official status uncertain)



**DESIGN:** Portland's flag has a navy blue field bearing the center portion of the city seal in yellow, approximately half of the hoist width of the flag in diameter. This image (the city's seal excluding its outer ring with inscriptions) shows a shield overlaid on an anchor, three points of which show; one on each side of the shield and one below it. The stock of the anchor appears above the shield and on it perches a phoenix, wings outstretched, facing the fly, clutching an inverted open wreath. The device on the shield is a ship, resembling a Roman galley with oars and sails, sailing on an ocean toward the hoist. The supporters are dolphins curved downwards around the shield and facing each other. The dolphins, shield, phoenix, anchor, and ship are white with blue

details, while the sea is blue with white outlines. Above the seal arches **CITY OF PORTLAND, MAINE**, and curved below it is **RESURGAM**, all in gold.

**SYMBOLISM:** Portland, a large coastal city, uses many maritime symbols on its flag including the anchor, the dolphins, and the ship upon the sea. The Roman galley may reflect the classical allusions popular in the mid-19th century when the seal was adopted.

What might appear to be a seagull is in fact a phoenix, holding a wreath, a mark of esteem. The phoenix, the mythical bird fabled to consume itself by fire and then rise from its own ashes, is an emblem of immortality and resurrection. Along with the motto, *RESURGAM* (“I arise”), the phoenix alludes to the rebuilding of Portland after it was twice destroyed by fire, first by the Indians in 1690 and later by the British in 1775. In 1866, the seal became an even more appropriate symbol of the city’s destruction and rebuilding when one-third of Portland was consumed in a fire which left 10,000 people homeless.

**HOW SELECTED:** Unknown. The seal was adopted on 7 January 1835.

**DESIGNER:** Unknown.

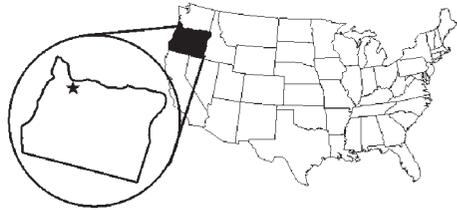
**MORE ABOUT THE FLAG:** The phoenix as a symbol for Portland can be traced to its use on an early militia color. Recorded in *The Cumberland Gazette* of 25 October 1790: ... *Amongst others, that of a Standard gave great satisfaction. The ground of it is a bright buff, and the device [alluding to Portland’s quick recovery from the two earlier disasters] is happily designed. It represents a Phoenix rising from its ashes.*

# PORTLAND, OREGON



*Population Rank:* U.S. .... # 28  
Oregon ..... # 1

*Proportions:* 3:5 (official)



*Adopted:* 4 September 2002 (official), originally adopted 1969

**DESIGN:** *There is designated an official flag for the City to be known as the City Flag and described as follows: The standard size measures 5 feet in length by 3 feet in height. The background shall be green, symbolizing the forests and our green City. The design includes a four-pointed directional star, formed by the vertical and horizontal intersection of counterchanged blue stripes, symbolizing our rivers. The blue stripes are paralleled with yellow stripes, symbolizing agriculture and commerce. The yellow stripes are separated from the green background and the blue river stripes by white lines called fimbriations. The white central star is positioned slightly left of center, toward the staff end of the flag, called the hoist. (Ordinance 176874, amending Portland's City Code Section 1.06.010.)*

The ordinance specifies the components in one-inch units: The star is 9 units high and wide, formed by 4-unit-radius quarter-circles. The center point of the star is 26.5 units from the hoist and 17 units from the top. The canton is 18 units wide by 13.5 units high, the second quarter is 30 units wide and 8.5 units high, the third quarter is 23 units wide and 8.5 units high, the fourth quarter is 25 units wide and 13 units high. The blue stripes are 4 units wide, the white stripes are 1 unit wide, and the yellow stripes are 2 units wide. (These result in a flag 34 units high by 60 units wide.) The colors are Kelly or Irish Green, U.N. Blue, Gold, and White.

**SYMBOLISM:** Green symbolizes Oregon's forests, which surround Portland. The vertical and horizontal blue stripes represent the Columbia and Willamette Rivers, with the central white star (hypocycloid) signifying Portland at their confluence. The yellow stripes symbolize the harvest of golden yellow grain (Portland is a major international exporter of wheat) and the gold of commerce. The white stripes are merely decorative. The offset cross is not intended to resemble a Scandinavian cross.

