



Redefining the Seal's Use

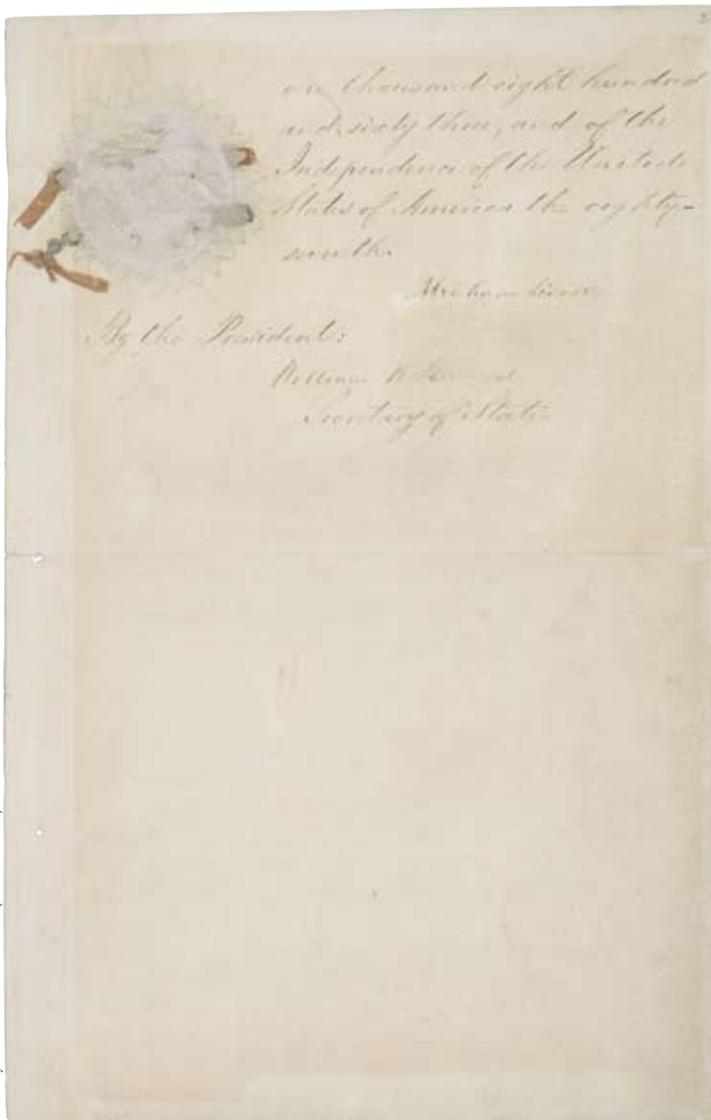
As the government grew and expanded along with the territory and population of the United States, the use of the Seal also changed. New government bureaus created their own seals. An expanding diplomatic corps required faster processing of papers. Streamlining removed Seals on warrants for fugitives from U.S. justice or Presidential pardons. Presidents Grover Cleveland, Richard Nixon and Lyndon B. Johnson issued Executive Orders to cease use of the Seal on certain documents.

No matter what changes have taken place, the President and Secretary of State must first sign all documents before the Seal is affixed.

EXAMPLES OF DOCUMENTS NO LONGER REQUIRING THE GREAT SEAL

Presidential Proclamations

The Emancipation Proclamation of 1863, which addressed complex issues of slavery during the Civil War, is one of the best known proclamations of our nation's history.



Courtesy of the National Archives (ARC#299998)

Exequaturs

The exequatur here is an example of a document that U.S. presidents issued in the past to foreign consular officials to conduct business in our country. As of 1971 this document is no longer required. A consul to the U.S. only needs a diplomatic note from his or her country requesting recognition from the U.S.



