



## Flag Day

### *The Symbolism of the State Flag of Missouri*



Tuesday, June 14<sup>th</sup> is Flag Day- a day for all Americans to celebrate and show respect. It was on that date in 1777 that the Continental Congress adopted the Stars and Stripes as our country's flag. Our flag has a glorious history, representative of our independence and our unity as a nation, and was carried at the front of every battle fought by Americans. The 13 stripes stand for the 13 original colonies, which are the roots of this great nation. The growth of the country is portrayed with the 50 stars that embody each of the 50 states.

We also celebrate Flag Day with our state flag, pictured above. The Missouri State Flag was adopted on March 22, 1913, ninety-two years after earning statehood. It was designed by Marie Elizabeth Watkins Oliver, wife of former State Senator R. B. Oliver. The Missouri flag is simple, yet contains many messages. Stripes of red, white and blue representing valor, purity, vigilance and justice serve as the flag's background.

The Great Seal of Missouri (pictured below, left) was placed in the center of the flag, consistent with Missouri's central location in the United States. The seal was adopted by Missouri's General Assembly on January 11, 1822. Designed by Judge Robert William Wells, the seal's center shield is composed of two parts. On the right is the United States coat-of-arms (pictured below, right) which contains an American bald eagle grasping a bundle of arrows with one talon and an olive branch with the other. It holds in its beak a scroll inscribed *E pluribus unum*, which is Latin meaning "out of many, one" and stands for one nation that was created from 13 colonies. There is a pattern with the number 13: 13 stars in the crest above the eagle, 13 arrows, 13 leaves on the olive branch, 13 letters in the motto *E pluribus unum*, 13 stripes on the shield upon the eagle's breast, and 13 feathers on the eagle's tale. The olive branch and arrows denote the power of peace & war, and to further emphasize the superiority of peace, the eagle faces the olive branch.



On the left side, or state side of the shield, are a grizzly bear and a silver crescent. The crescent symbolizes Missouri at the time of the seal's creation, a state of small population and wealth that would increase like the new crescent moon. The crescent moon symbolizes the "second son," consistent with Missouri being the second state formed from the Louisiana Territory. The shield is encircled by a belt inscribed with the motto, "United we stand, divided we fall," indicating Missouri's benefit in being a member of the United States. The two grizzly bears flanking the shield symbolize the state's strength and the bravery of her citizens. The bears stand atop a scroll of the state motto, "Salus Populi Suprema Lex Esto," Latin for, "Let the welfare of the people be the supreme law." Below this scroll are the Roman numerals MDCCCXX, for 1820, the year Missouri began functioning as a state and a year before joining the nation. The helmet above the shield represents state sovereignty and the large star atop the helmet surrounded by 23 smaller stars signifies Missouri's status as the 24th state in the union. There is also a cloud around the large star symbolizing the problems Missouri had in becoming a state.

These symbols and this holiday are reminders to us of the history of our state and the history of our country. As Americans we are proud of our culture, our history, and our flag. I encourage everyone to raise the flag today and every day.

## Contact Me

As always, I appreciate hearing your comments, opinions and concerns. Please feel free to contact me in Jefferson City at (573) 751-2459. You may write to me at Jason Crowell; Missouri Senate; State Capitol; Jefferson City, MO 65101, or email me at: [jcrowell@senate.mo.gov](mailto:jcrowell@senate.mo.gov) or visit me on the web at <http://www.jasoncrowell.com>.

Thank you for your time.

*Senator Jason Crowell represents the people of Bollinger, Cape Girardeau, Madison, Mississippi, Perry and Scott counties in the Missouri Senate.*