

COPYRIGHT / USAGE

Material on this site may be quoted or reproduced for **personal and educational purposes** without prior permission, provided appropriate credit is given. Any commercial use of this material is prohibited without prior permission from The Special Collections Department - Langsdale Library, University of Baltimore. Commercial requests for use of the transcript or related documentation must be submitted in writing to the address below.

When crediting the use of portions from this site or materials within that are copyrighted by us please use the citation: *Used with permission of the University of Baltimore.*

If you have any requests or questions regarding the use of the transcript or supporting documents, please contact us:

Langsdale Library
Special Collections Department
1420 Maryland Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21201-5779
<http://archives.ubalt.edu>

The American Flag

and the

National Anthem

(How they came into existence and what they symbolise)

by

FRANCIS S. KEY-SMITH

*Member of District of Columbia Bar,
Great Grandson of Francis Scott Key,
Author of The National Anthem*



© Thus be it ever when freeman shall stand
On hallowed ground, their lov'd home & the war's desolation;
Blest with ev'ry a prayer may the heav'n rescued land
Praise the honor that hath made 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 of all years
O'er the land of the brave the home of the brave.

The American Flag

and the

National Anthem

(How they came into existence and what they symbolize)



Copyright, 1935, by
FRANCIS S. KEY-SMITH

Printed by
Cornelius Printing Co.
Silver Spring, Md.

DURING Colonial days and the early days of the Revolution most of the colonies and states had adopted their own flags. These were many and varied. A green pine tree pointing upward in the center of a white field with the motto, "An appeal to Heaven," was adopted by Massachusetts. A coiled rattle snake in the center of a white field with the motto, "Don't tread on me." was adopted by South Carolina. A blue beaver in the center of a white field was adopted by New York while Rhode Island adopted a blue anchor in the center of a white field.

Official action was not taken for a national flag, emblematic of the union of states, until June 14th, 1777. The resolution adopted by Congress upon that day, provided: "That the flag of the thirteen United States be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the Union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new constellation."

This flag was first flown in a land engagement at the battle of Brandywine during the Revolution and Admiral John Paul Jones was the first to raise it over a naval vessel when he hoisted it upon the "Ranger."

There is a very pretty legend regarding the making of the first flag which is accredited and vouched for by reputable writers.

Betsy Ross, a sister-in-law of General George Ross, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, is accredited with making the first flag, General Washington, so the story goes, accompanied by Robert Morris and General Ross, called upon Mrs. Ross in her little home and shop on Arch Street, Philadelphia, and asked if she could make a flag. She replied that she never had made one but she could try and General Washington thereupon produced a rather rough design of the flag which Congress had recently authorized. Upon examination Mrs. Ross observed that the design contained six pointed stars and suggested that the stars should be five pointed ones. It is related that she carried her point by demonstrating how a five pointed star could be made with a single clip of the scissors. Her dexterity convincing Washington of her superior judgment in such matters.

Through voluntary contributions the little Philadelphia home of Betsy Ross has been preserved and can be visited today.

Vermont being admitted into the Union in 1791 and Kentucky in 1792, Congress on January 13, 1794, enacted, "That from and after the first day of May, 1795—the flag of the United States shall be fifteen stripes alternate red and white; that the Union be fifteen stars, white in a blue field." The addition of both a stripe and star for each new state admitted. The number of states having increased to twenty by 1818 Congress enacted that the number of stripes be reduced to thirteen to represent the original thirteen states; that the number of stars be increased to twenty and "on the admission of every new state into the Union, one star be added to the Union of the flag and that such addition shall take effect on the Fourth of July next succeeding such admission."

It was the flag of fifteen stripes and fifteen stars that flew over Fort McHenry in September, 1814, which was the inspiration for the National Anthem. Its making was likewise the handiwork of an American woman, Mrs. Mary Pickersgill of Baltimore, assisted by her daughter Caroline, later Mrs. Purdy.