**HOW SELECTED:** In July of 2002, the Portland Flag Association, including NAVA members Doug Lynch, Mike Hale, Harry Oswald, John Hood, Ted Kaye, and Mason Kaye, proposed an adjusted and improved version of the 1969 flag, with four major changes: removing the city seal from the canton, changing the canton to green, doubling the width of the blue stripes, and enlarging the central star to nine times its former size. Working with the mayor's chief of staff, Sam Adams, the group drafted the ordinance and testified before city council on behalf of the new flag. Mayor Vera Katz applauded the initiative and oversaw the raising on the council chambers' pole of the first new flag (manufactured and donated by Elmer's Flag & Banner).

**DESIGNER:** Douglas Lynch, 89, a nationally-known, award-winning graphic designer, created this revision of his previous flag. Believing his original design could be simplified, and seeking an opportunity to remove the city seal placed upon it by the former city council, he developed a new version after his presentation to the Portland Flag Association on the history of the 1969 flag.

**MORE ABOUT THE FLAG:** To allow for normal attrition in flag stocks, the ordinance of adoption made the previous flag equally valid until 31 December 2004.

In the 1980s, the city's Office of Neighborhood Associations sponsored the development and adoption of flags for the city's 70+ neighborhoods, modeled in proportion (3:4) on the flags of Sienna, Italy. These flags are occasionally displayed in city hall.

**FORMER FLAGS:** Portland has recognized four previous flags, of varying levels of acceptance.

In April 1969 the Commercial Club of Portland proposed a flag for the city, asserting that previous designs had never been officially adopted. That proposal consisted of a white field with the city seal in gold in the center, flanked by two red roses with **World Port of the Pacific** above and **City of Roses** below.

Mayor Terry Schrunk referred the design to the Portland Art Commission. Mrs. Gus (Libby) Solomon, chair of the commission, instead announced a plan to hire a qualified designer to design an official Portland flag for \$500. She invited Douglas Lynch, former commission chair and prominent graphic designer to compete. He declined, describing the process of creating and adopting an acceptable flag as "a project where even angels fear to tread". Instead he offered to draft criteria "by which an appropriate flag might be created", and polled the members of the city council and art commission in writing concerning the general character of the flag, color choice, and the use of the city seal. He found that all four city council members and none of the nine art commission members favored using the seal.



At Mrs. Solomon's urging, Lynch relented and designed a flag. On a field of bright medium green, its light blue stripes represent the Columbia and Willamette rivers in an offset cross, set toward the hoist. The stripes are fimbriated in white,

gold, and white, with proportions of 1:2:1:2:1:2:1. Their intersection forms a small four-pointed star (a hypocycloid) in white, representing the city at the confluence of the rivers. Overruling Lynch's preference, the city council altered his final design, changing the canton to a dark blue and adding the city seal. The canton is dark with the seal centered in yellow and white. The dimensions of the canton are 13:14; the upper fly quarter, 11:36; lower hoist quarter, 11:16, and the lower fly, 13:34. The width of the cross figure is 10 units. The city council adopted the flag by ordinance amid lively citywide discussion on 8 January 1970. Lynch called the design process "as much diplomatic as it was artistic".

In December 1957, the Lang Syne Society, composed of "senior citizens of Portland who have been engaged in its businesses, industries and professions for 30 years or more", launched a contest among the local high schools for a city flag design. The society felt that Portland, one of the only large cities without a flag, needed a municipal flag. Among 51 designs, the prize of \$200 went to the winner, Philip Schaffer of Franklin High School, at the 2 April 1958 meeting when the flag was introduced to the city council by city commissioner Ormond R. Bean. Although the flag was not adopted officially, the Lang Syne Society did have a flag made and presented it to Mayor Terry Shrunken on January 1, 1959. It hung in the council chambers until 1970.



