

celebrate
America
at the
Thanksgiving
Table

*with Proclamations,
Poetry, and Song*

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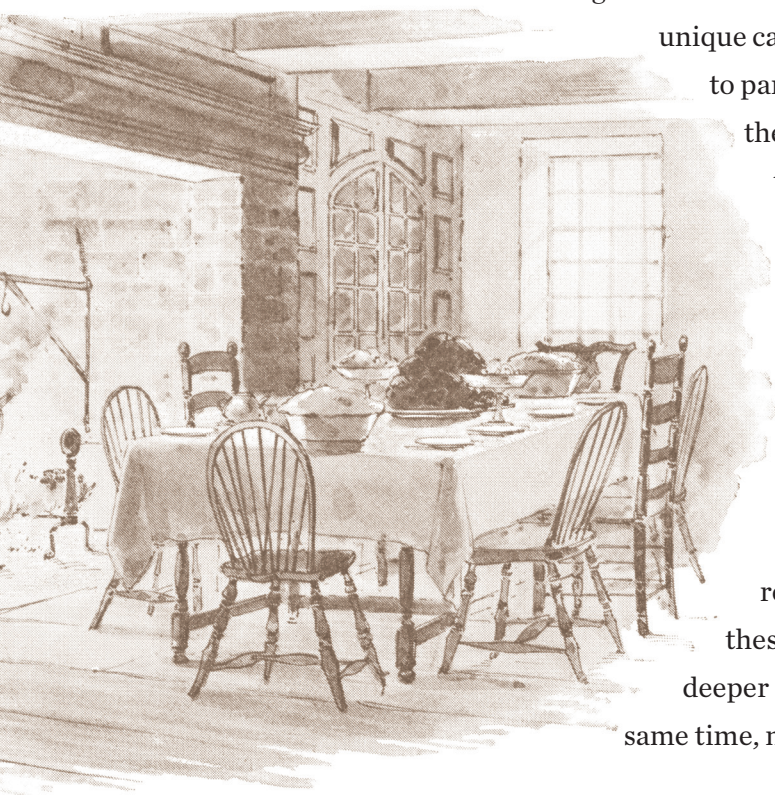
*with Proclamations,
Poetry, and Song*

If you are like so many others across the United States, you will be sitting around a table today, with family and friends, to give thanks for the many blessings we have been given. Perhaps this booklet can help you and yours—help us all—to give thanks for the blessings of liberty that this country and those who came before have handed down to us.

We offer this guide so we can see more clearly the start of our wonderful country; see just a few of the many acts of heroism, bravery, sacrifice, love, piety, and dedication; and read the loving and noble words of grateful Americans who went before us.

When we give proper thanks, we help ourselves to feel the need to protect and pass on the freedoms, liberties, principles, rights, and duties enshrined in our founding. And that gratitude, that sense of unity with those who gave us such a wonderful country, helps us live up to the unique calling of American citizens who are asked to participate in a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. Without that thankfulness, we may one day give up our American habit of self-government and turn our country into a government not of the people, but merely of the powerful.

So, aloud with your family and friends, at the table or on the couch after your meal—take up this Thanksgiving booklet. Enjoy these stories and prayers; read these poems and proclamations; sing these anthems and songs. May it inspire a deeper sense of gratitude in all of us, and at the same time, may it help us to give ever greater thanks.



“Now Thank We All Our God”

*Text by Martin Rinkart, 1636
English translation by Catherine Winkworth, 1858*



Core to America’s founding by the Pilgrims was a firm belief in Divine Providence. So, it is most appropriate that we begin with a prayer of Thanksgiving such as: **“This is the day that the Lord has made, On it let us rejoice and be glad”**

—Psalm 118:24

Now thank we all our God,
with heart and hands and voices,
who wondrous things has done,
in whom his world rejoices
who from our mothers’ arms
has blessed us on our way
with countless gifts of love,
and still is ours today.

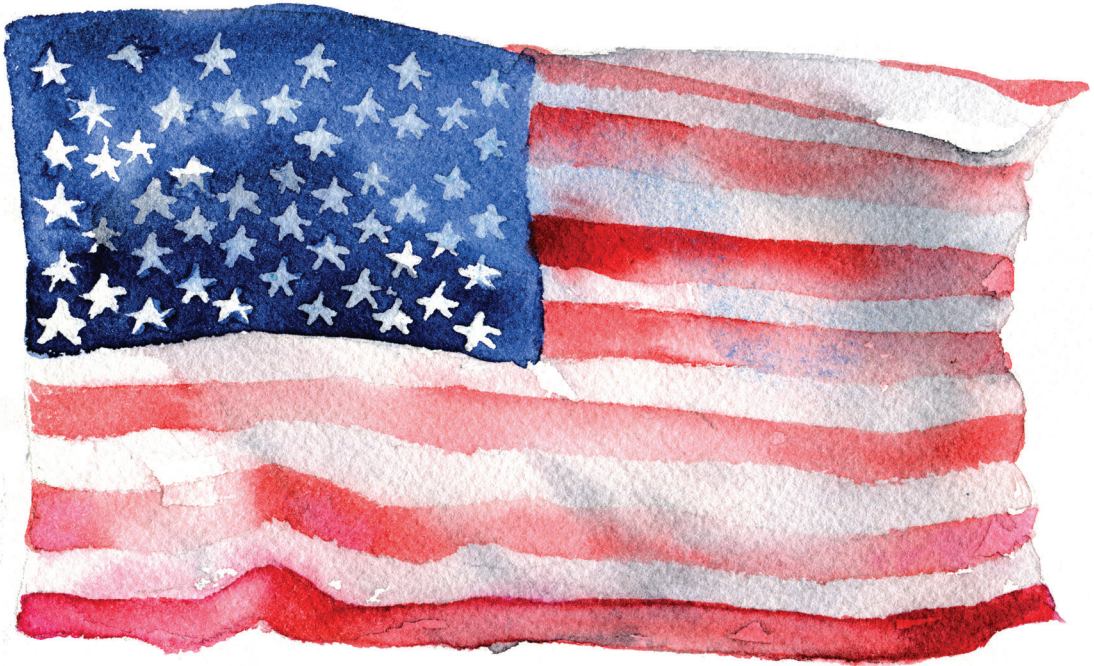
O may this bounteous God
through all our life be near us,
with ever joyful hearts
and blessed peace to cheer us,
to keep us in his grace,
and guide us when perplexed,
and free us from all ills
of this world and the next.

All praise and thanks to God
the Father now be given,
the Son and Spirit blest,
who reign in highest heaven
the one eternal God,
whom heaven and earth adore;
for thus it was, is now,
and shall be evermore.

