



Colorado Biographies



Katharine Lee Bates 1859-1929

- Katharine was born August 12, 1859, to Reverend William Bates and Cornelia Frances Lee in Falmouth, Massachusetts.
- She graduated with a degree in English from Wellesley College in 1886.
- She taught high school and prep school English from 1880-1889.
- Katharine spent a year, 1890-91, studying English at Oxford University in England.
- In 1891, she became a professor of English at Wellesley College and remained in that position for 40 years.
- In 1893, Katharine traveled to Colorado to spend the summer as a visiting professor of English at Colorado College.
- While in Colorado, she taught alongside many great teachers including future president Woodrow Wilson.
- During her tenure at Colorado College, she and other visiting teachers rode to the summit of Pikes Peak on burros. While standing on the summit looking out over Colorado Springs, she was inspired to write the first four lines of a poem that would later become “America the Beautiful,” the song.
- Wrote many books during her lifetime including *The English Religious Drama* (1893), *Spanish Highways and Byways* (1900), and *America the Beautiful and Other Poems* (1911).
- Katharine Lee Bates died at age 69 on March 28, 1929, in Wellesley, MA.

Great Resources on Katherine Lee Bates

- Bueler, Gladys R. *Colorado's Colorful Characters* Golden, Colorado: The Smoking Stack Press, 1975. pp. 93-94. Print.
- “Katharine Lee Bates.” *Dictionary of American Biography*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1944. *Gale Biography In Context*. Web. 22 Oct. 2012.
- Feeney, Donna D. “America The Beautiful.” *American History*, v 35.3. (2000) 16. *Gale Biography In Context*. Web. 23 Oct. 2012.

Photo courtesy of Katharine Lee Bates, ca. 1893. Courtesy of Special Collections, Pikes Peak Library District, 001-354.