

# Massachusetts



Massachusetts became the 6<sup>th</sup> colony to ratify the Constitution by a vote of 187-168 on 06 Feb 1788.

On March 6, 1915, Massachusetts adopted a State flag that was very similar to the flag that flies over the Commonwealth today. The 1915 flag depicted the Commonwealth coat of arms on one side on a white field. On the other side was blue shield with a pine tree on it, a symbol of the value placed on wood by the settlers of Massachusetts.

Today, the design depicts the Massachusetts coat of arms on a white field on both sides of the flag, a design approved on June 2, 1971 to take effect on November 1, 1971.

The coat of arms of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts consists of a blue shield with an Algonquin Native American on it. The Indian is dressed in a shirt, leggings and moccasins. He holds a gold bow in one hand and a gold arrow in the other hand. The point of the arrow is pointed down. In the upper right hand corner of the shield is a silver five-pointed star. Above the shield on a gold wreath is a right arm, bent at the elbow and grasping a gold broadsword. The motto of the Commonwealth is printed in gold on the blue ribbon partially surrounding the blue shield.

The shield of blue represents the Blue Hills of Canton and Milton, Massachusetts. The Indian depicted on the shield, Massachuset, is shown carrying the arrow with its tip pointed downward to indicate a friendly demeanor. The silver star of the coat of arms is designated as white (instead of silver) for the flag and represents Massachusetts as one of the thirteen original colonies of the United States.

The motto of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, *Ense petit placidam sub libertate quietem*, is printed in gold on a blue ribbon. It can be translated as "By the sword we seek peace, but peace only under liberty." This motto is supported by the ruffle sleeved arm grasping a sword that is depicted above the shield.