

The Great Seal of the State of
— California —

The adoption of an
appropriate design for the Great Seal of
the State of California was an incident
of considerable interest at the time as it was
connected with the organization of the
civil government of the first new state
bordering on the Shore of the Pacific
Ocean —

At least I have never seen any published
account of what transpired on that occasion
except the official account contained in

As I have often been asked why
the figure of Minerva was selected as the
authorised chronicle of the ^{first} constitutional
most prominent emblem, and the only
conviction held at Monterey in September and
October, 1849. That account is so meager
and gives so little of the inside history of
emblem, it may satisfy those who
historically designed the Great Seal it must
be a source of satisfaction to those who
California history, to learn what I have
taken an interest in the details and incidents,
to say, of what was said and did at the time.

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The Great Seal was adopted in the first
connected with early California history
Constitutional Convention at Monterey 1849

The figure of Minerva, which forms
the principal figure in the Great Seal
of the State of California, was
intended to be
the symbol of many virtues, and
appropriate to the
peculiarities of the new state, that
was being formed from a condition
of affairs, without a parallel in the
history of the world.

The general character of the forty
eight delegates, who composed
the first constitutional convention,
were gentlemen of more than
ordinary refinement and
education, and possessed of
an experience in active, practical

pursuits in life, that qualified them in a marked degree, to meet all the questions that came before the convention, for its consideration and final action.

It was for many reasons, that the figure of Minerva, represented more qualities than any other, that was thought to properly symbolize at one view, the many peculiarities of the newly rising State.

At Minerva the daughter of Jupiter sprang full armed from his brain. After he had disposed of his wife Atë, signifies that California appeared full armed, with all the essentials of full sovereign power, as a complete State of the Union without going through the

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tutelage of a territory, as all the other
states have done, since the establishment
of the United State of America as a
nation. That this nation symbolizes
Jupiter after it effectually stamped
out Englands sovereignty over the
thirteen colonies at the time of the
Revolution in 1776. The Nation of
the United States, after that revolution
was able to send forth men qualified
to found a state fully armed and com-
plete, as was the Mythological Jupiter
capable of sending forth from his brain
the fully armed Minerva of California

2^d Minerva was the Goddess of
wisdom and of war.

A symbol that California in all
its ways has shown her wisdom,
in that it led the way to freedom by

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prohibiting slavery in its first constitution, and in all its first system of laws.

In war California stood firm and held the shield aloft to protect and defend the nation when rebellion threatened its life in 1861.

California sends forth the most formidable battle ships and the swiftest war cruisers to vindicate her title to be the goddess of war.

3^d Minerva was the patroness of Literature and the useful arts.

The United States gave a dowry of Five Hundred ^{thousand} acres of land to each new state, to be selected from the public domain.

California gave this dowry that came to her, to be applied to education in this state inviolate forever.

This provision was put in the first Constitution of California. The school money that is distributed to the common schools through out the state, is the income derived from the sale of these lands, now invested in state bonds -

our State University and all the other institutions of California attest ^{the} ~~her~~ ^{Gods} love of literature and the useful arts.

4th Minerva was the patroness of agriculture and all industrial pursuits.

This goodly state of California, stands first in its variety of agricultural productions. The ripened grain, and timely fruits of California, are for variety and excellence, unknown in any other state or nation.

5th Minerva was the patroness of all intellectual occupations.

California is admitted to be the home of the best thought and intellectual occupations.

The fruits and flowers strewn on the ground denote the natural products of California.

The Miner is the appropriate emblem of our first great industry, beginning with pick and pan, shovel and rocker, and perpetual symbol of California's inexhaustible mines of silver and gold. It well denotes that idleness will never fill the horn of plenty, and that each stroke of the pick or shovel ^{butt} of dirt brings him nearer to "pay dirt". The mountains in the distance represent the ever-lasting hills that will furnish from age to age their fresh mineral wealth to honest industry.

The placid waters of the bay and golden gate, and abundant shipping symbol of our commerce with every nation, and our ample harbor that ^{to all the mariners of the world} invited safety from the roughest storms,

Major Garnett attached to the Engineer Corps of the United States Army, was stationed at Monterey in the fall of 1849, when the first constitutional convention was in session. He took a lively interest in the proceedings of the convention, from day to day, as it progressed towards the completion of a state constitution.

I was the acting chairman of the finance committee, and had to visit General Riley quite frequently to arrange with him for the payment of the expenses of the convention which he assumed to pay, out of the civil fund so called, which was under his control. This brought me to the officers' quarters and among the agreeable officers at that time stationed at Monterey I made the acquaintance of Major Garnett. He was an expert draughtsman and during some of our conversations about the progress of the

Convention, the subject of a coat of arms
 and of a great seal for the new state of
 California was discussed. Major
 Garnett was known to be a classical
 well read scholar, as well as expert
 draftsman, naturally ^{it} occurred to us to
 request him to make some designs
 for a Great Seal. He suggested that it was
 not proper for an Army officer to make
 suggestions concerning so important a
 matter. We all said he was too modest
 and ^{that he} ought to help the convention out
 with a classical design. He promised
 to make a design if it was not to be
 presented in his name, and his authorship
 kept unknown. This was agreed to and
 Major Garnett made the design of the
 Great Seal of California. It was brought
 to the notice of the convention by Mr. Caleb
 Lyons an under Secretary of Captain Wm.
 G. Marcy the Secretary of the convention.
 Mr. Lyons claimed to be the author of the
 seal, and was allowed one thousand
 dollars to get it engraved and delivered to

the secretary of the convention. This was done and Lyon pocketed the one thousand dollars, but Major Garnett was known ^{by several persons} to be the real author of the design.

Major Garnett was a native of Virginia and when the rebellion broke out in 1861, he followed his state with Earl Lee and others into the Southern Army.

It was reported that he led one of Pickett's storming columns at Gettysburgh and went down with the two thousand who perished in that terrible conflict.

Elisha O. Crosby
Delegate from Sacramento

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THE GREAT SEAL
OF THE STATE OF
CALIFORNIA.

- BY -

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