

# YOU'RE A GRAND OLD FLAG

George M. Cohan, 1906

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On June 14, 1777, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Continental Congress adopted the official flag of the United States by resolution. 140 years later, then President Woodrow Wilson issued a proclamation that officially established June 14 as *Flag Day*, and *National Flag Day* was eventually established by an Act of Congress in 1949.

This song, including both lyrics and music, was written in 1906 by George Cohan. Interestingly, it was not motivated by the congressional adoption of the flag, but as part of a Broadway musical created called *George Washington, Jr.* It quickly became the first song from a musical to sell over one million copies. The inspiration for the song title came from an encounter Cohan once had with a Civil War veteran, who was carrying a carefully folded by ragged old flag. The man reportedly referred to it as a *Grand Old Rag*, and Cohan used that as the original title. In later years, in response to the objections of many groups and individuals to referring to the flag as a 'Rag', he renamed the song to *You're a Grand Old Flag*.



Cohan's parents were traveling Vaudeville performers and introduced him to music at an early age. He is considered the inventor of the American musical comedy, with over 1500 songs to his credit. Among his most well-known hits are *Give My Regards to Broadway*, *The Yankee Doodle Boy*, *Mary Is a Grand Old Name*, and *Over There*.

In music and friendship,

~Tull

