



DAVID B. MARTUCCI

Flags Researched, Assessed and Appraised

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1 February 2021

**Committee on State and Local Government
c/o Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta ME 04333-0100**

Re: LD 115 - An Act to Restore the Former State of Maine Flag

Dear Senator Baldacci, Representative Matlack and members of the State and Local Government Committee,

Greetings!

My name is David B. Martucci and I am a vexillologist, that is, one who studies flags. I have been a flag researcher since 1966 when a teacher challenged me to write a paper to improve my grades and I discovered the language and traditions of colors, standards and flags. For six years from 1998 until 2004, I was elected President of the largest organization that advocates for such pursuits in the world, the North American Vexillological Association.

I have lived in Maine since 1974 and have studied Maine's flag history since that time. We possess the most varied and interesting flag history of any State in the Union, which is little known and even less understood by most Mainers.

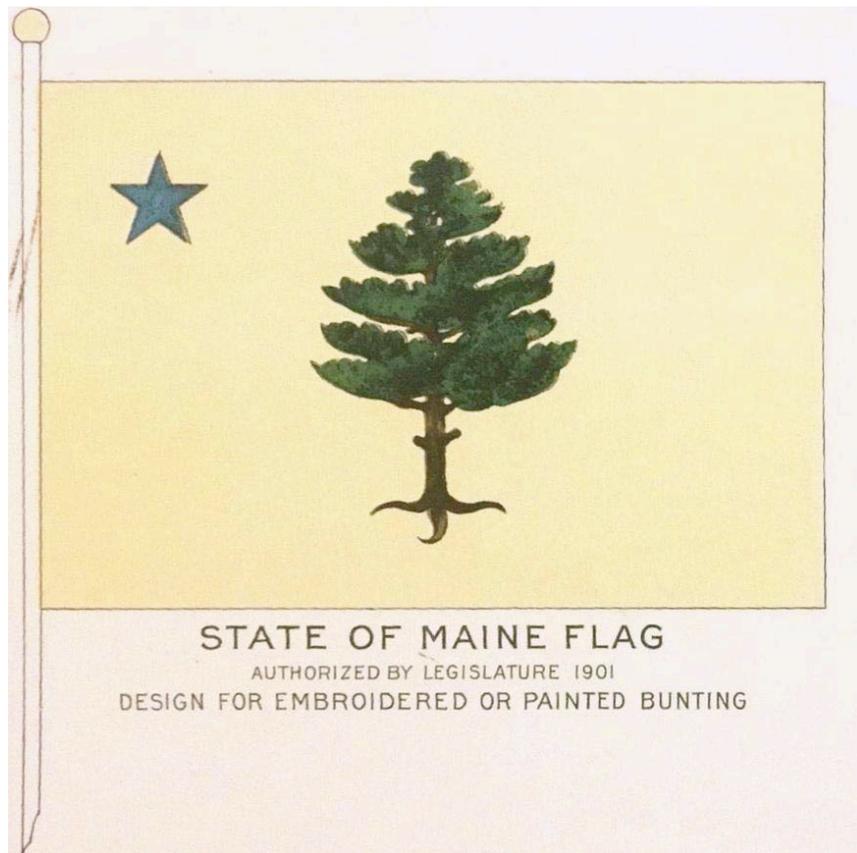
Although a standardized Militia Flag was in use since 1822, Maine like nearly all other States did not have an official State Flag throughout the 19th century. Beginning in the 1880s, States began to adopt official flags for their Governmental use and Maine followed suit on 21 March 1901.

The flag, a simple combination of a buff ground bearing a Pine Tree in the center and a blue star in the canton, was the creation of Adjutant General John T. Richards. In its 26 March 1901 edition, on page 5, *The Kennebec Journal* reported that "He did not word the description according to the terms used in heraldry

because they might be blind to many who are not familiar with them, but the bill in simple comprehensive language set forth General Richards' design."

The paper went on to explain "The design as adopted is preferable in many aspects to the State coat-of-arms ... Maine is everywhere known as 'The Pine Tree State' and what could be more appropriate than ... the tree should be one of the features of the flag? ... Were a flag bearing the pine tree carried through any city the people would say 'There is Maine'."

"Besides being the most appropriate in design, the State flag will be a thing of beauty. The background of buff, the old colonial color, will harmonize perfectly with the green of the tree and the blue pole star and altogether will form a beautiful emblem most fitting in appearance and sentiment to be the standard of the old State of Maine."



