By Nancy Whitaker

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

"Happy Birthday to You; Happy Birthday to you; Happy Birthday dear.....; Happy Birthday to You."

How many times have you sung this song either at a birthday party, school, work, or a social gathering? We always feel happy to have this song sung to us because it signifies we have marked another birthday.

I know this song has been around for many years as I have had it sung to me for ..... (not telling) years. I was wondering, as I wonder about many things, where did the song, "Happy Birthday" originate?

The Happy Birthday song is one of the most recognized songs in the world and its lyrics has been written in 18 different languages.

The original melody is from a song entitled "Good Morning to All." The tune was written in 1893 by Patty and Mildred J. Hill, two American sisters, who were teachers and sang it in their kindergarten class.

No one is really positive who wrote the lyrics and put it to the Hills sisters' melody, but the song "Happy Birthday to You" first appeared in print in 1912, but probably existed earlier.

With the appearance of radio and movies, the song became popular as a birthday celebration

song. In fact, it was used for Western Unions first singing telegram in 1933.

However, I was very surprised to find out was that the song is copyrighted and has been since 1935. The most recent copyright was purchased by Warner Chappell in 1990 and unauthorized public performances are illegal unless royalties are paid. The copyright on it does not expire until 2030.

Does this mean that everyone who warbles, “Happy Birthday to You” to family members are going to have to pay royalties? No, but when you see a greeting card, a watch, or TV shows using the song, be aware that someone had to pay royalties to use this old song.

That is how it works though. I guess everyone needs to be careful that we don’t sing the song for money or we could wind up paying the price.

I think the whole thing is strange that a song which has brightened so many lives and is sung everyday of the year has to be paid for to use.

No, none of us are going to sing the song for profit, but just the thought of the greed involved just doesn’t seem right.

How many times have you sung the Happy Birthday song? Have you sung the song at school, at work or at church? Can you believe the song is copyrighted? Let me know and I’ll give you a Penny for Your Thoughts.