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NEW ENGLAND GOVERNORS ADOPT WRONG FLAG

At the June 1998 meeting of the New England Governor's Conference, the six governors adopted a copyrighted flag designed by K. Albert Ebinger as "the New England Flag" thereby totally ignoring at least 300 years of New England vexillology. The design, which is not allowed to be "manufactured, printed or reproduced without written permission" from Mr. Ebinger is based on an error in a Dutch book made in 1693 which showed the flag as blue while describing it directly underneath as red (see story on page 2). Nineteenth century American historians, having

incomplete data, showed the erroneous design which was the basis for this flag.

In addition to the erroneous New England flag, Ebinger's flag adds six stars in a circle, formerly the flag of the Federated States of Micronesia, and these are a complete fabrication of Mr. Ebinger's as far as New England is concerned. Stars were never a traditional New England symbol.

We are unable to reproduce an image of it here as Mr. Ebinger has not granted us permission to display "The

Flag of New England."

The New England Vexillological Association finds such a situation intolerable and calls on the New England Governors to rescind their vote in favor of our true colors. The only appropriate symbol of New England, the real and traditional Flag of New England of red bearing a white canton on which is a green pine tree, cannot be improved upon and everyone is completely free to make, draw, fabricate, describe, use and fly it without having to pay ransom to any single individual.

New England Governors'
Conference, Inc.

U P D A T E

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Chairman

Governor
ANGUS KING, JR.
Maine
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Governor
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CENSORED

New England ©

*The
New England Flag
as presented by
Al Ebinger
at the June 1998
NEGC Meeting.*

© K. Albert Ebinger 1965

The Governors approved a motion to adopt the New England flag, designed by K. Albert Ebinger, as the official New England emblem. For several decades this New England flag has been utilized in regional advertising, tourism, and promotional materials, such as the "I'll take New England Anyday" program of the New England Regional Commission, but had never been officially adopted.

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THE NEW ENGLAND FLAG

by David B. Martucci

The history of the Pine Tree as a symbol of New England probably predates the European colonial settlements. In eastern Massachusetts and southern New Hampshire and the southern corner of Maine, there once lived a nomadic tribe of Amerindians known as the Penacook. "Penacook" is an Algonquin word meaning "Children of the Pine Tree." The Penacook people have been credited with teaching the Pilgrims, those settlers of the Plymouth Colony of Eastern Massachusetts, much needed survival skills when the colonists were starving to death during the winter of 1621-22. The forests surrounding the settlement were teeming with game and wild foods unfamiliar to the Pilgrims and it was the Penacooks who showed them these new things. According to some accounts, the Penacooks also taught the Pilgrims elementary democracy, which the Penacooks, in turn, had learned from the Five Nations (later six) of the Iroquois Confederacy.¹ The emblem of the Iroquois from the beginning of their history to the present day is the "Tree of the Great Peace," a White Pine Tree with an Eagle perched on the top of it.²

In 1629, the Plymouth Colony adopted a seal that featured a shield with a Saint George's cross on it, in between the arms of which is a scene repeated four times of a human figure on one knee holding up something in offering (sometimes described as a heart or as a flame) between two trees.³

Later, in 1639, the Massachusetts Bay settlers adopted a seal that featured an Amerindian in the center holding an unstrung bow and a down-pointed arrow (symbols of peace and the personal emblems of Samoset, who was one of the two Amerindians who had been captured by the English, taken to England and taught English and returned to New England in time to greet the Pilgrims in their own language, which they thought was a sign from God). Out of his mouth is a ribbon with the cap-



*Third Flag of New England, 1775-?
("The Bunker Hill Flag")*

Flag of Lincoln County, Maine, 1977-present



Detail from John Trumbull's painting "The Death of General Warren on Bunker's Hill." tion "Come over and help us" on it and on either side there are two trees. On the left is a Pine Tree and on the right is an Oak Tree.⁴ The Oak Tree is a traditional symbol of England; could the Pine be the traditional symbol of the natives of New England?

The Pine Tree has appeared on the Massachusetts Coat of Arms (Reverse) and Naval Flag; the first Seal of New Hampshire (1776); the Coat

of Arms, Seal and present Flag of Vermont; the Coat of Arms, Seal, and all the Flags, past and present, of Maine.