The Pledge of Allegiance

Francis Bellamy, 1892

If a flag is available, even a small flag with its stars and stripes, we can recite the Pledge of Allegiance which was first composed in 1892 and later amended in 1954 by Congress to add the phrase “under God.”



*I pledge allegiance to the Flag
of the United States of America,
and to the Republic for which it stands,
one Nation under God, indivisible,
with liberty and justice for all.*

“Columbus”

Joaquin Miller (pen name for
Cincinnatus Heine Miller), 1892

The following poem was originally published in 1892 to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Columbus’ voyage to the New World. It reflects the brave and stalwart vision of Columbus who, though heading for the Spice Islands of Asia, discovered a new world in the Western reaches of the Atlantic Ocean. As an example to us all, he sailed “on and on” despite doubts of others in his crew. The message to Americans is one of perseverance in the face of adversity, hope in the future, and faith in their missions and in themselves.

Behind him lay the gray Azores,
Behind the Gates of Hercules;
Before him not the ghost of shores,
Before him only shoreless seas.
The good mate said: “Now must we pray,
For lo! the very stars are gone.
Brave Admiral, speak, what shall I say?”
“Why, say? Sail on! sail on! and on!”

“My men grow mutinous day by day;
My men grow ghastly wan and weak.”
The stout mate thought of home; a spray
Of salt wave washed his swarthy cheek.
“What shall I say, brave Admiral, say,
If we sight naught but seas at dawn?”
“Why, you shall say at break of day,
‘Sail on! sail on! sail on! and on!’”

They sailed and sailed, as winds might blow,
Until at last the blanched mate said:
“Why, now not even God would know
Should I and all my men fall dead.

These very winds forget their way,
For God from these dread seas is gone.
Now speak, brave Admiral, speak and say”—
He said: “Sail on! sail on! and on!”

They sailed. They sailed. Then spake the
mate: “This mad sea shows his teeth to-night
He curls his lip, he lies in wait,
With lifted teeth, as if to bite!
Brave Admiral, say but one good word:
What shall we do when hope is gone?”
The words leapt like a leaping sword:
“Sail on! sail on! sail on! and on!”

Then, pale and worn, he kept his deck,
And peered through darkness. Ah, that night
Of all dark nights! And then a speck—
A light! A light! A light! A light!
It grew, a starlit flag unfurled!
It grew to be Time’s burst of dawn.
He gained a world; he gave that world
Its grandest lesson: “On! sail on!”

The Mayflower Compact

41 Colonists, 1620

The Mayflower Compact was adopted by the Puritans as they anchored off Cape Cod on their way to what later was known as the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

Having missed their expected destination in Virginia, which was hundreds of miles to the south, they recognized the need to create their own governing document.

Hence, they composed the first “constitution” in the New World—noted for its brevity and clarity, it was a model for our nation’s builders.

In the name of God, Amen.

We whose names are underwritten, the loyal subjects of our dread sovereign lord King James, by the grace of God, of Great Britain, France, and Ireland King, Defender of the Faith, etc.

Having undertaken, for the glory of God, and advancement of the Christian faith, and honor of our king and country, a voyage to plant the first colony in the northern parts of Virginia, do by these presents solemnly and mutually in the presence of God and one of another, covenant, and combine ourselves together into a civil body politic, for our better ordering and preservation, and furtherance of the ends aforesaid; and by virtue hereof to enact, constitute, and frame such just and equal laws, ordinances, acts, constitutions, offices from time to time, as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the general good of the colony: unto which we promise all due submission and obedience.

In witness whereof we have hereunder subscribed our names at Cape Cod, the 11th of November, in the year of the reign of our sovereign lord King James, of England, France and Ireland eighteenth and of Scotland fifty-fourth, Anno Domini 1620.

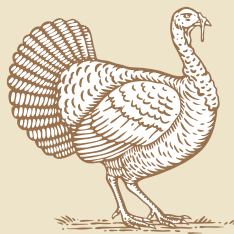
The First Account of the First Thanksgiving Feast of 1621 at Plymouth

Edward Winslow, 1621

*“Some men are mere hunters;
others are turkey hunters.”*

*—Archibald Rutledge,
South Carolina Poet Laureate*

....Our harvest being gotten in, our governor sent four men on fowling, that we might after a more special manner rejoice together, after we had gathered the fruits of our labors. They four in one day killed as much fowl as, with a little help beside, served the Company almost a week. At which time, amongst other recreations, we exercised our arms, many of the Indians coming amongst us, and among the rest their greatest king Massasoit, with some ninety men, whom for three days we entertained and feasted, and they went out and killed five deer, which they brought to the Plantation and bestowed on our governor, and upon the captain and others. And although it be not always so plentiful as it was at this time with us, yet by the goodness of God, we are so far from want that we often wish you partakers of our plenty.



Fun Fact:

The Wild Turkey is the fastest bird in the world during initial take off, quickly racing to flight speeds of up to 55 miles per hour!

The Five Native Species of Wild Turkey in the United States

- 1. Eastern Wild Turkey**
(*Meleagris gallopavo silvestris*)
- 2. Osceola Florida Wild Turkey**
(*Meleagris gallopavo osceola*)
- 3. Rio Grande Wild Turkey**
(*Meleagris gallopavo intermedia*)
- 4. Merriam's Wild Turkey**
(*Meleagris gallopavo merriami*)
- 5. Gould's Turkey**
(*Meleagris gallopavo mexicana*)

John Hancock
Saml Ad
Geo Read Wm Hooper Geo
Thos Nelson
Charles Carroll of Carroll Wm Ellbro
Sam^r a Hur
Cap Roger Sherman
Thomas Lynch
Josiah Bartlett Benj
Rich Stockton
Geo Wilkespoole
Samuel Chase Robt
Wm Wythe Matthew
Lewis W Jefferson
Morris Abner Clark
Middleton Tra^r Glover
Walton Cartery Braxton
and Henry Lee John
Benjamin Rush John Adam
Hall Joseph Hewes
Francis Lightfoot Lee
Edward Rutledge
William Ellery

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness...

IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776.

