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A History of the Seals 377/130934

of the City and State

of New York

New York City National Park Service Group
 Statue of Liberty National Monument
 Liberty Island, New York, N.Y. 10004

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September 21, 1964

Memorandum

To: Chief, Museum Branch

From: Superintendent, New York City National Park Service Group

Subject: Historical Report, Entitled "A History of the Seals of the City and State of New York."

We are pleased to forward a report completed by Miss Joan Reilly, Historian GS-5, of our staff. The purpose of the report is to provide the basic information needed for the selection and design of the New York City and State seals for Exhibit #7A of the First Floor Exhibit Plan, Federal Hall.

Miss Reilly's principle duties are to provide guided tours and other visitor services. However, during the months that Federal Hall was closed to the public, her time was employed in research, resulting in the enclosed report.

The scope of this study has extended beyond what the Museum Branch had requested. The report is more than a description of city and state seals. It is a history of the development of the seal from Dutch times to almost the present. As such, it provides us with information, in one package, on a subject having considerable local interest.

John A. Townsend
 Superintendent

cc w/encl: Director, WASO
 ✓ cc w/encl: Regional Director NE Region

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A History of the Seals
of the City and State of New York

by
Joan Reilly

Federal Hall National Memorial

August 1964

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GLOSSARY OF TECHNICAL TERMS

Ar. (Argent) - The silver or white color of armorial bearings.

As. (Azure) - Blue, represented in engraving by parallel horizontal lines.

Bend - An ordinary drawn diagonally across the shield from dexter chief to sinister base.

Chief - The upper part of the shield or a charge filling that space.

Counterflory - charged with flowers; divided part shows on either side.

Courant - Running position.

Dexter - Placed on the side of a shield toward the wearer's right hand.

Escutcheon - The surface, usually shield shaped, upon which the armorial bearings are charged: - heraldic shield.

Escutcheon of Pretence - The shield on which a man carries the arms of his wife, if she is an heiress, borne inside of his own.

Guard. (Gardant) - Looking with the full face toward the spectator.

Gu. (Gules) - The tincture red; in a blazon without color indicated by vertical parallel lines.

Impale (empale) - To place (two coats of arms) side by side on one escutcheon.

Or (Lat.) - gold or yellow - shown as a white surface powdered with dots.

Ordinary - A charge or bearing of simple form and in constant use, as the band, chevron, chief, cross, fesse, pall and saltier.

Pale - An ordinary consisting of a vertical band through the middle of the shield, occupying one-third of its width.

Passant - Walking and looking toward the dexter, with the dexter fore paw raised.

Rampant - standing on the sinister hind leg, with both fore legs elevated, the dexter above the sinister, and the head in profile.

Saltire - An ordinary formed by the combination of a bend and a bend sinister.

Saltire-Wise - Arranged &r divided per saltire.

Semée - Strawn or scattered over with small bearings.

Sinister - noting the side of the shield at the left of the wearer and the right of the observer.

Tressure - An ornamental circle surrounding the main design.

A History of the Seals of the City and the State of New York

I. The Seal of the City of New Amsterdam

The seal of the City of New Amsterdam was adopted in 1654. Before the adoption of this seal, the city used for all its transactions the seal of the Province of New Netherland.¹ The purpose of the new seal was to permit the officials of the city "...to execute transports and deeds of conveyances of houses and lots sold within that City and its liberties, and likewise mortgages,..."²

Since New Amsterdam was named after the City of Amsterdam in Holland, it seemed natural that for its first seal something reminiscent of the mother city should be included. Therefore, the seal of 1654 adopted the three white crosses of the coat of arms of Amsterdam.³ The seal consisted of a

. . . shield charged with a pale or vertical band in the center, upon which are arranged in a vertical row the three saltire crosses which appear in the arms of the mother city. On each side of the pale is a narrow vertical band which does not appear in the arms of Amsterdam. The crest of the new arms is a beaver, taken from the seal of New Netherland. Above the crest are a mantle and a small escutcheon bearing the monogram G.W.C., standing for Geotroyerde West Indische Compagnie, or Chartered West India Company. Below the coat-of-arms is the legend Sigillum Amstelodamense in Novo Belgio, meaning 'seal of Amsterdam in New Belgium' (New Netherland). The whole is surrounded by a wreath.⁴

