

Source 1 – Image

Painting of the State House

By Charles Codman (1880-1842)

Augusta, Maine

1834

Maine State Museum, 72.19.56

When Maine became a state, they needed to make a state capital. As you can imagine, there were lots of fights about this. Where would you have put Maine's capital? Southern Maine, where there are more people? Farther north, to be closer to the middle of the state?

Portland was the first capital, from 1820-1832. In 1827 they decided to make Augusta the official capital. They started building the State House, which was completed in 1832. That's when they officially moved the capital to Augusta, where it is today.

The State House was designed by architect Charles Bullfinch. He was a famous architect at the time, and also worked on the United States Capitol building.

It is in the Greek Revival style. It is meant to be imposing and a symbol of Maine's independence. The State House is made of local Maine granite.

Source 2 – Artifact

State House Lock & Key

ca. 1832

Maine State Museum, 59.2.2

What's important enough that Mainers wanted to lock it up safely? This metal lock and key were used to protect the Maine State House.

They were probably made around 1832, when the State House was built in Augusta, Maine. We believe they were on the original door of the Maine State House and would have been used to lock it closed.

The State House was remodeled in 1910, and the door was replaced. This lock and key were saved and given to the museum.

Look closely at the painting of the State House. The door with this lock and key would be much too small to see in the painting, but they would have been there at the time the painting was made!

Source 3 – Image

Portrait of William King

By Gilbert Stuart (1755-1828)

Boston, Massachusetts

1806

Maine State Museum, 72.19.93

William King was Maine's first governor and the most powerful man in Maine during the years leading up to statehood.

He was born in 1768 in Scarborough in the District of Maine. He served Massachusetts Legislature as Bath's Representative in 1800 and then as Senator of the Lincoln District in 1807 and 1808. He married Ann Frazier of Boston and the couple built a home in Bath, where King was a successful merchant. He served in the War of 1812. King was a strong supporter of Maine's separation from Massachusetts.

As president of Maine's constitutional convention, King was automatically declared acting governor when Maine achieved statehood. There was a formal election in April of 1820 and he won by a landslide.

King was only Maine's governor just over a year. He was caught up in party politics, unable to please either Maine's Federalists or Democratic-Republicans. He resigned in June 1821 to take a post in Washington D.C. When he returned, he had lost political influence in Maine. He was soundly defeated in an election for governor in 1835. William King died in 1852, leaving his wife nearly penniless.

Source 4 – Document

Working Copy of Maine’s Constitution

1819

Courtesy of the Maine State Archives

Did you ever think about how the constitution was written? This is the first working copy of the Maine Constitution. After Maine voted to separate from Massachusetts, a constitutional convention was held in Portland. It started on October 11, 1819. Delegates from across the State were sent to Portland to come up with a new constitution, and the draft was finished later that month.

The president of the constitutional convention was William King, who soon after became Maine’s first governor.

They used the Massachusetts Constitution of 1780 as their model, but there were some important differences. After the draft was approved by the delegates it had to be approved by a vote of the people of Maine. In December, Maine’s people approved the Constitution.

Notice the crossed-out sections of text. They show places where the Convention delegates worked to create it. Notably, one page shows “the Commonwealth of Maine” crossed out and replaced with “the State of Maine.”

Source 5 – Image

Sketch of Maine State Seal

1820

Courtesy of the Maine State Archives

This black and white version of the state seal was sketched as part of the Maine Legislature's 1820 resolution to decide on the seal design.

Maine became a state in March 1820. Three months later, in June 1820, the Maine Legislature decided on the design of the state seal. They made up rules about what should be in the seal, but it was drawn by different people and looked different over the years.

Source 6 – Image

Painting of Maine State Seal

1820-1860

Maine State Museum 72.36.1

This version of the state seal is colorful and artistic. It is painted on glass, with a dark frame around it. There are some cracks in the glass. Notice how this version of the seal has the same basic parts that the black and white sketch, but still looks very different!

This painted seal was made sometime between 1820 and 1860 and was probably used in the United States Capitol Building in Washington, D.C.