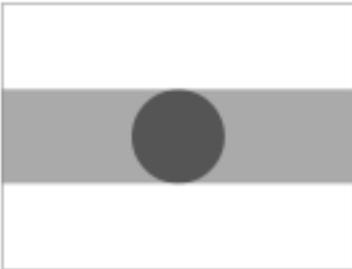
The flag has a medium blue field, with proportions of 3:5. At the hoist, about one-sixth of the field's length, is a vertical gold stripe on which **1851** (the year of the city's incorporation) runs downward vertically in large black numerals. Centered on the remaining blue portion of the field is a circular figure depicting the city's pioneer beginnings, although it is not Portland's official seal. The circle is bordered by a green ring edged on both sides by a narrow yellow line. Centered over the top portion is **Portland**, in black, clockwise. On the lower portion, beginning about at 8 o'clock and ending at about 4 o'clock, appears **Rose Festival City**, also in black (several other cities were also known as "The City of Roses")

at the time, so “Festival” was added as a distinction). On either side of the ring, centered are two roses, yellow over red, with stems and leaves. The central portion of the circle shows a snow-capped mountain scene with evergreen trees, and in the center foreground is a covered wagon and a pioneer cabin. The diameter of the circle is about one-third of the length of the entire field.



In June 1950, Mayor Dorothy McCullough Lee sought a municipal flag to fly along with the state flag. Benson High School’s band director Norman Street worked with art teacher Harry Matheson to design a flag. It consists of the city seal centered on a white background. **City of Roses** appears centered

above the seal, and **Portland, Oregon** appears centered below. Although Mayor Lee liked the flag very much, she failed to have it adopted, perhaps because of her rocky relationship with the city commissioners. While she had promised to use “whatever legal hocus pocus” necessary to make the flag official, one commissioner later reported “Mrs. Lee might have ‘hocused’, but she forgot to poke us.” However, a flag was manufactured, and Benson’s marching band and armed color guard carried it for several years in the annual Rose Festival Parade.



In 1917, Mayor Harry R. Albee appointed a committee to ascertain if Portland needed a flag to accompany its new slogan, “Your Portland and Mine”. The committee examined the flags of 31 other prominent U.S. cities and determined Portland should have a flag, appointing

Morris H. Whitehouse to lead a flag design contest. Having published extensive specifications, the committee received several proposals. Design number 8, by H. W. Frederick, won first place and \$25. It is a horizontal tribar of equal white, blue, and white stripes, the blue stripe representing the Willamette River. A red circle centered on the blue stripe represents the city of Portland. However, the committee found that the best design did not measure up to the standards outlined in the

contest guidelines. The flag did not appear to have “certain important requisites, such as historical association dating back to the earliest periods of the city’s history”, as Whitehouse made clear in the specifications. The flag did not express any apparent “robust civic ideal” or “common aim and purpose”, nor did it convey “civic spirit”. Joining the patriotic fervor of World War I, the committee recommended that Portland instead fly the Stars and Stripes for the time being. The Frederick design was never adopted.

Mason Kaye 

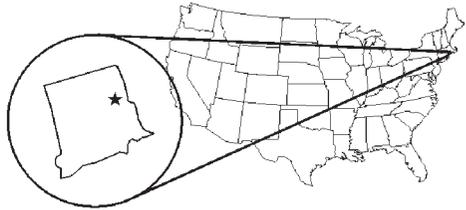
# PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND



*Population Rank:* U.S. ... # 119  
Rhode Island ..... # 1

*Proportions:* 43:55 (official)

*Adopted:* 9 April 1915 (official)



**DESIGN:** According to the latest ordinance of adoption of the flag of Providence:

*The flag of the city shall be of silk and the color shall be dark blue. In the center of the flag there shall be a white circle thirty-six inches in diameter. The seal of the city shall be embroidered on or painted in natural colors in the said white circle. In general all lettering and numbering shall be in gold....* (Ordinance 1941, ch. 1058 & 14; *Rev. Ordinances* 1946, ch. 13 & 14.)

**SYMBOLISM:** Another city ordinance gives the meaning of the city seal:

*The blazon or description of figures on the city seal shall represent the historical story of the founding of the City of Providence in 1636. The Indians are standing on slate rock which is on a point of land covered with forest trees on the west bank of the Seekonk River. The Indians are extending friendly greetings, by raising their arms and crying out 'WHAT CHEER, NETOP?' to an approaching canoe which contains the early settlers, Roger Williams and his companions. Roger Williams, the founder of the City of Providence, and the State of Rhode Island, stands in the bow of the canoe and acknowledges the greetings of the friendly Indians by raising his right arm. (Ordinance of 1941, sec. 2-336.)*

Although there is no official symbolism regarding the colors blue and white, in a 1920 newspaper article mentions the "adherence to the traditional 'blue and white' of colony and early Statehood days". *NETOP* is omitted on the seal.