II. The Seals of the City of New York

In 1664, the English captured and occupied New Netherland. Five years later the Duke of York granted to the city its first seal under the English. He appointed two seals on July 4/14, 1669 one for the province and the other for the city.⁵ The design for this seal is not definitely known. Edward Haganan Hall presents his opinion of what this seal looked like in an article in John B. Pins's book, The Seal and Flag of the City of New York:

the beaver, which appeared in the seal of New Amsterdam, also appears in the seal of 1686, it seems reasonable to infer that it was included in the intermediate seal of 1669; and if the English seal of 1669 represented the symbol of commodity upon which the Dutch commerce was principally founded, it seems likely that it also included the emblems of the industry which was the foundation of their own prosperity, namely, the windmill and flour barrels. If the seal had a crest, it would be natural that a ducal coronet should surmount the arms of the Duke of York's own city, as it formed the crest of the arms of the provincial seal of the same year. In other words, it would not be surprising if the city seal of 1669 was similar to the small seal which was in use in 1687. . . ; but this is purely conjecture, and must so remain until an authentic description or impression of the seal of 1669 can be found.⁶

Edward Seymour Wilde in his The Civic Ancestry of New York City and State feels that the seal of 1669 was the same as the small seal of 1686, more of which will be said later. In his

description of the Paulding Collection of seals he states that No. 5 of this collection is "the Mayor's Seal (N.Y. City-1701)," which accompanied the provincial seal in 1669.⁷ (Illustration #1)

In 1674, the Duke of York issued a warrant to Governor Edmund Andros to use the two seals of the Provost and Corporation of New York for public acts.⁸ This warrant seems to infer that the city's seal was placed in the governor's custody. The use of the same seal by both the city and the province apparently did not work well for we find, in answer to a request by Governor Andros in 1675, the Duke of York approving a seal for the City of New York. The Duke of York felt that "it is well that you have ye other Seale for ye Province."⁹ No other information on this seal could be found, but it is believed that the seal of 1669 was returned to the city's custody.

In 1683, the Common Council presented a petition to the Governor in which it requested that the city have just one seal to serve for all official purposes.¹⁰ The request was finally granted in the Dongan Charter of 1686, which provided that the "...City of New Yorke and their Successors Shall and may for ever hereafter have one Common Seal to Serve for the Sealing of all and Singular their Affairs & Businesses touching or Concerning the said Corporation."¹¹

This seal was the first adopted by the city itself pursuant to the charter.¹² There is no mention of it in the documents preserved in England and none in the minutes of the Dongan council. Further proof that the seal was made in New York City can be seen in its rude design and cutting.¹³ A seal cut in Europe would have been more refined and detailed. There is an illustration of this seal in the first volume of the Minutes of the Common Council. The accompanying description to this illustration states that the seal was granted by James II to the city a few months after he ascended the English throne.¹⁴ No evidence is given to support this statement, however.

The seal has been described in Pine's book as follows:

...oval in shape, measuring 2 $\frac{3}{16}$ inches in length 1 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches in width. In the center is a shield charged saltire-wise with the sails of a windmill. Between the sails in chief is a beaver; in the corresponding position in base a beaver; and between the sails on each flank a flour barrel. The dexter supporter is a sailor, resting his left hand upon the shield. His right hand holds a cross-staff which extends above his right shoulder and from the same hand depends a lead-line. The sinister supporter is an Indian, wearing a head-dress of many feathers, his right hand resting upon the shield, his left holding by the middle a one-piece bow the lower end of which rests upon the ground. The supporters stand upon a horizontal branch, which may be laurel, and beneath which is the date 1686. The crest is a ducal coronet. Upon a ribbon surrounding the lower part of the coat-of-arms is the legend: Sigill: Civitat: Novi: Eborace.

The windmill, as used in the seal of 1686, was not unique. The coat of arms of the Van Cortlandt family contained the sails of a windmill. Van Cortlandt, himself, was one of the leading citizens of the city under both the English and Dutch flags. It is possible that the use of the windmill may have been suggested by his coat of arms. Another influence on the design could have been the natural association one makes between Holland and the windmill. Holland, however, was not the only country to use windmills. They were also common in England as well as in New York during both the Dutch and English periods.¹⁶

The flour barrels represent one of the most important industries in New York during the early period of British occupation. Soon after the British arrived, the City of New York was granted the exclusive right to bolt flour within the Province.¹⁷

The Indian, as the first inhabitant of New York, naturally deserved to be included in the design of the city's seal. He is depicted in this seal with a head-dress of many feathers, which was similar to the war bonnet of the plains Indians, and also a one-piece bow, which is technically called a self-bow.¹⁸