Photo: Alex Jamieson

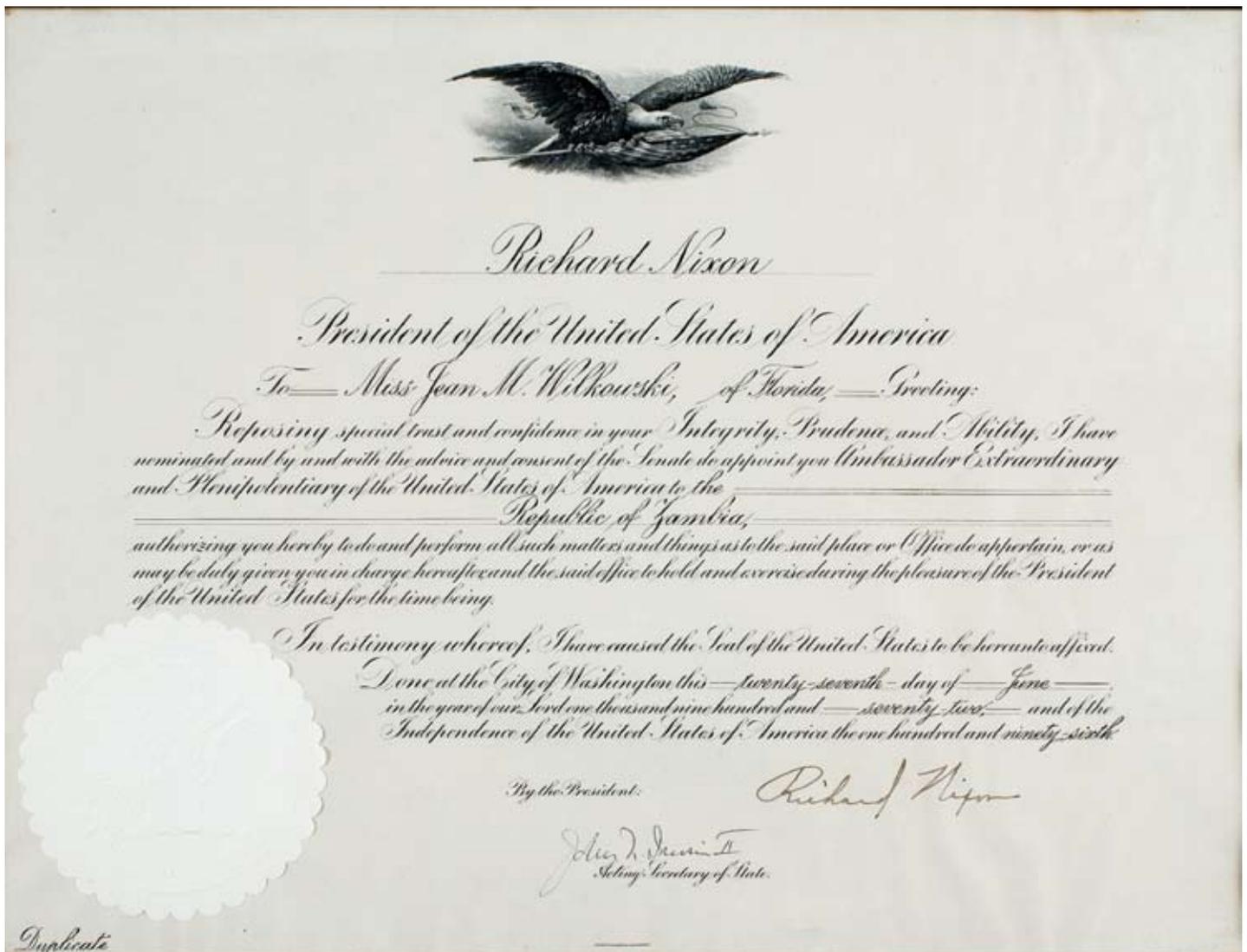
This exequatur, signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1938, authorized the French consul general in New York City, Charles de Ferry de Fontnouvelle, to conduct diplomatic business for France in the U.S.

The Emancipation Proclamation (left) bears the signatures of President Abraham Lincoln and Secretary of State William H. Seward on its fifth and last page along with an imprint of the Great Seal.

EXAMPLES OF DOCUMENTS WHICH REQUIRE THE GREAT SEAL

Commissions

Presidentially appointed officers receive commissions, official documents that grant the right to take office. Cabinet Officers, Heads of independent government agencies, Ambassadors, Foreign Service Officers and special envoys receive sealed commissions.



This is a copy of the commission that Ambassador Jean Wilkowski received from President Nixon upon her appointment as Ambassador to Zambia in 1972. She was the first female ambassador from the U.S. to serve in Africa.

Diplomatic Envelopes

The Great Seal also appears on the envelopes that contain letters of credence [credentials] and recall and other ceremonial communications from the President to heads of foreign governments.



Letter of credence

*To Her Majesty,
Elizabeth the Second,
by the Grace of God, Queen of the United Kingdom
of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and of
Grenada and Her other Realms and Territories,
Head of the Commonwealth.*

For exhibit purposes only