

THE DOLLAR BILL

Our government puts into our hands the finest example of the engravers art, the highest quality paper made of linen and cotton, and the finest intaglio printing.

To assure the best protection against counterfeiting, all U.S. paper money, most postage stamps, and documents of a financial character issued by the government are printed by the "intaglio" process, a process using plates onto which the designs are engraved by hand, inked, and transferred to paper under great pressure.

The most numerous denomination printed is the lowly dollar bill. Each year the Bureau of Printing and Engraving prints nearly 3 billion of them of which over 90% are replacements for those that wear out. They only last about eighteen months. So from time to time debate arises in Congress over whether to keep it or replace it.

Here's something to consider: the dollar bill is the only item of U. S. currency which puts into the hands of everyone who uses it a copy of the Great Seal of the United States—both sides of it.

Late in the day of July 4, 1776, after the Declaration of Independence had been signed, the founding fathers appointed a committee of Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and Benjamin Franklin to settle on a design for a seal for the new country. They decided that the seal would have two sides—like a coin. Jefferson suggested ideas from the history of Egypt because he regarded it as the cradle of civilization. He also suggested the Scales of Justice, the Eye of Providence, and the motto E Pluribus Unum.

Three committees and six years later, in May of 1782, the third committee, recommended the design which we see today on the reverse side of the dollar bill. By the way, that committee was composed of Arthur Middleton and Edward Rutledge—two South Carolinians—and Elias Boudinot from New Jersey.

On the front of the Great Seal is the "Eagle of Democracy" and above it is a Glory of God—a ring of light in Gold to indicate the spiritual above the material. Inside the glory are 13 stars representing the Original States.

The top of the shield is blue representing the Congress, free elections, and representative democracy. The head of the eagle stands for the Executive Branch. The nine tail feathers, the rudder of the State, represent the Judiciary. And above the Executive, Legislative and Judicial is a banner held in the eagle's beak with the motto: E pluribus Unum.

In the eagle's right talon are thirteen green olive leaves and seeds, a symbol for peace in Judaic, Islamic, Egyptian and other Middle Eastern Cultures. In the left claw are 13 arrows of American Indian origin, symbolizing war. The head of the eagle is turned to the olives, indicating a desire for peace even during war.

On the reverse of the seal, the Egyptian pyramid represents "solid strength and duration" as stated in the law adopted by Congress. Above is the Eye of Providence within a glory, also of Middle eastern origins—representing the spiritual above the material. The eye also

indicates education and freedom of knowledge. The words *Annuit Coeptis* means "God has favored our undertakings"

The unfinished pyramid means that the U.S. will always build, grow, improve. The 13 layers of the pyramid refer to the 13 Original States and the separate stones represent local self-government. At the bottom are the words *Novus Ordo Seclorum*: meaning 'New Order of the Ages, beginning in 1776. Each of the three mottoes on the seal has thirteen letters which symbolize the union.

The total symbol represents the Law, the supremacy of the spiritual above the material, and the rights of the individual—integral parts of the ideals, philosophy, and religion of the Islamic, Christian, and Judaic scriptures.

Like so much that is commonplace, we take it for granted. But every hand that holds the lowly dollar bill holds a piece of fine printing and a copy of the Great Seal of the United States—a symbol of the ideals of the founding fathers of our country.

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