

STAR-SPANGLED BANNER PART 2

[Star-Spangled Banner](#)



Historical Context Star Spangled Banner Lesson 6

Francis Scott Key

Francis Scott Key was a successful lawyer in the District of Columbia. In the beginning of the War, he was opposed to it. However, he changed his mind after witnessing the burning of public buildings in Washington, D.C. and the humiliating defeat at the Battle of Bladensburg.

During the bombardment of Fort McHenry, Key, an American, is on a British ship, had boarded a ship to negotiate the release of a prominent local doctor, Dr. Beanes, whom the British had taken prisoner. The British would not allow them to return to Baltimore until the battle was over.

Key watched as the battle raged through the night on the British ship. The British would send bombs that were round iron balls weighing 200 pounds filled with gunpowder to the fort. Attached to these bombs were fuses that were timed to go off while the bombs were still in the air. This would send shrapnel (heavy, sharp edged pieces of broken metal) down on the men below. It would also cause the night sky to light up. When Key saw the flag at sunrise the next morning, he felt such relief that he wrote “The Star Spangled Banner” as a poem.

Many years later, Key stated about that night,

“Through the clouds of war, the stars of that banner still shone in my view...Then, in that hour of deliverance and joyful triumph, my heart spoke, and ‘Does not such a country, and such defenders of their country, deserve a song?’ was its question. With it came an inspiration not to be resisted: and even though it had been a hanging matter to make a song, I must have writing it. Let the praise, then, if any be due, be given, not to me, who only did what I could not help doing, not to the writer, but to the inspirers of the song!”

Someone eventually gave a copy of the poem to the *Baltimore American*, Baltimore's newspaper, and it was printed in the newspaper. Then several other newspapers on the East Coast printed it. By November, it had been set to the music from a club song, "The Anacreontic Society." The Anacreontic Society was a gentleman's club in London.

It took a while for the "Star Spangled Banner" to become the official National Anthem. By 1905, all military posts and naval vessels were playing it as they raised and lowered the flag each day. It was understood that all officers and soldiers were required to stand at attention during the anthem. Civilians also began to stand at attention as it was played at plays, movies, and sporting events. In 1917, the military made "The Star-Spangled Banner" the official national anthem.



There were 15 different bills introduced in the U.S. Congress between 1912 and 1917 to have it become the National Anthem. A bill did not pass both houses of Congress until 1931. President Herbert Hoover signed it into law on March 3rd of that year.

It is now established that “The Star-Spangled Banner” is the national anthem. When the first note of the music is played, people in military uniform should salute it until the last note of the music. Those who are veterans or are members of the Armed Forces, but are not in uniforms, should also salute the flag. All other persons present should face the flag and stand at attention with their right hand over their heart. Men not in uniforms should remove their headdress or hat with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the shoulder. When “The Star-Spangled Banner” is played without a flag, all present should face toward the music and act in the same manner they would if the flag were present.

[War of 1812](#) at 7:05

[Anacreontic Song](#)

Original manuscript written by Francis Scott Key.

O say can you see ~~through~~ by the dawn's early light,
What so proudly we hail'd at the twilight's last gleaming,
Whose broad stripes & bright stars through the perilous fight
O'er the ramparts we watch'd, were so gallantly streaming?
And the rocket's red glare, the bomb bursting in air,
gave proof through the night that our flag was still there,
O say does that star-spangled banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free & the home of the brave?

On the shore dimly seen through the mists of the deep,
Where the foe's haughty host in dread silence reposes,
What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep,
As it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses?
Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam,
In full glory reflects now shines on the stream,
'Tis the star-spangled banner — O long may it wave
O'er the land of the free & the home of the brave!

And where is that band who so vauntingly swore,
That the havoc of war & the battle's confusion
A home & a Country should leave us no more?
— ~~Their~~ Their blood has wash'd out their foul footsteps' pollution.
No refuge could save the hireling & slave
From the terror of flight or the gloom of the grave,
And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave
O'er the land of the free & the home of the brave.

