

From the Archivists

Falmouth Historical Society

Robert H. Bidwell

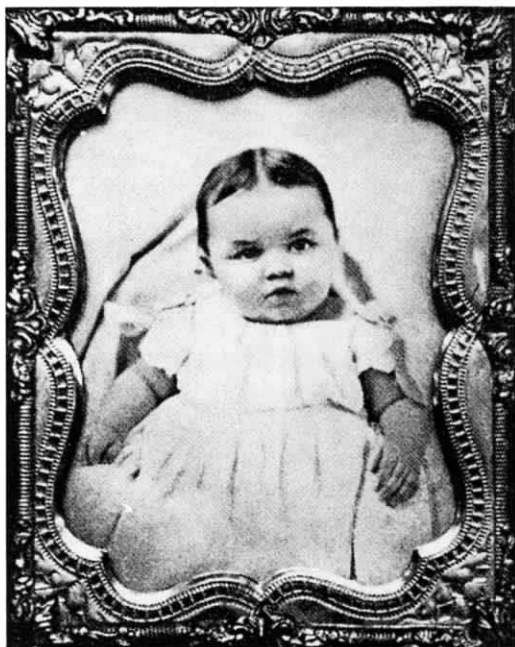
**Katharine Lee Bates
"America The Beautiful"
Centennial Celebration
July 22 - August 12, 1993**

You often hear the expression: "Never volunteer." Sometimes, however, nice things happen when you do.

One such occasion occurred recently when I happened to be in the offices of the Falmouth Historical Society and overheard Arnold Dyer mention to Florence Fitts, the Society's president, that he had received a call from Chandler Jones, a former owner for many years of the Katharine Lee Bates birthplace in Falmouth at 16 Main Street. Mr. Jones advised Mr. Dyer that he had several boxes of memorabilia and books relating to Katharine Lee Bates which he would like to donate to the Society if someone could come up to Sharon, Massachusetts where he lived and pick them up.

When Mrs. Fitts mentioned this call to me, I volunteered to go to Sharon. We had been looking for memorabilia to display in the front two rooms of the Miss Bates' birthplace which will be open to the public during the Centennial celebration this summer of the writing of "America the Beautiful." Mr. Jones said that he had heard about the Centennial celebration and thought that it would be a good time to make the donation.

Several days later, on a beautiful, sunny but cold day in early February, my wife, Connie, and I drove up to Sharon and found Mr. Jones' lovely old home, an



A rare photograph of Katie as a baby, which appeared in her biography, "Dream and Deed" by her niece Mrs. George Sargent Burgess. Courtesy the author's heirs.

historic landmark Inn on the stagecoach route from Boston to Taunton, about 250 years old and at one time a famous Tavern known as Cobb's Tavern. Every room had many items of historic interest including the Tap Room itself at one end of the house that had been carefully preserved intact.

Mr. Jones had just celebrated his 90th birthday (he looked much younger!) and on the dining room table lay many cards from schoolchildren who had recently toured his home.

After showing us a wooden shovel and a large wooden roller used at the old Falmouth Salt Works and a glass cane made at the old Falmouth Glass Factory, Mr. Jones took us up the circular pulpit stairs to a bedroom with a vaulted ceiling. There we pulled from a space between two walls two boxes, one containing

books and the other memorabilia relating to Katharine Lee Bates which he and his late wife, Dorothy, had collected over the years. He went over the contents with us and it was like discovering a real treasure chest!

We then loaded the boxes into our car and bid our most gracious host adieu with our heartfelt thanks. It was truly an exciting afternoon for us and one that we shall never forget.

Here is a partial listing of what the boxes contained:

- Sixteen books by Katharine Lee Bates, many of which are personally inscribed to her friend Harriet L. Gifford by Miss Bates; some samples:
 - "Harriet L. Gifford with love from her old friend KLB"
 - "Harriet from Katharine to play at being children again"
 - "Harriet L. Gifford with the life long friendship of KLB"
 - "Harriet L. Gifford with constant love from KLB"
 - "Inscribed to the one Sigurd loved best" (Katharine Coman)



Harriet (Hattie) Gifford was a relative of Mr. Jones' family on his grandmother's side. Hattie and Katharine grew up together in Falmouth as close friends. Sigurd was Katharine's first collie dog. Katharine Coman was a close friend of Miss Bates on the Wellesley College faculty.

