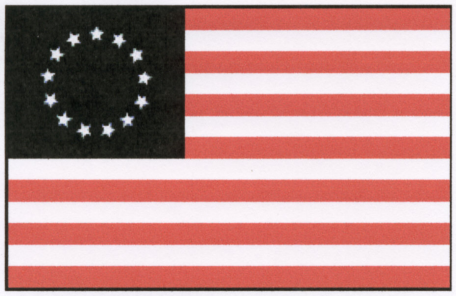
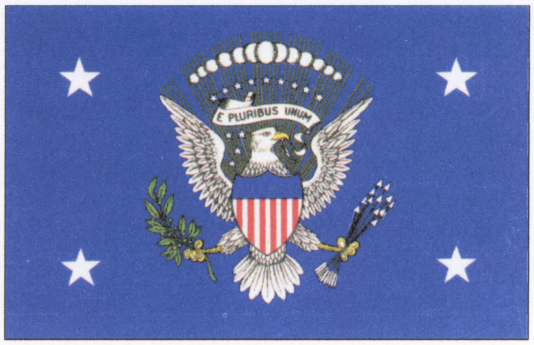


NATIONAL SYMBOLS

The Story Of Our National and Presidential Flags and Seals

by
Les Dropkin



Prepared for the Potomac Association, January 2004

Our National Symbols

The time has come……..
……..to talk of many things
Of ...ships and sealing wax……..
……..and whether pigs have wings
(Lewis Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland*)

Our ship, the Potomac, has many connections to our national symbols. We fly the national flag and, when cruising, a presidential flag. We display President Roosevelt's seal in the Potomac's saloon and in the fantail. And, as to whether pigs have wings, consider the following.

Recently, one of our docents asked, perhaps more to himself than to anyone else, where he had gotten the mistaken idea that the head of the eagle in the presidential seal faced the bundle of arrows in its left talon in times of war and to the olive branch in its right talon at other times.

I was intrigued by the question and decided to try and find the answer. But, as the popular saying goes, nothing is quite as simple as first appears. It's not that it was that hard to find the answer to *his* question. Rather, it was that other related questions suggested themselves and led me to the realization that there was a story to be told about the history of our national symbols in general and about presidential seals and flags in particular. The story goes back to the very beginnings of the United States and involves the history and interconnections of our national and presidential symbols.

Before telling that story however, lets first go back to the original question. It appears that while the original source of the idea that the eagle's head was turned to its left in times of war is not known, the myth began to spread very widely and very rapidly a few years ago after the airing of an episode of the program "West Wing". In that episode the United States was at war and a comment was made about the position of the eagle's head. The legend probably represents a case of jumping to conclusions, based on the fact that the eagle's head <u>was</u> turned to face the olive branch of peace just a few months after the end of World War II, when President Truman signed Executive Order No. 9646 on October 25, 1945 changing the presidential seal.

We can now return to the beginning of our story.

Among the early actions taken by the Continental Congress after approving the Declaration of Independence was the decision to design two national symbols - a flag and a seal - for the new country, the Confederacy of the United States of America. It did not take very long for Congress to agree on the flag.

THE NATIONAL FLAG

On June 14, 1777 Congress adopted a design that would continue to be the basis for our national flag ever since: Thirteen alternating red and white stripes (seven red and six white), together with a blue field containing thirteen white stars in the upper left. June 14th, of course, has entered the national consciousness as Flag Day and was first proclaimed by President Wilson in 1916. Technically, this rectangular area in the upper left is called a "Canton". However, because an area of a flag that contains

symbols representing a joining of political entities is called a “Union”, it is the latter term, which appears in Congressional references.

The reason that it did not take long to adopt the design was that a flag with the thirteen red and white stripes had already been adopted at the beginning of 1776 for use with the newly organized troops of the Continental Congress. That flag, known as the Grand Union flag, had a blue canton with the crosses of St. George and St. Andrew and reflected the fact that the tie with Great Britain had not yet been completely severed. Once the Declaration of Independence was approved and the separation finalized, the canton was replaced by the Union with thirteen stars.

The Union, when flown by itself as a separate flag or ensign, becomes the Union Jack.

In adopting the design of the flag, Congress did not specify the arrangement of the stars in the Union. One arrangement, perhaps the most familiar, is the one known as the “Betsy Ross” flag, where the stars form a circle. However, another arrangement, known simply as the “Thirteen Star” flag was also used frequently. In this flag the stars were arranged in five columns with the first, third and fifth columns having three stars and the second and fourth having two.

