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THE IDAHO STATE FLAG

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By legislative act of March 12, 1907, a state flag with the name of state on a blue field was adopted. The legislature specified that the adjutant general should prescribe the dimensions and colors of the lettering, as well as supervise "formal construction of said flag." The adjutant general ordered that the design be as follows:

A silk flag, blue field, 5 feet 6 inch fly, and 4 feet 4 inches on the pike, bordered by gilt fringe 2 ½ inches in width, with state seal of Idaho 21 inches in diameter, in colors, in the center of the blue field. The words "State of Idaho," are embroidered in with block letters 2 inches in height, on a red bank 3 inches in width by 29 inches in length, the band being embroidered in gold and placed about 8 ½ inches from the lower border of fringe and parallel with the same.

The flag actually prepared at the time for the adjutant general met most of these specifications. There were two major exceptions: The state seal portion of the flag included only the picture from the seal, not the entire seal (which contains the words "GREAT SEAL OF THE STATE OF IDAHO"), and the reproduction used on the flag bore only a general similarity to the picture in the center of the seal. (Various renditions of the seal prepared over the years also show considerable variation in the center picture from the picture of the original design, so the rather considerable discrepancy between the flag design and the seal picture hardly is surprising.) This original state flag now is preserved in the State Historical Society.

Because the original state flag prepared for the adjutant general did not quite match his specifications, the 1907 flag was accidentally ruled out by subsequent legislative action in 1927. At that time, the legislature codified and revised the statutes of Idaho pertaining to the National Guard. In doing so, the legislature adopted the adjutant general's 1907 state flag specifications in its militia law of March 15, 1927. Because the statute incorporated the exact words of the adjutant general, no effort was made to change the flag. But after 1927, Idaho law clearly demanded that the state seal--not just the picture from the seal, nor a modified version of the picture--had to appear on the flag. Thirty years after, the legislature recognized that various renditions of the state seal had departed from the original state seal, based upon the original, but with some of the details of design clarified by statute. This act incidently cleared up some problems in connection with the state flag. This more recently adopted standard form of the state seal is executed in color, and thus standardizes that part of the present state flag.

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