

God Bless America

Throughout the history of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks there have been many famous members including business leaders, political leaders, sports figures, and entertainment celebrities.

The song “**God Bless America**” was written by one of America’s greatest songwriters, Irving Berlin, and was introduced on national radio by Kate Smith during her weekly Kate Smith Hour on November 10, 1938, to mark the twentieth anniversary of the Armistice that ended World War I. The song was heard by millions of radio listeners. What most people do not realize is that Irving Berlin was an Elk. He joined New York Lodge No. 1 when he was 40 years of age and remained a proud member until his death at age 104.

Like Elks members then and now, Irving Berlin had no desire to cash in on his patriotism. In 1940 he established the **God Bless America Foundation** with all royalties from the song and its performance earned by either Berlin or Miss Smith going to the **Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts of America**. That arrangement exists to this day because, **“The complete nonsectarian work of the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts is calculated to best promote unity of mind and patriotism, two sentiments that are inherent in the song itself.”**

Irving Berlin, like all proud Elks, demonstrated even long ago that *Elks Care - Elks Share.*