**HOW SELECTED:** A city council committee solicited designs.

**DESIGNER:** Alderman E. Merle Bixby.

**MORE ABOUT THE FLAG:** In a photograph in the *Providence Sunday Journal* of 19 December 1920, the seal on the city flag has **PROVIDENCE** on the top section of the seal and the numerals **1636** below it. There is a ring of gold encircling the seal and the scene of the Indians greeting Roger Williams and his companions is within the inner circle, without the shield. It also has a different artistic rendition of this historical encounter.

Today the flag has the correct seal on the flag, as described in the ordinance of 1941. The scene showing Roger William's arrival at the site of Providence is on a shield in the center of the seal and a circle of rope surrounds the shield. The outer circumference of the seal is saw-toothed. The wording, **SEAL OF THE CITY OF PROVIDENCE**, is along the top of the seal and in smaller lettering is **FOUNDED 1636** above **INCORPORATED 1832** at the bottom the seal. Two stars separate the upper and lower inscriptions.

The flag came about when Alderman Bixby noticed the color company in a Providence police force parade carrying the United States flag and the Rhode Island state flag, but not a city flag. He brought the matter to the attention of the city council in 1914. A committee then solicited designs but found none acceptable. The committee then asked Alderman Bixby to create a design, which it adopted in 1915.

**OTHER FLAGS:** The Providence City Council has its own flag. It is white with two narrow dark blue stripes, one at the top and one at the bottom of the flag (the blue stripes represent the old Providence Plantations, which ran in narrow strips of land from the river). In the center is a dark blue disk with the seal of the Providence City Council embroidered or painted on it in gold. Encircling the seal are 15 gold stars, one for each ward of the city.

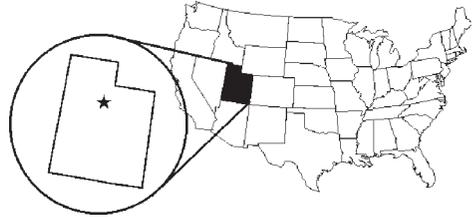
JC 

# PROVO, UTAH



*Population Rank:* U.S. ... # 219  
Utah ..... # 2

*Proportions:* Approximately  
4:7 (usage)



*Adopted:* 1989 (official status uncertain)

**DESIGN:** Provo's flag has a white field with **Provo** running across the center in gray-shadowed black letters slanting slightly from lower hoist to upper fly. Below, and slanted parallel to the letters but beginning about two letter-spaces ahead of it, is a narrow multicolored stripe beginning with red at the hoist and shifting respectively into violet, blue, green, yellow, orange, and back to red. (The stripe is also sometimes shown as omitting the red at the hoist and beginning with violet.)

**SYMBOLISM:** The colored stripe "indicates diversity, technology, and the exciting upward growth of the city", according to the city's administration.

**HOW SELECTED:** By the municipal council.

**DESIGNER:** Stephen Hales Creative Design.

**MORE ABOUT THE FLAG:** The city's administration lends city flags to civic groups for use in special ceremonies.



**FORMER FLAG:** An earlier flag of Provo was in use for some years after 1989. The field of this flag is 3 by 5 units, red at the hoist and blue at the fly, separated by a large, white, square-block P, slightly slanted toward the fly, and extending from the bottom edge of the flag to the top edge. The lower stroke of the “P” curves downward to the field’s center, but does not close completely. In the lower fly is **1849**, the year Provo was founded, in white block numerals. (The illustration of this flag in the official ordinances shows proportions of 6:7 and no date, which may have been added later.)