Massachusetts Bay Colony was the scene of "The Great Migration" wherein thousands of religious dissenters came over to the New World to make a new life for themselves in the company of "saints" and other Puritans. Right off quick they passed laws regulating social behavior and the

observance of the Sabbath and the ministers went to great pains to condemn the traditional "idols" of the established church (not to mention Popery). In 1636, following a sermon by Roger Williams (who was later ousted from Massachusetts for being too liberal and went on to found the Rhode Island Colony) condemning the cross as a symbol of the Anti-Christ, the Governor of the Colony, John Endicott, ordered the Standard Bearers of the Colony to remove the St. Georges Cross from their flags. Before this was done, however, the Great and General Court hauled Endicott in for examination, found that he had "exceeded the limits of his calling" and punished him by forbidding him from holding public office for one full year! Then they gave the Standard Bearers permission to devise any kind of flag they wanted and, without exception, they removed the crosses from their flags.⁵ From that time on until sometime about 50 years later, the unofficial flag of Massachusetts Bay was Red with a White Canton.⁶

More than a generation later, the Puritans having lost some of their hold on the beliefs of the Massachusetts settlers, the St. George's cross again begins to appear on the flags. In a manuscript, "Insignia Navalia by Lt. Gradon, 1686," an illustration of the "New England" Jack appears, a white flag with a red St. George's Cross with an Oak tree in the canton. Other documents from approximately this time period show the red ensign with the red St. George's

Cross on a white canton and a green tree in the canton of the cross. It should be noted that some of the famous "Pine Tree Shillings" of Massachusetts, minted between 1652 and 1688 show oak and willow trees in addition to the denominations that show pine trees.

The species of tree in the earliest drawings apparently is not critical, sometimes looking like a Pine, sometimes like an Oak. It is described as the "Red Flag of New England," even though one source labels it as such immediately below an illustration colored blue!⁷

This illustration, of course, gave rise to all kinds of copycats who didn't read the caption and showed the New England Flag as blue, even though there is no contemporary New English or English source that show it that way. Sometimes, the tree is replaced by a globe (again, not in any English

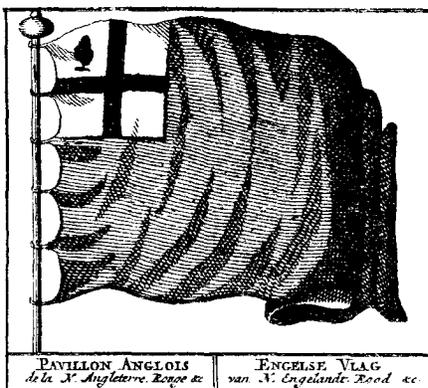
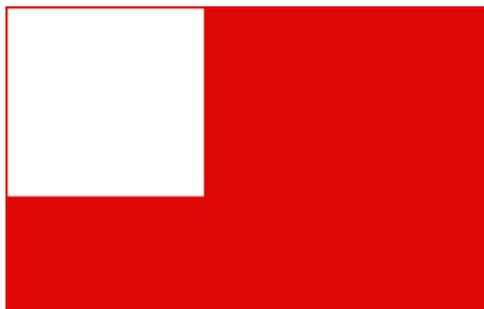


Illustration of blue New England Flag from "Le Neptune Francois" published at Amsterdam by Pieter Mortier, 1693 which is described immediately below in French and Dutch as being red!

intentionally the jack form of the New England Flag. This flag, minus the motto, was confirmed in 1971

being touted as "THE Flag of New England" that is blue with the cross and tree in the canton and six stars in a circle in the fly. (see page 1) This flag has no basis in good history or good vexillology. It was invented by a Flag Company in Ipswich, Massachusetts strictly for commercial purposes. The flag is accompanied by a copyright statement that says "NOT TO BE MANUFACTURED, PRINTED OR REPRODUCED WITHOUT WRITTEN PERMISSION."

On 8 June 1998, K. Albert Ebinger owner of the copyright on the above flag design, made a presentation to the New England Governor's Conference who, without realizing it was a proprietary design controlled for the profit of one person, adopted the design as the official New England Flag. Please contact me for further information, references, etc. regarding the Flags of New England and of Maine



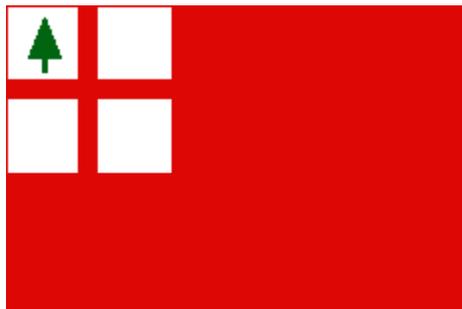
Unofficial Massachusetts Bay Colony Flag, 1636-c.1686

(source), probably because the artist couldn't tell what the illustration he was copying from was depicting.

