

How Much Do YOU Know about New Hampshire's Symbols?

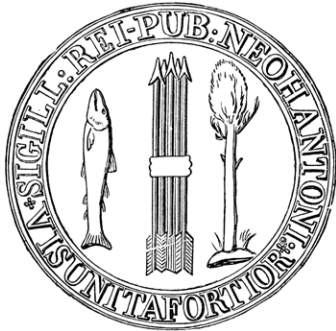
2009

Part III - Seal, Flag, Tartan and Song

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This concludes my series of articles on New Hampshire's state symbols. I personally found researching this information most interesting and enjoyable. Hopefully, some of you out there enjoyed reading them, and maybe even learned something about our wonderful state that you had not previously known.

New Hampshire has had a state **seal** for more than 200 years, but its present form is only fifty (50) years old. The seal was first created in 1775 by the First Provincial Congress. It comprised a pine tree and an upright fish on each side of a bundle of five (5) arrows. The design



reflected the then two major economic resources, and the arrows symbolized the strength of unity among the then five counties. When the present state constitution became effective in 1784, the new Legislature revised the seal, to depict a ship on

stocks, with a rising sun in the background, to reflect Portsmouth having become a major shipbuilding center during the war years. Various items for shipment were also shown on a frontal dock. Details of this 1784 seal became so distorted in the ensuing century and a half that the 1931 Legislature voted major improvements, and, for the first time, spelled out its makeup. Director Otis G. Hammond of New Hampshire Historical Society sparked this adjustment by reporting that artists and sketchers had injected surprising details into the seal, as they produced new dies every few years for official state use. They produced rum barrels on the dock, and on occasion, even human beings beside them. When Governor John G. Winant of Concord launched a second term in 1931, he named a committee to serve with Hammond to produce a less objectionable seal. The 1931 Legislature enthusiastically approved its recommendations.

The **official seal**, as it appears today, is "(2) inches in diameter, circular, with the following detail and no other. A field crossed by a straight horizon line of the sea, above the center of the field; concentric with the field the rising sun, exposed above the horizon about 1/3 of its diameter; the field encompassed with laurel; across the field for the full width within the laurel a broadside view of the frigate Raleigh, on the stocks; the ship's bow dexter and higher than the stern; the 3 lower masts

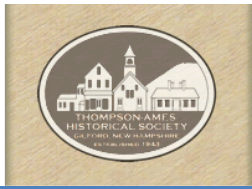
shown in place, together with the fore, main and mizzen tops, shrouds and mainstays; an ensign staff at the stern flies the United States flag authorized by act of Congress June 14, 1777; a jury staff on the mainmast and another on the foremast each flies a pennant; flags and pennants are streaming to the dexter side; the hull is shown without a rudder; below the ship the field is divided into land and water by a double diagonal line whose highest point is sinister; no detail is shown anywhere on the water, nor any on the land between the water and the stocks except a granite boulder on the dexter side; encircling the field is the inscription SEAL OF THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE, the words separated by round dots except between the parts of New Hampshire; at the lowest point of the inscription is the date 1776, flanked on either side by a 5-pointed star, which group separates the beginning and end of the inscription."



New Hampshire has a state **flag**. The body of the flag is blue, the center has the state's seal with the frigate Raleigh -- all surrounded by laurel leaves with nine stars interspersed representing New Hampshire as the ninth state to join the union*..The state flag was officially adopted in 1909. Prior to that, we had numerous regimental flags to represent the state. The flag has only been changed once in 1931 when the state's seal was modified. When used for military purposes the flag must conform to the regulations of the United States.



*You may note that the quoted seal description did not mention these nine stars, whereas my research of the flag did. I checked images of both the seal and flag finding them to be identical.

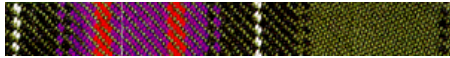


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Would you believe New Hampshire has an **official tartan**? Well we do. In 1993 the idea of creating a New Hampshire Tartan for the 20th Anniversary of the New Hampshire Highland games in 1955 was initiated.

Designed by hand weaver, Ralf Hartwell of Newton, NH, the Tartan is unique in its color tones in that special dye lots must be prepared for the coloring process. With the review and verification of the design as original and authentic by the Tartan Educational and Cultural Association and the International Association of Tartan Studies, NH State Representative Stephen Avery arranged for Governor Stephen Merrill to proclaim the Tartan as the State Tartan of New Hampshire in June of 1994. In January of 1995, Avery introduced a bill to the NH Legislature for permanent recognition, which was passed in May, 1995. The colors of the Tartan have



significance to the state.

Purple represents the state flower and bird, green represents the green of the forests, black represents our granite mountains, white represents the snow and red represents all the states heroes.

Last, but not least, New Hampshire has an **official state song**! It took a bit of doing, indecision, and competition to finally have an official state song. The title is Old New Hampshire (A Song of the Granite State) words by John F. Holmes, M.D. and music by Maurice Hoffman Jr. In 1949 the New Hampshire Legislature adopted Old New Hampshire as the state song. However, it did not quite end there! You see, the Legislature kept changing its mind and adding more and more "state songs" to the roster until there were nine (9) of them! Finally, a State Song Selection Board was created and set to work to choose one official song and labeling the remaining eight (8) as "honorary" songs.

The words to Old New Hampshire, the only official state song follow:

LYRICS

With a skill that knows no measure,
From the golden store of Fate
God in His great love and wisdom,
Made the rugged Granite State;
Made the lakes, the fields, the forests,
Made the rivers and the rills;
Made the bubbling, crystal fountains
Of new Hampshire's Granite Hills

REFRAIN

Old New Hampshire, Old New Hampshire
Old New Hampshire Grand and Great
We will sing of Old New Hampshire,
Of the dear old Granite State

Builed He New Hampshire glorious
From the borders to the sea;
And with matchless charm and splendor
Blessed her for eternity
Hers, the majesty of mountain;
Hers, the grandeur of the lake;
Hers, the truth as from the hillside
Whence her crystal waters break.

The "honorary" state songs are New Hampshire, my New Hampshire; New Hampshire Hills; Autumn in New Hampshire; New Hampshire's Granite State; Oh, New Hampshire (You're My Home); The Old Man of the Mountain; The New Hampshire State March and New Hampshire Naturally.

Gilford's Thompson-Ames Historical Society welcomes comments on, or suggestions for, articles. You can e-mail us at: thomames@metrocast.net and visit our web site at gilfordhistoricalsociety.org.