



ARIZONA: THE 48TH STATE



By 1890, Arizona had been a territory for 27 years. The people of Arizona were becoming impatient. They wanted Arizona to become a state. Statehood would allow them to be involved in national decisions like making laws and deciding who would govern them and enforce those laws.



The people in Washington who made the decisions for the United States were not anxious to make Arizona a state. All of Arizona's outlaws and the constant fighting with the Native Americans did not make Arizona a very good choice for statehood. Congress offered to make Arizona and New Mexico a state together. The citizens of Arizona did not like this idea.

Of course, Arizona did become a state. A man named George P. Hunt was responsible for helping Arizona reach its goal of statehood. Hunt was the leader of the team of men who wrote Arizona's first **constitution**. After the constitution was written, it was sent to the president of the United States for his approval.

President Taft sent it back! Arizona's newly written constitution allowed the people of Arizona to remove an elected government leader from office if they felt he or she was doing a bad job. President Taft did not want the voters of Arizona to have this much power. He refused Arizona's statehood unless this was changed.

Once again, George P. Hunt helped make the changes. President Taft approved the new constitution. On February 14, 1912, Arizona finally became a state. The people of Arizona were so thankful for George Hunt's help that they voted him in as the first governor of Arizona. He was voted in as governor six more times.

FAST FACTS



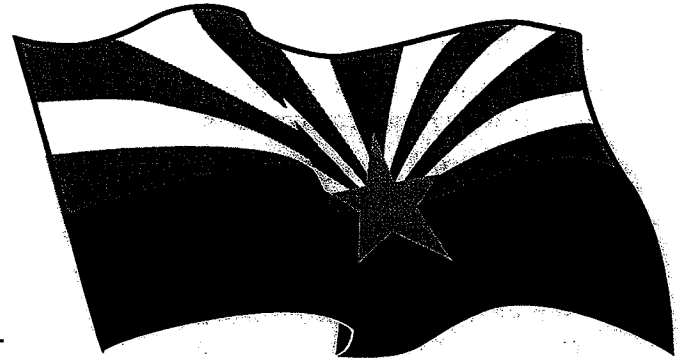
- Arizona was actually ready to become a state on February 12, 1912. This was the date of Abraham Lincoln's birthday, so President Taft waited until the 14th of February to grant Arizona's statehood.
- 130 years before Arizona's State Seal was designed, the Great Seal of the United States was adopted. Pictured on the Great Seal are the American Bald Eagle; the colors red, white, and blue; stars; stripes; and the Latin motto "E Pluribus Unum" which means Out of Many, One. Just like the Arizona State Seal, these symbols on the Great Seal of the United States represent our nation's values and the belief in our system of Democracy.

ARIZONA'S STATE SYMBOLS

A new state is responsible for designing a flag and choosing symbols to represent itself. After the constitution was approved by President Taft, Arizona's state seal was designed and adopted as the symbol of Arizona.

The seal shows the year that Arizona became a state. Pictured on the seal are cattle, copper, climate, citrus, and cotton. These are known as Arizona's 5 Cs because they have always been important parts of Arizona's economy.

The words at the top of the seal "Ditat Deus" are Latin words meaning God Enriches. Ditat Deus has become Arizona's motto. The state seal can be seen on the inside of the capitol building. It is also stamped on all government papers to make them official.



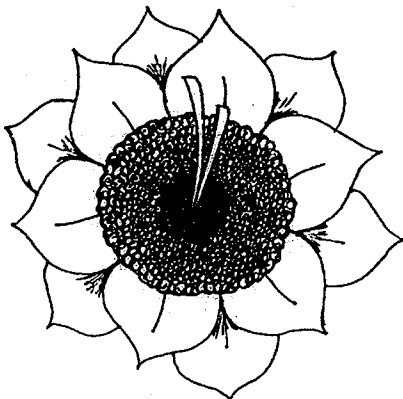
ARIZONA'S STATE FLAG

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In 1912, a flag was created for Arizona. Five years later, it was adopted as Arizona's official flag. The 13 red and yellow stripes in the top half of the flag represent the sun's rays and the 13 original colonies of the United States. Red and yellow were used because these were the colors of the flag carried by Spanish explorer Francisco Coronado when he traveled through Arizona in 1540. The copper star represents copper mining, and the field of blue in the bottom half of the flag is the same color of blue used in the American flag.

ARIZONA'S STATE FLOWER

The blossoms of the giant saguaro (suh•WAR•oh) cactus are Arizona's state flowers. The white waxy flowers with yellow centers are found on the tips of the long arms of the saguaro cactus during the months of May and June. The flowers bloom at night when the desert is cool and close by noon the next day. Sometimes the saguaro cactus produces a purple fruit which is eaten by many desert animals. The flesh, seeds, and juice of the fruit were once an important food source for Native Americans.



SAGUARO CACTUS BLOSSOM

ARIZONA'S STATE BIRD

The cactus wren is Arizona's state bird. The cactus wren is a very smart bird because it builds its nests in the protection of thorny desert plants like the arms of the giant saguaro and the cholla (CHOY•yuh) cactus. It builds several different nests, but only uses one of them to lay its eggs. It hopes that by doing this it can fool its enemies. The cactus wren is seven to eight inches long and is grayish-brown with lighter spots on its breast. It can be heard singing throughout the desert region of Arizona.