

1/30/07

“Your Tired, Your Poor”

by  
Tom Holbrook

**Brrrrrr! We’ve had a few cold nights over the last few days but comparing it to the temperatures north of here we’ve still got it pretty good. Talked with my son today in Greensboro, NC and he said the temp was in the teens with wind chill factors much lower. My daughter-in-law in WV said the same thing and that she can’t wait till she and my son, along with their kids, get here for a visit in April. I guess we’ll have to continue suffering these intermittent cold spells of 38-40 degree evenings every few weeks as they come through but the 60 degree days we normally have sure makes the wait for the greater warmth of spring all that more bearable.**

**I sure hope you folks have purchased your tickets for the Village Voices pre-Spring concert coming up on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of March at Church On The Square. I heard Friday that many of the tickets had already been snapped up. This is the first time we’ve charged for a show and most people are in favor of it because it guarantees them a seat. Get your buggy on the road to the Villages Box Offices and get your tickets before it’s too late. You know I’m not one to tell you any lies and I’m telling you this concert is going to be the best one we’ve had since I’ve been a member of the group. I feel strongly that it will even outshine the recent Christmas show we presented.**

**Speaking of singing groups, you know I also participate in the Heart of Florida Barbershop Chorus whose Spring/Pre-spring concert will be held at the Savannah Center March 3<sup>rd</sup>, at 6:30 and 8:00 pm. The Chorus sang for a special function in Mt. Dora this past weekend and was blessed with a great turnout of Barbershop starved fans. The guys did a great job and we were well received by all in attendance. I MC’d the show and one of the songs we sang was written by Irving Berlin entitled “Give Me Your Tired, Your Poor.” Knowing where these words came from I was interested in just how they got there.**

**In researching the song I learned some facts that I would like to share with you. In 1886 the United States received a tremendous gift from our then friends and allies France, Lady Liberty herself, The Statue of Liberty which has stood proudly and tall for over 120 years. France had given us the statue but we were responsible for building the base. Three years before Lady Liberty was erected a young Jewish-American poet by the name of Emma Lazarus wrote a poem to be auctioned off to help raise money to build the base. She was 34 years of age at the time, and 4 years later she died. In 1903, 17 years after erecting the Statue Ms. Lazarus’ poem was inscribed on a plaque attached to the base and also placed inside the base as a memorial to this daughter of Jewish immigrants from Portugal.**

What vision she had at such a young age to foresee the role America would play in the lives of millions from around the world who would be seeking shelter and freedom on our shores. From 1892 until 1924 over 25 Million immigrants sailed past the Statue of Liberty and were greeted with this message of hope:

**The New Colossus**

*Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,  
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;  
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand  
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame  
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name  
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand  
Glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command  
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.  
"Keep ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she  
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,  
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.  
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me,  
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"*

Another interesting, little known fact I discovered was that around the ankles of Lady Liberty is a broken chain, symbolizing freedom from bondage and oppression and freedom to move forward into a new life full of hope, opportunity and peace. We can only imagine the tears of joy and feelings of anticipation as to what lie ahead of those gazing up, over a ship's railing into the eyes of this beacon of freedom... yhey had passed through the "golden door" into their promised land.

In 1949 Irving Berlin, an immigrant himself from Russia, in an effort to make others aware of the special nature of our Lady of Liberty, sat music to the last 5 lines of the poem and a new song was born. We Americans have so much to be proud of and thankful for and the information I gleaned on Lady Liberty has made me even prouder. Let's never forget we will always be a light in the darkness to millions of others wanting to share in our blessings.

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