



BACKGROUND: The State Seal Two Centuries of Symbolism



As leaders formed North Carolina's government, they not only established rules, but also physical spaces to assemble for decision-making and symbols to create a state identity. 250 years ago, seals were created by pressing hot wax into a metal mold. Seals showed that official papers were authentic and came from a specific government office. Today, seals are made by pressing a metal stamp on foil paper or printed onto documents. The current North Carolina seal was revised in 1971 to accompany a new version of the North Carolina Constitution. Between the 1779 seal and today's state seal, there have been several variations. All versions feature two female figures, each representing a different aspect of North Carolina.



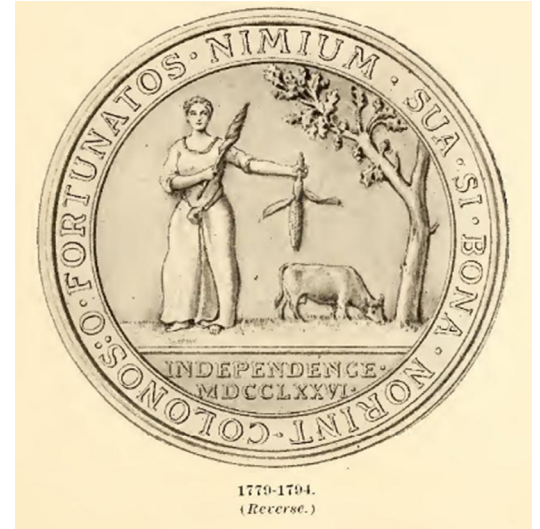
Pitt County deed, 1782, John Heritage Bryan papers, PC.6 box 17, State Archives of N.C.



Wax seal front and back, circa 1779-1794, 5812.18 box 2, State Archives of North Carolina

ACTIVITY: Identifying Symbols

Directions: Below are versions of the state seal, from 1779 to 1907. On notebook paper, describe what you see. **What** words are used? **What** do they mean? **Why** might leaders have selected those phrases? **What** images do you see? **What** activities are the female figures doing? **What** values do these activities represent?



State Seal images, J. Byran Grimes, *Great Seal of the State of North Carolina: 1666-1909*, Raleigh: N.C. Historical Commission, 1909.





Name _____

Date _____ Class _____



ACTIVITY: Spot the State Seal Differences

Directions: Below are the seals created in 1836 and 1971. Identify 6 differences between the two seals by circling them on the images. Then, list the changes with details in the box below. Why might these changes have occurred?



State Seal images, J. Byran Grimes, *Great Seal of the State of North Carolina: 1666-1909*, Raleigh: N.C. Historical Commission, 1909.