

# Spanish legacy in the symbols of the United States

BY Juan Ignacio Güenechea

With the support of:



THE  
HISPANIC  
COUNCIL

This activity has received a subsidy from the Secretaría General de Política de Defensa del Ministerio de Defensa.





THE  
HISPANIC  
COUNCIL





▶▶ **I**n 1513, Ponce de León, a native of Valladolid, arrived in Florida and started a period of more than 300 years of Spanish presence in what is now the United States. **Three centuries later, the sale of Florida took place;** in this way, Spain put an end to more than three centuries of history in a country that, back then, **was taking the very first steps as a nation.**

Throughout this history of more than 300 years, Spanish milestones in that land were numerous and significant. The first cities in the territory were established, **such as the outstanding city of Saint Augustine, Florida,** which is today the oldest city in the United States. The 1540 expedition of Vázquez de Coronado discovered the Grand Canyon, and Juan de Oñate established New Mexico in 1598. **The Sacred Expedition started in 1769 the Spanish settlement in Alta California** that reached the coastline of Canada and Alaska. Bernardo de Gálvez wrote one of the most well-known chapters of Spanish history in the country **playing an essential role in the American Revolutionary War.**

Those are just some examples of the important presence that Spain has had in the United States since its inception. This legacy, little known to the general public, is still present in the American historical Symbols, thus, **bringing to mind the Spanish presence in the country from its inception.**

The purpose of this report is to highlight and explain how to understand the **deep Hispanic heritage in U.S. symbology.** In the coats of arms and the flags of the states and the most important cities in the country we discover the Spanish trace that remains with the course of the years and **reminds us of the close ties that both countries have in common.**

## SPANISH LEGACY IN THE STATE SYMBOLS

Currently, out of the 50 states that compose the country, **six refer to Spain in their flags.** In particular, we can find it in: Alabama, Arizona, Montana, New Mexico, Florida and Arkansas. Additionally, **seals and coats of arms are symbols of each state** that are used in official documents, represented in state offices and other uses. In many of them, we can also find **reference to the Spanish presence in some territories of the country.** In this section we will analyze the states of which their symbols are a reference of the Spanish legacy in their flags, seals and coats of arms.

**The aim of this report is to explain how the deep Hispanic legacy can be seen in the American symbols, bringing us to mind the close relation that both countries have.**



## ALABAMA



Alabama Flag



Alabama Coat of Arms

The current Alabama flag was approved on **the 16<sup>th</sup> of February of 1895**. On this occasion, citizens of the state chose that the insignia shall be as follows: “a St Andrew crimson cross on a white background”.

The reason for making this decision was the important Spanish presence in the territory that today is the State of Alabama and **that the Cross of Burgundy was being used as a national pavilion at that time**. After the marriage of Joanna of Castile, daughter of the Catholic Monarchs, and Felipe “the Handsome”, the archduke of Austria, was celebrated, there was a common element that was taken for the Spanish flags at that time: the Cross of Burgundy. This symbol was a **representation of the St Andrew cross**, still present in the flag of cities such as Logroño or Fuenterrabia, and in the Spanish Armed Forces symbols.

After the discoveries made by Juan Ponce de León and Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca **all of the current southeastern region of the United States was called La Florida**, including the current states of Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Mississippi and Alabama. Regarding Alabama, the first expedition that entered this land **was led by Hernando de Soto in 1540**. Subsequently, Tristán de Luna tried to establish the first settlement in the Mobile Bay, but the attempt failed due to the destruction caused by a hurricane.

The aforementioned shows that, Alabama, even though it was not a state itself, **had an important Spanish influence from the beginning of the Spanish presence in the United States** that today can be reflected in its flag.

This state also makes references to the Spanish heritage in its coat for arms. There are **symbols of the five countries that have had sovereignty over Alabama**. Spain, France, Great Britain, the Confederacy and the United States of America. And in turn, it is supported on both sides by **bald eagles that represent courage**. The crest is a model of the boat, the Baldine, on which Iberville and Bienville sailed from France to establish a colony close to the current Mobile (1699). This coat of arms is used in public institutions of Alabama such as the **Governor’s Office and the State Security Department**. Known as the “**Cotton State**” Alabama recalls the founding character of the first Spanish that entered the territory and recognizes that legacy.

## ARIZONA



Arizona Flag

According to official Arizona State sources, their flag represents: **“the copper star of Arizona rising from a blue field in the face of a setting sun”**. Nevertheless, if we analyze the content of this symbol in more detail, we can also appreciate the Spanish legacy.

