

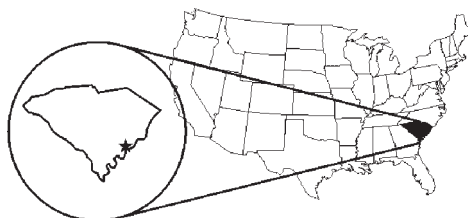
CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA



Population Rank: U.S. ... # 243
South Carolina # 2

Proportions: 3:5 (usage)

Adopted: mid-1990s (unofficial)



DESIGN: The flag of Charleston is dark blue on which is centered the embellished city seal in white and dark blue. On a flag with a ratio of 3 by 5 units, it has a diameter of 1.6 units. The seal is described officially in the ordinance of adoption: *On the right in the foreground is a female figure seated, her right arm raised and forefinger pointing, her left arm down and left hand holding a scepter; on the left is a ship under full sail; in the background is a water view of the city, with the steeples towering; immediately below the female figure are the words, “Carolopolis Condita A.D. 1670”, (Charleston founded in the year of our Lord 1670). Encircling the whole are the following inscriptions in Roman capitals: “Aedes mores juraque curat” (She cares for her temples, customs, and rights) and “Civitatis Regimine Donata A.D. 1783” (Pre-*

sented with the government of a body politic in the year of our Lord 1783)”.

The seal was first authorized on 13 August 1783. The current design is based on a version of the seal introduced in 1882 by Mayor William A. Courtney. There are palmetto branches below the seal and books stacked along its sides. At the top is a scroll, quill pen, and oil lamp.

SYMBOLISM: Of the city seal, Historian David C. R. Hesser writes *Tradition identifies the woman as the personification of the city itself, and the design evokes an image of Charleston deriving its livelihood from the sea and prepared to defend itself.* (A ‘Warrior Queen of Ocean’: The Story of Charleston and Its Seal, *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 93 (1992): 167.

HOW SELECTED: In the mid-1990s Mayor Joseph P. Riley changed the existing flag, although no legal authorization for the new design can be found.

DESIGNER: Unknown.



FORMER FLAGS: Mayor Courtenay first unfurled a Charleston city flag in 1882, but the exact design is unknown. For many years, an unofficial flag of dark blue with a large white central disk bearing the unembellished seal was used.

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