

Symbols





**President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Armistice Day Address
Before the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier
November 11, 1940**

On this day which commemorates the end of fighting between human beings in a world war, it is permissible for me to search back in the history of civilization, in order to visualize important trends.

On the **Great Seal of the United States**, which, for a century and a half, has reposed in the loving care of a long line of Secretaries of the State, appears these words: "**Novus Ordo Seclorum**" which means: "**A New Order of the Ages.**"

But in the scheme of civilization from which ours descends, I suppose we can properly recognize that in 2500 years there have been only a few "New Orders" in the development of human living under a thing called government.

Without question, the philosophy of orderly government, in which the governed had some voice in civilized society, goes back to the days of ancient Greece.

We must remember, however, that while the philosophy of democracy was first expressed in words and on paper, the practice of it was by no means consistent, and was confined to a relatively small number of human beings, and to a relatively small geographical area.

We come to the Age of Rome – an age of a strange admixture of elections and laws and military conquest and personal dictatorship.

It was an age which extended the civilization of the period to the greater part of the then known world. It was an age which forced its own conception of laws and way of life on millions of less civilized people, who previously had lived under tribal custom of centralized direction.

With Rome's collapse and the overrunning of Europe by vast population movements from farther east, orderly progress deteriorated, and the sword drove

learning into hiding.

That dark period could hardly be called an Age, because it was an interim between Ages.

Then, with the reawakening of a thousand years ago, with the crusades, the feudal system, the guilds, the kings and the renaissance, that Age which immediately preceded our own was born and grew and flourished.

That was an era of enormous distinction – arts and literature and education and exploration – marching armies, barons, and empires.

Human security was still non-existent. Democracy was not permitted.

Toward its close, however, the appearance of tiny movements in tiny places, led by tiny people, forecast the next vast step forward – the era of 1776 – the Age in which, thank God, we still live. Those beginnings originated, it is true, in the old world – among the philosophers, among the seekers of many kinds of freedom forbidden by those who governed.

There, by processes of trial and error, democracy as it has since been accepted in so many lands, had its birth and its training. We must accept that as fact because, fundamentally, nothing like it had ever existed before.

There came into being the first far-flung government in all the world whose cardinal principle was democracy – the United States of America.

With the gaining of our political freedom came the conflict between the point of view of Alexander Hamilton, sincerely believing in the superiority of government by a small group of public-spirited and usually wealthy citizens, and the point of view of Thomas Jefferson, an advocate of government by representatives of the people, an advocate of the universal right of free thought, free personal living, free religion, free expression of opinion and, above all, the right of free universal suffrage.

The New Order spread into almost every part of the civilized world. It spread in many forms – and over the next century almost all peoples had acquired some form of popular expression of opinion, some form of elections, of franchises, of the right to be heard.

The Americas and the British Isles led the world in spreading the gospel of democracy among peoples great and small, and the world as a whole felt, with much right, that it had discarded feudalism, conquest, and dictatorship.

People felt that way until 1914, when a definite effort was made in a part of the world to destroy this existing "New Order of the Ages" – to destroy it after its

relatively short trial, and to substitute for it the doctrine that might makes right.

A hundred years from now, historians will say rightly that the world war preserved the "New Order of the Ages" for at least a whole generation.

I, for one, do not believe that the era of democracy in human affairs can or will be snuffed out in our lifetime. I, for one, do not believe that the world will revert to a modern form of ancient slavery, or to controls vested in modern feudalism, or modern emperors, or modern dictators, or modern oligarchs in these days. The very people under iron heels will themselves rebel.

We, alive today, live and think in terms of our grandparents, and our own parents, and ourselves, and our children – yes, and our grandchildren.

We, alive today – not in the existent democracies alone, but also among the populations of the smaller nations already overrun – are thinking in the larger terms of the maintenance of the "New Order" to which we have been accustomed, and in which we intend to continue.

We recognize certain facts of 1940 which did not exist in 1918 – a need for the elimination of aggressive armaments – a need for the breaking down of barriers in a more closely knitted world – a need for restoring honor in the written and spoken word.

We recognize that the processes of democracy must be greatly improved, in order that we may attain those purposes.





Benjamin Franklin
First Committee - 1776
Society of the Cincinnati and the Eagle

The Society of the Cincinnati was formed after the American Revolution. Its name originates from Cincinnatus, the legendary Roman farmer-soldier who rescued Rome and then returned to his plow. George Washington exemplified the modern Cincinnatus. Benjamin Franklin was critical of this Brotherhood of Revolutionary War Officers because membership was to be hereditary in the line of eldest sons, like titles of nobility. He believed that an organization whose members would be selected according to birth rather than merit was unwise.

