

# **"I AM THE NATION"**

By Otto Whittaker (1955)

Re-written by Dr. Hoyt W. Allen, Jr.

I was born on July 4, 1776, and the Declaration of Independence is my birth certificate. The bloodlines of the world run in my veins, because I offered freedom to the oppressed. I am many things and many people. I am the nation.

I am 290 million living souls - and the ghost of millions who have lived and died for me. I am Nathan Hale and Paul Revere. I stood at Lexington and fired the shot heard around the world. I am Washington, Jefferson, and Patrick Henry. I am John Paul Jones, the Green Mountain Boys and Davy Crockett. I am Lee and Grant and Abe Lincoln.

I remember the Alamo, the Maine, and Pearl Harbor. When freedom called, I answered and stayed until it was over, over there. I left my heroic dead in Flanders Field, on the rock of Corregidor, on the bleak slopes of Korea and in the steaming jungle of Vietnam.

I am the Brooklyn Bridge, the wheat lands of Kansas, and the granite hills of Vermont. I am the coal fields of the Virginias and Pennsylvania, the fertile lands of the West, the Golden Gate and the Grand Canyon. I am Independence Hall, the Monitor, and the Merrimac.

I am big. I sprawl from the Atlantic to the Pacific - my arms reach out to embrace Alaska and Hawaii. I am more than five million farms. I am forest, field, mountain, and desert. I am quiet villages - and cities that never sleep.

You can look at me and see Ben Franklin walking down the streets of Philadelphia with his loaf of bread under his arm. You can see Betsy Ross with her needle. You can see the lights of Christmas and hear the strains of *"Auld Lang Syne"* as the calendar turns.

I am Babe Ruth and the World Series. I am 110,000 schools and colleges and 330,000 churches where my people worship God as they think best. I am a ballot dropped into a box, the roar of a crowd in a stadium and the voice of a choir in a cathedral. I am an editorial in a newspaper and a letter to a congressman.

I am Eli Whitney and Stephen Foster. I am Tom Edison, Albert Einstein, and Billy Graham. I am Horace Greeley, Will Rogers and the Wright Brothers. I am George Washington Carver, Jonas Salk and Martin Luther King, Jr. I am Longfellow, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Walt Whitman and Thomas Paine.

Yes, I am the nation, and these are the things that I am. I was conceived in freedom and, God willing, in freedom I will spend the rest of my days.

When the USA was attacked on September 11, 2001 by Terrorists, and I like millions watched on television as the World Trade Centers crumbled - I responded along with our allies to put down evil as I always have. I have always been proud to lead the world in overcoming evil and lifting up righteousness.

When some liberal judges wanted to delete the words from our Pledge Of Allegiance, *"Under God"* I was quick to voice my opinion of such to my Senators and Congressman to overturn this decision, because I am the nation.

When I became aware of the low salary of our military personnel I was quick to voice my opposition to those in charge in Washington, D.C. who could change such, because we need to have a strong and well paid military, and because I am the nation.

May I possess always the integrity, the courage and the strength to keep myself unshackled, to remain a stronghold of freedom and a lighthouse of hope to the world.