There are two versions of what the dexter supporter was. One group took the position that it was another Indian, while another

group felt that it was a sailor. Dr. E.B. O'Callaghan in The Documentary History of the State of New York says that the

Supporters [were] two Indian Chiefs proper; the one on the dexter side holds a warclub in his right hand the one on the sinister holds in his left hand a bow. In the dexter corner over the Indian's head is a cross patriarchal, as emblematic of the Gospel to which he is subject. 19

In Pine's book, it is stated that the dexter supporter was a sailor. In speaking about O'Callaghan's description, Hall says that

When one sees the naked, manikin-like figure of the dexter supporter represented in the woodcut accompanying O'Callaghan's description, he is not surprised at this misreading of the device. In the original seal, the figure is a very decently clothed sailor, wearing knee-breeches. The object in his right hand is not a warclub but a leadline for sounding the depth of the water; and the double-cross above him is not a patriarchal cross but a cross-staff, a navigating instrument. In the patriarchal cross, the upper crosspiece is shorter than the lower, while in the seal the upper is longer than the lower. The Art Commission Associates also received the suggestion that the cross was the emblem of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, but upon inquiry in New York and London, it was learned that the Society never used such an emblem. In the technical description of navigating instruments in Capt. John Davis's Seaman's Secrets, 1607 reprinted in volume 59 of the publications of the Hakluyt Society, the double cross-staff is illustrated as it appears in the seal, with the longer crosspiece (transom or transversary) farthest away from the eye. 20

Other writers have also adopted O'Callaghan's view. Mrs. Schuyler Van Rensselaer states that one of the Indian supporters and the cross that arched over him were replaced at a later date with the figure of a sailor.²¹

The crest of the seal of 1686 was a ducal coronet. The use of the ducal coronet instead of the imperial crown may seem surprising, since the Duke of York ascended the throne as James II in 1685. At a later date, which is not known, the crest was changed to a royal crown, "showing the distinguishing arches rising from the circlet and supporting the orb and cross." The change was made at least as early as 1701, for an impression of the seal with the royal crown may be seen at The New-York Historical Society on a document dated October 1, 1701.²² (See illustration #171)

As will be seen later, there was a definite change in the provincial seal in 1689/1690. Lieutenant Governor Jacob Leisler in a letter to the Duke of Salisbury stated that he altered the provincial seal by changing the crest and placing the royal crown in place of the ducal coronet. It might have been possible that the same change was made in the city's seal at this time.²³

The date used on the seal was the date of its adoption—that is, 1686. This date was used until a number of years after the Revolution when it was finally dropped, because it ceased to have any special significance.²⁴

The name of New York, which appears in the Latin form in the legend of the seal, was derived from the Duke of York.²⁵

Beavers have been used on all the seals of New York, from the provincial seal of 1623 to the present-day seal. It was natural that they should have been selected for the seal since the establishment of the fur trade was the reason for the settlement of New Netherland.²⁶

The elements of the seal, as described above, were not meant to be permanent. The Dongan Charter gave the ". . . Mayor Aldermen & Commonality of the Said City of New Yorke and their Successors as they Shall See Cause to breake, Change, Alter and New Make their Said Common Seal, when and as often as to them itt Shall Seem Convenient. . ."²⁷ The city officials have never really exercised their right of remaking this seal. The existing seal of the City of New York is essentially the same seal as that of 1686. There have been, however, a number of minor changes in the seal. For example, the legend was changed and the royal crown was replaced by an eagle rising from a demi-globe, a design taken from the arms of the State of New York. The shape of the shield was also changed after the Revolution.²⁸

There was also in existence at this time a smaller seal than the one described above. This one, like the seal of 1686, had a ducal coronet and was round, about $1 \frac{3}{16}$ inches in diameter. On a shield were the windmill, beavers and barrels as in the larger seal. Above the shield was the ducal coronet, and on each side was a scroll-like mantling. It had no legend or motto. The earliest impression of this seal was dated September 8, 1687. It is not known when and under what circumstances this seal came into existence.²⁹ However, there is definite evidence that two seals were both recognized as official instruments. An excerpt from the Minutes of the Common Council for April 24, 1691 states that the "Mayor Receiveth for his fees six Shillings for Every Great Seale and three Shillings for a Small Seale."³⁰ Further evidence that more than one seal existed can be deduced from an official document of 1689 in which reference is made to the existence of more than one seal.³¹

The seal remained unchanged until after the Revolution.