JP 

# RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA ★



*Population Rank:* U.S. .... # 62  
North Carolina ..... # 2

*Proportions:* 14:23 (official);  
2:3 (usage)



*Adopted:* 31 May 1899 (official); modified 25 April 1960

**DESIGN:** Raleigh's flag is one of the very few double-sided U.S. civic flags, no doubt because such flags are more costly to manufacture. Both sides have the same field, a vertical tribar of equal red, white, and red stripes. The front of the flag displays in its center the city seal, surrounded by a gold ring. On it **CITY OF RALEIGH** curves clockwise in the upper half and **NORTH CAROLINA** curves counterclockwise in the lower half, separated by dots, all in black. On the seal's white field is a green oak tree, with **ESTABLISHED 1792** curved counterclockwise below in small black letters. Surrounding the seal is an open wreath of green oak leaves and gold acorns, tied with a gold ribbon at its base.



The reverse of the flag displays in its center the arms of Sir Walter Raleigh with crest and motto, described in the 1960 ordinance:

*A shield in red with five lozenges in silver from the dexter or left hand upper corner, touching at points, in*

*a diagonal line to the sinister or right hand lower curve (pale-wise in bend). The crest shall be a stag upon a bandeau of six twists, straight, and having the same tinctures as shield and charges, the metal being the first twist on the dexter side. Beneath the shield shall be a red ribbon bearing the Motto of Sir Walter Raleigh, Amore et Virtute . . . .*

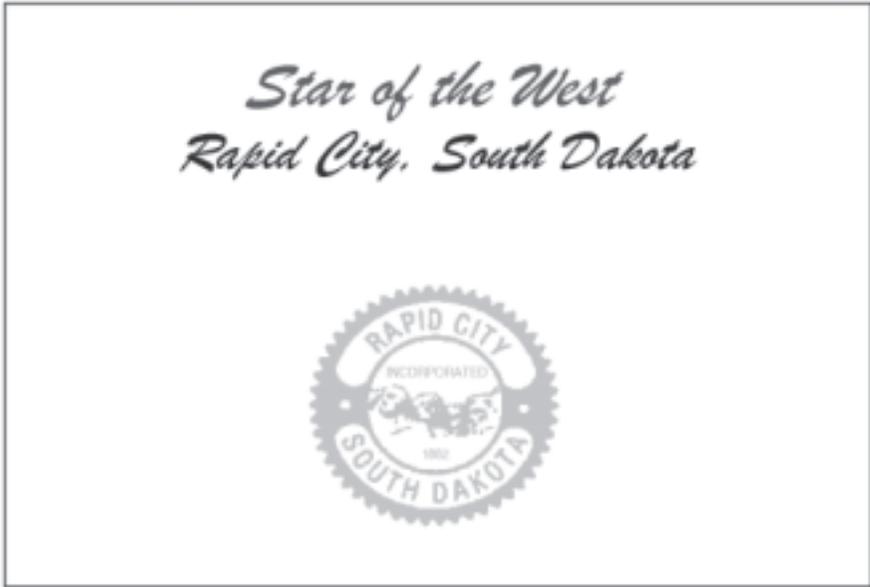
**SYMBOLISM:** Red and white are the colors of Sir Walter Raleigh, the 16th-century English nobleman for whom the city is named. The oak tree and wreath with acorns recall the city's nickname, "City of the Oaks". The deer on the crest of the arms is a play on the name Raleigh, derived from two Anglo-Saxon words meaning "meadow of the deer".

**HOW SELECTED:** In 1899 the city wanted to present a city flag to the captain of the cruiser *USS Raleigh* (launched on 31 March 1892). The board of aldermen established a flag committee to develop a new flag, which was sewed by a Miss Kate Densen for \$52.

**DESIGNER:** The flag committee.

**MORE ABOUT THE FLAG:** The ordinance of 1960 modified the flag slightly from the original ordinance of 1899. The later version omits the date from the seal's ring and places it with **Established** in small letters at the base of the tree. On the reverse, the full depiction of the arms was simplified in the later ordinance. The original flag of 1899, sewn by Miss Densen, is displayed in a glass case in the city's government complex.

# RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA



*Population Rank:* U.S. ... # 539  
South Dakota .... # 3

*Proportions:* 2:3 (usage)

*Adopted:* 1990 (official)



**DESIGN:** Rapid City's flag has a white field, 2 units high by 3 units wide. About a quarter-unit from the top **Star of the West** is centered in red, in a font resembling Brush Script MT, with its capital letters about an eighth-unit high. Another eighth-unit below that legend is **Rapid City, South Dakota**, centered in the same size and type of script, in dark blue. Centered in the lower half of the field is the city's seal, all in gold on white. Its top is at the field's midpoint and its bottom is approximately an eighth-unit from the flag's lower edge. The seal's diameter is 1.5 units; its outer edge is surrounded with 50 small triangles, points outwards, as if it were affixed to a document. Immediately within the outer edge is a ring about an eighth-unit in width. It is

divided into an upper and lower segment, each with rounded ends that do not quite meet at the seal's horizontal midpoint on either side, where a small white dot on the gold background marks the divisions. Arching clockwise in the upper segment is **RAPID CITY**, and curving counterclockwise in the lower segment is **SOUTH DAKOTA**, all in an Ariel-type font. The central disk shows Mount Rushmore National Memorial in outline. Centered above the memorial in small capital letters is **INCORPORATED**; centered below it is **1882**.

**SYMBOLISM:** “Star of the West” is the city’s motto. Mount Rushmore stands 35 miles southwest of Rapid City in South Dakota’s famed Black Hills. The memorial was carved between 1927 and 1941 under the direction of sculptor Gutzon Borglum to exemplify the first 150 years of American history. Depicting four U.S. presidents (George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt, and Abraham Lincoln), the memorial symbolizes the birth, growth, development, and preservation of the nation. The seal also commemorates the city’s incorporation in 1882. The indented edge of the city seal recalls the shape of the South Dakota seal on the state flag; its golden color recalls the outer rim of that seal. The other colors in the Rapid City flag—red, white, and blue—reflect those of the national flag.

**HOW SELECTED:** Developed by the mayor’s office staff.

**DESIGNER:** Kay Rippentrop and the staff in the mayor’s office.

**MORE ABOUT THE FLAG:** Information from available sources about the flag’s proportions is uncertain. The ratio of 2:3 seems to be the most accurate.

JP 

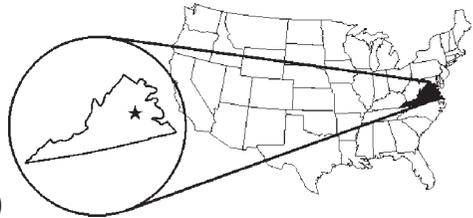
# RICHMOND, VIRGINIA



*Population Rank:* U.S. .... # 94  
Virginia ..... # 4

*Proportions:* 3:5 (official)

*Adopted:* 24 May 1993 (official)



**DESIGN:** Richmond's flag has a field of dark blue on its upper two-thirds. The lower third is divided into four horizontal stripes of white, red, white, and red, in proportions of 1:3:1:3. In the center of the blue field is a three-quarter silhouette of a bareheaded boatman in white, standing with his right leg slightly raised as if it rests on a seat, and poling his boat toward the hoist. The white boat melds with the top white stripe, which has four slight bumps resembling waves and thus gives the appearance of water. In a three-quarters circle around the boatman are 9 five-pointed white stars (were the circle closed, there would be 12 stars). The boatman and stars occupy just slightly less than half the total field.

**SYMBOLISM:** The city describes the symbolism in “Richmond and Its Flag”:

*The faceless boatman, as he poles to the honor side of the flag, symbolizes the tens of thousands of anonymous individuals, composed of a multiplicity of nationalities and races, who through the ages determined Richmond’s homogeneous character and contributed to the City’s success, growth and progress. Surrounding this symbol of our river’s power is an arc of nine stars. Each represents a present state that was once part of the Commonwealth of Virginia over which Richmond was their capital in the nation’s infancy—Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota.*

The city’s colors, red and blue, date to 1784 when the mayor, Robert Mitchell, added strips of red and blue ribbon when he affixed the city seal to documents. When asked why, he responded, “The blue signifies the river from which all life flows, and the red is for the infernal red clay that is always under our feet.” Richmond is situated on the James River.

**HOW SELECTED:** On 22 July 1991, an anonymous donor gave \$12,000 “to be used for the design of a devisal of arms, including shield, crest, supporters and badge, in connection with the creation of a new City flag”. The city council authorized establishing a flag committee to design the flag.

**DESIGNER:** The flag committee.

**MORE ABOUT THE FLAG:** Use of the city flag “except for the usual and customary official purposes, including decoration and display” is prohibited by ordinance (28 February 2000) unless specifically authorized by the city manager.