The flag was begun in their modest home at the corner of Albemarle and Pratt Streets, but owing to its enormous size, 28 by 32 feet, Mrs. Pickersgill was obliged to borrow the use of the floor of a nearby brewery in order to complete it. Here she could spread it out upon the large floor of the malt house while she and her daughter stitched on the fifteen stars and securely bound and topped it so as to prevent its being torn from its staff by cannon balls.

During the bombardment one shot pierced the flag tearing a star from its constellation but the secure binding held and the flag remained flying over the ramparts of the fort a gladdening sight for Key and his compatriots at dawn—the inspiration for our National Anthem.

In recent years the little Pickersgill house has also been purchased and preserved by a voluntary association, assisted by the City of Baltimore. It is now known as The Star Spangled Banner Flag House and is kept open to the public in honor of the flag that was made there and inspired the writing of the National Anthem.

The original flag after serving its usefulness at the fort became the property of Mr. Ehen Appleton of New York City. He was a grandson of Major George Armistead who commanded the fort during the attack and Mr. Appleton inherited the flag from his mother who was a daughter of Major Armistead. Shortly before his death Mr. Appleton presented the flag to the Smithsonian Institution of Washington, District of Columbia. This institution had it carefully and expertly stitched upon and backed by canvas so as to the better preserve it as it was very much impaired by age. It can now be seen in the National Museum at Washington.

It is impossible to convey any adequate conception of the inspiration for writing the song without explaining the character of its author and show the causes which entered into the formation of his character. The principles and teachings of Key's day were as responsible for the words and sentiments of the song as was the gallant defense of the city of Baltimore which followed so closely upon the ignominious destruction of the National Capital of which Key had been an eye witness and participant. From the anxiety he experienced on account of the destruction of Washington and the grateful thanks he felt for the deliverance of Baltimore came the inspiration for his immortal words which words could only have been conceived and penned by a man of his high character and mental conceptions and grasp of life and human events.

The words of the anthem are neither martial nor a conceited tribute to the success of war as are many national anthems of other nations. They are an anxious query followed by praise and thanksgiving to

Almighty God for the deliverance of the country from the "Havoc of war and the battle's confusion" as expressed in the beautiful lines of the poem.

Key's generosity and patriotism were of a very high order. He was one of the principal promoters and founders of the American Colonization Society, which had for its object the freedom of American slaves and their colonization under the protection of the United States upon the west coast of Africa where they, so protected, could remain free and establish their own government and independence. Although a slave owner Key freed his slaves many years before his death and he died in 1843 some twenty years before the Civil War.

Like many others of his times he both trusted and feared God and revered the home and family. The age in which he lived, while possessing imperfections, was, nevertheless, a God-fearing, self respecting, man's age, supported and inspired in its manhood by a very superior type of gentle womanhood. Women were regarded as above men and men respected them for their nobler and gentler instincts. It was truly an age of American manhood supported to the utmost by womanhood and both manhood and womanhood were accordingly in full flower. The spirit of such womanhood has been the inspiration for art, music and literature throughout all ages. It also no doubt greatly influenced Key's inspired sentiments exhibited in the words of "The Star Spangled Banner."

Men of those and preceding days paid her tribute in many ways, Bulwer Lytton's tribute to women is most expressive, he asks, "What state could fall, what liberty decay, if the zeal of man's noisy patriotism was as pure as the silent loyalty of a woman's love?"

Tennyson pays her tribute no less beautiful in his lines,

"Woman is the lesser man and all thy passions matched with mine,
Are as moonlight unto sunlight and as water unto wine."

There is no wonder that the people of those days were equal to their tasks and their emergencies or that they established the foundations for our great nation which they bequeathed to us and left us a most symbolic flag and truly expressive National Anthem of the principles and ideals for which they lived, strived and upheld.

We study the lives of great men and women in vain if we honor only their memories and disparage or forsake their principles and ideals or fail to appreciate and understand their matter of fact ideas and common sense, tersely and forcibly expressed in their trite homilies.

"It is better to endure the ills we have than to fly to those we know not of."

This is as true today as it was with them, although we are prone to demand change, constant change and radical change upon every pretext; unmindful of the further old injunction: "Fools rush in where Angels fear to tread."