O thus be it ever when freemen shall stand
Between their lov'd home & the war's desolation,
Blest with vict'ry & peace may the heav'n rescued land
Praise the power that hath made & 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 & the home of the brave.



This is a photograph of the garrison flag that flew over Fort McHenry on the morning of September, 14, 1814. It is now on display at the Smithsonian Institution's of National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C. This flag originally measured 30 feet by 42 feet. However it now measures 30 feet by 34 feet.

It was a family heirloom of the Armistead family and they would cut off "snippings" to give to people especially veterans as souvenirs. In 1912, George Armistead's grandson was overwhelmed with the responsibility of maintaining the flag and all of the requests to display it, so he donated it to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington.

DEFENCE OF FORT M'HENRY.

The annexed song was composed under the following circumstances—
A gentleman had left Baltimore, in a flag of truce for the purpose of getting released from the British fleet, a friend of his who had been captured at Marlborough.—He went as far as the mouth of the Patuxent, and was not permitted to return lest the intended attack on Baltimore should be disclosed. He was therefore brought up the Bay to the mouth of the Patuxent, where the flag vessel was kept under the guns of a frigate, and he was compelled to witness the bombardment of Fort M'Henry, which the Admiral had boasted that he would carry in a few hours, and that the city must fall. He watched the flag at the Fort through the whole day with an anxiety that can be better felt than described, until the night prevented him from seeing it. In the night he watched the Bomb Shells, and at early dawn his eye was again greeted by the proudly waving flag of his country.

Tune—ANACREON IN HEAVEN.

O! 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,
O'er the ramparts we watch'd, were so gallantly streaming?
And the Rockets' red glare, the Bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night that our Flag was still there;
O! 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,
Where the foe's haughty host in dread silence reposes,
What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep,
As it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses?
Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam,
In full glory reflected new shines in the stream,
'Tis the star spangled banner, O! long may it wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.

And where is that band who so vauntingly swore
That the havoc of war and the battle's confusion,
A home and a country, shall leave us no more?
Their blood has washed out their foul footsteps' pollution.
No refuge could save the hireling and slave,
From the terror of flight or the gloom of the grave,
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O! thus be it ever when freemen shall stand,
Between their lov'd home, and the war's desolation,
Blest with vict'ry and peace, may the heav'n rescued land,
Praise the Power that hath made and preserv'd 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.

Sir,

Post No 11 Aug 24th September 1814

A severe indisposition, the effect of great fatigue and exposure, has prevented the receipt of your interesting journal with an account of the attack on the Post on the night of Saturday the 18th inst. The British Fleet consisting of 4 Ships of the line, heavy Frigates and Bomb vessels amounting in the whole to 30 Sails, appeared at the mouth of the River Patuxent with every intimation of an attempt on the City of Baltimore, my own Force consisted of one Company of U. S. Artillery under Capt Burt and two Companies of the Rifles under Captains Brantley and Adair, of these three Companies 28 Men were unfortunately on the 18th inst and unfit for duty. I have been furnished with two Companies of Baltimore Artillery from the City of Baltimore under Capt Barry and Post Command Brantley, to these I must add another very fine Company of Baltimore Artillery under Capt Nicholson, who has proposed their services to aid in the defence of the Post whenever an attack might be apprehended, and also a Detachment from Commodore Barney's ^{under Lt Rodman} Flotilla. A Squadron of Cavalry has also furnished me with about six hundred Men under the Command of Lt Col Stuart & Major Lane, consisting of 4th Regiments from the 10th, 16th, 26th & 38th Regts of U. S. of Cavalry, the total amounting to about one thousand five hundred Men. On Monday morning very early,

and with perfect integrity in private life. I trust I shall be of the Company under Lt Brantley's command early in the attack or several conclusions in the state notwithstanding which it remained at the post during the whole Bombardment. Was I to name any individuals who signified themselves it would be doing injustice to others, suffice it to say, that every Officer and Soldier under my Command did their duty to my entire satisfaction.

I have the honor

to remain very respectfully

Your Obedient

Geo. Armistead

Lieut Col U. S. A.

Honble James Monroe
Secy of War