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Massachusetts Chronology, 1773–1790

1773

16 December Boston Tea Party.

1774

19 January News of Boston Tea Party reaches London.

March–June Parliament passes Intolerable Acts.

13 May General Thomas Gage arrives in Boston as royal governor.

17 June General Court elects five delegates to First Continental Congress.

7 October–
10 December First Provincial Congress of Massachusetts.

5 December Provincial Congress elects five delegates to First Continental
Congress.

1775

1 February–29 May Second Provincial Congress of Massachusetts.

6 February Provincial Congress elects five delegates to Second Continental
Congress.

31 May–19 July Third Provincial Congress of Massachusetts.

9 June Second Continental Congress recommends that people of
Massachusetts revert to Charter of 1691.

20 June Provincial Congress acts to dissolve itself and calls for election of
house of representatives.

19 July General Court meets.

1776

7 June Motion in Continental Congress for independence.

2 July Congress declares the colonies independent.

4 July Congress adopts Declaration of Independence.

1777

17 June–
6 March 1778

Massachusetts legislature transforms itself into a constitutional convention.

15 November

Congress adopts Articles of Confederation and sends them to states for their approval.

1778

5 March

Proposed state constitution submitted to freemen (not approved).

10 March

General Court instructs delegates to Continental Congress to sign Articles of Confederation with recommended amendments.

23 June

Continental Congress rejects Massachusetts amendments to Articles of Confederation.

9 July

Massachusetts delegates to Congress sign Articles of Confederation.

1779

1 September–
2 March 1780

Massachusetts constitutional convention drafts state constitution and submits it to towns.

1780

15 June

Massachusetts Constitution declared ratified.

1782

4 May

General Court approves Impost of 1781.

1783

20 October

General Court approves Impost of 1783.

1784

1 July

General Court grants Congress commercial powers for fifteen years.

13 November

Massachusetts cedes western lands to Congress.

1785

13 April

Report of congressional committee accepting Massachusetts land cession.

19 April

Massachusetts delegates to Congress deed land cession to Congress.

2 July

General Court approves 1783 population amendment to Articles of Confederation.

1786

- 24 March Appointment of Annapolis Convention commissioners (Caleb Davis, Benjamin Goodhue, Tristram Dalton, and John Coffin Jones—all eventually resign).
- 17 June Appointment of Annapolis Convention commissioners (Francis Dana, Elbridge Gerry, Stephen Higginson, and George Cabot—all eventually resign).
- 5 July General Court grants Congress supplementary funds requested in 1783.
- 6 July General Court adopts resolution authorizing Governor and Council to fill vacancies taking place among Annapolis Convention commissioners.
- July–August County conventions meet in Berkshire, Bristol, Hampshire, Middlesex, and Worcester counties recommending debtor relief and new state constitution.
- August–September Farmers in armed groups close courts in five counties.
- 11 August Governor and Council appoint Thomas Cushing an Annapolis Convention commissioner.
- post-24 August Governor and Council appoint Samuel Breck an Annapolis Convention commissioner.
- 11–14 September Annapolis Convention meets and calls for a convention to meet in Philadelphia on 14 May 1787.
- 30 November New York and Massachusetts settle land dispute.

1787

- 25 January Militia under General William Shepard routs Shaysites at Springfield.
- 4 February Militia under General Benjamin Lincoln routs Shaysites at Petersham (end of Shays's Rebellion).
- 21 February Congress calls for Constitutional Convention to meet in Philadelphia.
- 22 February General Court adopts resolution authorizing appointment of delegates to Constitutional Convention.
- 3 March General Court appoints delegates to Constitutional Convention (Francis Dana, Elbridge Gerry, Nathaniel Gorham, Rufus King, and Caleb Strong; Dana does not attend).
- 10 March General Court repeals resolution of 22 February.

10 March	General Court adopts resolution requesting Governor to grant commissions to delegates to Constitutional Convention.
9 April	Governor James Bowdoin issues commissions to delegates to Constitutional Convention.
14 May	Constitutional Convention meets, but lacks a quorum.
21 May	Rufus King first attends Constitutional Convention.
25 May	Constitutional Convention attains quorum.
28 May	Nathaniel Gorham and Caleb Strong first attend Constitutional Convention.
29 May	Elbridge Gerry first attends Constitutional Convention.
1 June	John Hancock becomes governor.
27 August	Caleb Strong leaves Constitutional Convention by this date.
12 September	Elbridge Gerry's motion in Constitutional Convention for committee to consider a bill of rights is defeated unanimously.
17 September	Constitution signed in Constitutional Convention by Nathaniel Gorham and Rufus King; Gerry refuses to sign.
25 September	First printing of Constitution in Massachusetts.
17 October– 24 November	General Court meets in Boston.
18 October	Governor Hancock delivers Constitution to General Court.
18 October	Elbridge Gerry writes to General Court explaining why he did not sign Constitution.
20–25 October	General Court debates and calls state convention.
24 October	James Wilson's speech of 6 October first printed in Massachusetts.
31 October	Massachusetts Senate reads Gerry's 18 October letter.
2 November	Massachusetts House reads Gerry's letter.
3 November	Gerry's letter first printed.
19 November– 7 January 1788	Towns elect delegates to state convention.
21 November	George Mason's objections first printed in Massachusetts.
23 November	First number of "Agrippa" printed in Massachusetts.
3 December	Benjamin Franklin's speech to Constitutional Convention printed in Massachusetts.

1788

- 7 January Boston tradesmen meeting at Green Dragon Tavern.
- 9 January–7 February Massachusetts Convention meets in Boston.
- 16 January *Massachusetts Centinel* prints first pillars illustration.
- 30 January John Hancock attends Convention for first time.
- 31 January Hancock proposes conciliatory proposition recommending amendments.
- 6 February Convention ratifies Constitution 187–168 with nine recommendatory amendments.
- 8 February Boston procession celebrates ratification of Constitution.
- 16 February Governor Hancock transmits copies of Form of Ratification to other states.
- 27 February–1 April General Court meets.
- 21–24 November General Court elects Caleb Strong and Tristram Dalton as U.S. Senators.
- 18 December Election of U.S. Representatives (4 of 8 elected).

1789

- 29 January Election of U.S. Representatives (2 of 8 elected).
- 2 March Election of U.S. Representative (1 of 8 elected).
- 11 May Election of last U.S. Representative.
- 8 June James Madison proposes Bill of Rights in U.S. House of Representatives.
- 25 September Congress approves 12 proposed amendments to Constitution and submits them to states.

1790

- 14 January Governor Hancock transmits 12 amendments to Constitution to the General Court.
- 29 January Massachusetts Senate adopts 10 of 12 amendments.
- 2 February Massachusetts House of Representatives adopts 9 of 12 amendments.
- 9 March General Court adjourns without adopting amendments.

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