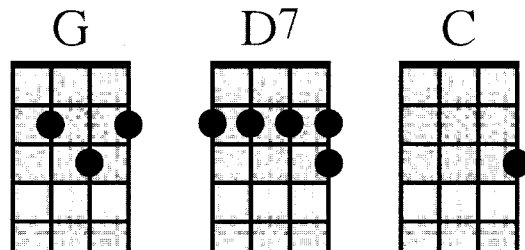


# Happy Birthday To You

A large contingent of Portuguese settlers arrived in Hawaii aboard the bark Ravenscrag. Historians are certain that at least one braquinha was present aboard the Ravenscrag when she sailed into Honolulu harbor on August 23, 1879. Aboard the Ravenscrag were five men who are closely identified with the ukulele in Hawaii. Augusto Dias, Jose do Espirito Santo and Manuel Nunes were craftsmen able to build fine musical instruments by hand. Joao Luiz Correa and Joao Fernandes were musicians who knew how to play a number of stringed instruments, including the braquinha. Oral tradition within the Nunes family maintains that Manuel Nunes opened a shop for the manufacture and sale of ukuleles almost immediately following the arrival of the Ravenscrag. The first written evidence of the presence of ukulele shops in Honolulu is the 1884 City Directory, which shows that Nunes and Dias had each opened their own shops by 1884. A later edition of the City Directory confirms that Jose do Espirito Santo had joined Nunes and Dias in the independent manufacture and sale of ukuleles by 1888.



The 'ukulele  
125 Years Old  
August 23, 2004



Ukulele Club of Santa Cruz August 2004

G D7  
Happy birthday to you  
D7 G  
Happy birthday to you  
G C  
Happy birthday dear Ukulele  
G D7 G  
Happy birthday to you

Chord progression for Mildred J. Hill's Happy Birthday To You. The melody was composed in 1893. At that time it was called "Good Morning To All".

In 1924, the "Happy Birthday" lyrics were published as a second stanza in a songbook. "Happy Birthday" was popularized via radio and films as a birthday song, supplanting the original lyrics. By the mid-1930s after it had appeared in a Broadway play, had been used in Western Union's first singing telegram, and finally in an Irving Berlin musical, Mildred's sister who administered the copyright, filed suit for infringement. She was able to secure the copyright in 1934.

This copyright is still in force and under current law the tune will not enter the public domain until 2030. Under the copyright law in force at the time it was secured, it should have entered the public domain by 1991. The yearly royalty payments amount to \$2 million dollars and are split between the Hill Foundation and a subsidiary of AOL Time Warner. Here's the complete story.

The copyright extension granted by Congress in 1998 is going to cost the public \$56,000,000 over the next 28 years assuming today's royalty rates. If you want to sing this outside of a family setting, your hosts have to pay for a performance license that contributes to the \$2,000,000 royalty. Many restaurants in the U.S. (and kid's summer camps) cook up an alternative birthday ditty to sing to clients for their birthday celebrations so that they can avoid having to pay ASCAP for a performance license.

At the tender age of three, Herb Ohta, Jr. learned his first song, "Happy Birthday", on the 'ukulele from his grandmother.