In 1910, a team of rifles from the Arizona State took part in a competition in Ohio and they did not have a flag to represent them. Charles Harris quickly designed what subsequently would become the state flag. **Arizona joined the Union in 1912 and the flag was approved in 1917.**

The copper star in the middle represents the **copper mining industry in Arizona**, and the blue bottom half represents the Colorado river. As well, in the top half we can appreciate 13 bars that **symbolize the 13 original colonies of the United States**. These rays also refer to a setting sun, although the most important thing

to understand **the Spanish legacy in the flag are its colors: red and gold.**

Those colors were chosen to remember the presence that Spain had in the state since its inception. The Salamanca **Francisco Vázquez de Coronado led the expedition that, between 1540 and 1542**, led him to discover new territories where Europeans had never set foot, including Arizona. This trip actually started to search for the “seven cities of Cibola”, a series of dream villages that were supposed to be full of riches. The retinue departed from Compostela, **what is now Jalisco in Mexico**, and crossed Arizona and New Mexico. Finally, although they did not find what they wanted, the journey was not in vain, García López de Cárdenas, a member of the expedition, **discovered the Colorado Grand Canyon.**

**What is most important to understand the Spanish legacy, is the colors on the flag: red and gold, which were chosen to remember the Spanish presence in the state from its inception.**



## ARKANSAS



Arkansas Flag

The history of Arkansas has been linked to that of Spain from the beginning of the Spanish presence in what is now the United States. It is estimated that **the first European that traversed this land was Hernando de Soto, lieutenant of Francisco Pizarro in Peru**. His expedition, that started in 1539, was unsuccessful regarding the discovery of riches and the establishment of settlements, but he traversed and illuminated a large portion of the North American geography, as well as **discovering the Mississippi river**.

Afterwards, before becoming a state, Arkansas was part of the Spanish Louisiana **after the French cession to Spain by means of the Treaty of Paris**. During the Spanish control that would last until 1803, one of the most important pages of the Spanish legacy in the United States was written: **the involvement in the American Revolutionary War**.

The Arkansas flag brings to mind the Spanish presence with **one of the stars under its name**. These symbolize the countries that had control over the state territory and one of them refers to Spain.

Arkansas joined the Union in 1836, but the official flag was not accepted until the 26<sup>th</sup> of February of 1913. Afterwards, there would be a modification, but there was already a **reference to the Spanish presence in the state** through that star.

**The Arkansas flag brings to mind the Spanish presence with one of the stars under its name. These symbolize the countries that had control over the state territory and one of them refers to Spain.**

## FLORIDA



Florida Flag

The current design of the Florida flag was done in 1900. The inhabitants of the state ratified an amendment to **add to the flag, red diagonal bars in the shape of the St Andrew cross**, since before, there was only the state seal on a white background.

Just like for the Alabama flag, the choice of adding it is linked to the **important Spanish presence in the current Florida State** and that the Cross of Burgundy was used as a national pavilion for many years while Spain had control over those territories.

Regarding the Spanish legacy in the United States, **the importance of Florida** cannot be omitted. The starting of the Spanish course in this country **began with the Ponce de León discovering of this land in 1513**. Afterwards, there were other expeditions that took place, such as those of Vázquez de Ayllón, Pánfilo de Narváez, Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca and the aforementioned Hernando de Soto among others.

But doubtlessly, a historical element that brought the countries together for ever was the **founding of Saint Augustine by Pedro Menéndez de Avilés in 1565**. This town is today the oldest and most continuously inhabited city in the United States. The Spanish presence in La Florida came to an end with the Adams Onis Treaty in 1821, but the **Spanish legacy in the state is still present**, and their flag today also shows that.

**The reason to include the St Andrew cross in the flag is linked to the important Spanish present in the current state of Florida.**

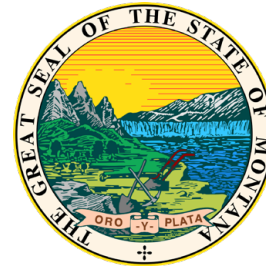




## MONTANA



Montana Flag



Montana Great Seal

The flag of Montana is a representation of the Great Seal of the state on a blue background. The flag was designed and taken by the Montana volunteers in the Spanish-American War, **but it was not accepted as official flag until 1904.**

The state seal, which is the central element of the flag, **shows historical symbols and the natural beauty of Montana.** However, there is something that refers to the Spanish legacy, at the bottom of the seal there is a **ribbon with the state motto “Oro y Plata” (gold and silver) written in Spanish.**

The Montana seal progressed after the original basic design made by **Francis McGee Thompson in 1864.** The project of Thompson had the words “Oro el Plata” (Gold the Silver) to refer to both riches that originated the **Montana’s alias: “Treasure State”.** Subsequently, aware of the grammatical error in the sentence, they

remade the motto to **replace it with “Gold and Silver”.** In addition, on the first territorial legislative deliberations made regarding this matter, the possibility to use **the word “El Dorado” (the golden)** instead of “Oro y Plata” was taken into account.