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America,

When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation. — We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such Principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. — Prudence will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all reform must be grounded on solid, and just, and long established Principles, which even the most desperate of tyrants will acknowledge. — But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security. — Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies, and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former system of Government. — The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. — To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world. —

He has refused his assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good. — He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, until suspended in their operation, till his assent should be obtained; and when suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them. — He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of People, unless those People would relinquish the Right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inseparable to them and par excellence to be enjoyed only. — He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their Public Records, so as to deface the judgment from its compliance with his measures. — He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the People. — He has refused for a long time after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected, whereby the Legislative powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise, the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of Anarchy and Confusion, which — He has endeavored to prevent the legislation of these States, for that purpose obstructing the Law for Alteration of Wages, refusing to pass that to encourage those magistrates either and raising the conditions of such Appropriations of Lands. — He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his assent to Laws for establishing judicial powers. — He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries. — He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harass our People, and eat out their substance. — He has kept among us in times of Peace standing Armies without the consent of our Legislature. — He has endeavored to render the Judiciary independent of and superior to the latter Powers. — He has combined with those engaged to us to a revolution, against our constitution, and acknowledged by our laws, governing us against their state of judicial legislation. — For quartering large bodies of armed troops among us. — For protecting them, by a mock trial, from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States. — For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world. — For imposing taxes on us without our consent. — For depriving us in many cases of the benefit of Trial by Jury. — For transporting us across Sea to be tried for pretended offences. — For suspending the Laws of the Colonies in a superseding Power, establishing therein an arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to extend it to one example and put instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies. — For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments. — For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves superior to the Legislature for us in all cases whatsoever. — He has abdicated government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us. — He has plundered our Woods, seized our Towns, and destroyed the lives of our People. — He has made us live in constant alarm, by the constant presence of large fleets of privateers, to compass the works of death, destruction and burning, already begun with circumstances of cruelty, and perfidy, scarcely justified in the most outrageous age, and lately involving the Head of a civilized nation. — He has constrained our fellow Colonies distant in the high seas to bear Arms against their Country, between the accusations of their friends and Brothers, to call themselves by their Names. — He has excited domestic jealousies among us, and has endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of these frontiers the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions. — In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms. Our repeated Petitions have been answered by repeated injury. — A Prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free People. — Nor have We been wanting in attention to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their Legislatures to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. — We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. — We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have begged them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. — They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of concinnity. — We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress assembled, appealing to the supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do in the Name and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States, that they are absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Alliance, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. — And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the Protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

John Hancock

[illegible]

For more information on the Declaration of Independence see: The Heritage Foundation *"The Essential Declaration of Independence,"* available online: [heritage.org/declaration-independence](https://www.heritage.org/declaration-independence).

Thanksgiving Proclamation

George Washington, 1789

George Washington issued a proclamation of Thanksgiving on October 3, 1789, establishing November 26th as a national day of thanks. Over the years, the date evolved to the fourth Thursday in November.

By the President of the United States of America. A Proclamation.

Whereas it is the duty of all Nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey his will, to be grateful for his benefits, and humbly to implore his protection and favor—and whereas both Houses of Congress have by their joint Committee requested me to recommend to the People of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many signal favors of Almighty God especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness.

Now therefore I do recommend and assign Thursday the 26th day of November next to be devoted by the People of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being, who is the beneficent Author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be—That we may then all unite in rendering unto him our sincere and humble thanks—for his kind care and protection of the People of this Country previous to their becoming a Nation—for the signal and manifold mercies, and the favorable interpositions of his Providence which we experienced in the course and conclusion of the late war—for the great degree of tranquility, union, and plenty, which we have since enjoyed—for the peaceable and rational manner, in which we have been enabled to establish constitutions of government for our safety and happiness, and particularly the national One now lately instituted—for the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed; and the means we have of acquiring and diffusing useful knowledge; and in general for all the great and various favors which he hath been pleased to confer upon us.



*Now therefore I do recommend and assign
Thursday the 26th day of November next
to be devoted by the People of these States
to the service of that great and glorious
Being, who is the beneficent Author of all
the good that was, that is, or that will be...*

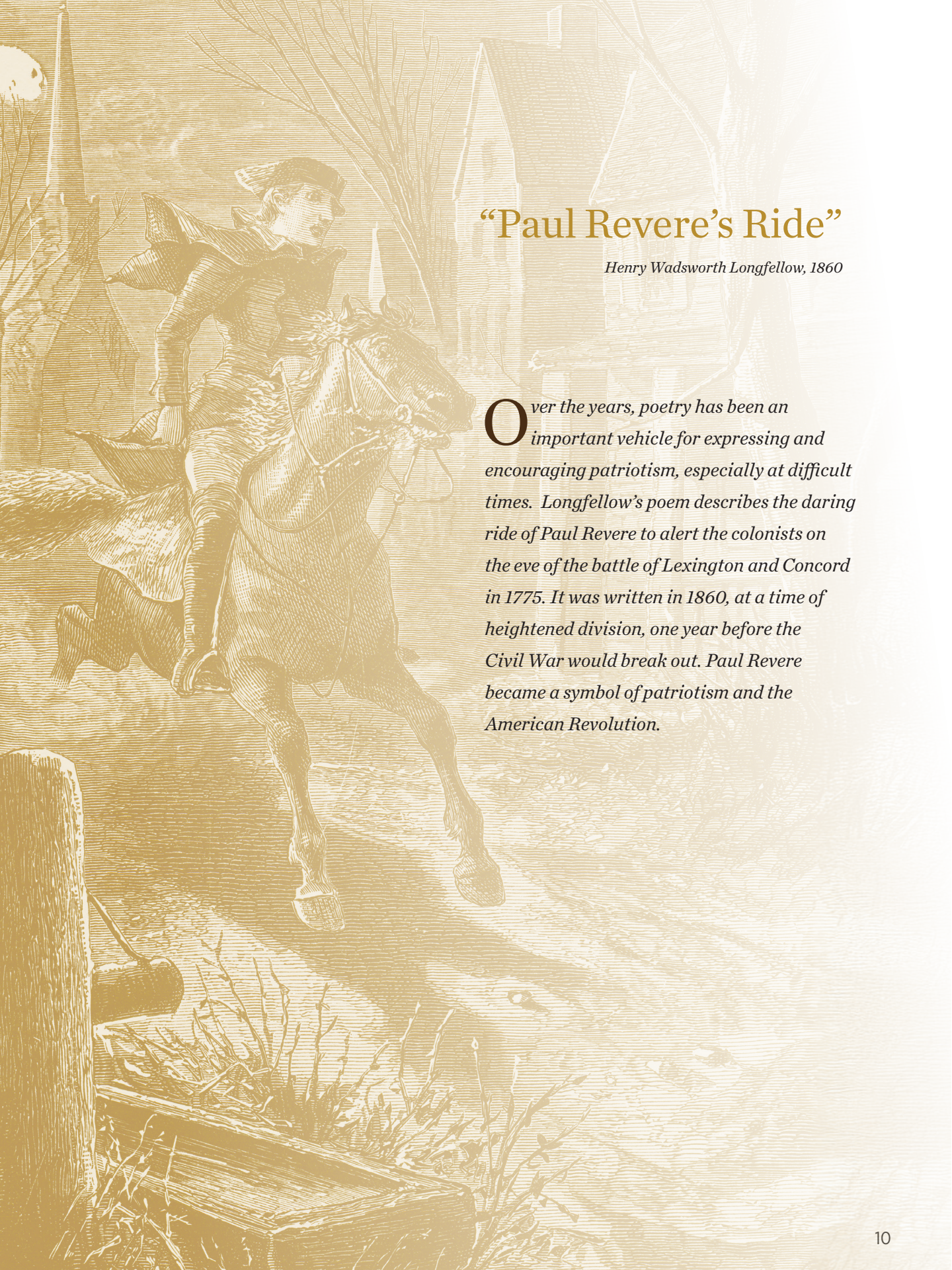
And also that we may then
unite in most humbly offering