In a letter to his daughter, written from France on January 26, 1784, Franklin casts doubt on the propriety of using the eagle to symbolize the "brave and honest Cincinnati of America." In fact, the image of the eagle used for the Society's insignia was poorly drawn and looked more like a turkey. Franklin, somewhat tongue in cheek, extends his argument to the superiority of the turkey as a symbol for the United States.

Benjamin Franklin's Letter Comparing the Eagle and the Turkey

"For my own part I wish the Bald Eagle had not been chosen the Representative of our Country. He is a Bird of bad moral Character. He does not get his Living honestly. You may have seen him perched on some dead Tree near the River, where, too lazy to fish for himself, he watches the Labour of the Fishing Hawk; and when that diligent Bird has at length taken a Fish, and is bearing it to his Nest for the Support of his Mate and young Ones, the Bald Eagle pursues him and takes it from him.

"With all this Injustice, he is never in good Case but like those among Men who live by Sharping & Robbing he is generally poor and often very lousy. Besides he is a rank Coward: The little *King Bird* not bigger than a Sparrow attacks him boldly and drives him out of the District. He is therefore by no means a proper Emblem for the brave and honest Cincinnati of America who have driven all the *King birds* from our Country . . .

"I am on this account not displeas'd that the Figure is not known as a Bald Eagle, but looks more like a Turkey. For the Truth the Turkey is in Comparison a much more respectable Bird, and withal a true original Native of America . . . He is besides, though a little vain & silly, a Bird of Courage, and would not hesitate to attack a Grenadier of the British Guards who should presume to invade his Farm Yard with a red Coat on."

The Shield is born on the breast of an American Eagle
without any other supporters to denote that the Unites States of America
ought to rely on their own Virtue. (1782)



The American bald Eagle holds in his sinister talon a bundle of thirteen arrows.
The arrows denote the power of war. (1782)

Although each of the three Great Seal committees included a shield in its design, the striped shield was first suggested by Francis Hopkinson, the consultant on the second committee, in 1780. He is the same person who three years earlier had designed the American Flag.

Hopkinson suggested: "The Shield charged on the Field Azure with 13 diagonal Stripes alternate rouge and argent." [red and white]

The third committee's consultant, a heraldry expert named William Barton, suggested 13 horizontal stripes. He later revised Charles Thomson's final design, so that the shield's 13 red and white stripes were vertical, beneath a blue Chief (the upper part of the shield) – which is how we see it today.

The shield design elegantly illustrates the motto E pluribus unum – Out of many, One.

The stripes are the states joined together "in one solid compact." They support a Chief (Congress) which depends upon their union and strength. Conversely, the Chief keeps the states closely united. Congress preserves the union of the United States of America.

The Constellation denotes a new State taking its place and rank among other sovereign powers. (1782)



Detail of first Great Seal painting,
St. Paul's Chapel, New York City

The Constellation of 13 Stars Over the Eagles's Head

"A radiant Constellation of 13 stars" was first suggested by the second committee's consultant, Francis Hopkinson, who had designed the American flag three years earlier. The sketches of his two versions show the stars surrounded with light rays, but in no particular formation.

William Barton (third committee) also included several groups of stars in both of his elaborate designs.

The precise written description (blazon) that defines the Great Seal's appearance **does not specify the shape of the constellation**, and Charles Thomson's original drawing showed the stars in a random arrangement. All dies of the Seal, however, have depicted the thirteen stars in the shape of a hexagram, a six-pointed star.

Also, it does not specify whether the individual stars are to have five or six points. In each of committee's sketches, the stars were drawn like asterisks (with three intersecting lines).

In 1782, the first official Great Seal die had six-pointed stars. Since 1841, however, all subsequent dies have had five-pointed stars – including the one in use today (as seen on the one-dollar bill).



The ancient Egyptians said it best...

"The Eye of God"

"The eye opens seeing old men, women and children. The eye opens seeing gods, flesh, vapors. The eye recalls the beauty of the ordinary. It sees me, therefore I am. As such are we all created. It watches and pierces the heart. Who knows its name? Call it love, creation, conspiracy. Call it an impossible sky hung with moons and stars. It is yesterday or tomorrow, a million years traveling. The sun circles and the hawk. We follow a flow. Thus looked upon the world receives its god.