III. The Seals of the City of New York Under the Republic

The British evacuated New York on November 25, 1783.³² On the following March 16, 1784 the Common Council passed an

ordinance entitled "A Law for altering and directing the uses of the public Seales of this City ..."³³ A New Seal was adopted for the city on September 1, 1784. The seal of the City of New York has been described as a

shield bearing the windmill, beavers and flour barrals; the dexter supporter a sailor in long trousers holding a lead line; the sinister supporter an Indian with full feathered headdress, holding a double-curved bow (which the Algonquin Indians did not use); the crest, a flying eagle rising to the dexter; the date 1686; and the legend Sigillum Civitat. Nov. Eborac. On each side of the crest, rising from the corners of the shield, is a spray or branch bearing some kind of flower or fruit. The cross-staff is omitted over the sailor. 34

The eagle and the hemisphere used in this seal were taken from the coat of arms of the State of New York for 1777.³⁵ (See illustration #1(3))

IV. The Seals of the Province of New Netherland

The exact date that New Netherland was officially constituted a province is not known. One view is presented by O'Callaghan. He accepts as evidence a statement by Adrian Van der Donck that New Netherland was constituted a province in 1623, and that it was "called a Province because it was invested, by their High Mightinesses, with the Arms of an Earl."³⁶ As further proof, O'Callaghan makes reference to an impression of a seal in the

Office of the Secretary of State.³⁷ Van Rensselaer seems also to have adopted this view. She states that "In 1623 the Dutch province was born."³⁸

I.N. Phelps Stokes, in his Iconography of Manhattan Island, cannot find the impression of the seal mentioned by O'Callaghan. He states that "It is evident that an impression of a seal on a late document of the Dutch period was used for this plate, and that the date 1623 was assumed here. . . ."³⁹ However, there could have been an impression of this seal in the State Library at Albany, which might have been destroyed by the fire in 1911. There is a photograph in Wilde's work of the seal of New Netherland taken before the fire. He does not date it, however.⁴⁰ This impression of the seal could be the one referred to by O'Callaghan.

A seal was finally adopted. This official seal has been described as a

shield upon which, 'in bend,' - to use an heraldic term meaning 'diagonally,' - is represented a beaver, surrounded by what appears to be a string of wampum. The crest is a count's coronet between single stars, the province having the armorial rights of a countyship. Around the shield is the legend Sigillum Novi Belgii, meaning seal of New Belgium* (or New Netherland). The whole is surrounded by a wreath. 41

It should be noted that the beaver has been represented on every seal of the city. The use of the beaver began with the

first provincial seal of New Netherland, and continued to be used in the seal of New Amsterdam and all the seals of the City of New York down to the present. From the beginning, the beaver represented the chief commodity upon which the original commerce of New Netherland and New Amsterdam was founded. The beaver skin, like wampum, was also used in the Dutch and early English periods as money, a 'beaver' in 1658 being reckoned as 16 guilders and a 'half beaver' in 1658 as '8 guilders.⁴²

This seal was used as the official seal of the Province of New Netherland until 1664, when Dutch rule came to an end, and as the seal of New Amsterdam until 1654, when the city was granted its own seal.⁴³

V. The Seals of the Province of New York

In 1669, the Duke of York granted to New York two seals — one for the province and the other for the city. The provincial seal consisted of a

. . . copy of the Royal arms of the House of Stuart which Burke [Encyclopedia of Heraldry] thus describes - Quarterly, first and fourth, France and England quarterly; second, or, a lion rampant, within a double tressure, flory counter flory, gu. Scotland; third, az. a harp, or, stringed, ar. Ireland. Motto HONI. SOIT. QUI. MAL. Y PENSE. Legend, SIGILL. PROVINCE NOVI. EBORAC. Crest, a Coronet composed of crosses and fleur de lis, with one arch. . . .44

A new seal was authorized for the province in 1686. A contemporary document described the seal as being

. . . engraven on the one side with Our Royal Effigies on Horsback in Arms over a Landskip of Land & Sea, with a Rising Sun and a Scrolle containing this Motto. Aliusq; et Idem. And our Titles round the circumference of the said Seal; There being also engraven on the other side Our Royal Arms with the Garter, Crown, Supporters & Motto, With this Inscription round ye Circumference Sigillum. Provinciae Nostrae Novi Eboraci & in America...45

No impression of this seal exists today, and no later provincial seal used this design. However, the State of New York adopted part of this design for the first seal of the state in 1777.