The Spanish presence in the Montana State was not as important as in other places of the North American geography, **but the Spanish legacy is still present in the state.** The name of the state itself comes from the Spanish word *montaña* (mountain) and was suggested by the Congress Delegate **James H. Ashley in 1864.** The seal includes the sunset above snowed mountains, the Great Falls and a pick, a shovel and a plow, **symbols of the mining and farming history of Montana.**

**On the Montana flag, there is something that refers to the Spanish legacy, at the bottom of the seal there is a ribbon with the state motto “Oro y Plata” (gold and silver) written in Spanish.**

## NEW MEXICO



New Mexico Flag

Ralph Emerson Twitchell, historian, designed the **first flag for the New Mexico State in 1915**, which did not have any reference to the Spanish influence in the territory excepting the state name itself.

In 1923, a design contest to change the flag took part, so that the **“unique New Mexico identity”** was represented. Dr. Harry Mera, a well-known doctor and archaeologist of Santa Fe, won the contest and in March, 1925 **the Governor Arthur T. Hannett proclaimed the design of Mera to be the official flag** that we know nowadays.

In the insignia we can find the **old symbol of the Zia sun**, since, the Sun is a sacred element for the natives of New Mexico. In addition, number 4 is a sacred number for the Zia, and the **figure is composed by a circle from which four points radiate**. For the natives, the sacred number is embodied on earth in the four main directions;

in the year with the four seasons; in the day, with the dawn, noon, afternoon and night; **and in life, in the four divisions: childhood, youth, adulthood and old age.**

Nevertheless, in this case, the Spanish presence is found in the colors of the flag: **yellow and red**. Those were chosen to commemorate the arrival of the first Spanish explorers to that land, where the **expedition of Vázquez de Coronado** already mentioned, was also very important.

**The Spanish presence can be found in the colors of the flag: yellow and red, that were chosen to commemorate the arrival of the first Spanish explorers to that land.**



## TEXAS



Back of the Texas State Seal

Texas does have a **clear reference to Spain when checking the back of the state seal**, even that it has not always been like that. The “Daughters of the Republic of Texas” proposed a model that was accepted by the 57<sup>th</sup> legislative body. Price Daniel, Governor, approved it on the 26<sup>th</sup> of August of 1961 and **Sarah R. Farnsworth established the design**. Due to some inaccuracies, in 1991, there was another regulation approved that described in more detail the back of the seal **giving room to the one that is used nowadays**.

It consists of a coat of arms **where the bottom half is divided in two parts**; on the left, there is a representation of the canyon where the Gonzalez battle took place and on the right part, there is an image of the Vince bridge. What’s more, on the top, there is an example of the Alamo. **The whole coat of arms is surrounded by oak and olive tree branches** and flags from France, Spain, Mexico, the Republic of Texas, the Confederacy and the United States of America. On the top part, the motto

“Remember the Alamo” can be found, and on the bottom, the words “Texas one and indivisible” are written. On the top of the coat of arms, centered with the flags, **there is a white star with five points**.

Texas was part of **six independent countries** through its history: Spain, France, Mexico, the Republic of Texas, the Confederacy and the United States. That is why **those six flags are represented**, so that all those countries were in the back of the seal.

The Spanish conqueror **Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca was the first European to step on the Texan territory on the 6<sup>th</sup> of November of 1528**. Although initially Texas was occupied by the French, subsequently, the Spanish domination period would come **and it would last from 1690 to 1821**, when Texas was known as the “Kingdom of Texas”. This period ended with the Independence of Mexico in 1821, creating the Mexican Texas.

**Texas was part of six countries through its history: Spain, France, Mexico, the Republic of Texas, the Confederacy and the United States, the reason for those six flags to be in the back of the seal.**

## PUERTO RICO



Puerto Rico Coat of Arms

Puerto Rico is not a state as such of the United States, but it is a territory of this country and the citizens have US Citizenship. **The isle has a territorial status in the United States Constitution**, that is to say, Puerto Rico belongs to, but is not part of, the United States.