—George Washintgon

our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations and beseech him to
pardon our national and other transgressions—to enable us all, whether in public or private
stations, to perform our several and relative duties properly and punctually—to render our
national government a blessing to all the people, by constantly being a Government of wise,
just, and constitutional laws, discreetly and faithfully executed and obeyed—to protect and
guide all Sovereigns and Nations (especially such as have shewn kindness unto us) and to
bless them with good government, peace, and concord—To promote the knowledge and
practice of true religion and virtue, and the encrease of science among them and us—and
generally to grant unto all Mankind such a degree of temporal prosperity as he alone knows
to be best.

Given under my hand at the City of New York the third day of October in the year of our
Lord 1789.

Go: Washington



“Paul Revere’s Ride”

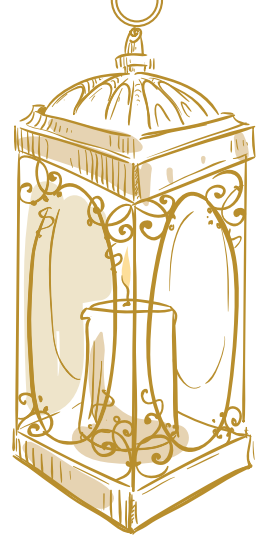
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, 1860

Over the years, poetry has been an important vehicle for expressing and encouraging patriotism, especially at difficult times. Longfellow’s poem describes the daring ride of Paul Revere to alert the colonists on the eve of the battle of Lexington and Concord in 1775. It was written in 1860, at a time of heightened division, one year before the Civil War would break out. Paul Revere became a symbol of patriotism and the American Revolution.

Listen, my children, and you shall hear
Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere,
On the eighteenth of April, in Seventy-Five:
Hardly a man is now alive
Who remembers that famous day and year

He said to his friend, "If the British march
By land or sea from the town to-night,
Hang a lantern aloft in the belfry arch
Of the North Church tower as a signal light,—
One, if by land, and two, if by sea;
And I on the opposite shore will be,
Ready to ride and spread the alarm
Through every Middlesex village and farm,
For the country-folk to be up and to arm."

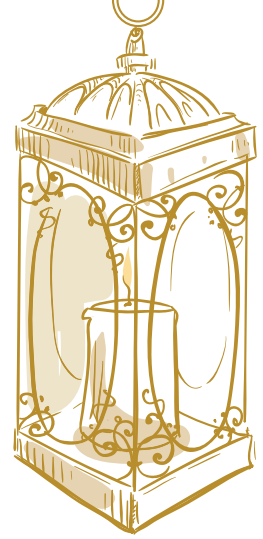
Then he said, "Good night!" and with muffled roar
Silently rowed to the Charlestown shore,
Just as the moon rose over the bay,
Where swinging wide at her moorings lay
The Somerset, British man-of-war;
A phantom ship, with each mast and spar
Across the moon like a prison bar,
And a huge black hulk, that was magnified
By its own reflection in the tide.



Meanwhile, his friend, through alley and street,
Wanders and watches with eager ears,
Till in the silence around him he hears
The muster of men at the barrack door,
The sound of arms, and the tramp of feet,
And the measured tread of the grenadiers,
Marching down to their boats on the shore.

Then he climbed to the tower of the church,
Up the wooden stairs, with stealthy tread,
To the belfry-chamber overhead,
And startled the pigeons from their perch
On the sombre rafters, that round him made
Masses and moving shapes of shade,—
Up the trembling ladder, steep and tall,
To the highest window in the wall,
Where he paused to listen and look down
A moment on the roofs of the town,
And the moonlight flowing over all.

Beneath, in the churchyard, lay the dead,
In their night-encampment on the hill,
Wrapped in silence so deep and still
That he could hear, like a sentinel's tread,
The watchful night-wind, as it went
Creeping along from tent to tent,
And seeming to whisper, "All is well!"
A moment only he feels the spell
Of the place and the hour, and the secret dread



Of the lonely belfry and the dead;
For suddenly all his thoughts are bent
On a shadowy something far away,
Where the river widens to meet the bay,—
A line of black that bends and floats
On the rising tide, like a bridge of boats.

Meanwhile, impatient to mount and ride,
Booted and spurred, with a heavy stride
On the opposite shore walked Paul Revere.
Now he patted his horse's side,
Now gazed at the landscape far and near,
Then, impetuous, stamped the earth,
And turned and tightened his saddle-girth;
But mostly he watched with eager search
The belfry-tower of the Old North Church,
As it rose above the graves on the hill,
Lonely and spectral and sombre and still.
And lo! as he looks, on the belfry's height
A glimmer, and then a gleam of light!
He springs to the saddle, the bridle he turns,
But lingers and gazes, till full on his sight
A second lamp in the belfry burns!

