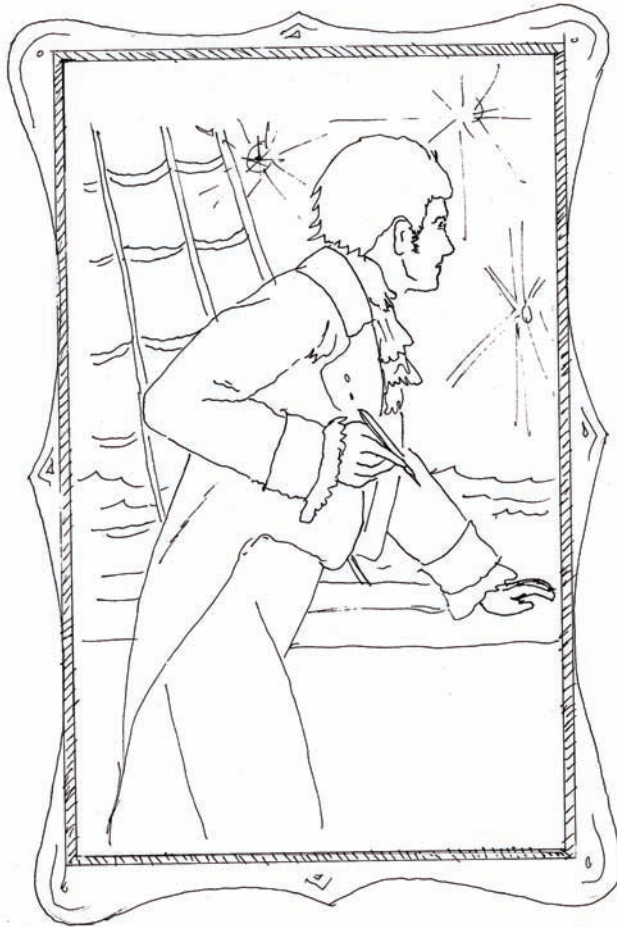


The Star-Spangled Banner

The Star-Spangled Banner is the flag that inspired Francis Scott Key to write the words that he would later set to the music that would become our national anthem. During the War of 1812, Key was detained on a British ship. He noticed the flag being raised early in the morning after a major battle, and was inspired by the sight to write “The Star-Spangled Banner”. The song became popular with Union troops and supporters during the Civil War, and was made our official national anthem in 1931. The actual “star-spangled banner” that he saw from the ship is now on display at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History.



The Star-Spangled Banner at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.

Vocabulary

anthem: a song of praise or devotion. “The British national anthem has the same tune as the patriotic American song, ‘My Country ‘Tis of Thee.’”

detain: to keep, to restrain. “He was detained by airport officials for several hours.”

Answer the questions below on a separate piece of paper.

1. Why was Key so inspired by the sight of the American flag?
2. What other songs do you think would make a good national anthem?