"Wilful waste makes woeful want"; so the founders neither killed their hogs nor plowed under their crops and would not have countenanced any who advised them to do so.

"Meddling in the affairs of others proves a thankless task," and the government which they designed was not intended to meddle in the industrial or business affairs of the people.

"What is every one's business is not any one's business," so they knew and believed what is every one's wealth is no one's wealth, that common property is no one's property. Accordingly they created a government which rendered to the Federal and National governments the things which belonged to those governments and to the 'States the things which were the States' and to the people the things which are the people's in obedience to the injunction of Christ, when he said, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto the Lord the things that are the Lord's."

"In hoc signo vinces" and they so conquered as we can conquer today if we follow their teachings and perpetuate their ideals as we do their memories. Considering what the country and the people have suffered and endured in recent years through disregard of the old principles it is amazing with the teachings and simple remedies of the patriot founders so easily at hand we should not return to them for the solution of our problems and our guidance.

Most any one can make money under normal conditions but its accumulation is an art conferred by nature and not by legislative enactment, exemplified in the old aphorism, "Any fool can make money but it takes a wise man to save it."

Through false conceptions and disregard of truth there has been brought about a disturbed peace and spirit of unrest throughout the world as the old order has been neglected, forced out of place and kept from functioning.

In this new and material world we are vainly seeking to build in disregard of experience—the attempted equalization of the sexes—the rich and the poor—the honest and the dishonest—the fortunate and the unfortunate—the naturally intelligent and the naturally ignorant, which Divine Providence alone can do but has not done, it is difficult, so artificially circumstanced, either longer to understand or appreciate the good or the wisdom of the old order which inspired our flag and our National Anthem and has ever been the moving spirit back of all literature, art and song as it is the background of our Declaration of Independence, our Constitution, our national existence, our institutions and our liberties. Shall the old order be preserved? Shall we not resolve that the American commonwealth, under the Constitution, as framed and adopted by the founders and left in trust to us for future generations be continued, a progress of individual strength, initiative and enterprise and not become a highly

socialized, industrial group, regimented and directed by a government controlling the home, the business, the fortunes and the liberties of the people. That our rugged American manhood and gentle womanhood shall not be destroyed under such a plan or under the guise of rugged individualism.

The situation calls for, and has for sometime called for, the concerted intelligent thought and prompt and efficient action of serious minded and sanely determined men supported by women who realize that true womanhood is essential to a return of prosperity and is worth more to women and their children than political rights or the right of suffrage.

It also demands a wise revision of legislation affecting labor to the end that such legislation shall be fair not alone to labor but to capital but more especially to the American people. Labor can not exist if the whole people fail. There are four groups involved in legislation of this nature, Capital, Industry, Labor and People. All, especially the latter, are legally and morally, entitled to equal protection and consideration under the law. When this is realized and steps taken to effect it what has been experienced as a depression, "Will fold its tents like the Arabs and as silently steal away," and the American flag and National Anthem be again symbolic of American freedom and progress.

The ease with which the British army captured Washington in August, 1814, terrifying its inhabitants and sending them scurrying in flight for safety into the nearby Maryland and Virginia hills caused the greatest consternation and anxiety among a people of the conceptions of the people of that day although it struck no cowardly fear in them. It aroused the greatest anxiety in Key for the fate of Baltimore when, a few weeks later, by a turn of fate, he was forced to witness the city's bombardment from within the enemy's lines.

It has been recently said that Key was tone deaf, which is deaf to music, and did not recognize the song he composed when it was later played in his honor upon his visiting Alabama in 1833. The statement is refuted by Key's own words contained in the lines of a verse written upon a request made of him while in Alabama. In complying with the request among other lines of his verse are these:

"And to a poet—sounds how dear,
My own song sweetly chanted here."

Another recent similar error relates to Key's departure for the British fleet and will be considered and corrected later in its appropriate place.