The Spanish heritage of the island dates back to the first trips made by **the Spanish conquerors at the end of the fifteenth century**. Ponce de León arrived in this island known as Boriquen in 1508, and the Spanish baptized it as San Juan, what today is Puerto Rico. There, the first settlement was established: Caparra, **what later would become San Juan, the current capital of the island**. Thanks to the good relationship he had with the native cacique (chief) Agüeybana, he managed to quickly take control of the entire territory and, **a year later, he was appointed governor**. However, Ponce de León had a heated dispute with Diego Columbus, son of Cristopher Columbus, for control of the island, **and the latter got the court to recognize his rights**, which meant that Ponce de León stopped being governor in 1511.

In that year, the coat of arms was given by the Spanish Crown **becoming the oldest in the New World according to some historians**, but it was not until the 9<sup>th</sup> of March of 1905 that it was approved as the first coat of arms of the island. Subsequently, after investigations and amendments to the law to get an accurate interpretation, **in 1976 it was approved as it is known today**.

This symbol is full of references to the Spanish legacy in the island. The edge of the coat of arms is composed by **16 pieces that are illustrated by castles representing the Kingdom of Castile**, lions for the Kingdom of Leon, a flag with castles and lions representing the unification of both kingdoms and **the Jerusalem cross is also present**.

In addition, in the top part, there is a real crown that shows the control of those that were ruling the island when it was discovered. On the right part, there is the **“F” initial for Ferdinand the Catholic and on the left, the “I” for Isabella**. Under the initials, the yoke and the arrows can be seen, symbols of union, due to the union of the Catholic Monarchs and their corresponding kingdoms.

In the bottom part, it is **written in Latin the motto “Joannes Est Nomen Ejus” that means “His name is John”**. In the center of the coat of arms there is a lamb on the book of the seven seals of the apocalypse with a flag, which is a **symbol of the classic heraldic to represent San Juan**. It is all found on a green background that frames the territory of the island, although it can also represent **the virtues, the hope and the courtesy** regarding different interpretations.



## SPANISH LEGACY IN THE CITIES SYMBOLS

Reducing the investigation to the city of the United States level, **the Spanish legacy is more than obvious, mainly in the south of the country and the west coast.** The number of cities and towns that have references to Spain in their symbols is large. Therefore, we have made a **selection of some of the most important cities** where this legacy can be seen or where it is very remarkable.

### LOS ANGELES



Official Seal of the City of Los Angeles

The official seal of the city of Los Angeles, which is the central element of the flag of the city, has **a close link with the Hispanic legacy.** This symbol was designed by Herbert L. Goudge, an assistant of the city district attorney, **and it was officially adopted on the 27<sup>th</sup> of March of 1905.**

The coat of arms in the center of the seal shows four images that represent **different periods of the history of Los Angeles.** On the top left part, **the stars and bars of the American flag** can be seen, and those show the status as city of the United States since 1848. Next to it, the **flag of California with the brown bear**, as Los Angeles was part of the Republic of California from 1846 to 1848. On the bottom left, there is an **eagle holding a snake, typical of the Mexican coat of arms**, that represents the Mexican control in the city from 1822 to 1846. Finally, **there is an obvious reference to the Castile and Leon Kingdoms**, what represents the Spanish control of the territory from 1542 to 1821.

The coat of arms is surrounded by images of olives, grapes and oranges, **the three main cultivations of Los Angeles** through its history. The fruits are surrounded by a rosary of 77 beads, referring to the role of the **Spanish missions in the Californian territory.**

As it is also shown in the seal, the city was founded in 1781. The founder was **Felipe de Neve, a Spanish soldier born in Bailen (Jaen) in 1724.** De Neve officially used the name "El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora de Los Ángeles". Los Angeles was **a Spanish city until 1821**, when Mexico became independent from the Spanish Crown, and California passed into control of this new country. Nowadays, it is **the most populous city of the State of California** and the second most populous in the United States.

## SANTA FE



Official Seal of the City of Santa Fe

Santa Fe is the New Mexico State capital and **the seal and the flag are linked to the Spanish legacy in the city**. In fact, the insignia of the city does have in the center its seal, that is the symbol that shows the main elements that **recall the Spanish presence**.

The seal includes the whole name of the city in Spanish “**La Villa Real de la Santa Fé de San Francisco de Asís**”. Inside, a coat of arms can be seen divided as follows: in the top, half of it makes reference to Mexico using an eagle with a snake on the beak, and **the other half refers to Spain using a castle and a lion** that represent the Castile and Leon Kingdom. In the bottom part of the coat of arms, there can be seen **13 white stars of five tips and 13 vertical bars** (7 red and 6 white) emphasizing that the city belongs to the United States.