After the Union of England and Scotland, there are a few pictures showing the New England Flag as a Red Ensign with the Union crosses in the Canton and a Pine Tree on a White Canton of the Union.

When the American Revolutionary War broke out in 1775, the Massachusetts Militia Men remembered their flag and modified it by removing the Cross of St. George and enlarging the Pine Tree. This flag is depicted in the famous painting by Jonathan Trumbell of "The Battle of Bunker Hill," which he painted in 1785, after the war was over. Trumbell was an officer in the Revolutionary Army and was in Massachusetts at the time of the battle, but he did not participate in that battle.

The Massachusetts Navy adopted a White Flag with a Green Pine Tree in the center and the motto "An Appeal To Heaven" below in 1775, probably

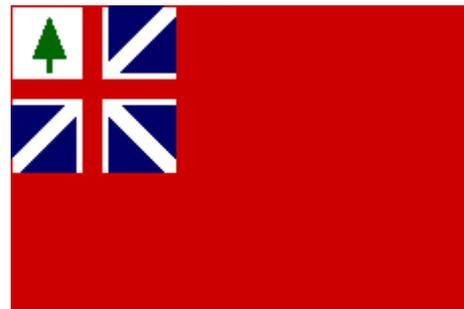


First Flag of New England, 1686-c.1707? as the Maritime Flag of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts⁸; a variant with the addition of a blue anchor, the State name and motto was adopted by the State of Maine in 1939 as that State's Maritime Flag⁹. The Third New England Flag was adopted by Lincoln County, Maine as their flag in 1977.¹⁰ The Jack form of the First New England Flag was used by the Town of York, Maine as their flag during the 250th Anniversary of the founding of the Town on August 5, 1902.

One thing to note; there is a flag



Illustration from "Insignia Navalia by Lt. Gradon, 1686."



Second Flag of New England, c.1707?-1775

FOOTNOTES

- 1 "Did the Indians teach the Pilgrims democracy?" by Cathy Spence, North Shore Weeklies, Ipswich, Mass., Week of September 5, 1984.
- 2 "Ganienekh" by Karoniaktajeh, The Flag Bulletin, Vol. XVI, No. 4, July-August 1977, pg.108.
- 3 Title page of "The Plymouth Records," Pilgrim Society, Plymouth, Mass.
- 4 "Heraldry in America" by Eugene Zieber, Bailey, Banks & Biddle Co., Philadelphia, 1909, pg. 142.
- 5 "The Flag Book of the United States" by Whitney Smith, Morrow, New York, 1970, pgs. 37-38.
- 6 "The New England Flag" by Howard Chapin, Pavillon Club, Providence, Rhode Island, 1930, pg. 5.
- 7 "Le Neptune Francois" published at Amsterdam by Pieter Mortier, 1693. Note the description in French and Dutch that translates as "English Flag in New England, Red, etc."
- 8 Smith, *op cit*, pg. 154.
- 9 *Ibid*, pg. 150.
- 10 Lincoln County Commissioners Minutes, 1977.

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

November 14, 1999

On board U.S.S. Salem, Quincy, Mass.

Attending: President Carl Gurtman, Secretary/Treasurer Dave Martucci, Tom Hale, Tom Hutcheson, Bob Koeller, Whitney Smith, Robert Lloyd Wheelock.

Meeting was called to order by President Gurtman at 1:35 p.m.

Minutes of the April 18, 1999 meeting were accepted as written on motion by Robert Lloyd Wheelock, seconded by Tom Hutcheson and passed unanimously.

The Treasurer's report was accepted as written on motion by Carl Gurtman, seconded by Whitney Smith and passed unanimously.

Old business: The admission of NEJV to FIAV was discussed. INFO-FIAV numbers 11, 12, 13, and 14 are available to members on request. A review of the 18ICV was held.

A discussion was held on the idea of making up a New England Vexillological site booklet. The Flag Heritage Foundation is working on a similar project for its web site. They have found about 100 flag related sites. NEVA can collect data on this in New England but does not have any better resources at this time. Send info to the editor of the NEJV.