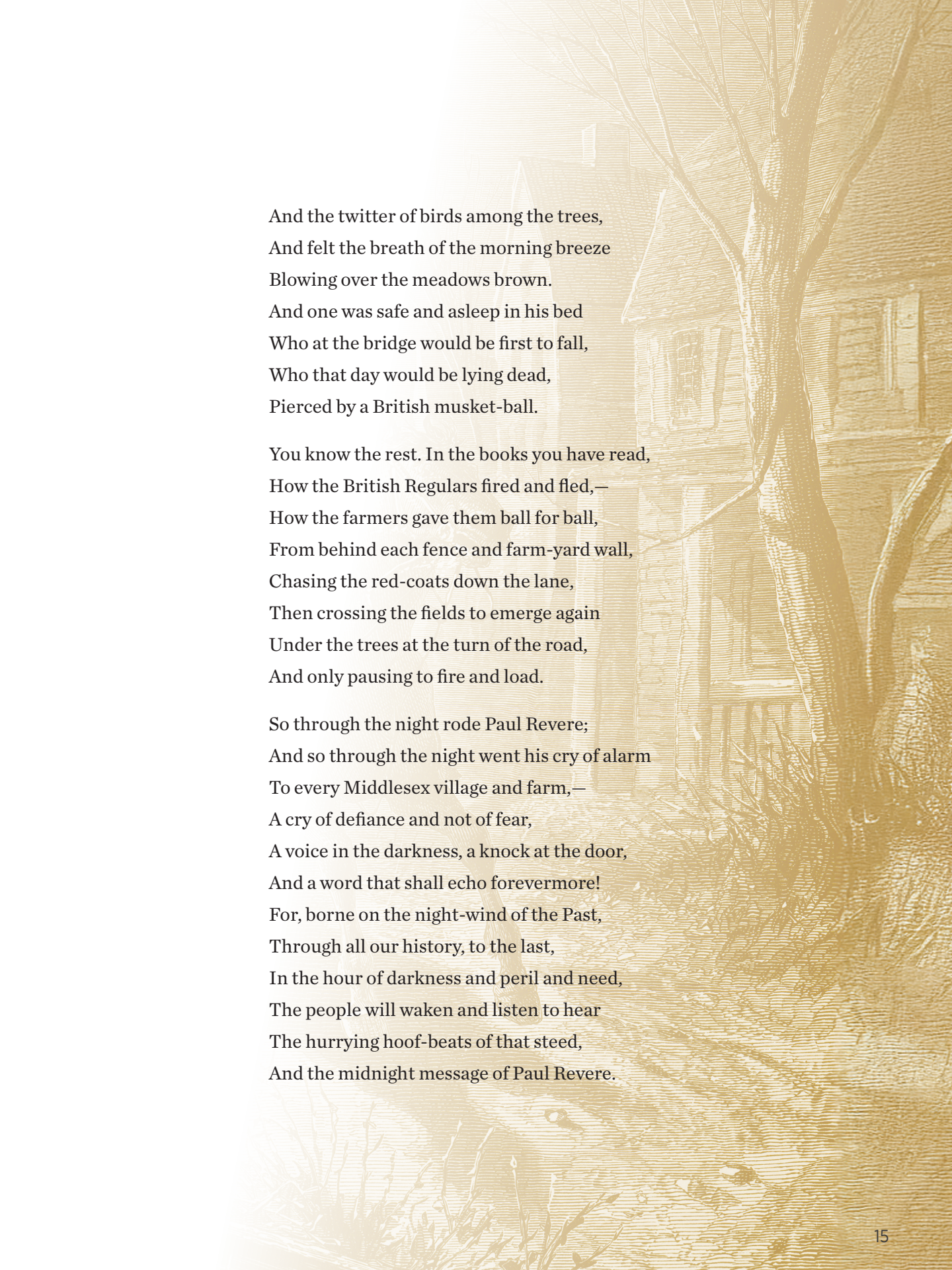
A hurry of hoofs in a village street,
A shape in the moonlight, a bulk in the dark,
And beneath, from the pebbles, in passing, a spark
Struck out by a steed flying fearless and fleet;
That was all! And yet, through the gloom and the light,

The fate of a nation was riding that night;
And the spark struck out by that steed, in his flight,
Kindled the land into flame with its heat.
He has left the village and mounted the steep,
And beneath him, tranquil and broad and deep,
Is the Mystic, meeting the ocean tides;
And under the alders that skirt its edge,
Now soft on the sand, now loud on the ledge,
Is heard the tramp of his steed as he rides.

It was twelve by the village clock
When he crossed the bridge into Medford town.
He heard the crowing of the cock,
And the barking of the farmer's dog,
And felt the damp of the river fog,
That rises after the sun goes down.

It was one by the village clock,
When he galloped into Lexington.
He saw the gilded weathercock
Swim in the moonlight as he passed,
And the meeting-house windows, black and bare,
Gaze at him with a spectral glare,
As if they already stood aghast
At the bloody work they would look upon.

It was two by the village clock,
When he came to the bridge in Concord town.
He heard the bleating of the flock,



And the twitter of birds among the trees,
And felt the breath of the morning breeze
Blowing over the meadows brown.
And one was safe and asleep in his bed
Who at the bridge would be first to fall,
Who that day would be lying dead,
Pierced by a British musket-ball.

You know the rest. In the books you have read,
How the British Regulars fired and fled,—
How the farmers gave them ball for ball,
From behind each fence and farm-yard wall,
Chasing the red-coats down the lane,
Then crossing the fields to emerge again
Under the trees at the turn of the road,
And only pausing to fire and load.

So through the night rode Paul Revere;
And so through the night went his cry of alarm
To every Middlesex village and farm,—
A cry of defiance and not of fear,
A voice in the darkness, a knock at the door,
And a word that shall echo forevermore!
For, borne on the night-wind of the Past,
Through all our history, to the last,
In the hour of darkness and peril and need,
The people will waken and listen to hear
The hurrying hoof-beats of that steed,
And the midnight message of Paul Revere.

“Barbara Frietchie”

John Greenleaf Whittier, 1863

The following story poem by John Greenleaf Whittier honors the Union patriotism of its heroine as she flies the Union flag in Frederick, Maryland while the rebel leader Stonewall Jackson marches through the city.



Up from the meadows rich with corn,
Clear in the cool September morn,

The clustered spires of Frederick stand
Green-walled by the hills of Maryland.

