

Philip F. Haxel, Sr. Patriotism Award  
2007 Essay Contest

**Winner & Recipient of the Baton of Patriotism**

Cecilia Morkovsky, Grade 4  
Church Creek Elementary School  
4209 Church Creek Road  
Belcamp, MD 21017

Pride We Share In Fort McHenry

As Marylanders, we should take pride in having Fort McHenry in our state for many reasons. It defended Baltimore from the British during the war of 1812 – 1814 and showed the world that America was a strong country. Mary Pickersgill, a flag maker that lived in Baltimore was asked to make two to fly over Fort McHenry. The first Flag was thirty feet by forty-two feet. It was the largest battle flag that was ever flown. This was so the British would be able to see it from far away. The second was a storm flag that was seventeen feet by twenty-five feet. It was to be flown during bad weather. The large Flag was the one that inspired Francis Scott Key, who was a Christian, a patriot, a poet and a lawyer, to write the poem that later became our National Anthem, “The Star-Spangled Banner.”

Fort McHenry is important to me because I got the chance to be part of the living flag ceremony that they hold every year at Fort McHenry. It is so cool and special to stand on the ground right beside Fort McHenry and be part of a flag that represents our love for our country and the freedom we have because brave people fought to make us and keep us free. When singing “The Star-Spangled Banner,” it is like reading a book. The words tell the story of what Francis Scott Key saw as he watched Fort McHenry being bombed. If you allow yourself to be part of the story, you can be standing beside Francis Scott Key on the ship and watch the battle with him. The battle lasted for twenty-five hours and it rained so you can also feel tired and wet along with feeling happy and excited when the rockets are no longer glaring and the bombs are not bursting in the air. You can’t wait until the stars are no longer shining and the sun has started rising to see if the Flag is still waving.

I wish that I could thank all the brave soldiers now and in the past for protecting our freedom. I know one way that I can do this is to show how proud I am to be an American by honoring our Flag that they gave their lives to protect. I honor our Flag by saying The Pledge of Allegiance and holding my hand over my heart when the Flag passes me and when I sing “The Star-Spangled Banner.”

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## **Grade 3 Finalist**

Lachae Reeder, Grade 3  
Samuel F. B. Morse Elementary  
424 S. Pulaski Street  
Baltimore, MD 21223

### Why Marylanders Should Take Pride in Having Fort McHenry Located in Our State

Fort McHenry is important to me as a Marylander because of what was done at Fort McHenry. They fought against the British in the War of 1812. Our National Anthem, "The Star Spangled Banner," was written at that time by Francis Scott Key.

In the book, The War of 1812, by Carl R. Green, the British tried to silence the city's forts, "Baltimore was well prepared. Fort McHenry and the other forts survived a twenty-five hour bombardment that began on September 13.

"A lawyer named Francis Scott Key had boarded Cochrane's flagship to arrange the release of a local doctor. When the battle started, Key watched from a front row seat. In the morning, the sight of the American Flag still flying above Fort McHenry inspired him to write 'The Star-Spangled Banner.' The song was an instant hit, but it did not become the national anthem until 1931."

As Marylanders, we should be very proud to have Fort McHenry in our state. It has played a very important part in our history. I will pass it on to my family, classmates, and friends to keep it alive. "Fort McHenry," what a great place, and it is located in MY STATE, MARYLAND!

Resource: The War of 1812 by Carl R. Green

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## **Grade 5 Finalist**

Taylor Hoch, Grade 5  
Church Creek Elementary School  
4299 Church Creek Road  
Belcamp, MD 21017

### Pride in Fort McHenry

We as Marylanders should take great pride in having such a historic landmark as Fort McHenry located in our state. Why should we be proud of Fort McHenry? Well, I can think of many reasons to be proud of the National Monument and Historic Shrine. I hope that when you finish reading that you will agree with [me] and be proud of having Fort McHenry located in our state.

First of all, Fort McHenry is the birthplace of our national anthem. Francis Scott Key wrote the Star Spangled Banner in September 1814 during the attack on Baltimore by the British. He wrote this poem on a British ship while watching the bombardment of the fort. In the morning, he was proud to see the Flag still there.

The soldiers that fought during this battle included the Maryland Militia. The Maryland Militia was made up of volunteer soldiers. They were very brave in defending the fort and Baltimore. These volunteer soldiers were so important that a Maryland state holiday named Defender's Day was created in honor of their courage and bravery.

Fort McHenry was also used in other wars. During the Civil War, it was used as a military prison. The fort was used during World War I and II. It is because of the history of the fort that it was named a National Monument and Historic Shrine, the only such place in the United States.

I hope that you now agree with me that as Marylanders, we should take great pride in having such a historic landmark as Fort McHenry in Maryland.

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