By 1792 two more states, Vermont in 1791 and New Hampshire in 1792, had entered the Union. Congress duly amended the flag in 1795, adding two new stars and two new stripes. The fifteen stripes alternated eight red and seven white stripes while the arrangement of the stars in the Union built on that of the Thirteen Star flag: now there was a sixth column with two stars added. This flag, the original “Star Spangled Banner” is the flag that flew over Fort McHenry when it was bombarded by the British on September 13, 1814 and which, when seen to still be flying the next morning, inspired Francis Scott Key to write the poem that later (1931) became the national anthem.

With the growth of the country and the expectation that new states would be formed, it became clear that simply adding stars and stripes was not feasible. On April 4, 1818, Congress adopted the solution that has governed ever since: adding a star to the Union of the flag as new states are admitted but keeping the number and arrangement of the stripes fixed at the original thirteen. Thus the new flag of 1818 had twenty stars, a number which had grown to forty-eight by 1912 with the admission of Arizona and New Mexico, to forty nine in 1959 (Alaska) and to the present fifty in 1960 with the admission of Hawaii.

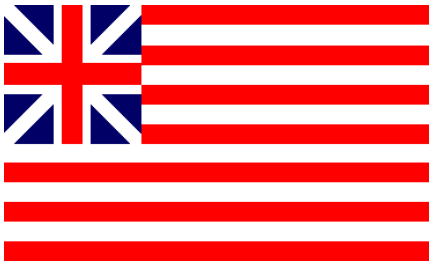
Illustrations of some of our national flags are on page 3.

THE SEAL OF THE UNITED STATES

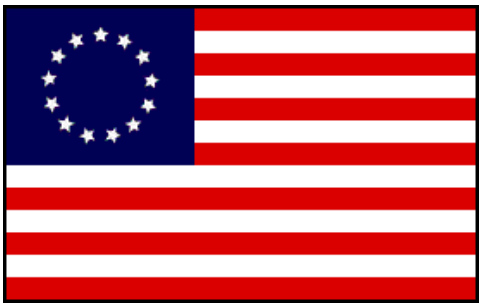
The red, white and blue of the flag reappear in the second national symbol adopted by the Continental Congress – the Seal of the United States. However, unlike the quick agreement reached for the design of the flag, several committees and several proposals were required before a design acceptable to Congress finally received approval on June 20, 1782. Ever since its adoption - and in contrast to our other national symbols whose designs have changed over the course of our history – the design of the Seal has remained the same.

The Seal of the United States, often called the Great Seal, is unusual in that it has two sides – the obverse side, which has the eagle, and the reverse side, which has the pyramid. The design was described in detail by Congress but no picture or drawing

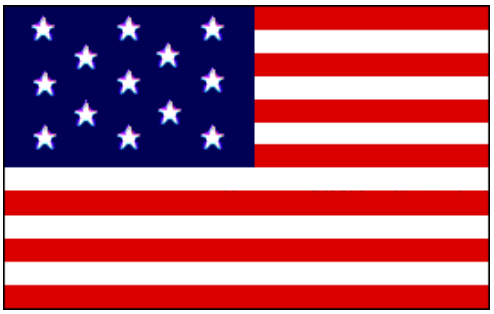
NATIONAL FLAGS



The Grand Union Flag

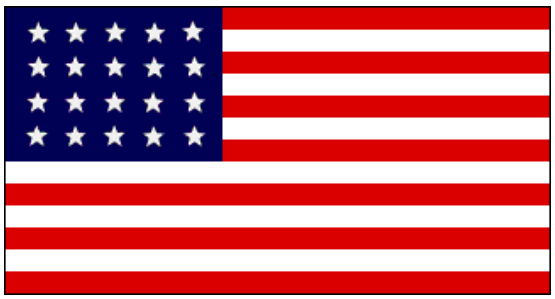


The Betsy Ross Flag

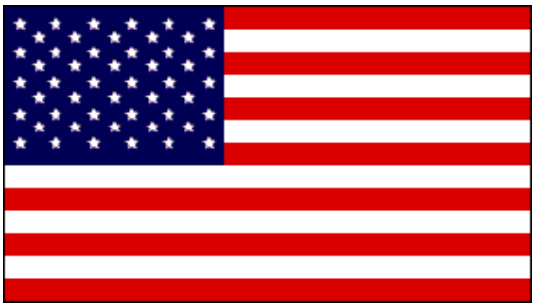


The Thirteen Star Flag

The Star Spangled Banner



The 1818 Twenty Star Flag



The Flag Today

was included in the Act itself. As a consequence, minor differences and some errors of execution have appeared through the years among the several dies, which have been cut, for the obverse side – the side actually used to emboss official papers.