As the British army under General Ross retreated to their ships in the Upper Patuxent river after capturing and burning the National Capital they passed through the small town of Upper Marlboro Maryland, and some of their stragglers appearing at the home of Dr. William Beanes near Marlboro made themselves ob-

noxious by their disorderly behavior which caused Dr. Beanes to have them arrested by the town authorities and lodged in the Marlboro jail.

One of them making his escape reported the arrest of himself and his comrades in a very exaggerated manner and General Ross dispatched a squad of British marines to Marlboro to arrest Dr. Beanes for interfering with the movements of British troops.

During the early afternoon of the succeeding day, Mr. Richard West, who lived near Dr. Beanes, upon an estate named Woodyard, arrived on horseback at the home of Key in Georgetown, District of Columbia, with the news of the arrest of Dr. Beanes. Explaining to Key that the arrest was wholly unwarranted; that the Doctor had been hurried from his home in his night clothes upon the bare back of a mule, and that his friends in Marlboro greatly feared for his safety, he requested Key to secure the authority of the government for his, Key's, visiting the British fleet to intercede for the release of Dr. Beanes.

The request was based entirely upon the friendly relations existing between the families of Mr. West, Dr. Beanes and Mr. Key. In keeping with the prevailing spirit of his times Key agreed to comply although he fully appreciated the hazards of such a mission. Securing the necessary credentials from the government he sent his family to his father's home, Terra Rubia near Frederick, Maryland, and made arrangements for leaving Washington.

The British fleet having sailed from the Patuxent it was thought advisable that Key should be accompanied upon the errand by Colonel John S. Skinner of Baltimore the regularly constituted government agent for the exchange of prisoners who was known to the British. Key was accordingly instructed to proceed to Baltimore and in company with Colonel Skinner to sail down the Chesapeake Bay in search of the British.

These instructions were contained in a joint letter addressed to Colonel Skinner and himself by General Mason, Provost Marshal of the District of Columbia and were dated September 2, 1814. The instructions advised:

"We have been instructed to authorize you to proceed to the quarters of Major General Ross, commanding the British Army which lately invested the City of Washington, to deliver him the letter herewith handed—copy of which accompanies this, and endeavor by all possible means to bring off Dr. William Beanes of the vicinity of Marlborough in Maryland—the substance of the case is stated in my letter to General Ross. Mr. Key has been made acquainted by friends of Dr. Beanes with the particulars, the grounds and issues to be taken by the enemy in justification of their conduct."

In another letter of like date addressed by General Mason to Colonel Skinner, General Mason recommends:

"That you embark in Baltimore and proceed down the Bay," and advises him that,

"This letter together with a copy of my communication to General Ross will be handed you by Francis S. Key, Esquire, who is joined with you in the mission—instructions are made out to you jointly which are in the hands of Mr. Key."

A recently published narrative states that Mr. Key joined Colonel Skinner at Annapolis but these instructions show that such was not the case.

The letter to General Ross which accompanied the letters of instructions to Skinner and Key advised the General that:

"Having understood from sources not to be doubted that a detachment of the Army under your command on its retreat from Washington—seized and carried off from their homes several respectable citizens in the vicinity of Marlborough—unarmed and entirely of non-combatant character—that one Doctor William Beanes, sixty years of age, was taken from his bed in the midst of his family and hurried off almost without clothes is yet detained—I have been instructed to inquire into the cause of this departure from the known usages of civilized warfare and to request the release of Dr. Beanes."

"To this end John S. Skinner, agent and flag officer and Francis S. Key, Esquire, a citizen of the highest respectability have been authorized to wait upon you to express to you the views and apprehensions of the government. It is hoped that the seizure and detention of the person of the age and respectability of Doctor Beanes has been unauthorized by you and I confidently trust, sir, that when you have been made acquainted with the facts in the case you will order his immediate release and restoration to his family at an early moment. He is far advanced in life, infirm and unaccustomed to privations from which he suffers severely."

