

## AMERICA'S CHRISTIAN HERITAGE

10/15/2017

In recent days we have been inundated with rebellion toward our National Anthem. Much of the rebellion has originated from the NBA players. Let's note today something about the history of our National Anthem.

### I. THE BRITISH WORKED THEIR WAY TOWARD MARYLAND

A. On August 24, 1814 the British invaded Washington burning;

1. The Capitol Building.
2. The White House.
3. The Library of Congress.

B. A few days later on September 13, 1814 they attacked Baltimore Maryland.

1. On their way to Baltimore they caught an elderly physician of upper Marlboro, Dr Willian Beanes.
2. The town feared Dr. Beanes would be hanged so they asked attorney Francis Scott Key to sail with Colonel John Skinner under a flag of truce to arrange a prisoner exchange
3. The British fearing their plans of attacking Baltimore would be discovered placed Francis Scott Key and Colonel Skinner under armed guard.

### II. ON SEPTEMBER 13-14, 1814 THE BRITISH ATTACKED FORT MCHENRY.

A. During the Battle of Fort McHenry, the citizens of Baltimore extinguished every light in every window so that the British would not be able to use them to guide their aim.

B. In God's timing He sent a tremendous thunderstorm to the city;

1. It rained so hard the ground was softened.
2. When the British fired the cannon balls many of them sunk in the mud and did not explode

- C. For 25 hours the British fired rockets and mortar shells at the earthen Fort McHenry.
  - 1. 19 British ships constantly fired at the fort
  - 2. Over 1800 cannon balls, rockets and mortar shells rained down on the fort.
- D. Through the night Key and Beanes;
  - 1. Heard bombs bursting
  - 2. They saw the red glare of rockets
- E. Near morning the bombardment ceased and a dreadful silence fell;
  - 1. Did Fort McHenry surrender?
  - 2. Did the British flag fly over the fort?
- F. The good news at dawn was seen;
  - 1. The American flag was still waving in the breeze!
  - 2. The British were unsuccessful in taking the fort.

### III. THE PENNING OF THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

- A. Key reworked the words from a previous poem he had written 9 years earlier to celebrate the victory over the Muslim Barbary pirates.

In the conflict resistless, each toil they endured,  
 Till their foes shrunk dismay'd from the war's desolation,  
 And pale beam'd the Crescent, its splendour obscured  
 By the light of the star-spangled flag of our nation.  
 Where, each radiant star gleam'd a meteor of war,  
 And the turban'd heads bow'd to the terrible glare;  
 Then mix'd with the olive the laurel did wave,  
 And form'd a bright wreath for the brows of the brave.

- B. We are familiar with the first verse of our National Anthem;

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,  
 O'er the ramparts we watched, 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?

- C. The fourth verse had an enduring effect as it contained a phrase which became the United States' Motto;

O thus be it ever when free men shall stand,  
 Between their loved home and the war's desolation;  
 Blest with victory and peace, may the Heaven-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,  
 Over the land of the free and the home of the brave!

#### IV. A PROCLAMATION FOLLOWED THE ATTACK ON FORT MCHENRY

- A. President James Madison proclaimed, November 16, 1814 a special day;

"The National Legislature having by a Joint Resolution expressed their desire that in the present time of public calamity and war a day may be recommended to be observed by the people of the United States as a day of public humiliation and fasting and of prayer to Almighty God for the safety and welfare of these States, His blessing on their arms, and a speedy restoration of peace... I...recommend...offering...humble adoration to the

Great Sovereign of the Universe, of confessing their sins and transgressions, and of strengthening their vows of repentance..

that He would be graciously pleased to pardon all their offenses against Him...that He would in a special manner preside over the nation...giving success to its arms."

- B. Our historic leaders recognized the need of Gods intervention.

#### V. THE TESTIMONY OF FRANCES SCOTT KEY

- A. Key told the Washington Society of Alexandria, March 22, 1814:

"The patriot who feels himself in the service of God, who acknowledges Him in all his ways, has the promise of Almighty direction, and will find His Word in his greatest darkness, 'a lantern to his feet and a lamp unto his paths'...

He will therefore seek to establish for his country in the eyes of the world, such a character as shall make her not unworthy of the name of a Christian nation."

- B. Francis Scott Key wrote a detailed account of the Battle of Fort McHenry to Thomas Jefferson's cousin, John Randolph, who went on to become a U.S. Senator, 1825-1828;

"May I always hear that you are following the guidance of that blessed Spirit that will 'lead you into all truth,' leaning on that Almighty arm that has been extended to deliver you, trusting only in the only Savior, and 'going on' in your way to Him 'rejoicing.'"

- C. On August 25, 1818 Randolph again wrote the following words;

"I have thrown myself, reeking with sin, on the mercy of God, through Jesus Christ His blessed Son and our (yes, my friend, our) precious Redeemer;

- D. Rep. John Randolph wrote to Francis Scott Key, September 7, 1818;

"I am at last reconciled to my God and have assurance of His pardon through faith in Christ, against which the very gates of hell cannot prevail. Fear hath been driven out by perfect love."