National Symbols: The Great Seal

The Great Seal of the United States was first used in 1794.

The eagle stands for liberty; the arrows represent strength in unity.

The olive branch is the symbol of peace. Above the eagle a constellation of thirteen stars breaks through a cloud in a burst of golden light and glory. The shield on the eagle has thirteen stripes in red and white, for the first thirteen states.

The Latin motto of 'E pluribus unum' is written on the eagles banner meaning



