

SPANISH-MEXICAN SEAL

CENTRAL IMAGE

- ❖ *A Spaniard's profile and the frontal view of an Indigenous person* are depicted in the image at the center of the seal. A third face emerges when the viewer's eye combines the Spanish and Indigenous images together. This central image contains the meaning of the entire seal as it captures the melding of the two cultures to form a unique Californian mestizo culture. All of the other images in the seal follow the first encounter of the two cultures and chronicle the ensuing human evolution.

INNER RING-SPANISH PERIOD, 1769-1822

- ❖ *Califia - The Queen of the mythical island of California* possibly inspired the name of California. It is believed that in an old Spanish novel of chivalry, entitled *Las sergas de Esplandián*, there existed a mythical island of California. It was located "to the right of the Indies" and was considered the "Terrestrial Paradise" on Earth. This island was inhabited by black women, wild animals including griffins, and a queen of majestic proportions. The Queen *Califia* was not only more beautiful than the rest but also had a brave heart. This novel greatly influenced the European minds in the early 16th Century, and most certainly the Spanish conquistadors in their early ventures in the New World. In a letter Cortes wrote to his sovereigns that he had information of "an island of Amazons, or women only, abounding in pearls and gold, lying 10 days journey from Colima." When Baja California was initially discovered, it was thought to be an island; thus, the Spanish explorers considered the northernmost territory as "Alta California." Today, it is known simply as California.
- ❖ *The Viceregal Standard of New Spain* symbolizes the claim and settlement on the territory of Alta California on behalf of the Spanish crown. This was the last royal standard used by the Viceroyalty of New Spain until August 24, 1821, which dates the close of the Spanish era. The great virtue of this royal standard is in its simplicity, with the tips of the cross displaying the arms granted by Carlos V to Mexico City.
- ❖ *The San Carlos Packet Boat* symbolizes the first sea expedition to begin the Spanish settlement of Alta California in 1769. Principal credit goes to the *visitador-general* of New Spain, José de Gálvez, for planning the settlement, which ultimately resulted in three sea expeditions (the *San Carlos*, the *San Antonio*, and the *San José*) and two land expeditions.

- ❖ *A Soldier with San Francisco Presidio in the Background* represents the Spanish military and government presence to defend the province of Alta California from foreign and native aggressions in the name of the Spanish crown. During the Spanish era, four presidios were established at San Francisco, Monterey, Santa Barbara, and San Diego.
- ❖ *An Official Seal used for the Regulations for Governing the Province of the Californias*, approved by HIS MAJESTY Carlos III by Royal Order, dated October 24, 1781. His Majesty deigned to decree by Royal Cédula that these regulations provide the instructions for the operations of the presidios, the erection of new missions, and the promotion of settlement and extension of the establishments of Monterey.
- ❖ *A Franciscan Friar with the Mission San Diego de Alcalá in the Background* represents the first permanent Spanish settlement of Alta California, with its formal ceremonies conducted by the first Father President Junípero Serra on July 16, 1769. California's 21 missions are characterized by their unique beauty and charm and serve as a reminder of Spain's historical role in spreading Catholicism to the northernmost province of New Spain.
- ❖ *The Mission Branding Symbols* represent the initial Spanish importation of livestock to Alta California (including horses, cattle, burros, sheep, and goats) as well as the annual rodeo in late summer or early autumn when the stock was rounded up and the calves were counted, branded, and ear-marked. All 21 missions had a unique brand to identify the cattle. The six displayed on the seal represent the missions at Santa Inés, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz, San Juan Capistrano, San Rafael Arcángel, and San Luis Rey de Francia.
- ❖ *The Carved Terra Cotta Roof Tiles* form a band around the Spanish ring to recognize the enduring influence of Spanish architecture in California.
- ❖ *The Ear of Harvested Corn* is a symbol of California's agricultural abundance, which stems from the State's ideal climate and natural resources, and connects us with the historic Spanish settlement of Alta California and Meso-America.

MIDDLE RING-MEXICAN PERIOD, 1822-1846

- ❖ *The Mexican Coat of Arms* represents the recognition of Mexican sovereignty in California on April 11, 1822; one year after Mexico gained its independence from Spain.
- ❖ *The Californio on Horseback and the Cattle panels* depict the independent lifestyle of the Rancheros during the Mexican era. The Californios were excellent horsemen,

and cattle ranching provided the primary source of income. The vast open range landscapes of these panels convey the freedoms of the Californios under the Mexican Land Grant system, which was pivotal to the economy and the essence of early California living.

