

Chapitre 38

L'expression du patriotisme aux Etats-Unis et en Grande-Bretagne

MILESTONES

- 800: the Cross of St George became England's flag
- 1950s: before, this year the national anthem was played at the end of each concert and theatre performance
- 4th July : US national day
- 1968 : US congress approved the first federal flag desecration law



In both the UK and the USA, patriotism is a really prominent notion.

British people have always showed a kind of attachment to royal symbols, they appear to love their sovereign, as well as their history. Ceremonial activities are used to attracting a lot of citizens, whether it is a royal wedding, or funerals and so on...

The flag, called The Union Jack, gathers the Cross of St George, the Cross of St Andrews and the Cross of St Patricks, as a symbol of unity between England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, just like the royal Coat of Arms, witness of the country's history. Moreover, the National Anthem *God Save the Queen* is also dedicated to royalty. As a matter of fact, this anthem is given pretty much more importance than we might be used to in France. Indeed, it was played and sung at the end of each theatre performance or concert until the 1950s. But *God Save the Queen* is not the only patriotic song; many other ones as well as few writings use this topic. Last but not least, patriotism in the UK is also conveyed by the wish citizens have to buy British goods.

When it comes to the US, what might strike us most is the omnipresence of the flag, namely the Stars and Stripes. Indeed, it is not rare to see American flags in front of houses for the 4th of July or Thanksgiving. It is also present in every school! The strong patriotic feelings of American people probably result from their education. As children, they are taught the respect of the flag and the nation very early at school, and they even pledge allegiance every day before class. Therefore, burning a flag in the US is outrageous and might be punished by law!

Other nation-devoted traditions exist in America, such as the tie of a yellow ribbon around an oak tree when a member of your family is going to war or anywhere else to serve the country. It shows how much people care about their soldiers and more generally the interests of their country. We also know different patriotic symbols like the national anthem (people always sing it standing to attention, the right hand on their heart), Uncle Sam or the bald eagle. The recent events of 9/11 reinforced all this patriotic feelings in the US.

THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH OF NATIONS