In this age of modern invention and rapid travel over good and smooth roads we are apt to overlook the hardships and difficulties of such a trip. There were no means of communication between Baltimore and Washington except by mail which required considerable time. The roads were rough and the means of transportation, horse drawn stage coaches, requiring from ten to twelve hours at least to travel the forty miles between the two cities and Mr. Key had no means of promptly communicating with his family or his friends after his departure. Judge Taney, his brother-in-law, writing in 1856, to Mr. Charles Howard of Baltimore, Key's son-in-law, says:

"We heard nothing from him until the enemy's retreat from Baltimore, which, as well as I can now recollect, was a week or ten days after he left us; and we were becoming uneasy about him, when, to our great joy, he made his appearance at my home, on his way to join his family."

Upon arriving at Baltimore, Key called upon Colonel Skinner, and delivering General Mason's letters, explained the anxiety felt by Dr. Beanes' friends for his safety and the necessity for their visiting the British fleet in the doctor's behalf. The necessary arrangements being made they sailed from Baltimore on September 5th, 1814,

Colonel Skinner advising General Mason by letter written under that date and headed, "Patapsco River," that:

"Mr. Key reached here yesterday morning and handed me your instructions and dispatches for Admiral Cochrane and General Ross. We are now on our way and expect to find them in the Patuxent and hope to be back Wednesday night."

Conclusively showing they sailed from Baltimore and not from Annapolis which is upon the Severn River.

The substance of the letter, as well as its heading, Patapsco River, also shows that at the time the letter was written, Colonel Skinner and Mr. Key were aboard a vessel.

The description and name of the vessel are not definitely known. Some early writers say the vessel was the United States cartel ship and was named the "Minden."

From a statement made by Judge Taney in the letter previously mentioned it would appear that the vessel was the vessel usually employed as a cartel ship by the government, for Taney speaking of this says:

"Orders were immediately issued to the vessel usually employed as a cartel * * * to make ready without delay and Mr. John S. Skinner * * * was directed to accompany Mr. Key."

How much time was consumed in the trip from Baltimore to the Patuxent River is shown by entries in the logs of the British vessels. Under date of Wednesday, September 7, 1814, there appears this entry in the log of H. M. S. "Tonnant":

"Sent a boat on board of a flag of truce from Baltimore," and under date of the next day, September 8th, 1814, there appears an entry in the log of the frigate "Surprise":

"At 7 A. M. sent a mate and four marines to take charge of a sloop with a flag of truce and at 7:30 A. M. took her in tow."

The muster book of the frigate "Surprise" shows that the crew of eleven officers and men of the American sloop bearing a flag of truce were taken on the British frigate, "Surprise" "as supernumeraries borne for victuals only," on the eighth day of September, 1814, *and were discharged to their own ship on the eleventh of September, 1814.*

Although courteously received by the British they were at first flatly denied their request for the release of Dr. Beanes. It would seem, by reason of some previous act or word of the doctor the British gained the impression he had somehow broken faith with them and they regarded him as a traitor.

Producing letters of wounded British officers whom the doctor had treated expressing their appreciation for his services and kindness to them Key at length disabused General Ross of this impression of broken faith by the doctor and prevailed upon him to release him. However, while prevailed upon to agree to the release, General Ross still entertained no very kind feeling for Doctor Beanes as his letter to General Mason, dated September 7th, 1814, written aboard the flagship "Tonnant," shows. He wrote:

These hardened soldiers were met when about half way to Baltimore by about half their number of raw American militia, patriots fighting in defense of home and country.

Wells
Less than half way upon their march to Baltimore General Ross was shot and killed as he rode at the head of his column by two young Maryland sharpshooters named Wills and McComas. Climbing a tree these two youths picked off the General from his horse. Instantly a retaliatory volley was turned upon them and they paid with their young lives for the life they had taken. Such is war.

Unadvised of the death of General Ross, Admiral Cochrane moved his fleet up the Patapsco preparatory to an attack upon the city, which was to have been simultaneous with that of the army under General Ross.

Upon coming in sight of Fort McHenry, the British fleet formed in a semicircle about two and a half miles off its breastworks.

The fort was garrisoned by a battery of artillery under the command of Major George Armistead of the United States Army. Judge Joseph Hopper Nicholson, a brother-in-law of Key commanding a volunteer battery of artillery, ranked second in command.