There has never been a die cut for the design of the reverse side and therefore there are no treaties or documents that show both sides of the Great Seal, nor has its design become the basis of other national symbols. Nevertheless it has become very familiar – at least since 1935 when President Roosevelt changed the one-dollar bill to show the Great Seal.

Since presidential seals and flags have used the Great Seal as the basis for their own designs, it will be convenient to identify the several specific components of the obverse side of the Seal so that we can make the necessary comparisons and contrasts later. Because the description in the Act uses heraldic language, it is not helpful to simply quote it. Paraphrased, the description would read something like the following:

There is an American eagle with its wings spread and its body facing directly forward, shown in its natural colors; on its breast is a shield; the shield shows thirteen vertical stripes; the stripes are white and red; along the top of the shield is a blue area; the eagle holds an olive branch in its right talon and a bundle of thirteen arrows in its left talon, with both the olive branch and the arrows shown in their natural colors; in the eagle's beak is a scroll, inscribed with this motto: "E pluribus unum."

Over the head of the eagle, which is above the shield, there is a constellation of thirteen white stars on a blue field shown against a golden "glory" or radiance of light; the glory is shown breaking through a white cloud.

There are several points in the description that we should note:

(1) The description does not dwell on anatomical details of the eagle. Thus, for example, it does not specify the number of feathers in the tail or whether its neck is scrawny or full, etc. The actual dies, which have been cut, show considerable variation. The present seal has a rather more robust looking eagle than earlier ones.

(2) Although the direction in which the eagle looks is not specified, all of the Great Seals from the first one (which was in use from 1782 until 1841) up to the present one (which was cut in 1986 but closely replicates the seal cut in 1885) have shown the eagle facing to its right towards the olive branch.

(3) Although the shape of the shield is not specified, all of the Great Seals up to the present - except for the second (which was in use from 1841 to 1872) - have shown the shield in what is known as an "English" shape: straight across the top and sides with a bracket shaped bottom. [The top of the shield in the 1841 Seal consists of two arcs, instead of a straight line.]

(4) The thirteen stripes are described as being white and red, instead of red and white - the phrase used in the Act approving the flag. Again, all Seals have shown seven white and six red alternating stripes. The design of the Great Seal constitutes the "Coat of Arms" of the United States. As such, the design conforms to heraldic rules and (apparently) it is these that required the reversal in the number of red and white stripes.

(5) Although the description does not specify where the eagle holds the banner, all of the Great Seals up to the present have shown the eagle grasping it in the middle so that the words " E PLURIBUS" are on the right side of the eagle while the word "UNUM" is on its left.

(6) Perhaps the greatest variation in executing the design has been in connection with the "Crest", the part of the Seal consisting of the cloud, the glory and the constellation of stars. The thirteen stars themselves have been arranged in the same way in all of the Seals. The stars are so arranged as to have up/down, left/right and diagonal symmetry. That is, there are five rows with the stars in a one, four, three, four, one pattern and such that the stars taken together form a six-pointed star; this is seen most clearly in the second one. However, other aspects, such as the size of the stars, the depiction of the glory or the size, shape and arrangement of the clouds, have varied widely.

Regardless of the extent of the differences which exist among the various seals – and some, like the Seal of 1841 with its eagle having strange jointed legs clutching a bundle of only six arrows, are very different indeed – it is important to remember that that the original description of the 1782 Act has never been changed. All differences, including the treaty–seal dies to be noted in a moment, reflect differences of interpretation and execution.

All government documents requiring a seal, including treaties, have the seal affixed to the document itself, except for the period 1815 to 1871. During those years special seals, known as pendant seals, were used for treaties. The seal itself, the wax impression of the die, was placed in a metal box (called a skippet) that was engraved with the seal design. The seal in its skippet was suspended from the treaty by cords that also bound the pages of the treaty.

