Esse Quam Videri [1]

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by Daniel W. Barefoot, 2006

The State Seal of North Carolina, 1945. Image from the North Carolina Digital Collections. [2]*Esse Quam Videri,* the state motto [3] of North Carolina, is a Latin phrase meaning "to be rather than to seem." Its origins are traced to Cicero's essay titled "Friendship [4]." Distinguished jurist and historian Walter Clark [5] selected the state motto and drafted the bill for its adoption in 1893. Senator Jacob Battle [6] of Nash County [7] introduced the bill in the General Assembly [8], and upon its passage the legislature directed that the motto be engraved on the great seal and coat of arms of the state. Prior to that time, the independent state of North Carolina had never adopted a motto. It was one of the very few American states and the last of the original 13 without one. Until North Carolina declared its independence, the colony maintained on its great seal the Latin phrase *Quae Sera Tamen Respexit*. Referring to the figure of Liberty on the seal, these words meant "Which, though late, looked upon me."

References:

Walter Clark, "Our State Motto and Its Origin," *North Carolina Booklet* 9, no. 3 [9] (January 1910).

J. Bryan Grimes, *The History of the Great Seal of the State of North Carolina* [10] (1909).

Additional Resources:

"An act to establish a state motto." *Public laws and resolutions of the State of North Carolina passed by the General Assembly at its session of 1893*. Raleigh, N.C.: Josephus Daniels. 1893. p.109. https://digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/public-laws-and-resolutions-of-the-state-of-north-carolina-passed-by-the-general-assembly-at-its-session-of-...1893/1956314?item=2103708 [11] (accessed August 17, 2012).

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"State Seal." From: "Tar Heel state: a Leaflet of Interesting Information About North Carolina." Raleigh, N.C.: State Superintendent of Public Instruction. 1945. https://digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/tar-heel-state-a-leaflet-of-interesting-information-about-north-carolina/1956635?item=2103099 [2] (accessed August 17, 2012).

Subjects:
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State Symbols [15]
Authors:
Barefoot, Daniel W. [16]
Origin - location:
Nash County [17]
From:

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