Under the coat of arms, in the ribbon, there are three dates in blue: 1610, 1846 and 1821. Those **are the years in which the nations represented in the coat of arms began their control of the city**: Spain in 1610, Mexico in 1821 and the United States in 1846.

In this case, **the capital of New Mexico does have a deep link with Spain since its beginning**. Mr. Juan de Oñate was the first governor of New Mexico and **he established the capital in San Juan Pueblo in 1598**, 40 km North of Santa Fe. Nevertheless, when Oñate stopped being the governor, Mr. Pedro de Peralta was named governor in 1609 and, **a year later, moved the capital to the current Santa Fe**.

**The seal includes the whole name of the city in Spanish “La Villa Real de la Santa Fé de San Francisco de Asís”, and in the coat of arms we can see a castle and a lion that represent the kingdoms of Castile and Leon.**



## ST. LOUIS



St. Louis Flag

The St. Louis flag is one of the most curious ones of the United States due to its design and coloring, and **we can also find in this flag references to the Spanish presence in the city.** It was officially adopted on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of February of 1964 and its design was made by Theodore Sizer, art teacher at Yale and member of the committee chosen by the mayor to redesign it on the occasion of the bicentennial of the city.

On it, we find two uneven bars on the left **that represent the Missouri and Mississippi river converging in St. Louis.** On the right part, we do only find a bar that symbolizes the Mississippi continuing by itself. The gold disc represents the purchase of Louisiana and the city itself, that is located in the converging of both rivers. On the inside, **the fleur-de-lis refers to the first French men** that settled the city and to the French Saint that gives its name.

The colors of the flag are the reflection of the Spanish legacy. **The red and yellow colors were chosen to commemorate the Spanish control in this city** and also bring to mind the contribution in the American Revolutionary War.

St. Louis is one of the cities that lived one of the most important chapters in the American Revolutionary War. Being under Spanish control, **Fernando de Leyba protected the city against the Englishmen with 300 men**, a battle that was crucial for the evolution of the war. On 26<sup>th</sup> of May of 1780, this man from Ceuta led the defense of the city and **the victory was key to keep the supply of weapons**, ammunition and other goods to the rebels across the Mississippi river.

**The colors of the flag reflect the Spanish legacy: red and yellow colors were chosen to commemorate the Spanish control in this city and also bring to mind the contribution in the American Revolutionary War.**

## SAN DIEGO



San Diego Flag



City of San Diego Seal

The flag and the seal of the city of San Diego have a **close relationship with Spain** and its presence in the territory. Regarding the flag, **the red and gold colors were chosen in honor of Spain, the country that founded the city.** In addition, right under the seal, there is written 1542, the year when Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo first entered the San Diego bay **and claimed the area for Spain.**

Regarding the seal, **it is a coat of arms inside a circle** where we can find the names of the city, the state and the official motto of San Diego “Semper vigilans”. Furthermore, **this symbol alludes to the Spanish legacy through various elements.** First of all, the caravel represents the territory exploration done by the Spanish. In second place, the bell found in the top part **refers to the founders of the mission.** Finally, **the Pillars of Hercules represent the old Spanish territorial jurisdiction.**

The mission of San Diego de Alcalá was founded in 1769 by Fray Junípero Serra and **it marked the origin of the current city of San Diego.** However, as the symbols explain, the Spanish presence goes further back to the foundation of the city, as the first European ship that got to the West coast of what today is the United States was Spanish, **it was called San Salvador and he was commanded by Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo.** He got to a part of the San Diego bay, in the South of California on the 28<sup>th</sup> of September of 1542.

**This symbol alludes to the Spanish legacy through various elements: the caravel, the bell and the pillars of Hercules, they represent the old Spanish territorial jurisdiction.**





## BATON ROUGE



Baton Rouge Flag

The city of Baton Rouge, which is located in the state of Louisiana, **has a simple flag that represents the city history very clearly.** In addition to the name of the city on a red background, there is a coat of arms that makes **reference to the countries that controlled the city in the past.** France is represented with a fleur-de-lis, Spain with a castle and the United Kingdom with an adaptation of the Union Jack. The flag was designed by a special committee created for this purpose and **was formally adopted on the 13<sup>th</sup> of December of 1995.**

The city also has another close tie with our country. The governor of the Spanish Louisiana and the hero of the American Revolutionary War, **Bernardo de Gálvez, released the city from the English control.** De Gálvez marched all along the Mississippi river with an army mainly composed by Hispanics to **expel the Redcoats from the position they had in Baton Rouge.**

**Baton Rouge has a simple flag that represents the city history very clearly. The coat of arms makes reference to the countries that controlled the city in the past, and Spain is represented by a castle.**

## COLUMBUS



Columbus Flag



Columbus Seal

In this city of the state of Ohio, both the flag and the seal of the city **refer clearly to Spain and, in particular, to Christopher Columbus.**

The flag has three vertical stripes in yellow, white and red. The **red and yellow colors were chosen to remember Spain**, the country that promoted and afforded the expedition of Christopher Columbus.

