

Topic Page: [Philadelphia](#)

Definition: **Philadelphia** from *Collins English Dictionary*

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1 a city and port in SE Pennsylvania, at the confluence of the Delaware and Schuylkill Rivers: the fourth largest city in the US; founded by Quakers in 1682; cultural and financial centre of the American colonies and the federal capital (1790–1800); scene of the Continental Congresses (1774–83) and the signing of the Declaration of Independence (1776). Pop: 1 479 339 (2003 est)

Summary Article: **Philadelphia**

From *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

River port and chief city in Pennsylvania, USA, on the Delaware River at the junction with the Schuylkill River; population (2000 est) 1,517,600. It is the world's largest freshwater port, the fifth largest city in the USA, and a financial, business, and research centre. Industries include oil-refining, food-processing, electronics, printing, publishing, and the production of iron, steel, chemicals, textiles, carpets, and transportation equipment, although manufacturing is less important than it was. Philadelphia was originally settled by Swedish settlers in 1682, and was the capital of the USA 1790–1800.

History Founded by William Penn in 1682 as 'the city of brotherly love', a Quaker settlement, its religious tolerance made it the most populated city of the original 13 colonies. The scientist and diplomat Benjamin Franklin lived and published here, and the Constitution was drafted here in 1787. In 1876 Philadelphia held the Centennial Exposition, the first international trade fair in the USA. An inhabitant of Philadelphia, Katharine Drexel, who used her \$20 million inheritance to found the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, was canonized in 2000, becoming the second US-born saint.

Features Independence Square National Historic Park contains Independence Hall (1732) now a World Heritage site, where the Declaration of Independence was adopted on 4 July 1776 and the Constitution was adopted on 17 September 1787. Congress Hall, where the US Congress met 1790–1800, is in Independence Hall. Other landmarks associated with the American Revolution and the early years of independence include the Liberty Bell (1753). Cultural institutions include the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the University of Pennsylvania. The American Philosophical Society was founded in Philadelphia in 1743, as was the Academy of Sciences in 1812. It is the site of the US Mint (1969), the largest in the world.

Location The city lies 210 km/130 mi north of Washington, DC, 130 km/80 southwest of New York city, and 160 km/100 mi from the mouth of the Delaware River. It is situated on the main north–south axis through the principal cities of the Atlantic coast, and at the eastern terminus of the old Pennsylvania railroad, formerly the main east–west route across the state, which linked the city with Harrisburg and Pittsburgh; the Pennsylvania Turnpike has replaced this role.

Economy Industrial output is exceeded by only four other US cities; about 30% of Philadelphia's workforce is involved in manufacturing. The port district is one of the busiest in the USA, with a total water frontage of 60 km/38 mi, along two rivers. In 1990 the Philadelphia Regional Port Authority was created, and it handled 39.2 million tons of cargo in 2000. The industrial sector has seen many former manufacturing plants abandoned. A large government navy yard is located at League Island, just

upstream of the city.

Architecture From the outset, Philadelphia was a planned city; over 2,575 km/1,610 mi of streets are laid out with chequerboard regularity. Benjamin Franklin Parkway is one of the few exceptions; a wide, tree-lined avenue, completed in 1924, which runs from City Hall Square, in the centre of the city, to Fairmount Park. City Hall 1871–1900, with 642 rooms, is the largest in the USA. Formerly the highest building in Philadelphia, it rises 167 m/548 ft to the top of the 11m/37 ft-high bronze statue of William Penn crowning its tower. Other notable buildings include the Swedish church of Gloria Dei (1700), the city's oldest structure; Christ Church (1754); Christ Church Burial Ground, with the grave of Benjamin Franklin; Carpenters Hall (1770), where the First Continental Congress convened in 1774; Philosophical Hall 1785, the headquarters of the American Philosophical Society, founded by Benjamin Franklin in 1743; Betsy Ross House, where the first American flag was sewn; Franklin Court; Arch Street Meeting House (1804); the First Bank of the United States (1791), the oldest bank building in the USA; the Second Bank of the United States (1824), modelled on the Parthenon in Athens; and Elfreth's Alley (1702), the oldest residential street in continuous occupation in the USA.

The architecture of Society Hill includes Powel House (1765); Todd House (1775); and Bishop White House (1786). The Masonic Temple (1868) is an important centre of freemasonry.

Culture, education, and entertainment The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (1804) is the oldest art institution in the USA. The Rodin Museum has the best collection of Auguste Rodin sculptures outside France. Other museums include the Rosenbach Museum and Library (1863); the Academy of Natural Sciences 1868 (founded in 1813), the first natural history museum in the USA; the National Museum of American–Jewish history; and the Afro-American Historical and Cultural Museum. The Free Library of Philadelphia, a public institution founded by Benjamin Franklin in 1731, has 15 branches in the city. Franklin also founded a school in 1750, which became a college in 1755, and the University of Pennsylvania in 1779, the oldest university in the USA. Philadelphia universities include Franklin Institute (1824), Temple University (1907, on an 1884 foundation), Chestnut Hill College (1924), St Joseph's University (1851), Drexel University (1891), which includes M C P Hahnemann University with a focus on health sciences, Philadelphia University (1884), Widener University (1824), and Philadelphia Museum School of Art. The Philadelphia Orchestra flourished under Leopold Stokowski and Eugene Ormandy. The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts opened in December 2001. Fairmount Park is the largest city park in the world. Philadelphia Zoo, the first in the USA, was chartered in 1859 and opened in 1874.

Penn's Landing, where William Penn came ashore in 1682, is in a riverside development on the Delaware River waterfront, which includes the Independence Seaport Museum. Three old ships are berthed here: the USS *Becuna*, a World War II submarine; the USS *Olympia*, from the Spanish-American War; and the *Gazela of Philadelphia* (1883), a Portuguese cod-fishing ship, the oldest square-rigger still sailing.

Sport Pennsylvania is the home of professional teams in American football (the Eagles), basketball (the 76ers), ice hockey (the Flyers and the Phantoms), and baseball (the Phillies).

Population One of the most ethnically mixed of US cities, Philadelphia has a majority black population, many of whom are descendants of the thousands who migrated here after the Civil War, and large Irish, Italian, eastern European, and Asian communities. In 1850 the population was 500,000, and by 1950 it had reached a peak of 2.1 million, but subsequent urban decay and the emigration of people and industry caused a decline in numbers; the city's population fell 4.3% from 1990 to 2000. It remains,

however, the centre of a large metropolitan area, which extends into New Jersey and Delaware.

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