**FORMER FLAG:** The earlier flag of Richmond is double-sided with a dark blue field. On the front side occupying about the center third of the field is a “Norman” shield in white, featuring the central figure from

the city's seal. In the center of the field is the allegorical Justice, also called *Vindicatrix*, or “the Spirit of the South”, robed in a pink *chiton* (Greek gown) and a *himation* (drape) in white with blue shadings. Her hair is brown and she is blindfolded. In her right hand she holds a sword upright; in her left, the scales of justice. A green tobacco plant behind her symbolizes one of Richmond's early important products. Above her head, running across the center third of the shield, is the Latin motto **SIC ITUR AD ASTRA** (“Such is the way to the stars”) in black. Arched over all this, beginning and ending at the shield's vertical midpoint, in similar letters, is **RICHMOND VA, FOUNDED BY WILLIAM BYRD MDCCXXXVII**.



On the reverse side in the center is a red shield. The top half of the shield bears the Confederate Battle Flag: on a red field, a blue saltire edged in white with 13 white five-pointed stars. Below it is a white horizontal bar, with

**DEO VINDICE** (“Vindicated by God”), centered in two lines in blue.

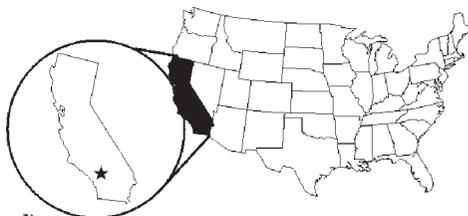
This flag was designed by Carlton McCarthy, an early 20th-century mayor of Richmond, and adopted officially in 1914. Its proportions are 3:5. The designers intended its symbolism to recall Richmond's role as “the capital of the great southern Confederacy [1861-1865] and the leading city of the south”, and strongly defended the “historic connection with the Confederate cause ... [as] part of the history of the world from which we cannot be separated.”

# RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA



*Population Rank:* U.S. .... # 67  
California .... # 10

*Proportions:* 5:8 (usage)



*Adopted:* 17 January 1967 (official)

**DESIGN:** The field of Riverside's flag is divided horizontally, gold over blue. In the center of the flag is the city's logo, 7.5 units in diameter on a field of 10 by 16 units. The outer ring of the logo is edged in blue. The field within the ring is white and has a width of one unit. Curved clockwise above is **RIVERSIDE**, below, counterclockwise, is **CALIFORNIA**, all in blue. In the logo's center, blue on a white field, is a symbol described as a Native American "rain cross", a trapezoidal figure surmounted by a double cross. The sides of the rain cross, which cross each other at their junctions, are 3 units, as is the top; the bottom side is 4 units. Within the rain cross is a bell, 1.5 units from its top to the bottom of the clapper, suspended from the top side.

**SYMBOLISM:** The bell and rain cross are taken from “the world-famous collection of the Mission Inn”, according to the city’s publications. The bell recalls the many missions of the Spanish missionaries along *El Camino Real* in early California; the rain cross recalls the Native Americans who were the first to live in what is today Riverside.

**HOW SELECTED:** By recommendation of the chamber of commerce.

**DESIGNER:** Charles L. Bridges, Chairman of the Mayor’s Conference on Civic Beauty.

**MORE ABOUT THE FLAG:** After the flag’s design was adopted, the city ordered 16 flags to fly at various sites around the city, and two flags of rayon taffeta with a white fringe for indoor use.



**FORMER FLAG:** On 22 November 1966, barely two months before adopting the current city flag, the city council had approved a similar flag in the same colors with a modified version of the city seal, but apparently it was never used. The city

seal is shaped somewhat like a shield, so that, ironically, the logo looks more like the traditional seal than the seal itself. The top of the seal curves upward. Following the same curve, immediately below it is **INCORPORATED 1883** in blue on white. Below that legend, and forming the top of an “inner shield”, is what appears to be the Native Americans rain bird, in gold. On a blue field below the rain bird are three figures: On the hoist side is a branch of three oranges; in the center, what appears to be a bundle of rods (the Roman *fasces*, or symbol of authority); and on the fly side a cornucopia curved over two small figures, all in gold. At the bottom of the “outer” shield is **CITY OF**, in blue on white. Across the lower stripe is **RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA**, in gold on blue. (Seal colors reconstructed.)

