

Pennsylvania House of Representatives

MACE



MACE BEARER



When the House is in session, the Mace Bearer escorts the mace and the Speaker to and from the House chamber. During session, the Mace Bearer stands to the Speaker's right and assists with various tasks.



The mace is the House of Representatives symbol of authority, peace, and order. It measures 46 inches long and is made of solid mahogany. It is topped with a polished brass sphere engraved with the coat of arms of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. A bald eagle perches on top of the sphere.

The mace used by the Pennsylvania House today is a replacement of the original mace that was destroyed when the State Capitol building burned down in 1897. The original mace was used when the House met at Independence Hall in Philadelphia. It was created by Philadelphia cabinetmaker John Folwell in 1780. He was paid 22 pounds, 10 shillings by State Treasurer David Rittenhouse.

While it is not known who crafted the current mace or where it was made, we do know that in 1901, T.L. Eyre, superintendent of Public Building and Grounds, delivered the mace to the House. An identical mace was delivered to the Senate at the same time.

Each day the Pennsylvania House of Representatives is in session, the Speaker is escorted into the House chamber by an individual, known as the Mace Bearer, who carries the mace and places it in a pedestal to the right of the Speaker. It remains there until the House adjourns at the end of the day. The mace is then returned to the Speaker's private office.

DISCIPLINARY USAGE





Throughout history, on the rare occasions that members of the state or federal House of Representatives have become unruly, the Sergeant of Arms has lifted the mace from its pedestal and presented it before the offenders to restore order. This specific procedure is not currently practiced in Pennsylvania.

In February 1901, the Pennsylvania House Assistant Sergeant at Arms had to forcibly restrain a legislator from Allegheny County. At this time, the original mace that had burned in the fire of 1897 had not been replaced. The incident prompted both the House and Senate to procure new maces.



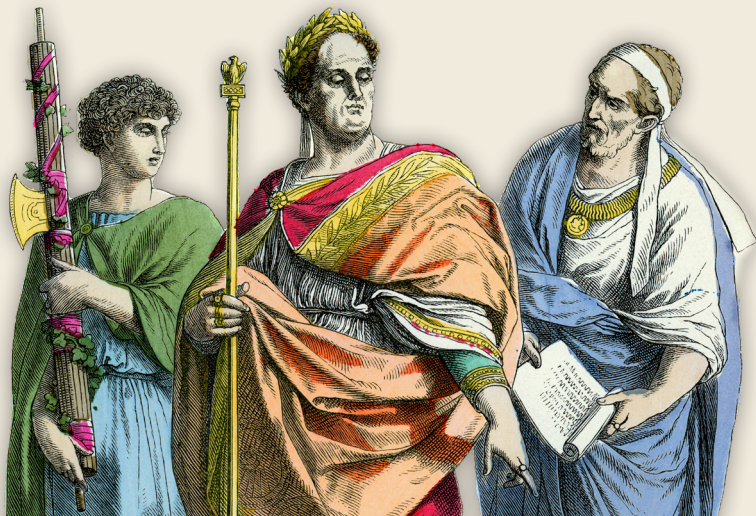
HISTORY

ANCIENT ROME



Use of the mace dates back to ancient Rome. Initially it was a bundle of bound elm or birch branches with an axe head protruding from the top and was called the fasces (FASS-eez). In Roman times a mace was carried in advance of magistrates or emperors, signifying the power and authority of their offices. By medieval times, the mace had evolved into a fearsome weapon made of iron and often times studded with sharp barbs.

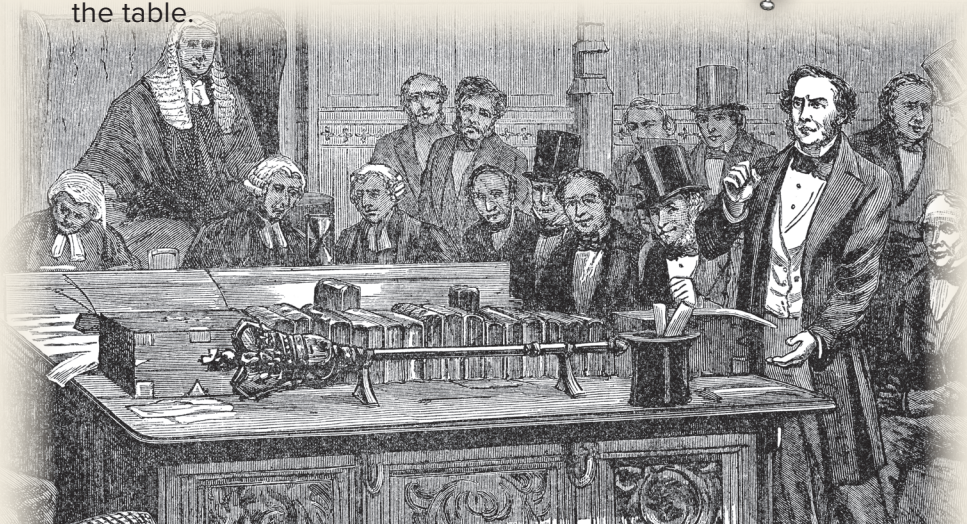
Today maces are rarely used for actual combat, but many governmental bodies, universities, and other institutions have ceremonial maces and display them as symbols of authority and tradition.



OF THE MACE

BRITISH HOUSE OF COMMONS

The mace used in the British Parliament is the symbol of royal authority and without it neither the House of Commons nor the House of Lords do official business or pass laws. The mace used in the House of Commons measures about 5 feet in length and is a silver gilt ornamental club dating from the reign of King Charles II (1660-1685). When the House of Commons is in session, the mace is carried by the Sergeant at Arms, who leads the Speaker's procession. It is placed horizontally on a table at the front of the chamber. When the House is in committee, the mace rests on two brackets underneath the table.



UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES





A mace has been used in the U.S. House of Representatives since 1789.

The first Speaker of the House, Frederick Muhlenberg of Pennsylvania, approved the mace as the proper symbol of the Sergeant at Arms in carrying out his duties. This mace was destroyed when the Capitol Building was burned on August 24, 1814, during the War of 1812.

A new mace was crafted by William Adams, a New York silversmith, in 1841. The current mace is made of 13 thin, bundled ebony rods representing the original states. A silver globe with a bald eagle perched on it sits at the top of the mace. For daily House sessions, the Sergeant at Arms carries the mace in front of the Speaker, in procession to the rostrum. When the House is in session, the mace stands on a cylindrical pedestal of green marble to the Speaker's right. When the House is in committee, it is moved to a lowered position on a pedestal next to the Sergeant at Arms' desk.



PENNSYLVANIA
HOUSE
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