In 1688, two years after the provincial seal was authorized, the Province of New York was included in the Dominion of New England. Therefore the "...Seal appointed for the said colony of New England be henceforth made use of for all that our Territory and Dominion in its largest extent & boundaries aforementioned; and that the Seal for our Province of New York be forthwith broken and defaced..." 46

The New England seal which superseded the New York seal set a precedent for all the future seals of the Province of New York. The following description of the New England seal was to be repeated, with the exception of a few changes, for the next 89 years:

Engraven on the one side with His Majesty's effigies standing under a canopy, robed in his royal vestments and crowned, with a sceptre in the left hand, the right hand being extended towards a Englishman and an Indian, both kneeling; the one presenting the fruits of the country, and the other a scroll, and over their heads a cherubim holding another scroll, with this motto - Nunquam libertas gratior extat, with his Majesty's titles around the circumference; there being on the other side the King's Arms with the Garter, crown, supporters, and motto, and this inscription round the circumference: Stigillum Novae Angliae in America. 47.

This seal, like the provincial seal of 1686, was not destined to have a long life, because in 1689 a rebellion occurred in New York, and the local government, which was supported by James II, was deposed. Jacob Leisler, who headed the rebellion, assumed the title of Lieutenant Governor of the Province. In a letter written to the Bishop of Salisbury, he mentions that he "adventured to make a new seal for the province, altering the Duke of York's coronet, and placing the Crowne of England in its stead."⁴⁸

With the establishment of the government of William and Mary in England, a new seal was authorized in 1691 for the province. The warrant for this seal was not sent to Leisler, but to Slaughter, the new governor. The seal was for

...the use of our Province of New York and the Territories depending thereon in America, the same [seal] being Engraven on the one side with our Royal Effigies, and Two Indians kneeling & offering presents unto Us, with our Royal Titles round the circumference of the said Seal, and on the other side with our royal Armes, with the Garter, Crown, Supporters and Motto, and this

Inscription round the circumference. SIGILLUM
 PROVINCIAE NOSTRAE NOVI EBORACI IN AMERICA, which
 said Seal, We do hereby authorize & direct to be
 used in the sealing all Patents and publick Grants
 of Lands and all Publick Acts and Instruments which
 shall be made and passed in our name and for our
 Service within our said Province and the Territories
 depending thereon and that it be to all intents and
 purposes of the same force and Validity, as any
 former Seal within our Province, or as any other
 Seal within our Province, or as any other Seal
 whatsoever appointed for the use of any of our
 Plantations in America. . . .49

The royal effigies on the seal were those of King William and Queen
 Mary, the new monarchs. The presents offered by the Indians were
 a roll of wampum and a beaver skin. The titles around the
 circumference were "GVILHELMVS III. ET MARIA. II. DE. GRA. MAG.
 BRIT. FRAN. HIB. REX ET REGINA. FID. DEF." The royal arms
 were the same as those on the Stuart seal, with the addition of
 an escutcheon of pretense containing a lion rampant for the arms
 of Nassau of which house King William was a member.⁵⁰

Normally with the death of an ruling monarch, a new seal
 was delivered. It was for this reason, after the death of Queen
 Mary (1694), that Lord Bellomont wrote to Thomas Weaver, the
 agent for the province in London, requesting him to solicit a
 new seal for the province.⁵¹ There is no answer recorded to this
 request. However, in 1705, three years after the death of King
 William, Lord Cornbury, the Governor of the Province, received a
 warrant for a new seal. This seal now of Queen Anne was

engraven on the one side with our Royal Effigies, and two Indians kneeling and Offering presents unto us, with our Royal Titles round the circumference of the said seal, and on the other side with our Royal arms, with the Garter, Crown, supporters and motto, and this inscription round the circumference "Sigillum provinciae nostrae novi Eboraci in America..." 52

A new seal was required shortly after the receipt of the seal of 1705, because of the union between England and Scotland in 1706. This second seal of the reign of Queen Anne was received in 1710. The new seal is described as follows:

The Queen's effigy, the Indians with the Royal titles, are the same as on the first seal on the reverse, the Royal arms, now changed in consequence of the Union; on the first and fourth quarters, England impales Scotland; on the second are the lilies of France; on the third the Harp for Ireland, and the former Motto, Semper Eadem. Around the circumference is the Inscription SIGILLVM. PROVINCIAE. NOSTRAE. EBORACI, IN. AMERICA. 53