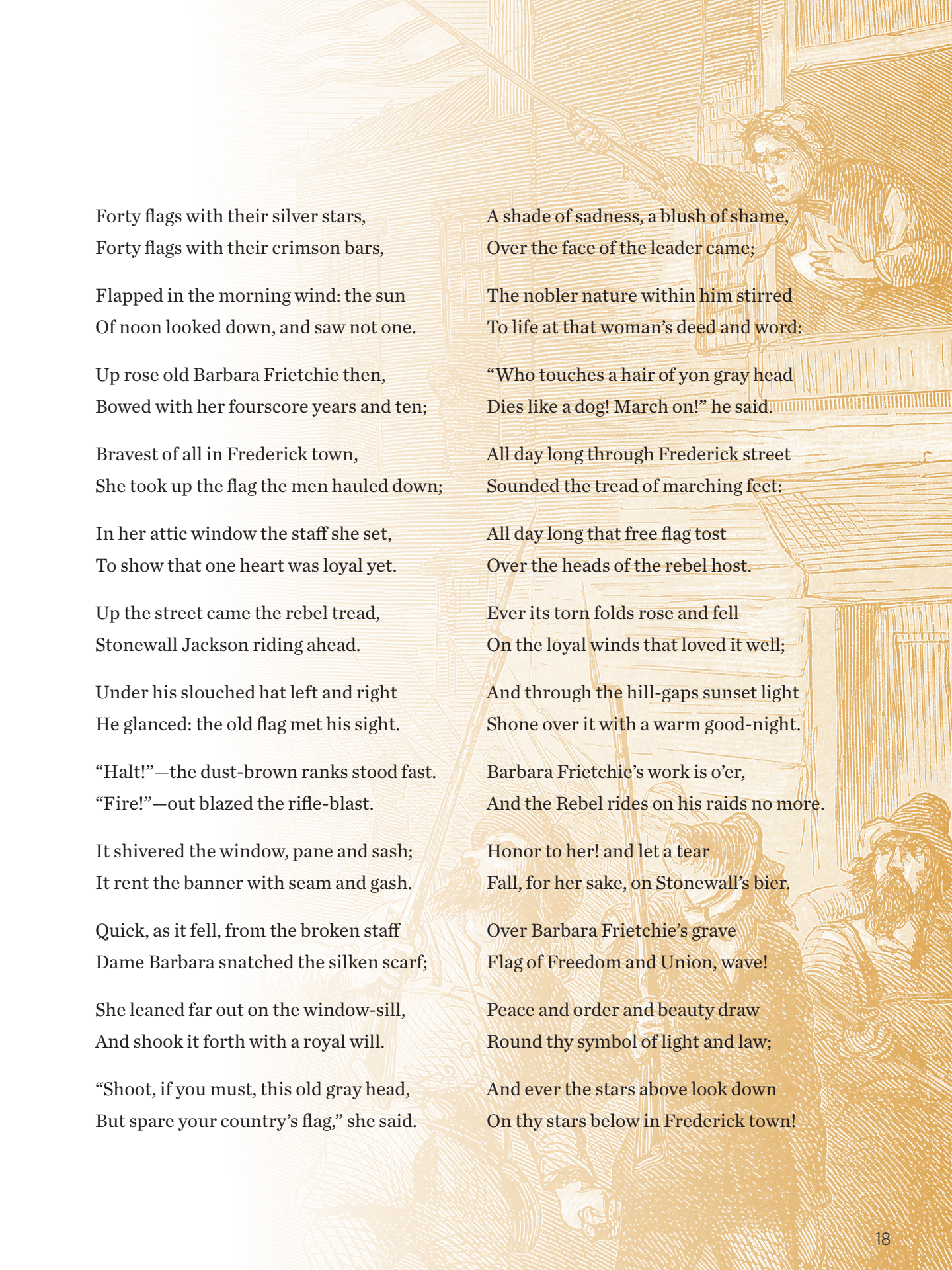
Round about them orchards sweep,
Apple- and peach-tree fruited deep,

Fair as a garden of the Lord
To the eyes of the famished rebel horde,

On that pleasant morn of the early fall
When Lee marched over the mountain wall,

Over the mountains winding down,
Horse and foot, into Frederick town.





Forty flags with their silver stars,
Forty flags with their crimson bars,
Flapped in the morning wind: the sun
Of noon looked down, and saw not one.
Up rose old Barbara Frietchie then,
Bowed with her fourscore years and ten;
Bravest of all in Frederick town,
She took up the flag the men hauled down;
In her attic window the staff she set,
To show that one heart was loyal yet.
Up the street came the rebel tread,
Stonewall Jackson riding ahead.
Under his slouched hat left and right
He glanced: the old flag met his sight.
“Halt!”—the dust-brown ranks stood fast.
“Fire!”—out blazed the rifle-blast.
It shivered the window, pane and sash;
It rent the banner with seam and gash.
Quick, as it fell, from the broken staff
Dame Barbara snatched the silken scarf;
She leaned far out on the window-sill,
And shook it forth with a royal will.
“Shoot, if you must, this old gray head,
But spare your country’s flag,” she said.

A shade of sadness, a blush of shame,
Over the face of the leader came;
The nobler nature within him stirred
To life at that woman’s deed and word:
“Who touches a hair of yon gray head
Dies like a dog! March on!” he said.
All day long through Frederick street
Sounded the tread of marching feet:
All day long that free flag tost
Over the heads of the rebel host.
Ever its torn folds rose and fell
On the loyal winds that loved it well;
And through the hill-gaps sunset light
Shone over it with a warm good-night.
Barbara Frietchie’s work is o’er,
And the Rebel rides on his raids no more.
Honor to her! and let a tear
Fall, for her sake, on Stonewall’s bier.
Over Barbara Frietchie’s grave
Flag of Freedom and Union, wave!
Peace and order and beauty draw
Round thy symbol of light and law;
And ever the stars above look down
On thy stars below in Frederick town!



"Our Banner in the Sky", Frederic Edwin Church, 1861

Battle Hymn of the Republic

Julia Ward Howe, 1862

After touring Union Army camps near Washington, DC in 1861, Julia Ward Howe, the daughter of a wealthy New York City banker, was inspired to write lyrics to a familiar tune that was being sung at the time. Her poem was published on the front page of The Atlantic Monthly, in February 1862 and became associated with the Union cause. It has been a fixture of patriotic programs ever since.

Mine eyes have seen the glory
of the coming of the Lord
He is trampling out the vintage where
the grapes of wrath are stored;
He hath loosed the fateful lightning
of His terrible swift sword;
His truth is marching on.

Glory, glory, hallelujah
Glory, glory, hallelujah
Glory, glory, hallelujah
His truth is marching on

I have seen Him in the watch-fires
of a hundred circling camps;
They have builded Him an altar
in the evening dews and damps;
I can read the righteous sentence by
the dim and flaring lamps;
His day is marching on.

Glory, glory, hallelujah
Glory, glory, hallelujah
Glory, glory, hallelujah
His truth is marching on

He has sounded forth the trumpet
that shall never call retreat;
He is sifting out the hearts of all
before His judgment seat;
O be swift, my soul, to answer Him;
be jubilant, my feet!
Our God is marching on.

Glory, glory, hallelujah
Glory, glory, hallelujah
Glory, glory, hallelujah
His truth is marching on

In the beauty of the lilies
Christ was born across the sea,
With a glory in His bosom
that transfigures you and me;
As He died to make us holy,
let us die to make men free,
while God is marching on.

