

Katharine Lee Bates (1859-1929)

Professor, Wellesley College

Class of 1874

Katharine Bates wrote the poem "America the Beautiful" in 1893 while sitting on top of Pikes Peak in Colorado Springs. The poem was published in *The Congregationalist* on July 4, 1895. "America the Beautiful" was sung to a variety of tunes, but the tune that persists today is "Materna" by Samuel A. Ward. The poem became so popular that in 1926, "America the Beautiful" almost became the national anthem.

Katharine Bates was a Needham High School graduate in 1874, though at that time the school was named "West Needham High School". She was a poet, a scholar, and an educator. She wrote volumes of critical analysis as well as poetry in her capacity as professor of English at Wellesley College where she later became Chairperson of the English Department. After studying at Oxford University in England, Katharine Bates received a M.A. from Wellesley College. Her career at Wellesley College spanned over 45 years.

M.H.