"I lived in the delta in a house of mud when I first felt its glance. I lived in its fire and never knew. I was asleep, dreaming blue dreams in the egg of the world. The eye opened and closed, blinking once perhaps as it does every million years, and I came from unknowing into knowing. I left my hut yawning. I was naked in a bed of light. I shone like day. I opened like a purple flower at dawn.

"I am in the eye of god, resting in its blue orb. Golden eyelids encircle me. Eyelashes grow like stalks of dark truth. I see what I never dared – beyond the bucket banging the well, beyond mountains pushing up dirt. Light shimmers in every blade of grass, gods dance in every leaf, blue and gold fires leap from my pores. I shine in and out of life.

"A thousand forms have I, wholly mine – man and hawk, sycamore, lotus and fig. I please myself to be born and to die over again. I walk a flowered path bordered by a million years. Season to season I change as a leaf greening. I flow as blood through flesh. The eye opens and closes, and then . . .

"What lives in the gods and rivers lives in me, parts of the whole, one in One. I take my journey seriously. I've seen mountains, deserts and seas. Going nowhere one morning I suddenly entered heaven. I opened its door and passed through. I stood on polished floors and understood heaven no better there than while I was planting corn. Then I laughed; in that was truth.

"Does the world die with me when I sleep? It seems so. I wake in the morning and it is born again – my wife, my children, my cattle, the stars. There are times in the day when I forget her, then seeing her pass, a jug of water on one hip, she is born in me and love rises.

"All things are beheld in the eye of god. We are his bodies. His time moves in our bellies. There is no season in which heaven does not hold the shape of its beloved, no time in which the earth does not sing. Under the sun, flamingos nod and bow and walk. Birds of the air spin in countless exhaled breaths. We are growing, remembering, forgetting, becoming. The many are one face changing expression.

"The eye is everywhere. There is no act it does not see, no desire it can not hold, no secret that can not be known. The heavens speak. The flame bursts on your cheeks. Things are possible. In a moment we live a million years, a thousand lives in a breath.

"Behold the eye that holds you. Without hands, it made you. You will be its hands. Without tongue, you become its tongue. Your work is its will. If what you make – your body, your love, your peace – is good, it shall be looked on by gods and endure forever.



"When the eye opens, I look back."

This Latin phrase has been traced to Virgil, the renowned Roman poet who lived in the first century B.C. In his epic masterpiece, the *Aeneid*, he tells the story of Aeneas – son of Venus, ancestral hero of the Romans – and his journey from Troy to Italy.

In book IX, line 625, is the phrase: "Jupiter omnipotens, audacibus annue coeptis." (All-powerful Jupiter, favor [my] daring undertakings.) Also, in Virgil's *Georgics* (book I, line 40) are the words: "Da facilem cursum, atque audacibus annue coeptis." (Give [me] an easy course, and favor [my] daring undertakings.)

Charles Thomson changed the first person imperative "annue" to the third person "annuit." In the motto *Annuit Coeptis*, the subject of the verb must be supplied, and the translator must also choose the tense.

Thomson said: "The pyramid signifies Strength and Duration: the Eye over it & the Motto allude to the many signal interpositions of providence in favour of the American cause."

The eye is therefore the missing subject, and the translation would be: "It (the Eye of Providence) is favorable to our undertakings" or "Providence has favored our undertakings" or "God favors our undertakings."

A Wink and a Nod

It's of interest to note that *annuit* means "to nod to; to assent to; to agree." One can't help but wonder: if the Eye is giving us a nod, might it also on occasion be giving us a wink?

Seclorum and Secular

It's of interest to note that the English word *secular* is related to *seclorum* (an abbreviated form of *seclorum*). The root of both words is "seed," from which sprang various words that meant: seed of mankind; generation; the period of a generation or of a century; the world of human beings – and eventually to "worldly." *Secular* refers to a period of time, in contrast to an eternity. It suggests the temporal, not the eternal.

Perhaps, with this motto Thomson was emphasizing the non-religious aspect of the United States as an earthly endeavor, not a heavenly one. (He used the motto above the pyramid to highlight the divine element.) Such distinctions add further nuance to the unique symbolism of the pyramid and eye.

Seclorum means "of the ages" or "of the generations." This is easily seen in the phrase sometimes found at the end of prayers in Latin bibles: "*secula seclorum*" – forever and ever (literally, "ages of ages"). *Seclorum* (*seclorum*, *saeculorum*, *saeculorum*) is a genitive plural form that could not properly be translated as "of the worlds."

