

Massachusetts History

Massachusetts is the most populous state in the New England region of the northeastern United States. It borders on the Atlantic Ocean to the east, the states of Connecticut and Rhode Island to the south, New Hampshire and Vermont to the north, and New York to the west. The capital of Massachusetts is Boston, which is also the most populous city in New England. It is home to the Greater Boston metropolitan area, a region influential upon American history, academia, and industry. Originally dependent on agriculture, fishing and trade, Massachusetts was transformed into a manufacturing center during the Industrial Revolution. During the 20th century, Massachusetts's economy shifted from manufacturing to services. Modern Massachusetts is a global leader in biotechnology, engineering, higher education, finance, and maritime trade.

Plymouth was the site of the second colony in New England after Popham Colony in 1607 in what is now Maine. Plymouth was founded in 1620 by the Pilgrims, passengers of the Mayflower. In 1692, the town of Salem and surrounding areas experienced one of America's most infamous cases of mass hysteria, the Salem witch trials. In 1777, General Henry Knox founded the Springfield Armory, which during the Industrial Revolution catalyzed numerous important technological advances, including interchangeable parts. In 1786, Shays' Rebellion, a populist revolt led by disaffected American Revolutionary War veterans, influenced the United States Constitutional Convention. In the 18th century, the Protestant First Great Awakening, which swept the Atlantic World, originated from the pulpit of Northampton preacher Jonathan Edwards. In the late 18th century, Boston became known as the "Cradle of Liberty" for the agitation there that led to the American Revolution.



The entire Commonwealth of Massachusetts has played a powerful scientific, commercial, and cultural role in the history of the United States. Before the American Civil War, Massachusetts was a center for the abolitionist, temperance, and transcendentalist movements. In the late 19th century, the sports of

basketball and volleyball were invented in the western Massachusetts cities of Springfield and Holyoke, respectively. In 2004, Massachusetts became the first U.S. state to legally recognize same-sex marriage as a result of the decision in *Goodridge v. Department of Public Health* by the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court.

Many prominent American political dynasties have hailed from the state, including the Adams and Kennedy families. Harvard University in Cambridge is the oldest institution of higher learning in the United States, with the largest financial endowment of any university, and Harvard Law School has educated a contemporaneous majority of Justices of the Supreme Court of the United States. Kendall Square in Cambridge has been called "the most innovative square mile on the planet", in reference to the high concentration of entrepreneurial start-ups and quality of innovation which have emerged in the vicinity of the square since 2010. Both Harvard and MIT, also in Cambridge, have been ranked among the most highly regarded academic institutions in the world. Massachusetts' public-school students place among the top tier in the world in academic performance; and according to the World Population Review's 2020 ranking, Massachusetts' residents demonstrated the highest average IQ of all U.S. states. The state has been ranked as one of the top states in the United States for citizens to live in, as well as one of the most expensive.

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