Queen Anne died in 1714, but it was not until 1717 that a warrant for a new seal was signed by King George I. The new seal was received in 1718, and was described as follows:

On the one side are, the effigy of his Majesty, two Indians offering presents; and around the circumference the royal titles - GEORGIVS. D.G. MAG. BRIT. FRAN. ET. HIB. REX. BRVN. ET. LVN. DVX. SA. RO. IM. ARC. THES. ET. PRIN. ELECT. On the reverse, the royal arms, Garter, Crown, Supporters and Motto, and this inscription, SIGILLVM. PROVINCIAE. NOSTRAE. NOVI. EBORACI, IN. AMERICA. The "Semper Eadem" of the last seal is replaced by Dieu et Mon Droit; on the escutcheon we have, first, the arms of England impaling those of Scotland; second France; third Ireland; fourth gu. two lions passant guard. in pale

or, for Brunswick; impaling, or, ~~same~~ of hearts gu. a lion ramp. az. for Lunenburgh, on a point in gu. a horse courant ar. for Saxony; on the centre of the fourth quarter an escutcheon gu. charged with the Crown of Charlemagne, or, as Arch-treasurer of the Holy Roman Empire. 54

A new seal was delivered to Governor Montgomerie in 1730, three years after the death of George I and the accession of George II. This seal, as described by O'Callaghan, was more artistic than the last, and exhibited a progressive change in the dress and drapery of the principal figure.

The kneeling Squaw is introduced here for the first time nude. . . . There is another improvement worthy of remark—the inscriptions on this and the next seal are on the sides opposite to those they heretofore occupied. The words "SIGILLVM. PROVINCIAE. NOSTRAE. NOVI. EBORACI. IN. AMERICA," are appropriately on the side representing American gifts; whilst the Royal titles - GEORGIUS. II. D.G. MAG. BRI. FR. ET. HIB. REX. F.D. BRUN. ET. LON. DUX. S.R.I. ARC. TH. ET. PR. EL. surround the Royal arms on the reverse side. 55

These arms are the same as those of the seal of George I, but according to O'Callaghan, their design and finish are superior. (See illustration #2).

In 1763, the Lieutenant Governor found it necessary to request a new seal, since the province had not received one upon the accession of George III in 1760.⁵⁶ It was not until 1767, however, that a warrant for a new seal was received. It is described thus:

The principal side, where the Indians are offering their gifts to the King, is surrounded by the inscription SIGILLUM. PROVINCIAE. NOSTRAE. NOVI. EBORACI. IN AMERICA; on the reverse are the Royal arms (as last described,) with the royal titles GEORGIUS III. D.G. MAG. BRI. FR. ET HIS. REX. F.D. BRUN. ET. LUN. DUX. S.R.I. AR. THES. ET. ET. 57.

This was the last great seal issued by the British and remained in effect until the Revolution. (See illustration #3, a & b).

VI. Seal of the State of New York

On April 15, 1777, the state convention at Kingston, New York, appointed a committee "to prepare and report a proper device for a great seal for this State."⁵⁸ On September 10, of the same year, Governor George Clinton and Chancellor Robert Livingston were appointed a committee of two to see that a new seal was made.⁵⁹ While awaiting this new seal, it was voted that the Governor's seal be employed as the Great Seal of the State. This happened to be the family seal of Governor Clinton. Wilde states, and perhaps rightly so, that this seal was actually the first seal of the State of New York.⁶⁰

The following year, the legislature passed an act to organize the state government. This act devised two seals for the state—a Great Seal and a Privy Seal.⁶¹

The Great Seal consisted of a rising sun over three mountains, the motto Excelsior underneath; and the legend, The Great Seal of the State of New York. On the reverse was a huge rock rising out of the sea and the legend, Frustra, and the date 1777. (See illustration #4).

In 1798, the legislature passed "An ACT concerning the Great Seal of this State." This act created a commission to repair the Great Seal or make a new one. In accordance with the instructions received, the commission created a new seal, modeled after the coat of arms of 1777.⁶² This seal consisted of a shield which contained part of the former seal, that is, the sun rising over the mountains. The crest, which is placed above the shield, consists of an eagle standing on a half globe with its head turned toward the dexter. The two supporters of the shield are the figures of Liberty on the sinister side and Justice on the dexter side. The motto of this seal was "Excelsior" and the legend was "The Great Seal of the State of New York." The reverse is the same as that on the seal of 1777.

