

"Alaska's Flag"

Written by Marie Drake

Composed by Elinor Dusenbury

Adopted on February 23 1955.

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1st Verse of Alaska's Flag Song

Eight stars of gold on a field of blue,
Alaska's flag, may it mean to you,
The blue of the sea, the evening sky,
The mountain lakes and the flowers nearby,
The gold of the early sourdough's dreams,
The precious gold of the hills and streams,
The brilliant stars in the northern sky,
The "Bear," the "Dipper," and shining high,
The great North Star with its steady light,
O'er land and sea a beacon bright,
Alaska's flag to Alaskans dear,
The simple flag of a last frontier.

2nd Verse of Alaska's Flag Song -- Words by Carol Beery Davis

A Native lad chose the Dipper's stars
For Alaska's flag that there be no bars
Among our culture. Let it be known
Through years the Native's past has grown
To share life's treasures, hand in hand,
To keep Alaska our Great-Land;
We love the northern midnight sky,
The mountains, lakes and streams nearby.
The great North Star with its steady light
Will guide all cultures, clear and bright,
With nature's flag to Alaskans dear,
The simple flag of the last frontier.

- *Source* : *Alaska Blue Book 1993-94*, 11th ed., Juneau, Department of Education, Division of State Libraries, Archives &

Origin of Song:

The words to the song Alaska's Flag were written by Marie Drake, The Territorial Legislature adopted Alaska's Flag as Alaska's official song in 1955.

"Alaska's Flag" written by Marie Drake a long-time employee of the Alaska Department of Education, and set to music composed by Elinor Dusenbury, who husband was commander of Chilkoot Barracks at Haines from 1933 to 1936 was adopted as the official state song in 1955, and was gifted to the University of Alaska in April 1960. Carol Beery Davis wrote the second verse to "Alaska's Flag" and gifted the words (protected by copyright) to the University of Alaska Foundation in February 1987.

Carol Beery Davis, an Alaskan pioneer and poet laureate, as the maker of the second verse. While the official Alaska state song recognizes and describes Alaska's flag, the words of Davis in the second verse of "Alaska's Flag", "A Native lad chose the Dipper's stars, For Alaska's flag that there be no bars", provides recognition of Bennie Benson who designed Alaska's official flag in 1927. Benny Benson described his design of the flag:

"The blue field is for the Alaska Sky and the forget-me-not, an Alaskan flower. The North Star is for the future of Alaska, the most northerly in the union. The Dipper is for the Great Bear - symbolizing strength."

Marie Drake:

Marie Drake, author of the words to *Alaska's Flag*, the state song, was born February 11, 1888. In 1907 she married James Drake in Van Wert, Ohio, where she was engaged in social work with the Y.W.C.A. and the Red

Museums.

- Copyright for *Alaska's Flag* is held by the University of Alaska. For further information contact the University Archivist at the Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks, Fairbanks, Alaska 99775-6808.
- Verse 2 by Carol Beery Davis. 1986.

Cross. They came to Alaska when her husband was assigned to work with the Bureau of Public Roads. In 1917, Lester Henderson was appointed first commissioner of education, and he hired Marie Drake as his secretary. She remained with the Department for 28 years, retiring July 1, 1945.

Marie Drake assumed the post of assistant commissioner of education in 1934. She edited and wrote most of the material for the department's *School Bulletin*, that was circulated throughout the territorial school system. The poem that later provided the words for the official state song first appeared on the cover of the October 1935 *School Bulletin*. In recognition of her devotion to the young people of Alaska, Marie Drake received an honorary Doctor of Letters degree from the University of Alaska in 1958. She died March 5, 1963.

- Source : *Alaska Blue Book 1993-94, 11th ed., Juneau, Department of Education, Division of State Libraries, Archives & Museums*

Benny Benson chose the background color of the flag to represent both the blue sky and the forget-me-not. The Legislature later named the forget-me-not as the official State flower. This provides another symbolic link, one between the official State flag, the official song and the official flower.

Carol Beery Davis, a longtime Juneau resident and musician, wrote a second verse to the Alaska Flag song and gifted the words (protected by copyright) to the University of Alaska Foundation in February 1987. It has been unsuccessfully proposed as an addition to the official lyrics twice. The last time, in 2002, House Bill 285 sought to officially incorporate Davis' second verse into the Alaska state song. The bill passed the Alaska House, but it died in the Senate. Because of the copyright restrictions, it is not shown here. Instead, a link to it and more detailed information is provided at the bottom of the page

Source: Wikipedia

Dear Senator Menard,

I am delighted that you are proposing the second verse of the Alaska Flag song be adopted by the state as part of the official state song. I introduced that legislation many years ago; it passed the House but stalled in the Senate. I have long felt it important that both verses be sung on all occasions. Alaska Poet Laureate Carol Berry Davis wrote the second verse because she felt that the first verse did not recognize the contributions that Alaska Native people have made to our state. She asked me to introduce the bill, which I did and there were many people who supported it.

Years ago Carol Berry Davis gave the second verse to the University. I am not sure what rules might apply to the copyright. I am happy to have my staff look into this and help you with whatever contacts or permission is necessary in order to pursue this legislation.

Thank you so much for your work promoting the adoption of the second verse of the Alaska Flag song.

Best regards,
Fran Ulmer
Chancellor