Early on the morning of the 13th of September, two days after their arrival, the British keeping well out of range of the guns of the Fort, began their attack with six bomb and a few rocket vessels. Major Armistead knowing that the guns of the fort would not carry as far as those of the British, patiently waited until the British might come nearer and in range of his guns. From their vantage point of safety the British pumped heavy bombs upon the little fortress.

About three o'clock in the afternoon of the 13th the British brought a few of their vessels nearer the fortifications and within range of its guns. Now having the opportunity for which they had waited and saved their ammunition, the Americans hailed shot and shell upon the enemy, forcing them to withdraw. The battle was again resumed from a distance where the British could throw their bombs upon the Fort without coming within range of its guns.

Between two and three o'clock in the morning of September 14th with one or two rocket and several bomb vessels, manned by twelve hundred picked men, the British attempted, under cover of darkness, to slip past the Fort and effect a landing beyond and attack the garrison in its rear.

Succeeding in passing Fort McHenry but unmindful of Fort Covington before which they next came they gave vent to their enthusiasm in a derisive cheer. Fort Covington and the American barges now simultaneously poured a galling fire upon them. Terribly slaughtered, surprised and disappointed they endeavored to regain their ships which drew closer to the fortifications in an endeavor to protect their retreat. Repassing Fort McHenry, Major Armistead opened the full force of its batteries upon them and the attack was ended.

From the time darkness closed in much of the battle as the flag was hidden from view, but as Key tells us,

“The rocket’s red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night, that our flag was still there.”

Shortly before the break of day when the battle ceased there was no means of knowing how it had terminated or of knowing more than that:

“The hurly-burly’ done,
* * * the battle’s lost and won.”

If we recall the ideals of Key’s age, the people’s pride in themselves and country, their individual devotion to duty and reverence for home and family and patriotism for country we may understand the feeling and anxiety of Key as he paced the deck of his little ship awaiting the break of day to ascertain if the flag of America or the flag of the enemy was flying over his native state and country.

How great his disappointment when dawn came and the smoke of the battle and “the mists of the deep” still precluded his seeing either the fort or its flag.

At length, through a rift in the smoke and mist, was disclosed the flag. That flag whose red and white recalled the blood stained snows of Valley Forge; whose blue, the benumbed and frozen feet of invincible American patriots; whose stars their unconquerable faith in God, country and themselves which carried them to victory across the floe ice waters of the Delaware, and laid the foundation for individual liberty and freedom under Constitutional government, the greatest heritage ever bequeathed to man.

The sentiment which the flag inspired in Key was neither exuberance nor boastfulness but one of anxious praise and the giving of thanks to Almighty God for the merciful deliverance of the country and Baltimore from the fate of the National Capital a few weeks before.

In the lines of The Star Spangled Banner, which named the flag and symbolized America as, “The land of the free and the home of the brave,” Key expresses only the anxious question uppermost in his mind and describes what he actually saw. The art lies not so much in technique or refined words and expression as in his accurate and beautiful description.

In the third stanza alone does he give expression to any feeling of triumph over the enemy or criticism of it. His reference in this stanza to, “hireling and slave,” refers to the fact that a large number of the enemy’s troops were hired soldiers and not British subjects fighting for either principle or country.

In the last stanza a splendid fortitude, born of his Christian character, manifests itself.

As he peered by the dim light of dawn, wearily and anxiously, through the smoke and mist which surrounded him he asks the simple question uppermost in his mind and tells what he had been able to know during the night before and what now greeted his vision and inspired him—the victory and the flag of his people.

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 mist of the deep,
where the fox's hangings, 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 now shines in 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 blood~~
(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 freeman shall stand
Beside his 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. —

AUTHOR'S FIRST DRAFT OF THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER

The splendid encouraging sentiment of the National Anthem could only have emanated from a man surrounded by the teachings and environment of Key's day and since we are studying the poem the oft repeated lines of another early American poet of like ideals, character and environment are peculiarly appealing and appropriate.