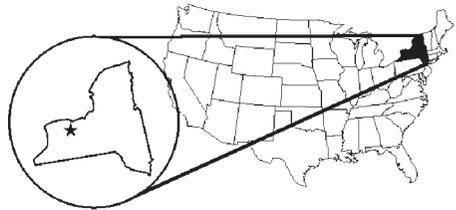
JP 

# ROCHESTER, NEW YORK



*Population Rank:* U.S. .... # 79  
New York ..... # 3

*Proportions:* 10:19 (official)  
2:3 and 3:5 (usage)



*Adopted:* 25 June 1934 (official)

**DESIGN:** According to the ordinance of adoption:

*The flag presented to the City of Rochester by The Rochester Historical Society, June 21st, 1934, is hereby designated as the official flag of the City of Rochester, having the following description: Said flag to be of three colors, arranged in perpendicular bars of equal width, federal blue nearest the pole, white in the center, and golden yellow on the extreme of the flag, from the pole. Upon the white center shall be inscribed the Coat of Arms of the Rochester Family, as allowed by the Herald's Visitation to the County of Essex, England, in the year 1558. Beneath the said Coat of Arms shall appear the word **Rochester**, in a downward curved line. The hoist and fly*

*of said flag shall correspond with those of the Flag of the United States of America, particularly so when used in conjunction with our National flag.* (Ordinance 4079.)

**SYMBOLISM:** According to Mayor Hiram H. Edgerton, who designed the flag in 1910: *The blue represents our exceptional water and electric power; the white, the cleanliness of our city; the gold, our financial strength and industrial prosperity....* The city is located at the mouth of the Genesee River on Lake Ontario. It is also on the New York State Barge Canal system (the Erie Canal created an industrial boom for Rochester in the 1820s).

Originally Ebenezer "Indian" Allen had settled here in 1789, but by 1791 he had abandoned his sawmill and gristmill. Then in 1803, Colonel Nathaniel Rochester, traveled with two companions by horse from Maryland to Genesee country. Colonel Rochester purchased 100 acres of land when he saw the abundance of water resources in the area and the potential for factories. By 1817 Rochester had become a village. The Rochester family coat of arms commemorates Colonel Rochester and recognizes his contributions to its history.

In 1933 Edward R. Foreman, the city historian, wrote a brief history on *The Official Flag of Rochester*, in which he described the symbols on the Rochester family coat of arms. The shield is gold with a horizontal black bar midway across it and occupying one-third of the width of the field. Three black waxing crescent moons (horns up) are placed two above and one below the bar. The shield has a narrow red border. According to Foreman, the crane (in the crest) represents vigilance; the three crescents symbolize fertility and prosperity; and the black bar represents a waistband, one of the symbols of high command in knighthood. The red border on the shield symbolizes military affiliation. (Although these emblems are given traditional heraldic meanings, there is no documentary proof that they relate to the symbols on the Rochester family arms).

**HOW SELECTED:** Upon learning that the flag had never been formally adopted by the city council, the historical society brought the matter to the council at the urging of the city historian, Edward R. Foreman.

**DESIGNER:** Mayor Hiram H. Edgerton.

**MORE ABOUT THE FLAG:** On 15 September 1910, Mayor Edgerton had formally designated this flag as official but the common council never voted on it. The Rochester Chamber of Commerce, by resolution, approved the design on 19 September, but because the common council never made a decision, the flag remained unofficial until 1934.

A variant of the official flag contains a narrow blue line surrounding the entire coat of arms in the center of the flag. 10:19 are the same proportions as the United States flag.



**OTHER FLAGS:** In 1979, the city adopted a “city banner” but this did not replace the official Rochester flag. The flag has a royal blue field with a stylized five-petal lilac flower divided by five lines representing a water wheel, all in white. • **Flour City** •

**Flower City • City of Rochester, N.Y.** surrounds the petal in gold. The city was at one time a major flour-milling center, and later known for its tree nurseries and seed houses, hence the play on the words “Flour — Flower”. The gold is PMS 124, the blue is PMS 287.

**FORMER FLAG:** Mayor James G. Culer created and used a “mayor’s flag” during his 1904-08 term of office. It was white with the city seal in gold in the center.

JC 