Seclum was used to mean "world" in ecclesiastical (church) Latin – in the sense of worldliness – hence the meaning of the English word *secular* (from the Latin adjective *seclularis*). Moreover, since "*seclorum*" is plural, even if it did mean "world" in the sense of "planet" (which it does not), "*novus ordo seclorum*" would have to be translated "new order of the worlds." For example:

"*Immaculatus ab hoc saeculo*" means "unstained by this world."

"*Et servientem corpori absolve vinclis saeculi*" means "and free him who serves the body from the chains of the world."

Notice that the phrases, "this world" and "the world," could be replaced by the word "worldliness." This is decidedly not the case for the phrase "New World Order."

In Classical Latin, "world" – in the sense that it is used in the phrase "new world order" – would be "*orbis terrarum/terrae*" (or sometimes *terra* alone), or "*mundus*," or maybe "*tellus*." In Latin-English dictionaries, "*seclum*," in all its forms, is conspicuously absent from the listing of Latin words for "world."



The **Great Seal of the United States** appears on the backside of the United States \$1 bill. The reverse of the seal appears on the left, and the obverse side of the seal appears on the right.

The Continental Congress decided to create a national seal or emblem on July 4, 1776, the same day that the congress adopted the Declaration of Independence and the birth date of the United States as a nation. The congress appointed Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson and John Adams to a committee to devise a national seal. It took six years, three committees, several artistic contributions and many revisions before the final seal was adopted on June 20, 1782.

Since that time, the Great Seal has undergone an evolution of design, reflecting the tastes and ideas of subsequent generations, but the features of the original design were kept intact. These features are full of symbolism and meaning, graphically representing the tenets of the new nation.

The unfinished pyramid and the eye in a triangle on the reverse side show the influence of classical images and symbols on the design of the seal. The Egyptian pyramid is a symbol of strength and duration. The 13 steps indicate the original number of state, and they lead to an unfinished summit, indicating future growth of the nation.

The eye is known as the "**Eye of Providence**" and is surrounded by rays of light. According to *Webster's New World College Dictionary*, "providence" can mean:

1. a looking to, or preparation for, the future; provision.
2. skill or wisdom in management; prudence.
3. a) the care or benevolent guidance of God or nature, b) an instance of this.
4. God, as the guiding power of the universe.

The single eye shows up in Egyptian mythology as the Eye of Horus, an important deity to the ancient Egyptians. The eye represented wisdom, health and prosperity. Some people think that the "all-seeing eye" is a symbol of Freemasonry, a fraternal organization, and shows that the Founding Fathers believed in Masonic principles and wanted to impose Masonic order on the United States.

Here are the other symbols on the Great Seal.

The **obverse** side:

- The shield, or **escutcheon**, is shown on the breast of the eagle without any support, indicating the self-reliance of the United States. Thirteen red and white stripes appear on the shield, signifying the 13 original states. The red color represents hardiness and valor, and the white represents purity and innocence. These stripes support and unite with the top blue band, which represents Congress. Blue signifies vigilance, perseverance and justice.
- The eagle's talons hold 13 arrows in the right and an olive branch in the left. These symbolize the power of war and peace, respectively. The number of arrows again represents the 13 original states.
- The constellation of 13 stars (states) above the eagle's head signifies the United States' rank among other sovereign powers.
- The motto, "*E Pluribus Unum*," written on the banner held in the eagle's beak, is Latin meaning "Out of many, one," conveying the union of the States.

The significance of the mystical number 13, which frequently appears upon the Great Seal of the United States, is not limited to the number of the original colonies. The sacred emblem of the ancient initiates, here composed of 13 stars, also appears above the head of the "eagle." The motto, *E Pluribus Unum*, contains 13 letters, as does also the inscription, *Annuit Coeptis*. The "eagle" clutches in its right talon a branch bearing 13 leaves and 13 berries and in its left a sheaf of 13 arrows. The face of the pyramid, exclusive of the panel containing the date, consists of 72 stones arranged in 13 rows.

The **reverse** side:

- The pyramid
- The eye in the triangle above the pyramid
- The Roman numerals, **MDCCLXXVI**, appear on the base of the pyramid and translate to 1776, the year of independence.
- Above the "eye" are the Latin words "*Annuit Coeptis*." This translates to "He has favored our undertakings." This line is associated with the "Eye of Providence."
- Below the pyramid are the Latin words "*Novus Ordo Seclorum*," meaning "A new order of the ages," referring to the birth of America in 1776.