Longfellow tells us in his sincere and beautiful way that

“Lives of great men all remind us,
We can make our lives sublime,
And departing leave behind us,
Footprints on the sands of time.

Footprints, that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing shall take heart again.”

Heart! synonymous with hope—that hope which the poet Lord Byron assures us, “Springs eternal in the human breast.” What would man be without it or what could he accomplish if his environment did not support it? What hope can man have under conditions which crush rather than support it, and kill human initiative, ambition, thrift and enterprise?

In an age of so much boasted magnanimity, forbearance and philanthropy with such songs of the poets of the past ringing down the corridors of time could there be lost heart, confidence or hope if the present age followed the precepts of those who bequeathed to America its inheritance, its flag, its Constitution and its National Anthem?

Is it not worth while to so live that when all that remains of mortal man has returned to dust that dust consecrates and hallows the dust to which it has returned and the life leaves an imprint which the ravages of time can not dull but brighten. Silent though the tomb may be the memory of such lives is cherished forever, engraven upon the hearts of all true men.

Upon being released Key and his companions went ashore and that afternoon he wrote out the first draft of the song from notes he had made upon the back of an old letter which he had with him. The next morning, meeting with his brother-in-law, Judge Joseph H. Nicholson, who had been second in command of the fort, he showed the verses to him. Judge Nicholson, being much impressed with the sentiment and beauty of the poem, immediately took it to the printing office of Benjamin Edes but finding his office closed, Judge Nicholson next carried it to the office of the Baltimore American and Commercial Daily Advertiser. He also found this office closed except for a small apprentice boy, Samuel Sands, who was too young to be away with the troops defending the city as was every one else. Young Sands volunteered to set the words in type and print hand bills of them for distribution throughout the city.

One of these bills came into the hands of Ferdinand Durang, a musician as he loitered in front of the hotel where he was stopping next to the Holiday Street Theater. Much impressed also with the sentiment of the words, Durang tried them to several pieces of music and finding that they suited the music of a then popular song, “Adams and Liberty,” mounted a chair and played them upon his violin. The

music of "Adams and Liberty," had also in turn been taken from an old English song entitled, "Anacreon in Heaven."

Durang and his brother were playing at the Holiday Street Theater and upon the evening of the same day that he adapted the words to the music the song was sung by an actress upon the stage of the theater and soon thereafter gained a national reputation.

From the time it was first sung the song by popular acclaim became The National Anthem of the American people. Several attempts had been made to have Congress officially recognize the words and the music as the National Anthem but all such attempts failed until the Seventy-first Congress, when an act was passed and approved by the President on the 3rd of March, 1931, declaring both the words and the music to be the national anthem.

A recent biographer of Francis Scott Key, conjectures that Key had the music in mind when he composed the words (a strange conjecture if he was tone deaf). This conjecture is based upon Key's authorship of another poem of the same meter, entitled, "When the Warrior Returns." From this the biographer assumes that Key wrote this poem previously to his writing The Star Spangled Banner and had the music of "Adams and Liberty" in mind when he wrote both poems. There is, however, no evidence to support such an assumption, excepting the conjecture of the biographer based upon the similarity between the meters of the two poems and the further fact that in the poem, "When the Warrior Returns" there is a line which ends, "the star spangled flag of our nation." Of course, if the poem, "When the Warrior Returns," was not written until after The Star Spangled Banner was composed, the conjecture and assumption wholly fail.

Considering the state of Key's anxiety at the time he wrote the National Anthem it is exceedingly doubtful if he had in mind, or a mind for, any thoughts beyond those to which he then gave expression, or that he ever conceived the flag to be either a star spangled banner or a star spangled flag until he received the inspiration for the national anthem upon that memorable Fourteenth of September, 1814.

It is much more probable that the poem, "When the Warrior Returns" was written subsequent to "The Star Spangled Banner" than that it was written prior thereto and that its line containing the words, "the star spangled flag of our nation," was an adoption of the conception of the flag given expression for the first time in, "The Star Spangled Banner."