- ❖ *The Fandango Dance*, which was originally brought to Alta California by the Spaniards, portrays the festive ambience and warm hospitality of the Californios.
- ❖ *The Immigrants* panel captures the image of trappers on foot and traders in ships who entered Mexican California, in search of adventure, trade, and land. The Mexican government offered land grants to these immigrants on condition of their becoming Mexican citizens and Catholics. Many immigrants by sea took advantage of this opportunity for legal residence, including such familiar names as Sutter, Marsh, and Larkin. The overland immigrants began with trappers in search of beaver pelts, establishing a significant migration of settlers who rejected Mexican citizenship and eventually initiated the Bear Flag Revolt and ensuing war with Mexico. John C. Frémont, a major player in Mexico-California history came with the “over-landers” on a mapping expedition.
- ❖ *The Pico Oak Tree, also known as the Oak of Peace*, is a historic site in Glendale, California. It was at this site that Andrés Pico surrendered to John C. Frémont, which signified the end of the Mexican War in 1847. The United States’ possession of California was formalized with the signing of the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in Mexico on February 2, 1848.

OUTER “FUSION” RING

The outer ring of the seal is a series of tiles engraved with icons and enduring aesthetic, cultural, and political images – a contemporary representation of the fusion of our collective Spanish-Mexican-Californian relationship. The Fusion Ring reaches into history, rituals, and traditions to illustrate visually the connection created between Spain, Mexico, and California up to the present and into the future. The Fusion Ring reads in a clockwise progression from left to right.

- ❖ *A Pair of Hands* represents the contributions of Latinos to build the State of California, figuratively and literally, into the great state it is today.
- ❖ *Ballet Folklórico* is a popular tradition of regional dances and costumes that brings Mexican music and movement into the California heritage.
- ❖ *Tomatoes* or “Jitomates,” originated in Mexico, and are a pillar in the Central Valley economy as well as a formidable Mexican dietary endowment.

- ❖ *Pottery and Folk Art* represent the enduring influence that Spanish and Mexican art forms have had on the California aesthetic.
- ❖ *Grapes* came to California from Spain and continue to thrive in the state's agricultural and wine industries.
- ❖ *The United Farm Workers' Flag* is the emblem that represents the union created by César Chávez among Mexican fieldworkers, who have played a crucial role in California's agricultural industry.
- ❖ *The City of Angels (Los Angeles)* depicts the influence of language and immigration to California. The City of Angels is a vibrant example of the tremendous impact that the Spanish language has had on the names of our California cities, rivers, and mountains.
- ❖ *The Piñata* represents a historical form of celebration in Mexican culture, which has become universally popular in contemporary celebrations in California.
- ❖ *The Nopal or Prickly Pear Cactus* has dual symbolism: it represents homeland for Mexicans; and it is a plant that blends California landscape and climate with our southern neighbor. In this way, California and Mexico are joined physically as well as culturally.
- ❖ *The Sun Rays and Field* image is an aesthetic pause between the two halves of the outer circle. It is a sun burst when viewed from the bottom of the seal and becomes a field as the viewer circles the ring.
- ❖ *The Calla Lilies* are a strong image associated with Mexico, Diego Rivera, and California floriculture. These blooms are a poetic and artistic reminder of the beauty of our blend and fusion.
- ❖ *The Indigenous Musician* playing a traditional instrument represents the continuing influence of the many tribes and cultures of Mexican Indians, not only in Mexico, but also in California.
- ❖ *Olives* were imported by the Spanish and have had a Mediterranean influence on the arboreal landscape and cuisine in California. The olive branch also represents a universal symbol of peace.
- ❖ *The Ballot Box* represents the importance of citizenship and the growing civic participation by Latinos in California. This image brings us to the present and leads us into the future, as Latinos exercise the right to vote, hold public office, and shape public policy.

- ❖ *Oranges* were brought to California by the Spanish and have become a symbol for California's sunshine, health, and abundance.
- ❖ *La Catrina* is a famous popular-culture skeleton etching by a Mexican artist, José Guadalupe Posada. This image has become associated with the Mexican Day of the Dead (El día de los Muertos), which is one of the many Mexican celebrations that are increasingly embraced by Californians.
- ❖ *La Cocina Mexicana* includes the "molcajete," which is a traditional mortar and pestle made of volcanic rock. This image recognizes the enormous influence that Mexican cuisine has had in forming the Californian palate.
- ❖ *Two Capistrano Swallows* are a familiar image of renewal, spring, and the enduring presence of the Missions in California. The swallows' annual migration bonds our Spanish-Mexican-Californian traditions.
- ❖ *The Virgen de Guadalupe*, the patron saint of Mexico, with brown skin and indigenous features, clearly holds the spirit and hearts of the working people of Mexico and California. Her presence is essential as a female symbol of hope, faith, strength, and compassion.