The Oxford Democrat.

SOUTH PARIS. 3

MAINE, APRIL 9, 1901.

Boston Herald: Maine's new official flag is buff in color with a green pine tree in the center and a blue star in the upper left hand corner. It is said to be as beautiful as the State it represents, which ought to be enough to make it float most proudly.

The Bridgton Pioneer

Bridgton, N. J., April 11, 1901. 4

Maine's new State flag bears a green tree and a blue star on a buff ground—a combination never seen in any other State.

**NEW-YORK TRIBUNE
ILLUSTRATED SUPPLEMENT**

APRIL 21, 1901.

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MAINE'S NEW FLAG.

From The Boston Herald.

The new official flag of the State of Maine, recently authorized by the legislature, is to be buff in color, with a green pine tree in the centre and a blue polar star in the upper left hand corner.

It is from a design by Adjutant-General John T. Richards. The background of buff, the old colonial color, will harmonize with the green tree and the blue star, making a most attractive combination of colors.

The design was also used by the militia both as a military flag and as the design for the buttons of the new uniforms. The Maine Railroad Company, known as "The Pine Tree Line" also used a variant on its conductors uniform buttons. The design was also used by the people of Maine in various capacities.



Militia Button, 1901-1909



Railroad Button c.1902



Rockland, Maine Old Home Week Guest Badge



1908 Souvenir Flag, AYPE, Seattle WA

In 1909, with the legislature containing more ex-Civil War soldiers than ever and following the retirement of General Richards, it was decided to change the flag to be more military-like. Indeed, the description of the new flag could not have been more dissimilar than the 1901 flag, requiring it be made of silk, "...of the following dimensions and design; to wit, the length, or heighth, of the staff to be nine feet,

including brass spear-head and ferrule; the fly of said flag to be five feet six inches, and to be four feet four inches on the staff; in the center of the flag there shall be embroidered in silk the same on both sides of the flag, the coat of arms of the State of Maine, in proportionate size; the edges to be trimmed with knotted fringe of yellow silk, two and one-half inches wide; a cord, with tassels, to be attached to the staff at the spearhead, to be eight feet six inches long and composed of white and blue strands.” There is not one flag in existence that meets these legal specifications today. The flag flying over the State Capitol is not an official Maine Flag! No such flag exists!

In 1991 and in 1996, working with my local representatives in the Legislature, I brought proposals to you to readopt the 1901 flag arguing it was more representative, easier and cheaper to make, and more distinctive than the present flag, which is similar in design to 25 other US State flags. Indeed, Vermont’s flag is blue with a coat-of-arms in the center that features a pine tree and a cow on its shield and it is often confused with our flag which features a pine tree and a moose on our shield.

In 2019 the proposal was made again. I pointed out then that the original flag was being used more and more by the people of Maine despite there being an official design that is seldom used. Indeed, following the original simplistic design description, there are many variants but all are easily recognizable as Maine’s true flag. These flags can be seen in nearly every town in Maine while the official blue flag is seldom seen.

The people of Maine have spoken. Besides the flags that you can see State-wide, there are countless other items sporting the design available and in use both by the Maine people and those who visit here and are attracted to the design as a quintessential Maine design.

As the *Kennebec Journal* stated in 1901, clearly this basic design says “There is Maine”. It is time for the legislature to follow the lead of the people and make this design our official flag once again. Please vote “ought to pass”. Thank you.

First Maine Flag Variants available at the present time



CRW Flags



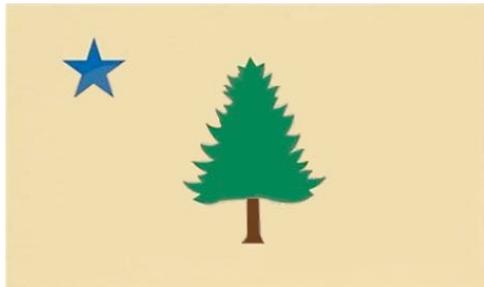
Dirigo Flag Co.



Gettysburg Flag Co.



Gorham Flag Co.



Maine Arts



Maine Flag Co.



Maine Stitching Co.



Zazzle

A Small Sample of First Maine Products



Artwork



Belt



Coasters



Hat



Hoodie



Jewelry



Koolah



Mask



Mug



Pillow



Tee Shirts



Tote Bag