

Seal, State ^[1]



"Great Seal of North Carolina." From the North Carolina General Assembly website. ^[2]

Seal, State

by Wiley J. Williams, 2006

See also: [North Carolina State Symbols and Official Adoptions main page](#) ^[3]

The design of North Carolina's state seal, officially called the Great Seal of the State of North Carolina, was standardized by the [General Assembly](#) ^[4] in 1971 and modified in 1983 after many variations. The official seal is a circle 2¼ inches in diameter that features the robe-covered figures of "Liberty" and "Plenty" in its center. Liberty is standing and holding a capped pole in her left hand, and in her right hand is a scroll on which is written the word "Constitution." Plenty is seated with her right arm extended, holding three heads of grain in her right hand and the end of an overflowing cornucopia in her left hand. In the background are depictions of mountains and a three-masted ship floating on the ocean. The dates "May 20, 1775" (the date of the so-called [Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence](#) ^[5]) and "April 12, 1776" (the date of the [Halifax Resolves](#) ^[6]) appear at the top and bottom, respectively, of the center part of the seal. Around the outside border of the seal are the phrases "The Great Seal of the State of North Carolina" and [Esse Quam Videri](#) ^[7], the state motto, meaning "to be rather than to seem."



Photograph of Gov. Kerr Scott passing the Great Seal of NC to Gov. William Umstead, January 1953. Item H.1966.109.14 from the North Carolina Museum of History. Used courtesy of the Department of Cultural Resources.

[8]

References:

J. Bryan Grimes, *The History of the Great Seal of the State of North Carolina* (rev. ed., 1974).

Additional information:

Grimes, J. Bryan. 1909. *Great seal of the state of North Carolina: 1666-1909* North Carolina Historical Commission. Online at: <https://digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/great-seal-of-the-state-of-north-carolina-1666-1909/2148975> [9].

"State seal and motto." North Carolina General Assembly. Online at: <http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/ncgainfo/educational/StateSeal.html> [10]

Image credit:

"State seal and motto." North Carolina General Assembly. Online at <http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/ncgainfo/educational/StateSeal.html> [10] (accessed September 25, 2014).

"Photograph [Gov. Scott passing the Great Seal of NC to Gov. Umstead]," Accession #[H.1966.109.14](#) [8]. 1953. North Carolina Museum of History. (accessed September 25, 2014).

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[Encyclopedia of North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press](#). [12]

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