



Francis Bellamy

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“I am fortunate. I come from a long line of men of responsibility: preachers, teachers, writers, merchants...I possess a driving will and a forceful nature that always aided me in...life.”

Hello, my name is Francis Bellamy. I am the author of the Pledge of Allegiance. Though my name isn't familiar to most people today, the Pledge, I am happy to say, has never been forgotten.

I was born at Mt. Morris, New York, on May 18, 1855. If you look on a map of the United States, at the state of New York, you'll notice that Mt. Morris is not too far from Lake Ontario. In 1859 my family moved to Rome, New York, which is a bit east of Mt. Morris.

When I was six years old, the Civil War began. At the end of the war I remember seeing soldiers limping through the streets of Rome as they returned home. One day I questioned my father about these men and one in particular, a neighbor. Father said that this man had fought in the Union army and had been wounded at Gettysburg. “What was he fighting for?” I asked my father. He told me that the man had fought to preserve the Union. The war had been fought to end slavery and to make the United State a nation one and inseparable. That idea inspired me always.

In 1892, when I was a young man, the country was making preparations to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the discovery of North America. That happened in 1492. I'm sure that you know the name of the man who discovered it. That's right! His name was Christopher Columbus!

The United States was one of three countries that were later formed out of the land we call North America. In 1892 there was a great celebration in honor of the discovery of America. It was a very patriotic occasion. There was a movement to provide every school in the country with a United States flag, and I came up with the idea to write a pledge to our country. This is what I wrote:

I pledge allegiance to my flag, and (to) the Republic for which it stands - one nation indivisible - with liberty and justice for all.