

# **COLONIAL FESTIVAL SCRIPT**

## **DECEMBER 2014**

**Welcome family and friends to our 4th Grade Colonial Festival! This event marks the beginning of our study of early American history and the birth of our nation. We are thrilled you can celebrate the day with us!**

**We will assemble to the music of "Simple Gifts" - a traditional Shaker tune. The Shakers were a religious community that settled in northern New York in the late 1780s. Their values included being simple, humble, modest, generous and working hard.**

**We kindly ask you to rise as we make our grand entrance.**

### **4TH GRADERS ENTER AUDITORIUM**

**In every society, music reflects the values of its people. By exploring the music of early Americans, we are able to learn much about their heritage, culture and daily lives.**

**Our opening selection will be "Chester," a hymn written by William Billings. Born in 1764,**

**Billings was America's first composer of religious music. "Chester" later became the anthem of the Continental Army.**

**In our rendition of "Chester," the recorder will imitate the sound of the fife. The fife is a woodwind instrument that is similar to the piccolo and was associated with the military during the Revolutionary War. It was used in parades to signal commands in battle and call out the routines of camp life.**

### **"CHESTER"**

**Our next two songs will be "The Drum" and "Johnny Has Gone For A Soldier." When performed together or side by side, they represent the conflicting emotions of war.**

**First, we will sing "The Drum" which glorifies battle and was used to recruit soldiers during the Revolutionary War. It inspired patriotism and bravery in the fight for freedom and independence.**

**Later, we will perform, "Johnny Has Gone for a Soldier," which expressed the feelings of misery and loneliness suffered by women who**

**feared for the lives of their men. It reminds us that with every victory comes sacrifice and tragic loss.**

**Unfortunately, many songs of the Revolution are forever lost since they were never written down. We are grateful to Captain George Bush of the 11th Pennsylvania Regiment who collected and transcribed many popular songs of his British, Scottish and Irish heritage. "The Drum" is a song from his manuscript.**

### **SING: THE DRUM**

**Similar to "The Drum," "Johnny Has Gone for a Soldier" is a song from Captain George Bush's Irish heritage and dates back to the mid 17th century. Would you believe that nearly half the soldiers in George Washington's army were of Irish origin or descent? Not surprisingly, they often sang the chorus in the original Gaelic.**

**And now, for the first time ever at West Side School, "Johnny Has Gone for a Soldier," a traditional women's tune, will be performed as a solo by our lovely 4th grade girls!**

**Special thanks to Sam Adler, Michael Byrne, Jack Henick and Matthew Zemsky for playing the recorder. They devoted several lunch and recess periods to composing the introduction and accompaniment that they will perform today.**

### **"JOHNNY HAS GONE FOR A SOLDIER"**

**"Amazing Grace," written by John Newton, is a message of hope and rebirth that has inspired Americans during times of trouble for over 200 years.**

**In one interpretation of this moving tale, the narrator was the captain of a ship that transported slaves from Africa to the New World. One night, a storm raged that threatened the lives of all on board. In a moment of revelation and enlightenment, the captain understood his own evil and immoral conduct. The captain pleaded with the Lord for forgiveness and promised to become a kinder and gentler human being if only his life would be saved. As you can probably guess, the story ends happily and the captain gives up the slave trade.**

**Unfortunately, this is only a personal account of heroism. We must never forget that the slave**

**trade flourished during the Revolution. Although our fight for independence resulted in freedom for Americans, Blacks were denied citizenship and excluded from the most basic rights.**

**We are proud to sing "Amazing Grace" for you.**

### **"AMAZING GRACE"**

**It is amazing how our vast nation of 50 states grew from only 13 original colonies. In honor of 238 years of unity, we will sing "Fifty Nifty United States" by Ray Charles.**

### **"FIFTY NIFTY UNITED STATES"**

**In the spirit of a march, we will exit to one of the favorite songs of the American Revolution - "Yankee Doodle." Despite its popularity, a majority of Americans are not familiar with the many verses or meaning of this funny song.**

**The first verse was probably written by a British army surgeon named Dr. Richard S. Schuckberg. It was played by the British on the march to Lexington and made fun of the Minutemen:**

**Yankee Doodle went to town,  
Riding on a pony;  
Stuck a feather in hat  
And call it macaroni.**

**Calling the colonists "Yankee Doodles" was an insult. Translated into English, "Yankees" is the name "John Cheese" in Dutch. Likewise, "Doodle" means a fool. In 18th century England, a "macaroni" was man who dressed up in overly fancy clothes to make himself look more important than he really was.**

**The Minutemen, who were able to laugh at themselves, proved to the British that they were above such ridicule. They adopted "Yankee Doodle" as their own and sang it right back at them. The soldiers even went a step further by inventing new verses that teased their own officers, including General George Washington.**

**In the grand tradition of "Yankee Doodle," we will take our bows in the form of a musical joke. Here's to laughter and good times! Thanks for coming!**

**"YANKEE DOODLE"**