



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on May 28, 2018

When Announcer Declares No Singing of the National Anthem, Crowd Sings Anyway

When the announcer declared that there would be no singing of the National Anthem at the start of a game to decide California's Central Section Division 1 high school softball championship on Friday night, the crowd booed the announcer and sang the National Anthem anyway.

Tiffany Marquez caught the event on her cellphone and posted it on her Facebook page. She told the *Fresno Bee*:



Honestly, I was shocked (when) the announcer stated, "There will be no anthem; let's just play softball." Within seconds, you could hear people in the crowd singing and the volume of their voices building. There I was, standing in the middle of a true testament to unity and patriotism.

The message was not lost on the event coordinator, Bob Kayajanian, who told the *Bee* that when more than one game is played during a tournament such as this one, the National Anthem is played only before the first one. But, chastened by the booing and the makeshift choir's patriotic and heartfelt (albeit ragged) rendition, he announced that it was "a learning experience" and "going forward we're playing the national anthem [before] every game."

How many Americans today remember the details of the British bombardment of Fort McHenry toward the end of the War of 1812? How many remember their history about Francis Scott Key, a 35-year-old lawyer who happened to be aboard the British flagship to negotiate the release of a friend who had recently been arrested? Although he was successful, Key and his friend were not allowed to return to American soil until after the bombardment of Fort McHenry in Baltimore Harbor had ended.

During the night, Key wrote later, "It seemed as though mother earth had opened and was vomiting shot and shell in a sheet of fire and brimstone." But at "dawn's early light" he saw the American flag still flying "o'er the ramparts" and penned the now-famous 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 rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there:
Oh, say! does that star-spangled banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

After Key's lyrics were printed by the *Baltimore Patriot*, they were reprinted all across the country, not only immortalizing Key's poem but also naming the flag it celebrated.



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But the flag that flew over Fort McHenry that night of September 13-14, 1814 wasn't the flag that Key saw the morning after. At the request of Major George Armistead, the commander of Fort McHenry, two flags were made: a "storm" flag with 15 stars and 15 stripes (each representing a state), and a much larger "garrison" flag. Armistead wanted flags that were large enough for the British to see without straining their eyesight. His request to the commander of Baltimore defenses in July 1813 stated:

We, sir, are ready at Fort McHenry to defend Baltimore against invading by the enemy ... except that we have no suitable ensign to display over the Star Fort, and it is my desire to have a flag so large that the British will have no difficulty in seeing it from a distance.

The "storm" flag — 17 x 25 feet — was the one that withstood the horrific pounding and vomiting of fire and shell from the British fleet that night. In the morning, the one that Key saw was the "garrison" flag — 30 x 42 feet — which was raised in the morning signaling the failure of the British bombardment to secure the fort.

The "garrison" flag is the one that resides, following its restoration, in the National Museum of History and Technology inside the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, D.C. Said Brent Glass, the museum's director, "The Star-Spangled Banner is a symbol of American history that ranks with the Statue of Liberty and the Charters of Freedom [the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, and its Bill of Rights]."

Added Glass:

The survival of this flag for [more than] 200 years is a visible testimony to the strength and perseverance of this nation, and we hope that it will inspire many more generations to come.

That would include the crowd at Fresno's Margie Wright Diamond where, after the National Anthem was defiantly rendered, the Clovis High School Cougars defeated the Buchanan High School Bears, 6-3.

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