Glory, glory, hallelujah
Glory, glory, hallelujah
Glory, glory, hallelujah
His truth is marching on

Proclamation 106 —Thanksgiving Day 1863

Abraham Lincoln, 1863

On October 3, 1863, after victories at Gettysburg where General Robert E. Lee was defeated and forced to return to Virginia and Vicksburg where the Union forces won and divided the Confederacy in two, President Abraham Lincoln issued his Proclamation of a Thanksgiving holiday.

By the President of the United States of America. A Proclamation.

The year that is drawing toward its close has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies. To these bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they come, others have been added, which are of so extraordinary a nature that they cannot fail to penetrate and even soften the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever-watchful providence of Almighty God.

In the midst of a civil war of unequalled magnitude and severity, which has sometimes seemed to foreign states to invite and provoke their aggressions, peace has been preserved with all nations, order has been maintained, the laws have been respected and obeyed, and harmony has prevailed everywhere, except in the theater of military conflict; while that theater has been greatly contracted by the advancing armies and navies of the Union.

Needful diversions of wealth and of strength from the fields of peaceful industry to the national defense have not arrested the plow, the shuttle, or the ship; the ax has enlarged the borders of our settlements, and the mines, as well of iron and coal as of the precious metals, have yielded even more abundantly than heretofore. Population has steadily increased, notwithstanding the waste that has been made in the camp, the siege, and the battlefield, and the country, rejoicing in the consciousness of augmented strength and vigor, is permitted to expect continuance of years with large increase of freedom.

No human counsel hath devised, nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy.

It has seemed to me fit and proper that they should be solemnly, reverently, and gratefully acknowledged as with one heart and one voice by the whole American people. I do,



...therefore, invite my fellow-citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next as a Day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the heavens.

—Abraham Lincoln

therefore, invite my fellow-citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next as a Day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in

the heavens. And I recommend to them that, while offering up the ascriptions justly due to Him for such singular deliverances and blessings, they do also, with humble penitence for our national perverseness and disobedience, commend to His tender care all those who have become widows, orphans, mourners, or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife in which we are unavoidably engaged, and fervently implore the interposition of the Almighty hand to heal the wounds of the nation, and to restore it, as soon as may be consistent with the Divine purposes, to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquility, and union.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the city of Washington, this third day of October, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and of the Independence of the United States the eighty-eighth.

Abraham. Lincoln By the President: William. H. Seward. Secretary of State.

Gettysburg Address

Abraham Lincoln, 1863

The Gettysburg Address, November 19, 1863, is the shortest and most eloquent statement explaining the Civil War, honoring those who fought and died, and focusing on America's hope for the future. The Union victory at the battle of Gettysburg assured President Lincoln of the righteousness of the cause to free the slaves and enabled him to proceed with the Emancipation Proclamation. His address honored those who had died and gave inspiration to the living.

Four score and seven years ago

our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate—we can not consecrate—we can not hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

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Military Anthems

*Excerpts from the Army, Navy,
and Marine Corps Anthems*

*Thank you to all armed service members.
All gave some; some gave all, laying down
their lives so we could live in freedom. In
earlier years and especially at the time of
World War II, children around the nation sang
the Marine and Army anthems in school to
demonstrate their patriotism.*





Air Force

Tribute

Please note that we are unable to reproduce the lyrics or music of the official U.S. Air Force anthem in this publication due to copyright restrictions. However, we deeply honor and value the service, sacrifice, and dedication of all Air Force members. Their contributions are an essential part of our nation's strength and legacy.

The Army Anthem

“The Army Goes Rolling Along”
Harold W. Arberg, 1908 (excerpt)

We dedicate this anthem to all who served: from the Minutemen at Lexington and Concord, to the brave men at Gettysburg, to those who fought at St. Mihiel hastening the end of World War I, to soldiers who held off the last efforts of the Third Reich against our troops in Bastogne, to those who fought the enemy at Khe Sanh in Vietnam, and at Fallujah in Iraq.

March along, sing our song,
with the Army of the free
Count the brave, count the true,
who have fought to victory
We’re the Army and proud of our name
We’re the Army and proudly proclaim

First to fight for the right,
And to build the Nation’s might,
And the Army goes rolling along
Proud of all we have done,
Fighting ‘til the battle’s won,
And the Army goes rolling along.



The Navy Anthem

*“Anchors Aweigh”
Alfred H. Miles, 1906 (excerpt)*

The Navy, one of our oldest services, began with Privateers fighting in the Revolution. Our nation built ships of the line for the war against the Barbary Pirates and the War of 1812. The Navy grew with iron-clad vessels during the Civil War. Teddy Roosevelt sent the Great White Fleet around the world in the early 20th century leading to a Two-Ocean Navy in World War II. Naval force projects our power around the globe.

Anchors Aweigh, my boys,
Anchors Aweigh.
Farewell to foreign shores,
We sail at break of day-ay-ay-ay.
Through our last night ashore,
Drink to the foam,
Until we meet once more.
Here's wishing
you a happy voyage home.



The Marine Anthem

*"The Marine Hymn", Author Unknown, 1929,
revised in 1942 (excerpt)*

The Marine Hymn, one of the best-known military anthems, illustrates a long history of pride and toughness from the Barbary Wars and Mexican War to our current day. With support of naval and air power, Marines led the assaults on the Japanese islands in the Pacific in World War II.

From the Halls of Montezuma
To the shores of Tripoli;
We fight our country's battles
In the air, on land, and sea;
First to fight for right and freedom
And to keep our honor clean;
We are proud to claim the title
OF UNITED STATES MARINE.