After the 1782 die of the Great Seal was used to create the first pendant seal in 1815, it was felt that a larger die would be more appropriate for treaty-sealing. As a result, a special treaty-seal die was created for President John Quincy Adams in 1825. It was not only large (with a diameter of almost 5 inches) but also had its own variant design. The eagle is turned slightly and appears to be resting on an olive tree branch. The banner is held at one end so that the "E Pluribus Unum" motto is unbroken. Also, the shape of the shield on the eagle's breast is typical of the nineteenth century: the sides have a gentle curve and meet a point at the bottom; the top has two arcs, like the top of the 1841 Great Seal. This design would be used for all the pendant seals on treaties until 1871 when the use of pendant seals was discontinued.

The final form of the Great Seal, still used today, is known as the "Tiffany Seal", after the company that designed and cut a new die in 1885.

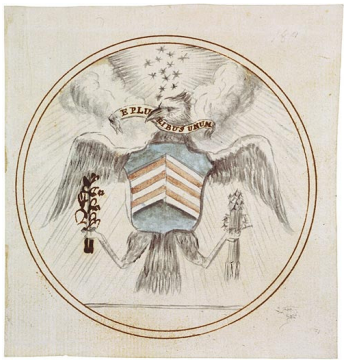
Illustrations of some of the Great Seals are on page 6, They include the pendant seal and an original design sketch by Charles Thomson, Secretary of the Continental Congress and the person responsible in 1782 for bringing in a final design.

PRESIDENTIAL SEALS - The First Design

Both the national flag and the national seal represent the country; an entity with a history and governmental structure. Created by Congressional Acts, they go back to the very beginning of the United States. In contrast, however, presidential seals and flags, which are personal emblems of the office of president, date to only the latter part of the nineteenth century and are created or modified by executive action.

Ultimately, presidential seals derive from the design of the Great Seal. As noted, they did not exist before the late 1800's. It is not surprising then that there were other,

SEAL OF THE UNITED STATES (obverse)



An Original Design Sketch (1782)

The First Seal (1782)

The Second Seal (1841)

A Pendant Seal (1871)

The Present Seal (1885;

replicated in 1904 and 1986)

earlier emblematic expressions of the presidential office, and that these were also based on the seal's description. In particular, several sets of official White House dinnerware incorporate the "arms of the United States", as interpreted by a given administration.

A case in point is offered by the Monroe dinnerware service. It was ordered from France by President Monroe in 1817 as part of the restoration and reconstruction of the White House after its burning by the British in the war of 1812. Looking at a dinner plate, one sees in the center an eagle in its natural colors looking to its right, but in flight. Instead of the eagle holding the banner in its beak, it is draped across the eagle's breast going from the forward edge of its right wing to the back edge of its left. The shape of the shield is the same as that described above for the pendant seal. Instead of being above the eagle's head, the cloud of the Great Seal has become a circular backdrop to the eagle with a very faint constellation of stars appearing in the open center of the cloud. The golden rays of the glory are not seen, although they do reappear as a central surround on the plates of the dessert service. (See page 8.)

A presidential seal, as such, was first introduced in 1877 in connection with the invitation to, and the menu for, a state dinner given by President Rutherford B. Hayes just after his inauguration. Up to this time, presidential invitations, envelopes and similar items had been issued either without decoration, or if decorated, used a design other than a coat of arms.

All of the design elements of the Great Seal are there: the eagle with a shield on its breast and with its wings outstretched, an olive branch held by its right talon, arrows with its left, a banner held in its beak. There too are the elements of the crest: stars, cloud and glory. However, the way in which many of these features are handled indicates a clear intent to create a seal that is recognizably different from the Great Seal.

The physical appearance of the eagle replicates that of the Great Seal in use at that time. That is, it is a rather scrawny eagle with its oddly jointed legs. The shield on its breast is the same as the one we saw on the Monroe service, a shape which not only appeared on later sets of White House china, but also on many other American articles of the nineteenth century. This shaped shield is one of the constant design elements of presidential seals and still appears today.

Another design element that differentiated the Hayes seal from the Great Seal was the fact that the eagle's head faced to its left; a feature that lasted until 1945 when changed by President Truman.

While the eagle holds the banner with the "E PLURIBUS UNUM" motto in its beak, we see that it is the end of the banner that is being held. Again, this treatment is one that still appears today.

