

Great Seal of the Confederate States of America

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ca. 1872-1874



Title Statement

Great Seal of the Confederate States of AmericaGreat Seal of the Confederate States of America, ca. 1872-1874 Ms.2017.022

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Profile Description

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

Ms.2017.022

Unit Date

ca. 1872-1874

Language

The materials in the collection are in English.

Abstract

Collection consists of an electrotpe replica of the Great Seal of the Confederate States of America, along with a letter of authentication, dated 6 March 1874, from J.S. and A.B. Wyon of London, England, the engravers of the original Great Seal made for the Confederacy in 1864.

Extent

0.1 Cubic Feet 1 folder

Condition Description

The Seal and the gutta percha box are in excellent condition. The Wyon letter had previously been taped together and that tape is still present on the reverse of the letter. Though fragile, the letter is perfectly legible.

Repository

Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open for research.

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Source of Acquisition

The Great Seal of the Confederate States of America was donated to Special Collections and University Archives in 2001.

Processing Information

Original processing of this collection occurred in 2001. Reprocessing, arrangement, and description occurred in August 2017.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [identification of item], [box], [folder], Great Seal of the Confederate States of America, Ms2017-022, Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va.

Historical Note

The original Great Seal was commissioned by the Confederate States of America, likely in 1863, from J.S. and A.B. Wyon, London, England, then Chief Engravers of Her Majesty's Seals. Reaching Richmond before the end of the American Civil War, the seal, as reported in the *New York Times* (21 May 1912), was removed from the city during the evacuation of April 1865 by William J. Bromwell, chief clerk of the Confederate State Department. By 1872, it was in the possession of John T. Pickett, formerly a Colonel in the Confederate army and then a lawyer in Washington D.C. and Thomas O. Selfridge, a U.S. naval officer. Pickett, reportedly, had 100 electrotype copies made, possibly by George Massamore, numismatist of Baltimore. Seventy-five were made of copper and twenty-five of silver over copper. The original seal was returned to Selfridge, who remained in possession of it until he sold it in 1912 to a group of Richmond businessmen. It now resides in Richmond at the Museum of the Confederacy.

One of the copies made for Pickett was presented by him in 1874 to Wyon, the engravers of the original seal, for authentication, as described in the document that accompanies the seal in this collection. The seal itself is one of the silver on copper electrotype copies.

Scope and Content

One of one hundred electrotype replica copies made from the original Great Seal of the Confederate States of America in the early 1870s. Of the hundred, 75 were made of copper and 25, as is the case with this example, are silver over copper. The original seal was produced for the CSA in 1864 by J. A. and A. B. Wyon, London, Chief Engravers of Seals for the British Monarchy. Accompanying the seal is a letter of authentication from Wyon dated 6 March 1874, verifying the authenticity of the impression as a faithful reproduction of the original. The Seal is held in its original gutta percha box.

Keywords

Civil War

Confederate States of America

United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865

Existence and Location of Copies

This collection has been digitized and is available online.

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Description of Subordinate Components

Great Seal of the Confederate States of America in gutta percha case

Unit Date ca. 1872

folder 1

Letter confirming authenticity from J.S. and A.B. Wyon

Unit Date 03-06-1874

folder 1