

## American Music and American History

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**For teachers: The purpose of this document is to teach students about American patriotic songs, and how they are related to American history. The first slide serves to teach the students about the musical alphabet (a,b,c,d,e,f,g). This slide is not essential for the student's understanding of the document as a whole, but I have included it in case there is interest.**

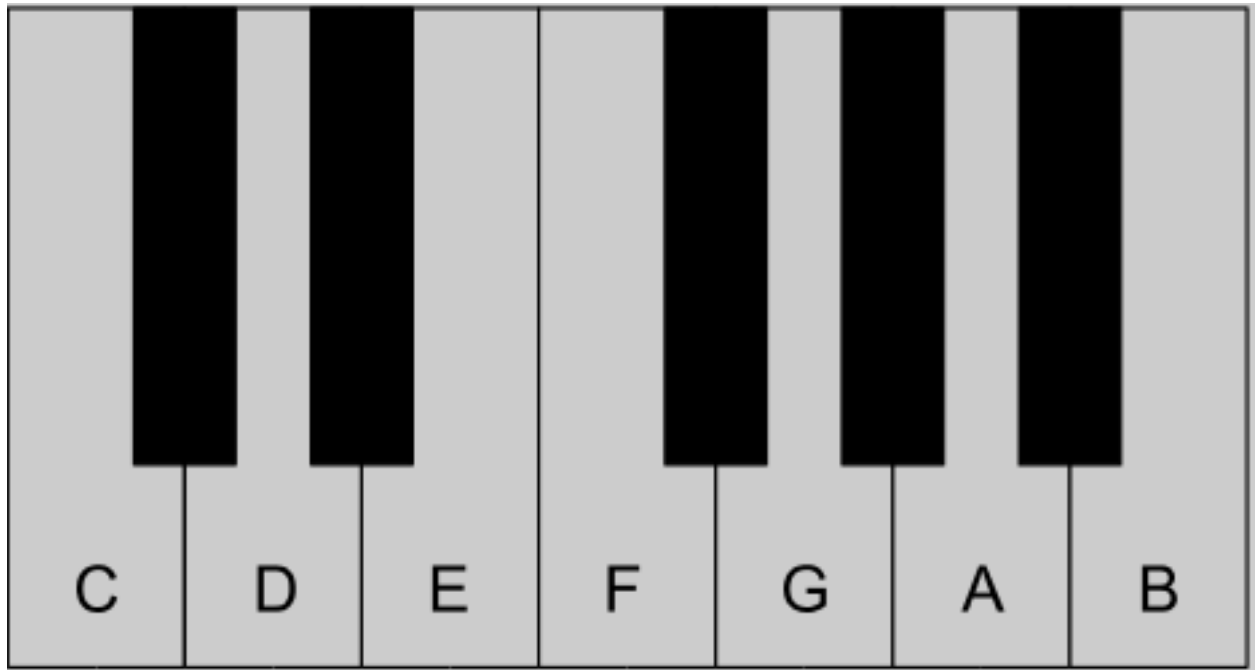
**The next few slides each give a brief background about an individual songwriter or composer. It also gives a list of songs that they wrote. It would be helpful for the student to learn about who these artists are, and what songs they wrote before going into detail about specific historical topics.**

**The last few slides show pictures related to historical topics that influenced the songs mentioned in the first few slides. I also give a few bullet points about how the songs and historical topics are related. I suggest that the teacher talk about the topics first, and then play recordings of the songs, and ask the class to relate the song lyrics to the topics discussed.**

**Recordings of American patriotic songs can easily be found on [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com). Here are my suggestions for songs to play:**

- 1). Francis Scott Key: *The Star Spangled Banner***
- 2). Woodie Guthrie: *This Land is Your Land***
- 3). Samuel A. Ward (music) and Katharine Lee Bates (lyrics): *America the Beautiful***
- 4). Patrick Gilmore: *When Johnny Comes Marching Home***

**PIANO KEYBOARD WITH NOTE NAMES**



FAMOUS SONGWRITERS OF AMERICAN PATRIOTIC SONGS

FRANCIS SCOTT KEY



**-1779-1843. Born and died in Maryland. Lived in Georgetown.**

**-Lawyer, author, and amateur poet.**

**-Known for: Writing the lyrics to “The Star Spangled Banner”.**

**-The melody to for “Star Spangled Banner” was taken from a popular British song called “To Anacreon in Heaven”**

**-There are two bridges named in his honor. One in Virginia, and one in Georgetown.**

## **WOODIE GUTHRIE**



- Woodrow Wilson Guthrie (birth name)**
- 1912-1967. Most popular in from the 1930s-1950s.**
- He's an American singer-songwriter. He plays guitar and sings.**
- Best known for "This Land is Your Land"**
- He wrote hundreds of political, traditional, and children's songs**
- Very well known for his lyrics.**
- A lot of his songs are about the Great Depression in the 1930s.**

## **KATHARINE LEE BATES**



**-1859-1929. Lived in Massachusetts.**

**-She wrote many poetry books, books about travelling, and children's books.**

**-Author, Poet, Educator.**

**-Known for: Writing the lyrics to America the Beautiful.**

**-Samuel A Ward, organist and composer, wrote the music for "America the Beautiful".**

# PATRICK GILMORE



**-1829-1892**

**-Born in Ireland. Lived and worked in the United States after 1848.**

**-Composer and bandmaster**

**-Wrote the lyrics to “When Johnny Comes Marching Home” while serving in the Union army during the Civil War.**

**-He was a very successful composer in his lifetime. He set up “Gilmore’s Concert Garden” in New York, which became an arena called “Madison Square Garden”.**

EVENTS THAT INFLUENCED PATRIOTIC SONGS

**THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER**



**The lyrics come from "Defence of Fort M'Henry" a poem written on September 14, 1814 by Francis Scott Key after seeing Fort McHenry by being bombed by British ships in during a battle the War of 1812. Key was inspired by the large American flag, the Star-Spangled Banner, flying triumphantly above the fort during the American victory.**

# THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND



- Was written in 1940 with The Great Depression in mind.
- The lyrics are about Guthrie's belief that poor people should have the same rights as the rich.
- Guthrie borrowed the melody from another song by a group called The Carter Family.
- When writing the song, Guthrie was travelling from Los Angeles to New York City.



# America The Beautiful



- In 1893, Bates took a train trip to Colorado. The sights that she saw on her trip inspired her to write the lyrics to America the Beautiful. These sights included wheat fields in Kansas, and the views from the top of Pike's Peak (pictured above).
- The words started to come to her at the top of the mountain, and she wrote them down in her hotel room that night.
- The melody (written by Samuel A. Ward) was also inspired by a trip. The composer was travelling from Coney Island back to his home in New York when he thought of the tune.

# When Johnny Comes Marching Home



- Inspired by the American Civil War (1861-1865)
- P. Gilmore is said to have written the song for his sister Annie as she prayed for the safe return of her fiancé, Union Light Artillery Captain John O'Rourke, from the Civil War.
- Based on a melody that Gilmore heard someone hum.