

July's hymn of the month 2019
by
Bill Dagle

The 4th of July evokes feelings of patriotism in all of us. Each year, we celebrate the birth of the greatest nation on earth with picnics, special services at our churches and, of course, the 4th of July parades. At the head of each parade will be our symbol of America—a piece of cloth that represents all that we stand for, our flag. Men and women have given their best that it may proudly wave. In the words of Francis Scott Key, “O say does that star-spangled banner yet wave over the land of the free and the home of the brave.” Yes, it does; and all of us should pray that it will until our Lord returns. Well, there is an old song that was written about our old flag; and even though it's not found in our hymnals, I thought you might like to know the story behind its writing.

George M. Cohan, the famous composer of many Broadway hits, was riding in a funeral procession with an elderly Civil War veteran. The year was 1910. The old veteran was recalling, for Cohan, Pickett's holding a folded American flag. At the end of the story, the soldier embraced the flag and said, “I did it all for her, for she's a grand old rag.”

Cohan was so taken by the story that he would write a song and then a complete play centered around his new tune. In short time, *George Washington Jr.* became one of the most successful musicals of its day. Cohan played the role of a patriotic young man who adopts the name of George Washington Jr. The highlight of the show would be Cohan singing his new song, “You're a Grand Old Flag,” (*Rag* had been changed to *flag* after charges of disrespect) which would bring audiences to their feet with cheers and applause.

Since 1910, many more have given their best for the “Grand Old Flag.” We would do well to honor them and all who serve this great land in flying our flags high, and if given the opportunity, to sing a song that expresses so well our patriotism and love for our grand old flag:

You're a Grand Old Flag

You're a grand old flag you're a
High flying flag, And forever in
Peace may you wave. You're the
Emblem of the land I
Love, The home of the free and the
Brave. Ev'ry heart beats
True under Red, White and Blue, Where there's
Never a boast or brag; “But should
Auld acquaintance be forgot,” Keep your
Eye on the grand old flag

The hymn of the month for July 2019: **You're a Grand Old Flag**