

As a result of this action all native Canadians, that is, all people born in Canada, whether belonging to Canada's national societies or not, wore maple leaves and carried branches of this tree in their hands in a parade held in honour of the Prince three weeks later. It was here that the maple leaf first received official public acclaim as Canada's national emblem. And maple leaves were also used extensively during this time of celebration for decorative purposes, such as on pins and brooches.

But apparently England already associated the maple leaf with Canada at this time for "the Worcester china brought by the Prince's party showed a wreath of maple leaves surmounted by a crown and the Prince of Wales feathers".

On July 1, 1867, Canada's Confederation documents were signed. Shortly afterward, in the same year, Alexander Muir, a Toronto school-teacher, wrote the soon-to-become-famous words and music of *The Maple Leaf Forever*, which was first sung publicly at a patriotic demonstration at Beaverton, Ontario, on May 24, 1871. And, on May 26, 1868, Queen Victoria granted permission to Ontario and Quebec to incorporate the maple leaf into their coats of arms.

During both the South African War and the First World War, regimental badges of the Canadian expeditionary forces displayed the maple leaf. During the Second World War Canada's nationality was again represented by the maple leaf on militia uniforms, on ships and on highway signs. And Canada's armed forces and police forces still wear the three-leafed sprig of maple on their badges and buttons today.

A proclamation of King George V on November 21, 1921, established the Canadian coat of arms. This official seal bears a shield divided into five sections: four equal-sized sections represent England, Scotland, Ireland and France with their respective emblems of three lions, a single lion, a harp, and three fleur-de-lis. Below, at the base of the shield, is Canada's emblem -- a three-leafed sprig of green maple leaves on a single stem, similar to that in the coat of arms granted to Ontario and Quebec by Queen Victoria in 1868.

Surmounting the shield is the crest: a golden, crowned lion holding a brilliant red maple leaf in its upraised paw. The shield with the crest is held erect, on the left, by an upright lion flying the Union Jack and, on the right, by an upright unicorn flying the banner of royalist France. Lion and unicorn stand on either end of the inscribed motto "A mari usque ad mare" ("From sea to sea"), which rests on a wreath of roses, thistles, shamrocks and lilies. Completing the total design, at centre top, is the Crown of St. Edward.

In the proclamation of Canada's coat of arms in 1921, white and red were officially designated as the colours of Canada. In 1957 the three green maple leaves in the coat of arms were changed to red in keeping with the national colours of Canada.

And on February 15, 1965, a new Canadian flag was proclaimed by Queen Elizabeth II confirming the maple leaf as Canada's national symbol. This flag is red at either end with a white square in the centre. In the square is a large red, conventionally stylized maple leaf. So national emblem