In the center of the flag, the official seal of the city also **makes reference to Christopher Columbus and Spain.** In fact, in the central circle inside of it, there can

be appreciated **a ship of the expedition that arrived in the New World in 1492.**

Those symbols, linked to the Christopher Columbus figure, **have not been exempt from controversy** and some groups of the civil society have suggested to replace them in some occasions, but with no success until today.

**The red and yellow colors of the flag were chosen to remember Spain, the country that promoted and afforded the expedition of Christopher Columbus. In the central circle of the coat of arms, you can see a ship of the expedition that arrived in the New World in 1492.**



## RIVERSIDE



Riverside Flag

This city, located in the State of California, has a simple flag in which the **Spanish legacy is also present**. It was designed by Charles L. Bridges and **was adopted on the 17<sup>th</sup> of January of 1967**.

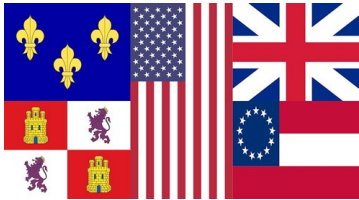
In the emblem, there is a symbol described as a native American “rain cross”, **a trapezoid figure with a double cross on top**. However, in the inside of it is where the **reference to the Spanish presence is found through a bell**. In addition, this symbol is the one used to illustrate the seal of the city.

The bell recalls the numerous missions that the Spanish made throughout the **“Camino Real” of Alta California**. Furthermore, the “rain cross” recalls **the native Americans that were the first in inhabit what today is Riverside**.

One of the most important elements of the Spanish legacy in the United States that we can find **nowadays are the roads that linked the missions**. When a mission was founded, the road that linked it with the next one was widen and flatten and **it was given minimum auxiliary elements**. A lot of missionaries had technical knowledge that **made easier the drawing and construction of the “Camino Real”**. One of the most important ones was the “Camino Real” of California that, according to the representations found in 1821, **linked 21 Franciscan missions and was a path only suitable for horseshoe animals**, although later it was adapted and improved as the years went by. Bells are one of the many **characteristic features of this historical outline** that crosses the State of California and that we find now present in the symbols of Riverside.

**In the flag of Riverside, the bell recalls the numerous missions that the Spanish made throughout the “Camino Real” of Alta California.**

## PENSACOLA



Pensacola Flag



Pensacola City Seal

This city is also known as “**The city of five flags**”. This nickname is due to the five countries that controlled the city through its history. Since the **Spanish explorer Tristán de Luna first stuck the flag** with the banner of Castile and Leon in the city coast in 1559, the inhabitants of Pensacola have had five different flags; **the Spanish, the French, the British, the Confederacy one and the American one**. The current flag shows this legacy with a combination of all of them.

The seal of the city recalls the Spanish presence, as there is a **representation in the center of a cross and a helmet** that the explorers typically wore, in honor to the **arrival of the first Spaniards** to this territory.

In addition, Pensacola has a deep link with Spain due to **Bernardo de Gálvez and his role in the American Revolutionary War**. Gálvez was governor of the Spanish Louisiana and earned his well-known slogan, “**Yo solo,**” (just me) precisely when he took this city **from the English in 1781**.

**Pensacola, “The city of five flags”, recalls the Spanish presence through symbols such as the cross and the helmet typically used by the explorers of that era, in honor to the first Spaniards that got to this territory.**



## CUPERTINO



Cupertino Flag

Cupertino, a city located in the State of California, is **on the western border of Silicon Valley**, and has a population of about 64,000 people. The city is in the South of San Francisco and is home to many high technology companies, in between which we can find Apple.

The territory in which Cupertino is found **was claimed by the Spaniards in 1776**, specifically by the explorer Juan Bautista de Anza. This name is familiar for all the inhabitants of the city that use **De Anza Boulevard**, the street that crosses the center of this Californian city. Regarding symbols, the flag and the seal make reference to the **Spanish legacy in the city** as they show a morion.

The town council, in the 1970's, made the decision to make a sculpture that commemorates the legacy of Anza

and **they chose this type of helmet as the central element of the monument**. In this way, the morion became the official symbol of Cupertino. Paradoxically, it is believed that Juan Bautista de Anza himself never did use a morion. Rather than that, **it is more probable that he used a plain, black and wide-brimmed hat**, that was more comfortable and helped him to protect his face and neck from the elements as he was exploring California.