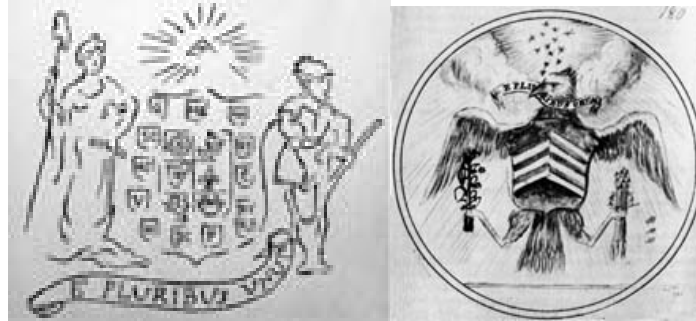
In 1935, the Department of Treasury proposed the use of the obverse and reverse sides of the Great Seal on the back of the \$1 bill, originally with the obverse on the left hand side and the reverse on the right. Before approving the design, President Franklin Roosevelt decided to switch the order of sides of the seal, and then added "The Great Seal" under the reverse and "of the United States" under the obverse.



Francis Bacon

"...the Sun enters the palace and the privy alike and is not polluted thereby. We raise not a Capitol or Pyramid to the pride of man, but a Holy Temple in his *mind* on the model of the Universe, *which model we imitate*. For whatsoever deserves to exist deserves to be known, and knowledge is the image of Existence. Now the mean and the splendid alike exist..."





Each Committee's Contribution to the Final Design

First Committee (1776):

- Shield
- E Pluribus Unum (Out of Many, One)
- Eye in a triangle
- Glory breaking through a Cloud
(and surrounding the eye in a triangle)
- MDCCLXXVI (1776)

Second Committee (1780):

- Thirteen red and white stripes on the shield
- Constellation of 13 stars
- Arrows
- Olive branch

Third Committee (1782):

- Eagle
- Unfinished pyramid

Charles Thomson (1782):

- American Bald Eagle
- Annuit Coeptis (Providence Has Favored Our Undertakings)
- Novus Ordo Seclorum (A New Order of the Ages)

