

A brief history of Happy Birthday

In 1893, Patty Hill, a kindergarten principal in Louisville, Kentucky developed some new teaching methods; her sister Mildred was a pianist and composer.

'*Good Morning to All*' was a song used by the sisters for young children. It was catchy and easy to sing.

The combination of that melody and lyrics in 'Happy Birthday to You' first appeared in print in 1912. However, the early appearances of this song didn't include credits or copyright notices.

In 1935 a copyright was registered by The Summy Company, crediting authors Preston Wave Orem and Mrs. R.R. Forman.

Then in 1988 Warner Chappell music purchased the company that owned the copyright for US \$25 million; the value of 'Happy Birthday' was estimated at US \$5 million. Warner said that the US copyright would not expire until 2030; unauthorized public performances of the song were illegal unless royalties were paid.

In February 2010, the royalties for a single use totalled US \$700. This song is supposed to be the highest-earning single song in history.

However, in 2015 the copyright claim was declared invalid and Warner Chappell agreed to pay back \$14million in licensing fees. These very expensive lyrics have been translated into at least 18 languages.

'Happy Birthday' is an expression of goodwill offered at the anniversary of someone's birth. Saying these words shows the recipient that they are remembered, valued and appreciated by others. Many view this as a celebration of the 'gift of life' and being thankful for surviving another 'trip round the sun'. It is supposed to strengthen interpersonal bonds, encouraging communication between friends and family.

So..... if anyone here has just had a birthday or is about to have one, then may I wish you a Happy Birthday.

Liz Crossingham