

" I AM AN AMERICAN." Indeed - these words should be bannered from the rooftops and shouted with joy. In the past, we have been a humble and proud nation. But, today, many of our citizens have abandoned their higher principals and donned the cloak of apathy. If the original holders of this land were to see it now, I fear they would call us to task for the marring and destruction of the land they so respected. The "real" Americans and forebearers of our country truly held the laws of nature in high esteem and with no exception would the American Indian have violated these rules, as we have. Our forefathers claimed this land in its infancy when it was without a blemish. Then the air was fresh and invigorating and the sparkling waters fresh, but today, these rich resources are certainly hard to find. Either we don't really care or feel that someone else is taking care of these problems. However, shouldn't each of us claim our individual responsibility for the problems facing America. After all, we all share the same household, so we should all keep the house in order.

Being an American carries a responsibility that many have ignored. If we are to ever escape our limitations and climb to the heights of prosperity, then each of us must be willing to shoulder our own load and walk proudly together as the great nation we once were.

Regardless of race, color or creed, we are all brothers and sisters of this of our native land and we are woven together by an invisible thread called "Patriotism".

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I have heard it said that Patriotism is dead in our country. Well, I don't think so. It may be hidden under the rug or stored in a closet but it's certainly not dead. If you're guilty of hoarding your patriotism, then now is the time to drag it out and hang it on your front lawn for all the world to view. Perhaps if we started today to plant the seeds of brotherly love in our country, then tomorrow it could be harvested by our children, the future "Americans". It stands to reason that if we wish to sip from the cup of our inheritance and truly enjoy our birthright as heirs of this mighty land, then we must combine the knowledge of the past with the wisdom of the present and mix it with the promise of tomorrow, whereby it can be molded into a better future. This must be done, not only for our own sakes but for the future generations to come. Truly, our future depends on it. It is time to discard our differences and band together as one nation. Whether you happen to be entangled in the intricate webs of the city or deposited in the secure lap of suburbia, it is time to join hands and "stand tall". Let us claim our rights as citizens of these great United States, and remember, the key word here is "United". If we continue to pick at her ideals and work against each other, one day, we may be called the Separate States of America.

We should not let a day go by that we don't recall that we are all children of this land we call "home", whether you happen to be a born child or recently adopted, our mother land has clutched each of us to her bosom and bestowed on

us a fruitful heritage that we may pick and enjoy at our leisure. So from this day forward, let each of us vow to help and bless our neighbors, each and every one, instead of cursing and condemning our fellow man. For this would be the first step to "peace on earth" - which is the true legacy to this land. If each of us searched our soul, perhaps we would find more workable solutions that would lead to a more harmonious roads. If you have been blessed with the label of "American" - then I urge you to wear it proudly and without shame. For God has blessed America - now we must keep her free!