A round table discussion was held:

Dave Martucci showed photos and read some correspondence that was received. He also showed a few of the flags in his collection, namely the Bucks of America and 54th Mass. Vols. replicas made for Flag Services Co., and the replica Dave made out of linen of the Serapis flag of 1779.

Tom Hale showed flag designs of the Papua-New Guinea provinces and gave a color chart of them to each attending member. He also showed some of the books he recently collected and the proprietary Flag of New England made by Ebinger. He asked 'What can we do to combat this?'

Whitney Smith showed a copy of a page from a 1661 Heraldry book that

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showed a charge of 13 stars in a circle as a constellation. It is possible Francis Hopkinson, who was an heraldic aficionado, knew of this charge when he was designing the US Flag, thereby making the possibility he envisioned the first flag with a ring of stars. Whitney also showed a copy of the World Encyclopedia of Flags by Alfred Znamierowski which was recently published.

Bob Koeller visits a lot of flag shops. He showed three 'Stars and Stripes' banners and a Russian Czar's flag he picked up. He also showed an anti-NATO flag he designed.

Tom Hutcheson reported on his recent travels to Baltimore and a visit to the Star Spangled Banner House.

Robert Lloyd Wheelock told of the new Rwanda flag that is in the works and showed his interpretation of a potential design. He has formed the International Symbolism Research Institute and has received some info from St. Eustatius and is designing a new flag for them. He showed a quite extensive listing of the Vaud, Switzerland communes that have flags and is working on a personal flag.

Carl Gurtman also talked about Znamierowski's book that he recently picked up and the book by a NEVA member, Zvi Ruder, about the National Colors of Israel. He saw an unusual Confederate flag that flew at Fort Fischer captured in 1864 and found in an attic of a person in New York state now on display in Wilmington, NC. It is a white flag with a CSA Battle flag in the canton but with colors reversed, that is, the cross was red and the field blue, the opposite of a "regular" CSA flag. The fimbriations and 13 stars are white, as on a conventional flag. He also showed a photo of himself and the original Maine Maritime Flag he located at Maine Maritime Academy. He noted that car dealers often fly the largest flags but that in Ellsworth, Maine he also saw one displaying a very large Christian Flag.

Thanks were extended to Tom Hale for organizing the venue of the meeting and to Robert Lloyd Wheelock for the fantastic flag cookies. As per tradition, we had to guess the flag before we could eat it!

No presentation was made at this meeting but Tom Hale offered to do a one at the next meeting, maybe on Civic Flags. A general discussion of flag topics ensued.

New Business: Carl offered to work on the next meeting venue. He also suggested we should all contact the New England Members and try to bolster attendance. Next meeting tentatively set for April 16, 2000, place TBA. Tom Hutcheson offered to help him with the arrangements.

Meeting adjourned at 3:25 pm and the members then toured the ship.

Respectfully submitted,

Dave Martucci

Secretary.

Notice of Next Meeting

**1 PM SATURDAY,
15 April 2000**

North Portico

**Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI**

Please note we are meeting on **SATURDAY** and not on Sunday as usual. This is because we could not get to see the flags at the RI Statehouse on a Sunday.

Directions: From wherever people are, get to Route 95 and head for PROVIDENCE. From either north or south take the exit for "Downtown Providence." This will put you between the Westin Hotel and the Providence Place Mall. When you get to the end of the exit off 95, TURN LEFT, which will take you in front of Providence Place Mall. The State House will be right in front of you. You can park on the street anywhere around the building. There are parking meters but on Saturday nobody cares. We should meet at the NORTH portico of the building (the one OPPOSITE the one you see when you get off the highway. It's the one with the marble paving in front, not the big lawn).

We'll have a special tour, with vex. highlights. Then people can follow me across the river to the R.I. Builders Association headquarters, where we can use their big meeting room for as long as we need it. They have refreshments in a kitchen there but if we use them people should kick in a buck or two.

Because it's on a weekend, I had to organize this tour through the Secretary of State's office and, believe it or not, it has to be approved by the House, the Senate and the Governor!!! You'd think we wanted to build a bridge across Narragansett Bay! The Sec. of State staff says there should be no problem, but I'm calling every big cheese I know anyway!

If people need further directions, details etc. They can call me at New River Press (800) 244-1257.

Paul Eno



Bob Koeller displays his "No NATO" flag at the November 1999 meeting. Photo by Robert Lloyd Wheelock.