Another new seal was authorized by an act of the legislature in 1809. It has been described as "Argent a rising sun proper; crest in a wreath; a demi-globe, and an eagle passant, regardant, all proper; supporters, the figure of Justice on the dexter and Liberty on the sinister side; motto, EXCELSIOR; legend, THE GREAT SEAL OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK."⁶⁴

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NOTES

1 Haganan Hall, "The History of the Seal and Flag," in John B. Pine, ed, The Seal and Flag of the City of New York, (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1915), p. 24 (Hereafter referred to as Hall).

2 Berthold Fernow, ed., The Records of New Amsterdam 1653-1674 (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1897), I, p. 219 (Hereafter referred to as Rec. N. Am.).

3 Hall, p. 23.

4 Ibid., p. 29; There is an illustration of the seal of New Amsterdam, dated 1659, in Edward Wilde's book, but without the mantle and the escutcheon of the West India Company. No reason could be found as to why this change was made. See Edward Seymour Wilde, The Civic Ancestry of New York - City and State (New York: Irving Press, 1913) p. 40, Plate VII. (Hereafter referred to as Wilde).

5 Rec. N. Am. VI, p. 199. These seals were to "be made use of upon all occasions, for Sealing of Warrants, Writs, Executions, Patents, Grants, and all other Publick Acts and Instruments, Wher any Wayes Concerns either the Province or Corporation of New York respectively . . ." Ibid.

6 Hall, pp. 35-36.

7 Wilde, p. 63.

8 I.N. Phelps Stokes, The Iconography of Manhattan Island 1498-1909 (New York: Robert H. Dodd, 1915-1928) IV, p. 959, quoting Calendar State Papers, Am. & W.I., 1668-1674, p. 604, item 1346.

9 E.B. O'Callaghan, Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York: procured in Holland, England and France, by John Romeyn Brodhead. (Albany: Weed, Parsons and Co. 1853-1856) III, p. 230. (Hereafter referred to as N.Y. Col. Docs.)

10 New York City, Minutes of the Common Council 1675-1776 (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1905) I, pp. 102-104. (Hereafter referred to as M.C.C. 1675-1776)

11. Ibid., p. 296. The authenticity of this charter had been questioned by Lord Bellomont, who in a letter to England in 1700 stated that ". . . it appears plainly the charter of New Yorke is not a legal charter for the original I have lately seen; 'tis sealed with the Duke of Yorke's seal and neither the Great Seal of England nor the Seal of the Province, yet it bears the date the 21 year of King James, so that the whole foundation is wrong. In strictness this is no City . . ." N.Y. Col. Docs., IV, p. 812.

12 Hall, p. 37.

13 Mrs. Schuyler Van Rensselaer, History of the City of New York in the Seventeenth Century (New York: Macmillan Company, 1909), II, pp. 304-305. (Hereafter referred to as Van Rensselaer)

14 M.C.C. 1675-1776, I, Frontispiece.

15 Hall, pp. 39-40.

16 Ibid., pp. 40-41.

17 Ibid., p. 42

18 Ibid., pp. 43-46.

19 E.B. O'Callaghan, The Documentary History of the State of New York (Albany: Weeds, Parsons & Co., 1850), III, p. 242. (Hereafter referred to as Doc. Hist. N.Y.)

20 Hall, p. 46-47.

21 Van Rensselaer, II, pp. 304-305.

22 Hall, pp. 48-49.

23: N.Y. Col. Docs. III, p. 656.

24 Hall, pp. 49-50.

25 Ibid., pp. 50-51. The name of New York can be traced through the Duke of York to the old cathedral City of York in England. The word is derived from two ancient roots, ure or euor, meaning water, and go meaning place. Euro-ac, contracted to York, means 'place at the water.' The old City of York is situated on the Ouse River, which was anciently the Ure, a name now applied to one of its tributaries. New York, therefore, is a transplanted place-name . . ." (Ibid.)

26 A description accompanying a plaster cast model of a 1915 seal, designed by Paul Manship, located in the basement of the Museum of the City of New York.

27 M.C.C. 1675-1776, I, p. 296.

28 Van Rensselaer, II, pp. 304-305.

29 Hall, pp. 51-52.

30 M.C.C. 1675-1776, I, p. 222.

31 Ibid., p. 208.

32 Hall, p. 55.

33 New York City, Minutes of the Common Council 1784-1831 (City of New York, N.Y., 1917) I, 16. (Hereafter referred to as M.C.C. 1784-1831)

34 Hall, p. 59.

35 Ibid., pp. 59-63. The probable reason for the adoption of the eagle in the New York State seal, the United States seal and the New York City seal was that the eagle is "native to America and by its strength, daring and vision, suggest power, independence and perspicacity." Ibid.