The greatest difference between this seal and the Great Seal is in the treatment of the three elements of the crest. While the component parts of the crest are still to be seen, the way they have been used is quite different, indeed. Instead of a cloud surrounding the glory and the constellation of stars, there is an arc of thirteen cloud puffs between the eagle's wings. The glory, instead of being a generalized radiance, has become distinct rays of light appearing behind the cloud puffs. But the most radical departure from the design of the Great Seal is in the arrangement of the thirteen stars. Seven of the stars are above the banner and follow the curve of the banner. The other

The Monroe Dinnerware Service

six stars are below the banner and behind the eagle's head. While the specific design treatment of the crest elements described here for the Hayes seal was subsequently modified, the underlying concept continued to be used.

The blue field against which the stars appear in the Great Seal was represented in the Hayes seal by horizontal lines drawn around and above the head of the eagle. A second seal was subsequently cut and differed from the original only in the omission of the horizontal lines.

An illustration of the Hayes seal is on page 10.

Exactly who designed the seal is not known and various sources have been suggested for its design ideas, including U.S. coins and (possibly) the variant Great Seal that appears on President Grant's White House china. Almost certainly, however, the design of the U.S. Army's 1851 sword-belt plate [the buckle of the belt worn by those members of the U. S. Army entitled to wear a sword] played a major role. It is shown on page 10.

Use of the seal in President Hayes administration was almost wholly restricted to invitations. Documents that, today, we might otherwise expect to have used the presidential seal, such as an 1879 Naval Warrant signed by the President, exhibit variant treatments derived from elements of the Great Seal. An illustration of the Warrant is also shown on page 10.

The 1877 presidential seal continued to be used in all the following administrations through the beginning of that of President Wilson with only minor variants. Although no dies from this period have been preserved, several impressions or prints were. One of the more interesting of these is from 1895. This print shows an arc of nine stars above the banner and four behind the eagle's head. It also shows the coat of arms surrounded with the legend "THE SEAL OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES". The use of small capitals for the words "of the" continues to be a particular feature of presidential seals up to the present time, as does the nine/four division of the stars.

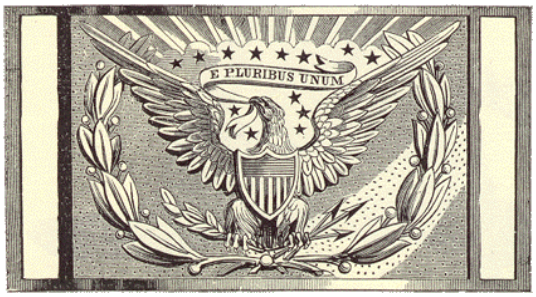
PRESIDENTIAL FLAGS - The Early Designs

The first presidential flags were representations of the fact that the President is Commander in Chief of the country's military forces. That is, they symbolized that one particular aspect of presidential responsibilities. Only with the passage of time did they come to symbolize all aspects of the presidential office. It was not until 1858, during the presidency of James Buchanan, that the Navy first addressed the question of an appropriate flag to indicate the presence of the Commander in Chief. In that year the Navy decided to use the Union Jack, flown at the head of the mainmast. But then, in 1863, the ensign (the national flag) was substituted for the Union Jack. The following years saw the decision going back and forth: 1864 reinstated the Union Jack; 1865, the ensign; 1867, the Union Jack; and the ensign once again in 1870.

In 1882, with the approval of President Chester Arthur, the Navy designed the first presidential flag, per se. The naval order of August 9th, which provided that the Navy would have a special flag for the president, stated that it would contain "the arms of the United States" in the center and be upon a blue ground. The interpretation of the

PRESIDENTIAL SEALS

President Hayes Seal - 1877



Sword–Belt; Buckle Design - 1851

President Hayes Warrant - 1879

Presidential Seal; Print – 1895

The Presidential Seal Today

words of the order produced a very unique flag. The eagle, which was all white, faced to its own right – because the words were "arms of the United States" (referencing the Great Seal), rather than "arms of the President" (referencing the presidential seal). Of the other design elements, some are unique while some more closely reflect presidential seals. Thus the shape of the shield on its breast was that of the presidential seal. And the shield, which is shown in full color, has seven red and six white stripes. Moreover, the chief – the blue field running across the top of the shield – shows thirteen white stars (in a one, four and eight arrangement). The banner is held in manner of the presidential seal. The glory and the cloud of the crest do not appear. The constellation of stars does, but in its own way. It resembles the arc of the Hayes seal; but the arc has all thirteen stars with the wings of the eagle separating the first three and the last three from the central seven.

