

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS ★

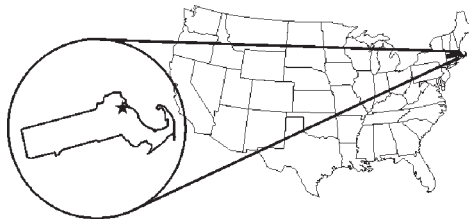


Population Rank: U.S. # 20

Massachusetts # 1

Proportions: 7:10 (official)

Adopted: 30 January 1917



DESIGN: Boston's flag centers the city's seal on a blue field. The seal consists of a white disk with its features outlined in blue. It shows a city scene in the early 1800s with the state house, built in 1790, featured prominently in the center, along with several sailing ships in Boston Bay. In the lower part of the seal appears, in three lines, **BOSTONIA/ CONDITA A.D. / 1630.** ("Boston Founded AD. 1630"). On a ring of "continental buff" surrounding the seal is **SICUT PATRIBUS SIT DEUS NOBIS** ("God be with us as He was with our fathers") at the top, and **CIVITATIS REGIMINE DONATA AD. 1822.** ("Presented with the government of a body politic in the year of Our Lord 1822"), at the bottom, all in blue. A thin white line fimbriates the outer edge of the ring.

SYMBOLISM: Governor John Winthrop founded Boston in 1630 and made it the capital of the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1632. The ships signify the importance of maritime commerce to the city's development. The motto "God be with us as He was with our fathers" comes from 1 Kings, 8:57.

HOW SELECTED: In 1913 the Columbus Day Committee designed a civic flag for its parade and later proposed to the mayor that it be adopted. An ordinance was introduced into the city council on 16 January 1914, after the municipal art commission had been consulted, but it was not adopted until 30 January 1917.

DESIGNER: Unknown.



Seal of the Boston Society, showing an image of the Trimountain.

MORE ABOUT THE FLAG:

The city seal was created in 1823 and has no colors. Since the ordinance does not specifically define the flag, except to specify that *the colors herein specified shall be the official colors of the city of Boston, namely: Continental blue and Continental buff* (the colors derive from the uniforms of Boston soldiers during the Revolutionary War), the flag has been manufactured differently. One version has the seal in blue and white with the buff circle on

a light blue field. Another has a colored seal that appears on a dark blue field. The city ordinance creating the civic flag described "a City Flag and a Municipal Standard". The flag was to be flown from public buildings such as city hall, and made of bunting with the seal showing through to the reverse side. The standard was to be used in parades and other functions when the mayor could attend, and made of silk with the reverse showing the Trimountain (three hills of Boston). Apparently the standard was never manufactured, as no reports, examples, illustrations, or photographs of it exist.

FORMER FLAGS: In the 19th-century booklet (n.d.) *City Flags*, published by Allan and Ginter, the civic flag of Boston is illustrated as a colored city seal on a white field with wreath below it. Whether this flag was actually used remains unknown, as no other evidence has appeared to either verify or refute its use.

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