

Centenary Minute No 2 - February 12, 2002

The Club seal which graces each Meeting Notice first appeared on the 'Preliminary Programme of Meetings of the Club' issued in the fall of 1907 which was found in the earliest of the Club's scrapbooks. It is essentially unchanged today although one can notice some subtle differences. It was designed initially for the Club Medal.

From the 1933 Club History: "Among various plans for the encouragement of effective travel, especially among the younger men, Professor Davis [the founding force behind the Club] early proposed that a medal should be awarded from time to time to some person whose record of travel or exploration should be deemed unusually worthy of recognition.

Accordingly, in April, 1906, the Fellows appointed a committee . . . to prepare and submit designs for a suitable medal. The committee at once requested suggestions for a suitable design from the members, at the same time having in view its use as the Club's seal."

The Medal was first presented at the Annual Meeting of the Club held at the University Club, 270 Beacon Street, Boston, on May 18, 1906. The speaker that evening was Professor Solon I. Bailey of Harvard College Observatory. His talk was entitled "A Journey made in 1905 from Arequipa, Peru, over the Andes to the Headwaters of the Amazon." Sixty members were in attendance. The recipient of the Medal was WILLIAM BROOKS CABOT (*For explorations in Labrador*)

The design of the seal shows [again from the Club History] “. . . a pilgrim in oldtime costume, with his staff in his hand and his wallet slung over his shoulder, surmounted by the word “Peregrinantur”—“they wander in foreign lands.” Our pilgrim is walking along the shore of the sea, which appears in the background, bounded on the right by steeply conventional peaks, the mountains of his desire, toward which his face is set. A lonely flower blossoming at his feet on the edge of the strand, and a wheeling dolphin, the fish that is the friend of man, thrusting its head above water, symbolize the flora and fauna, while a distant caraval is significant of travel by sea. At that time, travel by air had not been thought of, so no symbol is included!”

An early, more detailed version of the Club Seal was incorporated into a bookplate for the Club Library which was established in 1914 and originally housed at the Harvard Club. With the opening of the Institute of Geographical Exploration in Cambridge, the over 400 volumes were moved there and accommodated in “...modern bookcases in the Club’s room...” Alas, only a few titles remain from the collection which was otherwise dispersed.