In 1898, during President McKinley's first term, the Army introduced its own presidential flag. The central device was the Great Seal, in its 1885 Tiffany form, set against a large blue star edged with a white border. Surrounding the central device were forty-five white stars (the number of states in the Union in 1898). The flag also had four white stars in the corners. Unlike the blue field of the naval flag, the army flag had scarlet as the ground color.

A year later, the naval presidential flag was changed to show the Tiffany Great Seal as its device.

The Army flag was modified in 1912 in accordance with an Executive Order of President Taft that stated that both flags should have a blue ground. To accommodate this change, the color of the large central star became scarlet.

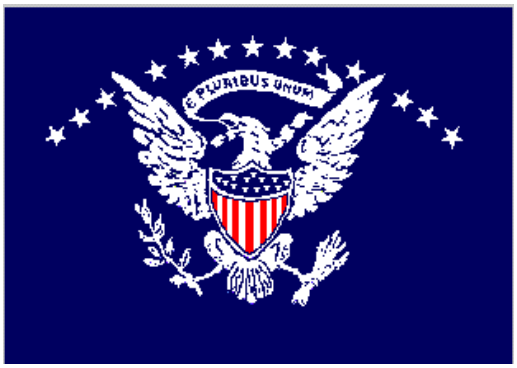
Illustrations of presidential flags are on page 12.

PRESIDENTIAL FLAGS AND SEALS - From President Wilson to the Present

As President Wilson began his administration there were three separate symbols of the presidential office, each with its own design: a presidential seal – the Hayes seal in its 1895 form; the1899 naval flag; and the 1912 army flag. By 1915, the President had decided that there should be just one presidential flag. A small group within the administration - including President Wilson's young Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Franklin D. Roosevelt and Byron McCandless, aide to Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels– began the process of coming up with a design for the new flag. The flag that was adopted in the Executive Order issued on May 29, 1916 owes some part of its design to each of the three then existing symbols.

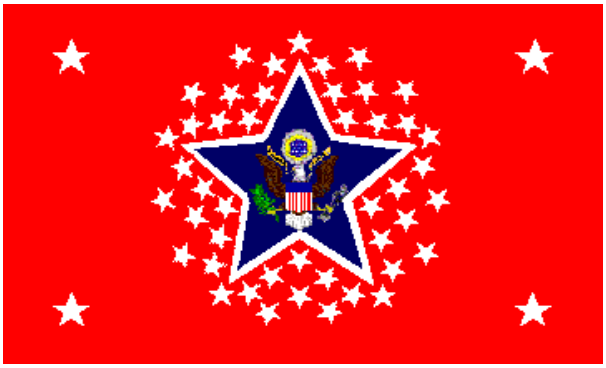
The flag's blue ground was from the Navy (and, by then, the Army), as was the physical look of the eagle; it was shown in white except for its yellow beak, feet and legs. However the eagle's head was turned to its left, as it was in the presidential seal. Also from the seal were both the shield and the way the eagle holds the end of the banner, although the banner floats in a somewhat more horizontal position. Cloud puffs, rays and arrangement of the stars followed the presidential seal, but with a few modifications. The thirteen cloud puffs have become more abstract; they are now circles, and instead of extending from wingtip to wingtip, they have been placed higher up. The rays were made more distinct, extended from the back of the eagle to just

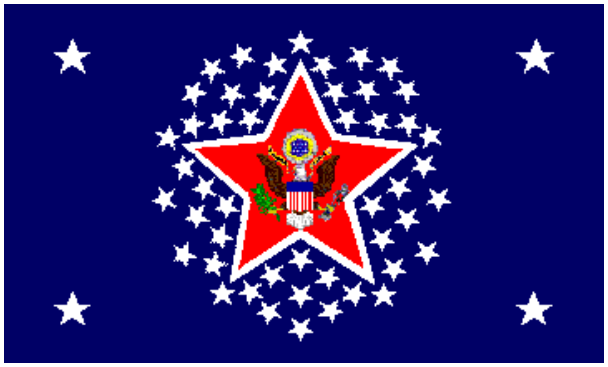
PRESIDENTIAL FLAGS



NAVAL

1882 **1899**





ARMY

1898 **1912**

1916 **PRESENT**

beyond the cloud puffs and were colored yellow. As in the presidential seal, the stars were shown in a nine/four arrangement. But, by having the banner more horizontal, there was more room for the nine stars and they could be placed as arc. Placed in the four corners were the white stars appearing in the Army flag.

