

design of a new seal that would include the originally unauthorized "sovereign's helmet" and date, and also the words, "Liberty and Prosperity," which over the years had "largely been adopted as a motto in sundry representations of the Great Seal." The legislature ordered that the date take the form of arabic numerals, 1776, instead of the "antiquated" roman letters. Otherwise, the new seal would retain the major elements of the original Du Simitière design.

Appropriating \$1,000 for design and production expenses, the resolution passed both houses of the legislature unanimously and was approved by Governor A. Harry Moore on March 26, 1928.

*The original and current state seals
are preserved for the Secretary of State
by the New Jersey State Archives,
Department of State*

*The original seal is on temporary display
in the Legislative Exhibit Space,
New Jersey State House, 3rd floor*



*This brochure was produced by the publications office
of the New Jersey State Archives, Department of State*

90
H673
1995g

The GREAT SEAL of the State of NEW JERSEY



*Descriptive &
Historical Explanation*

The Great Seal of the State of New Jersey

New Jersey's great seal represents the constitutional authority and sovereignty of the state government and is used to authenticate its official documents. The Governor receives the seal upon inauguration as a symbol of the assumption of governing power and authority. The Secretary of State maintains the seal and is responsible for applying it to state documents.

The Original Seal of 1776

In October 1776, four months after declaring independence from Great Britain, New Jersey's first state legislature resolved to commission the production of "a Silver Seal, which is to be round, of two and a half Inches Diameter, and three-eighths of an



Original State Seal of 1776

Inch thick; and that the Arms shall be three Ploughs in an Escutcheon, the Supporters Liberty and Ceres, and the Crest a Horse's Head." The commission was awarded to Pierre Eugene du Simitière, an immigrant artist and naturalist then living in Philadelphia.

The symbols chosen for the seal drew from sources in classical mythology, medieval heraldic traditions, and the contemporary ideals of revolutionary republicanism. The figure of Ceres, the Roman goddess of agriculture, holding a cornucopia, represents the new state's hopes for prosperity and abundance. The figure of Liberty, holding a staff with a liberty cap, plainly symbolizes New Jersey's claim of freedom from royal rule and from arbitrary government, generally. The use of an escutcheon (or shield) in the center stems from the medieval tradition in which noble families adopted distinctive coats of arms. The three plows depicted on the shield signify the importance of farming in an era that exalted independent yeomen as the bulwark of republican liberty. The horse's head represents agriculture, as well, though it also symbolizes speed, strength, and usefulness to commerce.

Du Simitière deviated somewhat from the legislature's instructions: he added a prince's helmet beneath the horse's head, which in heraldry denotes sovereignty, to emphasize the new state's independence; he also placed the roman numerals for 1776

(MDCCLXXVI) at the base of the seal. The helmet may have aroused some controversy, offending republican sensibilities with its aristocratic imagery: official state printers, at least, often omitted the helmet when they reprinted a version of the seal on the cover of annual session laws. Nevertheless, the legislature accepted Du Simitière's work, and the seal remained in use unchanged for just over 150 years.

New Jersey's Current Seal

In 1928 the state legislature acted to resolve discrepancies between its original instructions and the Du Simitière-designed seal, which by then had grown worn from use. By joint resolution, it directed the



Reauthorized State Seal of 1928