36 N.Y. Col. Docs., I, p. 262, note 1.

37 Doc. Hist. N.Y., IV, 1.

38 Van Rensselaer, I, 41.

39 Stokes, IV, p. 51.

40 Wilde, pp. 33-34.

41 Hall, pp. 24-25.

42 Ibid., pp. 25-27.

43 Ibid., p. 24.

44 Doc. Hist. N.Y. IV, p. 1.

- 45 N.Y. Col. Docs. III, p. 427.
- 46 Ibid., III, p. 546.
- 47 Van Rensselaer, II, p. 346. The motto "Humanas libertas
gratior extat" was a truncated quotation from Claudian's panegyric
on Stilicho which, when completed by the words quam sub regio nio,
informed the Protestant Americans whose liberties the Catholic
Stuart had just taken away that "Never is liberty more agreeable
than under a pious king." (Ibid.)
- 48 N.Y. Col. Docs. III, p. 656.
- 49 Ibid., III, p. 726.
- 50 Doc. Hist. N.Y., p. 2.
- 51 Stokes, IV, p. 410.
- 52 N.Y. Col. Docs., IV, 1441.
- 53 Doc. Hist. N.Y., IV, pp. 2-3.
- 54 Ibid., IV, p. 3.
- 55 Ibid.
- 56 N.Y. Public Library, HSS Div., N.Y. Colony Box, Cov.
Cadwallader Golden Folio.
- 57 Doc. Hist. N.Y., IV, 3.
- 58 New York State, Journal of the Provincial Congress,
Provincial Convention, Committee of Safety and Council of Safety
of the State of New-York 1775-1776-1777 (Albany: Thurlow Weed,
1842), I, 882.
- 59 Henry A. Howe, Second Paper on the Correct Arms of the
State of N.Y. (Albany: Weed, Parsons & Co., 1832), pp. 7-8.
- 60 Wilde, p. 7.
- 61 New York State, Laws of New York State (1778), First Session
New York: Hugh Gains, 1789 I, Chapter 12, p. 23.

62 New York State, Laws of the State of New-York (1798)
21st session, (Albany: Loring Andrews & Co., 1798.) Chapter 6,
p. 249.

63 Wilde, p. 59.

64 Franklin B. Hough, The New York Civil List from 1777 to
1860 (Albany: Weed, Parsons & Co., 1860) p. 469.

Illustration #1 - Paulding Seals - reproduced from
Wilde, Civic Ancestry, Plate XXVI

- 1) Corporation Seal - N.Y. City in use from 1686
to Revolution
- 2) Seal of Corporation of Trinity Church - 1697
- 3) Seal of N.Y. Common Council - after Revolution
- 4) Territorial seal of Governor Dongan (about 1685)
- 5) Mayor's Seal - N.Y. City - 1701
- 6) Mayor's Seal - 1795

*Impressions made from Ancient Public Seals. Presented
by Mr. John Building.*

No. 1.



No. 2.



No. 3.



No. 5.



No. 4.



No. 6.



- No. 1. Corporation Seal. N.Y. City. in use from 1686 to Revolution*
No. 2. Seal of Corporation of Trinity Church. 1697. still in use.
No. 3. Seal of N.Y. Comm. Council, struck immediately after Revolution
No. 4. Territorial seal of Governor Donagan. (about 1685)
No. 5. Mayor's Seal. (N.Y. City) ~ 1701.
No. 6. Mayor's Seal. 1795.

Illustration # 2 Great Seal of the Province of New York, 1730 -
reproduced from O'Callaghan, Documentary History
of the State of New York - Plate 8.

GREAT SEAL
of the
PROVINCE of NEW-YORK



GREAT SEAL
of the
PROVINCE of NEW-YORK

REVERSE



Illustration # 3 Great Seal of the Province of New York,
1767 to Rev. - reproduced from O'Callaghan,
Plate 9

GREAT SEAL
of the
PROVINCE of NEW YORK
1767 TO THE REVOLUTION



GREAT SEAL
OF THE
ROYAL EXCHEQUER
OF GREAT BRITAIN



Illustration 4 Seal of the State of New York - 1778 - reproduced from
Wilde, Civic Ancestry, plate XXVII