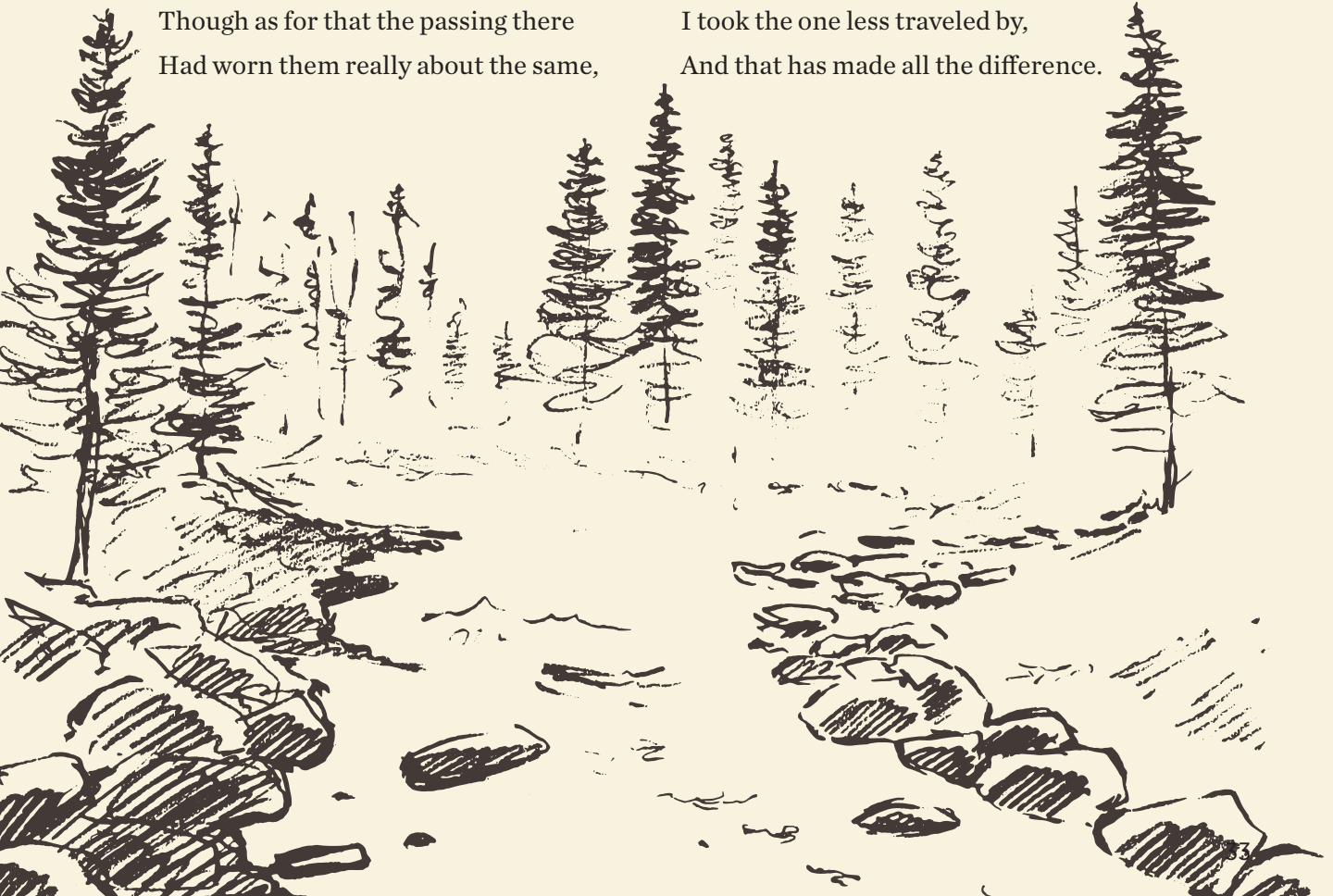
“The Road Not Taken”

Robert Frost, 1916

Robert Frost was one of the great American poets of the 20th century. This poem is a tribute to the choices we have made as a nation from the days of our independence until today as the leader of the free world.

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;
Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.
I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.



“A Nation’s Strength”

William Ralph Emerson, 1891

This poem was written by architect and occasional poet, William Ralph Emerson, second cousin of the more famous Ralph Waldo Emerson. The poem uses architectural metaphors to illustrate that the nation was built on a strong foundation of character, honor, and hard work.

What makes a nation’s pillars high
And its foundations strong?

What makes it mighty to defy
The foes that round it throng?

It is not gold. Its kingdoms grand
Go down in battle shock;

Its shafts are laid on sinking sand,
Not on abiding rock.

Is it the sword? Ask the red dust
Of empires passed away;

The blood has turned their stones to rust,
Their glory to decay.

And is it pride? Ah, that bright crown
Has seemed to nations sweet;

But God has struck its luster down
In ashes at his feet.

Not gold but only men can make
A people great and strong;

Men who for truth and honor’s sake
Stand fast and suffer long.

Brave men who work while others sleep,
Who dare while others fly...

They build a nation’s pillars deep
And lift them to the sky.

“America the Beautiful”

Katherine Lee Bates, 1913

*I*nspired by a trip to Pikes Peak in 1893, Katherine Lee Bates wrote the poem “America.” Her poem first appeared in print on July 4, 1895, in *The Congregationalist*, a weekly journal. Ms. Bates revised the lyrics in 1904 and again in 1913 and titled the work, “America the Beautiful.” Its lyrics focus on our nation’s natural beauty, patriotism, brotherhood of all Americans, and hopes for the future—as an inspiration to all citizens.



O beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain!

America! America!

*God shed His grace on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!*

O beautiful for pilgrim feet
Whose stern impassioned stress
A thoroughfare for freedom beat
Across the wilderness.

America! America!

*God mend thine ev'ry flaw,
Confirm thy soul in self-control,
Thy liberty in law.*

O beautiful for heroes proved
In liberating strife,
Who more than self their country loved,
And mercy more than life

America! America!

*May God thy gold refine
Till all success be nobleness,
And ev'ry gain divine.*

O beautiful for patriot dream
That sees beyond the years
Thine alabaster cities gleam
Undimmed by human tears.

America! America!

*God shed his grace on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea.*



Acknowledgements

With gratitude we acknowledge the example and encouragement we received from Heritage friends, Bob and Jane Lewit, to compile a short “Thanksgiving Booklet” of readings and songs similar to what they have shared with their own family and friends for many years. Much like the rich tradition of recounting the story of the Exodus during the Passover Seder, they share America’s story around their Thanksgiving table to pass on our history and traditions and to create memories for the next generation.

As we begin to commemorate the 250th anniversary of our country’s founding, the Lewits thought others also might wish to share proclamations, poems, and songs that remind us of the sacrifices and heroics that came before and the spirit that will sustain us through the next 250 years.

Special thanks, also, to Dr. Matthew Mehan of Hillsdale College who helped compile this volume.

*And now is the time to place this booklet
where you will be able to find it for
future Thanksgivings.*

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Note: Inspired by a trip to Pikes Peak in 1893, Katherine Lee Bates wrote the poem "America". She revised the lyrics in 1904 and 1913. The most common melody associated with "America the Beautiful" is the piece "Materna," originally composed by Samuel A. Ward. "Materna" was first published in accompaniment with "America the Beautiful" in 1910.

Building
an America
where freedom,
opportunity,
prosperity,
and civil society
flourish.



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