Evolution of the Great Seal: 1776 — 1782

Obverse Side



1776



1780



1782

Reverse Side



1776



1780



1782

Final Designs



Final reverse



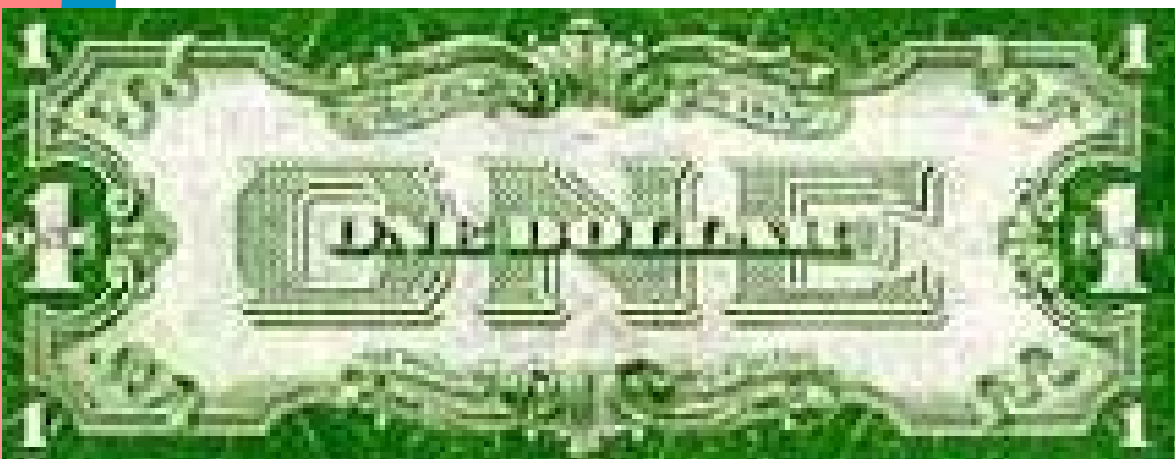
Final obverse

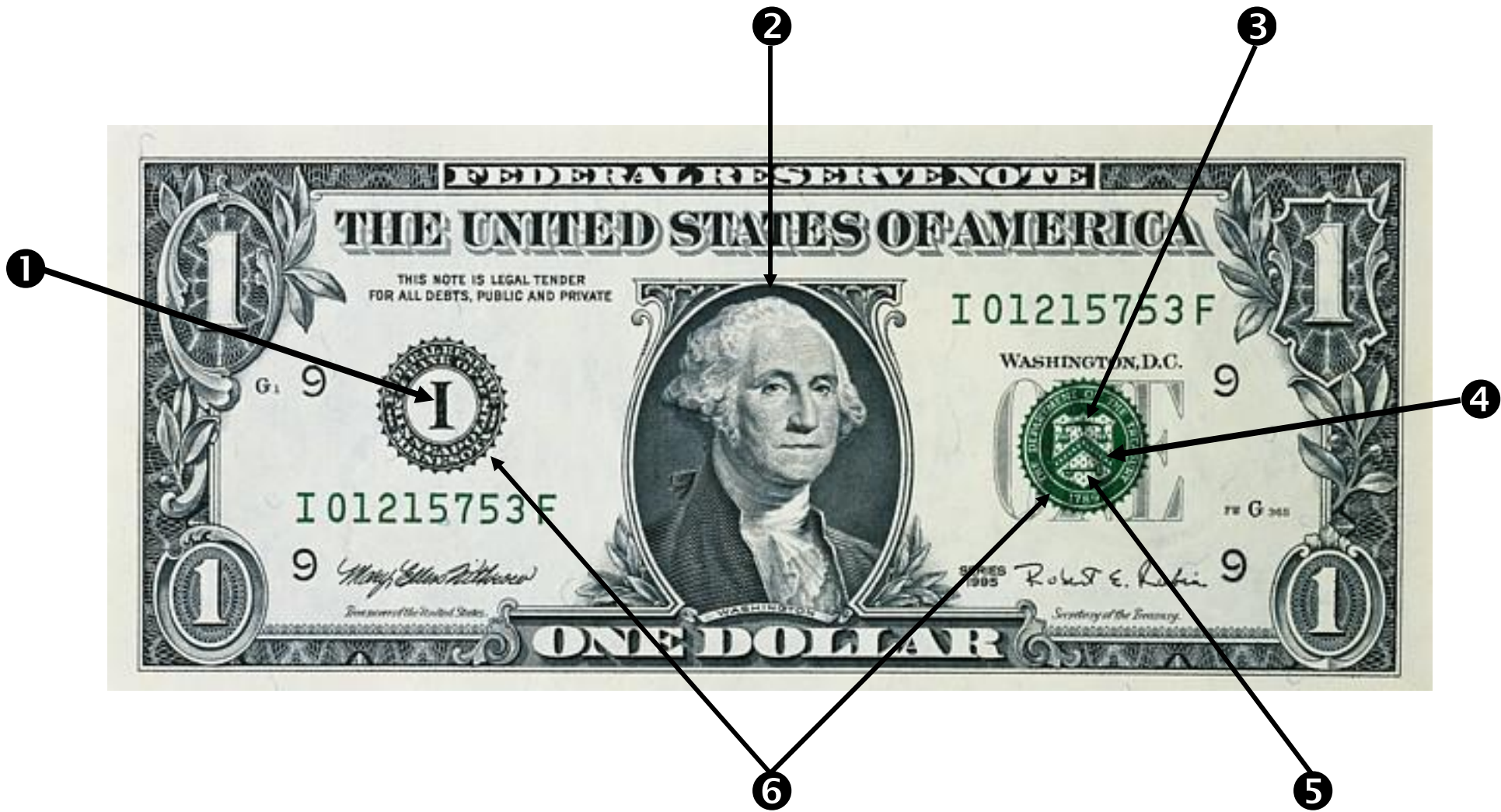


The Seal of the President

It used to show the eagle facing its left talon that holds the bundle of arrows symbolizing the "power of war."

On October 25, 1945, however, President Truman issued an Executive Order that specified the eagle on the Seal of the President face toward the olive branch.







1. On some notes the letter “G” is printed and said to be for God
3. The scale is for
Scale of justice
Libra the 7th sign
5. The key
The key of the treasure
The key that unlocks the door in Masonry
8. The land of Egypt
9. The number 13
13 levels on the pyramid, 72 stones
- 13 Masonic symbols of Masonic Order
MDCCLXX-1776
11. The eagle
The eagle should be the phoenix on the Great Seal of the US

2. George Washington, PM
4. The Square
A working tool of a Mason
6. The Sun Rises in the background. Bring forth strength
7. The Eye
The eye of harest a Greek god of health and wealth
Or the all seeing eye
10. ANNUIT
An endless amount
COEPTIS
A new empire
NOVUS
Something new
ORDO
A way of life for few
SECOLORUM
To take from another