As a curious fact, it is to say that, in 1988, Fred Subegra, a public worker of the city government, went to Toyokawa, Japan, to assemble **a life-size replica of the morion of Cupertino**. Both cities are twinned, and the Californian city gave it as a present to the Japanese city. In this way, it can be considered that the Spanish legacy, **and more specifically the one of Juan Bautista de Anza, is also present in Japan**.

**In 1970, the decision of making a sculpture to commemorate Anza's legacy was made and they chose this type of helmet as the central element of the monument. In this way, the morion became the official symbol of Cupertino.**

## ST. AUGUSTINE



Saint Augustine Coat of Arms

When referring to the Spanish presence in the symbols of the United States, **it is crucial to mention Saint Augustine, the city founded by Pedro Menéndez de Avilés in 1565** and that today is still the most uninterrupted inhabited city in the country. Its symbols, especially the coat of arms, show the **unmistakable Spanish legacy that today is as lively as ever.**

In the coat of arms, we can find the **crown that symbolizes the monarchy**, a fleur-de-lis that represents the Bourbon monarchy that gave the coat of arms to the city and, as it could not be other way, **the Kingdoms of Castile and Leon are also represented.** There can also be seen a reference to the military importance that Saint Augustine had through an arm with armor, bended on the elbow, **holding a silver sword on a red background.**

This coat of arms has been the official symbol of the

city for more than 300 years. The 26<sup>th</sup> of November of 2015 **three centuries were commemorated since St Augustine received this insignia**, even that the history was not easy regarding that the coat of arms was “lost” for a long period of time.

In 1715, the citizens of Saint Augustine asked Felipe V to **give the city a coat of arms due to his faithful and brave service to Spain.** There is no evidence that this request was solved, so it was again requested to King Juan Carlos I in 1991.

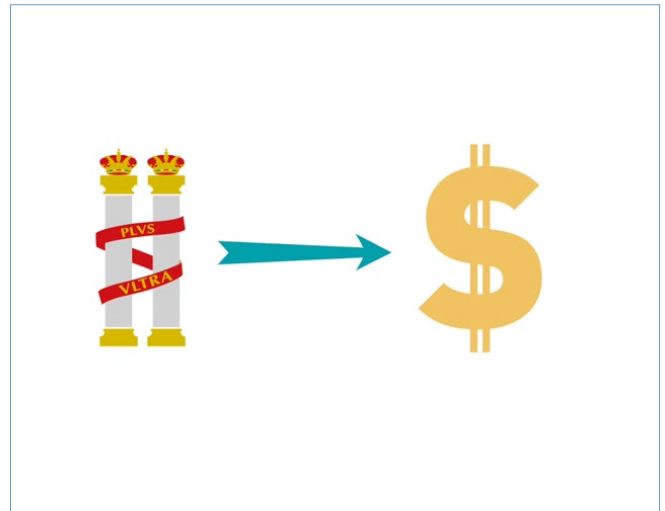
The investigation carried out by Vicente de Cardenar y Veicent revealed that, on the 26<sup>th</sup> of November of 1715, King Felipe V did authorize to give a coat of arms to the city. Saint Augustine obtained the coat of arms on the **12<sup>th</sup> of October of 1991, almost 276 years after the original concession by Felipe V.**

**The symbols of Saint Augustine, the city founded by Pedro Menéndez de Avilés in 1565, show the unmistakable Spanish legacy that today is as lively as ever.**



## THE DOLLAR, AN AMERICAN SYMBOL WITH SPANISH ORIGIN

Another of the most important American symbols where the Spanish legacy can be seen is the dollar. If we go back to the XVII century, **the use of the Spanish coins was widely spread in the territory that today forms the United States.** In particular, the “real de a ocho”, known as the “Spanish dollar” became the **first currency with legal use in the United States in 1775**, approved by the Continental Congress as a suggestion made by Thomas Jefferson. When in 1792 the American dollar was made, **its design was based on the Spanish coin.** In this way, the bars of the dollar symbolize the **two pillars of Hercules**, that today can be seen in the Spanish coat of arms, as well as the ribbon with the **inscription “plus ultra”** turned into the “S” of one of the most famous symbols in the world.



