



By the dawns early light.....

During the War of 1812, Francis Scott Key, an American lawyer, took a drinking song that had been written in Britain in the late 1700s and put verses to it, inspired by the patriotic courage he witnessed in the battle against the British forces near Washington, DC. The British had captured Key aboard their ship to keep him from revealing the plans of the attack until after the battle ended. The bombardment started on Tuesday, September 13, 1814, and continued all day and almost all night. He paced the deck all night. When dawn came he saw through the mist that the American flag was still flying over the walls of the fort. Key was deeply moved. He pulled a letter from his pocket and scribbled these famous verses quickly on the envelope. By November 1814, the song had been published in Baltimore under the name "The Star-Spangled Banner." It was soon published in several other American cities and quickly gained popularity. The U.S. Congress officially approved the song as the national anthem in 1931.

So many of us know this song, but how few of us really think about the words we sing over our hotdogs in the ballpark... An anthem is supposed to be the



declaration of a nation's most heartfelt ideals. But for most of us it is just a song that is too hard to sing... But if you really consider the words your soul must find one response or another... Do the deep convictions expressed inspire you? Since the "land of the free and the home of the brave" is your home address, do you treasure that freedom? "The dawn's early light" must awaken in us the appreciation for the high ideals that once inspired our ancestors to establish a nation as a home for the "free". July 4th is not just an exciting time for fun and fireworks ... those fireworks are supposed to remind us of the "proof through the night that our flag is still there"...

Have you ever wondered if the pleasures of our generation have replaced those high ideals that once filled the souls of our ancestors? Our soft, convenient lifestyle tends to make us yawn at the star-spangled banner and ask when the fireworks start (Ezekiel 16:49).

*If we forget to be thankful for our freedom,
it will not be long before its's gone.*

The Star-Spangled Banner



*Oh! say, can you see,
by the dawn's early light....
What so proudly we hailed at the
twilight's last gleaming? Whose broad
stripes and bright stars, through the perilous
fight... And the rocket's red glare, the bombs
bursting in air, Gave proof through the night that our
flag was still there.....*

*Oh! say, does that Star-Spangled Banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?
On the shore, dimly seen through the mists of the deep, ...
How it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam,
In full glory reflected, now shines on the stream.*

*'Tis the Star-Spangled Banner. Oh! long may it wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!
... Blest with vict'ry and peace, may the heav'n-rescued land
Praise the power that hath made and preserved us a nation.
Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just,
And this be our motto — "In God is our trust."
And the Star-Spangled Banner in triumph shall wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.*

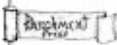
“O ye that love mankind!
Ye that dare oppose,
 not only the tyranny, but the tyrant,
 Stand forth!
Every spot of the old world
 is overrun with oppression.
Freedom has been hunted round the globe.
 Asia, and Africa have long expelled her.
Europe regards her like a stranger,
and England has given her warning to depart.
O! receive the fugitive,
 and prepare in time an asylum for mankind..”

*Written in 1776
by Thomas Paine
in his famous
publication
“Common Sense”*



Happy Birthday America,

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508-732-7201

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