By the beginning of 1917, the presidential seal was changed to conform to the presidential coat of arms of the new flag. A new die was cut using the central device of the new flag and encircled by the words "The Seal of the President of the United States". Thus, although both flag and seal used a common presidential coat of arms, there was still one difference: the flag had the four white stars.

The flag and the seal adopted by President Wilson continued to be used without change throughout the succeeding administrations until 1945 and the death of President Roosevelt. About a month before his death, President Roosevelt had asked the War and Navy Departments to consider whether the presidential flag should be revised. The query was prompted by the fact that new military ranks, General of the Army and Fleet Admiral, had recently been introduced – and these ranks carried an insignia of five stars. On March 20th, the White House contacted Byron McCandless (at that time Commandant of the Naval Repair Base at San Diego) for his opinion. The President died before McCandless could reply, but when he learned that the new administration continued to have an interest in the subject, he drafted a very lengthy and complete paper that became the starting point for the changes which would be made by President Truman.

Coming out of that research was the conclusion that the title "Commander in Chief" does not represent a military rank and that, therefore, the four stars were not military insignia. As a result, other civilian offices, such as Secretary of State or Secretary of Defense, continue to have flags showing their four stars.

President Truman revised the seal and flag in three ways: in the new coat of arms the head of the eagle was turned to its right, as it is in the Great Seal; a surrounding circle of forty-eight stars, the number of states then in the Union, was added; the corner stars of the flag were eliminated. There have been no further changes, except for the addition of two more stars in the surrounding circle (one in 1959 and one in 1960).

PRESIDENTIAL CHINA

In discussing the presidential seal, we noted that official White House dinnerware could emblematically express the presidential office. Not all presidents have purchased china for official use in the White House, and for those who did, not all have used the Great Seal or the presidential coat of arms as decorative elements. But many have.

The first one to do so was President Monroe. As we saw, he made a variation of the Great Seal the central design. The idea that presidential china could have a central design that makes use of, but does not necessarily copy, the Great Seal was followed by Presidents Jackson, Lincoln and Benjamin Harrison. President Grant's china also used a variant design, but showed the seal on the rim rather than in the center.

President Theodore Roosevelt also chose to show a seal on the rim. Perhaps it was the fact that the Tiffany seal design had more of a "presence" than previous seals that led him to use the Great Seal rather than a variant.

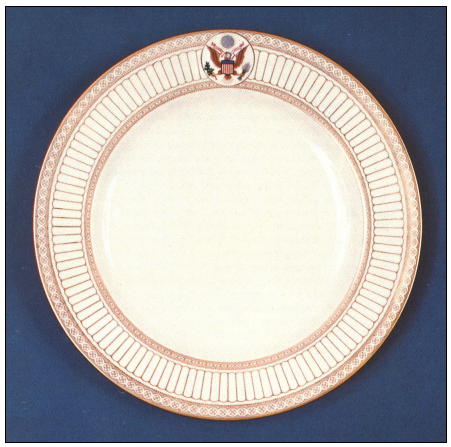
PRESIDENTIAL CHINA

James Monroe

Andrew Jackson

Abraham Lincoln

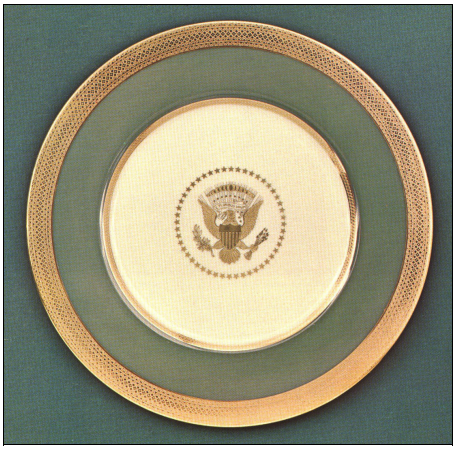
Benjamin Harrison



Theodore Roosevelt

Woodrow Wilson

Franklin Roosevelt



Harry Truman

Dwight Eisenhower

Lyndon Johnson

Once President Wilson established the principle that a single design for the presidential flag would be used and that the presidential seal would conform to that design, he and subsequent presidents normally used the presidential coat of arms as the decorative element for their china. The one very interesting exception was President Lyndon Johnson, who chose to return to the Monroe design for the center while showing American wildflowers - another form of representing the country - around the rim.