## THE SPANISH LEGACY IN THE USA, AS LIVELY AS EVER

The Spanish legacy of the symbols of the United States goes further than a great number of flags, coats of arms, seals and mottoes in the states and cities. **The significance that Spain had in these territories can be appreciated in many other elements of the country that this report does not expect to cover.**

A lot of buildings, parks and nature reserves remind the Spanish people that inhabited these lands for more than 300 years and left their mark on them. Toponymy is another factor that proves it, just as the great **number of statues in honor of Spanish historic personalities** that we can find in the United States, from the statues of Christopher Columbus, to the ones commemorating El Cid Campeador. The legislative branch also has references to Spain, in the House of Representatives there is a marble relief of Alfonso X the Wise. Even Hernando de Soto had a car produced by the Chrysler Company with his name and the iconic image of the American cowboys originated in the marshland of the Guadalquivir river.

All of that proves that **the Spanish legacy in the United States is a palpable reality through its symbols and it is still alive through them.** After more than 500 years of the arrival of Ponce de León, this legacy is still alive and is preserved by the American citizens themselves and their institutions.

---

## SOURCES

---

- **Alabama Department of Archives and History. Official Symbols and Emblems of Alabama:** <http://www.archives.state.al.us> (Consulted between 1<sup>st</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of June 2019).
- **Arias, David, “Las raíces hispanas de los Estados Unidos”,** Fundación Mapfre, Madrid, 1992.
- **Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records:** <https://azlibrary.gov/state-arizona-flag> (Consulted between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of June 2019).
- **Arkansas Secretary of State, History of Arkansas:** <https://www.sos.arkansas.gov/education/arkansas-history/history-of-the-flag> (Consulted between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of June 2019).
- **Cardelús, Borja, “La huella de España y de la cultura hispana en los Estados Unidos”,** Centro de Cultura Iberoamericana (CCI), 2008.
- **Cervera, César, “Pedro Menéndez de Aviles: el español que fundó la ciudad más antigua de Estados Unidos”.** The Hispanic Council, 2019.
- **Cervera, César. “Así es la herencia española de EE.UU: la bandera rojigualda sigue presente en Texas”.** ABC, August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2015.
- **Crespo-Francés, José Antonio. “Españoles olvidados de Norteamérica”.** Actas, 2016.
- **Columbus City Council, History and Culture:** <https://www.columbus.gov/visitors/History-and-Culture/> (Consulted between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of June 2019).
- **City of Pensacola official site:** <https://www.cityofpensacola.com/> (Consulted between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of June 2019)
- **City of St Augustine, City Crest:** <http://www.citystaug.com/visiting/history/CityCrest.php> (Consulted between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of June 2019).
- **Cupertino City Council, Official city seal:** <https://www.cupertino.org/our-city/about-cupertino/city-seal> (Consulted between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of June 2019).
- **Florida Department of State, State symbols:** <https://dos.myflorida.com/florida-facts/florida-state-symbols/state-flag/> (Consulted between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of June 2019).
- **Los Angeles City Council, The Official Seal of Los Angeles:** <https://www.lacity.org/for-residents/history-los-angeles/official-seal-los-angeles> (Consulted between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of June 2019).





- **Montana Secretary of State:** <https://sosmt.gov/> (Consulted between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of June 2019).
- **New Mexico Secretary of State, State symbols:** [http://www.sos.state.nm.us/Kids\\_Corner/State\\_Symbols.aspx#flag](http://www.sos.state.nm.us/Kids_Corner/State_Symbols.aspx#flag) (Consulted between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of June 2019).
- **North American Vexillological Association. Nava.org.** (Consulted between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of June 2019).
- **Portal Oficial del Gobierno de Puerto Rico:** <http://www.pr.gov/SobrePuertoRico/Pages/Escudo.aspx> (Consulted between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of June 2019).
- **San Diego City Council, Official seal of the city of San Diego:** <https://www.sandiego.gov/city-clerk/aboutus/factshistory/seal> (Consulted between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of June 2019).
- **Santa Fe City Council, History:** [https://santafe.org/Visiting\\_Santa\\_Fe/Plan\\_Your\\_Trip/History/index.html](https://santafe.org/Visiting_Santa_Fe/Plan_Your_Trip/History/index.html) (Consulted between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of June 2019).
- **Texas Secretary of State, The Texas State Seal:** <https://www.sos.state.tx.us/statdoc/seal-additional.shtml> (Consulted between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of June 2019).
- **Trillo, Manuel, “De Florida a Alaska: tres siglos de legado español en EE.UU.”.** The Hispanic Council, 2019.

---

## The Hispanic Council

---

The Hispanic Council is an independent think tank that promotes relations between the US Hispanic community and Spain.





With the support of:



THE  
HISPANIC  
COUNCIL

[www.hispaniccouncil.org](http://www.hispaniccouncil.org)