

# SPJST May Vestnik Project - A National Treasurer: The Star Spangled Banner

This project earns a maximum 2 points in the SPJST Youth Clubs Merit Points System. Mail completed project no later than **May 31, 2009** to:  
SPJST Youth Program c/o SPJST Home Office • P.O. Box 100 • Temple, Texas 76503

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Lodge \_\_\_\_\_

## A National Treasure: The Star Spangled Banner

**T**he SPJST Youth Program has three parts: educational, social and patriotic. The patriotic program consists of ceremonial rituals and an annual essay contest. The objective is to teach the operation of a free democratic society and majority rule. In June, we take a closer look at the United States National Anthem, *The Star-Spangled Banner*.

On September 14, 1814, U.S. soldiers at Baltimore's Fort McHenry raised a huge American flag to celebrate a crucial victory over British forces during the War of 1812. The sight of those "broad stripes and bright stars" inspired a gifted amateur poet and attorney Francis Scott Key to write a song that eventually became the United States national anthem. Key's words gave new significance to a national symbol and started a tradition through which generations of Americans have invested the flag with their own meanings and memories.

### The Old Original

The original Star-Spangled Banner, the flag that inspired Francis Scott Key to write the song that would become our national anthem, is among the most treasured artifacts in the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C.



During the 19th century, "The Star-Spangled Banner" became one of the nation's best-loved patriotic songs. It gained special significance during the Civil War, a time when many Americans turned to music to express their feelings for the flag and the ideals and values it represented. By the 1890s, the military had adopted the song for ceremonial purposes, requiring it to be played at the raising and lowering of the colors. Despite its widespread popularity, "The Star-Spangled Banner" did not become the National Anthem until 1931.

### Something to Think About

Have you ever wondered why *The Star Spangled Banner* is always played before ball games? In 1918, the United States was fighting in World War I. With American soldiers facing intense combat in France, baseball officials considered canceling the World Series. When they heard that the soldiers were looking forward to hearing the series, the officials compromised, and they went ahead with the games, but as a patriotic gesture, they played *The Star Spangled Banner* during the seventh-inning stretch. Everyone stood and sang along. Eventually, *The Star Spangled Banner* became a tradition at baseball games, and before every other major sporting event as well. For more background on the National Anthem, visit the Smithsonian's website at <http://americanhistory.si.edu/starspangledbanner>.

### After reading about the Star-Spangled Banner, answer the four questions below:

1. What was the name of the gifted amateur poet and attorney who wrote the Star-Spangled Banner? \_\_\_\_\_
2. In what year was the *Star-Spangled Banner* written? \_\_\_\_\_
3. In what year did the song become our National Anthem? \_\_\_\_\_
4. In what year was the *Star-Spangled Banner* introduced as a regular and patriotic tribute to national sporting events? \_\_\_\_\_