Illustrations of presidential china are on pages 14 and 15.

National Symbols in American Folk Art

The elements of the national and presidential seals and flags have been incorporated into American folk art from the very beginnings of the country in a great number of innovative ways. The subject, of course, is huge and we cannot even begin to actually treat the subject in any meaningful way here. The illustrations included on pages 17 and 18 are only suggestive of the impact of these symbols.

AFTERWORD

(1) The story of the West Wing program that spread the mistaken idea that the eagle turns its head according to whether the country is at war or peace can be found at the following website: snopes2.com/history/american/turnhead.htm.

(2) Even a very cursory search of the Internet will turn up many websites with some history and/ or illustrations of the American flag. Also readily available are many books.

(3) The standard reference for a historical treatment of the Seal of the United States is the book *"The Eagle and the Shield: A History of the Great Seal of the United States "* by Richard S. Patterson and Richardson Dougall (Washington: Department of State/GPO, 1978). It contains much more than is implied by its title. In fact, I was first made aware of its scope when the Curator of Manuscripts at the Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Center sent me a photocopy of part of the chapter on presidential seals in response to a question I had about the 1877 seal of President Hayes.

Perhaps more readily available, although much less comprehensive, are the several other books which the Department of State has published over the years: *"The history of the seal of the United States"* by Gaillard Hunt (1909); *"The Seal of the United States"* (1957); and *"The Great Seal of the United States"* (1986).

That these are publications of the State Department is, of course, a reminder that the Secretary of State has guardianship of the Great Seal. The Major State Department Publications page of their website (www.state.gov) provides Internet access to the1986 booklet.

Virtually any website with material on the national or presidential seals ultimately derives from these State Department publications, and in particular, *"The Eagle and the Shield".*

NATIONAL SYMBOLS IN FOLK ART

Eagle Wall Plaque – ca. 1860
(H.16 in., W. 37 in.)

Carved, painted, and gilded pine, flag-bearing eagle - ca. 1876
(H. 19-1/2 in., W. 32-1/2 in.)

Eagle and shield weathervane – ca.1800
(H. 36 in., W. 43-1/2 in.)

Declaration of Independence eagle – ca. 1825 to1840
(H. 20 in., W. 24 in.)

(4) It was stated above that the first presidential seal was the Hayes seal of 1877. Perhaps yes and perhaps no. It rather depends in what light the following two mysteries are viewed.

In June of 1894, a certain Mr. Dorsett appeared at the State Department with a seal that he claimed was George Washington's and that it had been given to his ancestors and kept in the family ever since. Its design was like that of the Great Seal, but had the olive branch and the bundle of arrows transposed. A careful investigation by the State Department revealed that it had never been used as the Great Seal. With its uncertain provenance and unable to say exactly what this seal was, who made it, when it was made, the purpose for which it was made and how it had been used (if at all) makes for a genuine mystery.

In 1885, the *New York Daily Graphic* carried an article which stated that President Fillmore, on July 26,1850, had sent a design to an Edward Stabler, a seal-maker, requesting that a seal be made for him. The article was accompanied by a drawing of the purported seal. (See page 20) This article – which had some discrepancies between its text and the illustration – is the only known reference to such a presidential seal.

(5) A good website source for material on presidential (and other) flags is: Seaflags

(6) The standard reference for presidential china is: *"Official White House China"* by Margaret Brown Klapthor (Washington/ Smithsonian Institution Press, 1975). The volume goes only through the presidency of Lyndon B. Johnson. From such checking as I have been able to do on the Internet, I believe that use of the presidential coat of arms has continued to be the choice of subsequent presidents.

(7) Aside from books, good starting places for material on American folk art are the on-line auction and sales sites under the Americana collectibles category. Following appropriate links will get to items using the national symbols. The website of the magazine Antiques and Fine Art should also be checked out for appropriate articles.

THE FILLMORE PRESIDENTIAL SEAL

Purported 1850 Seal of President Fillmore
(From New York Daily Graphic Print; 1885)