- Nineteen books written by other authors, many of which were given to Harriet L. Gifford by Katharine Lee Bates and the rest have KLB's bookplate.

Examples of inscriptions to Harriet:

"For an old fashioned girl from the other Snowy girl"

"Harriet Gifford with love from her old playmate"

"Katharine Lee Bates, who expected to keep this book herself, has enjoyed it so much that she thinks it may also give pleasure to her dear friend Harriet L. Gifford and so sends it for Christmas greeting 1914"

One book entitled "Avon's Harvest" by the noted poet Edwin Arlington Robinson had a letter tucked in it from the author addressed to Katharine Lee Bates.



Two rare photographs of Katharine Lee Bates from the Chandler Jones collection which help to fill the picture gap of her younger years. These pictures probably were originally given by Katharine to her long-time friend, Hattie Gifford. The first shows Katie as a young girl in Falmouth — perhaps about six years old. The second shows her as a young lady of high school age when she was about sixteen years old. Courtesy Falmouth Historical Society.



Birthplace of Katharine Lee Bates, 16 Main Street, Falmouth, just off the Village Green. The First Congregational Church rented this home in 1858 for its pastor The Rev. William Bates and his family. Her father died in 1859 one month after Katharine, the youngest of five children, was born. After about two years at 16 Main Street, Mrs. Bates and her children moved five times during their twelve years in Falmouth. The 1870 Census shows them living in the Butler place where the Falmouth Square Inn now is. Benjamin Franklin Jones purchased this home in 1865 and it remained in his family until 1970. Pictured in the buggy is his son, George Washington Jones, long-time postmaster of Falmouth, with his trotting horse and dog. Approximate date of picture is 1896. In 1970, his son, Chandler Jones, sold the home to Edward Sherry who in turn sold it to The Falmouth Historical Society, its present owner, in 1977. Courtesy Falmouth Historical Society.

- “America the Beautiful” with five musical settings by Clarence B. Hamilton, William Arms Fisher, John Carroll Randolph, William W. Sleeper and Will C. MacFarlane.

The story of how the music was chosen for the poem “America the Beautiful” is a rather unique one. In 1926, the National Federation of Music Clubs conducted a contest to obtain a musical setting for the poem. In “Dream and Deed” by Dorothy Burgess, p.104, her biographer states that Miss Bates refrained from any expression of opinion though she approved of the contest. Nearly 900 compositions were submitted but none were found worthy of selection. The contest did not exclude compositions already well known. Will MacFarlane’s music was a leading

contender; the setting by Clarence Hamilton of Wellesley’s music department was probably secretly preferred by Miss Bates but she made no public statement of preference. In effect, she let the public choose the music, and Samuel Ward’s melody is what we sing today.

Samuel Ward was an organist in a number of churches in New Jersey. In 1882, he wrote a hymn “Materna O Mother Dear Jerusalem” which was first published in the Episcopal Hymnal in 1894. He died before knowing that his music became the accepted melody for “America the Beautiful.” After his death, his widow gave permission to use his melody of Materna with “America the Beautiful” and it is now the “official” music by popular choice.



AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL

Words by Katharine Lee Bates

Music by Samuel A. Ward

1. O Beau-ti-ful for spa-cious skies, For am-ber waves of grain,
 2. O Beau-ti-ful for ful-gim feet, Whose stern im-pas-sioned stress
 3. O Beau-ti-ful for the-wood prom-in lib-er-at-ing strife,
 4. O Beau-ti-ful for pa-triot dream That sees, be-yond the years.

JOHN CARROLL RANDOLPH

Tempo di Marcia

1. O beau-ti-ful for spa-cious skies, For am-ber waves of grain,

WILLIAM ARMS FISHER

1. O beau-ti-ful for spa-cious skies, For am-ber waves of grain,—

WILLIAM W. SLEEPER

1. O beau-ti-ful for spa-cious skies, For am-ber waves of grain,—

CLARENCE G. HAMILTON

1. O beau-ti-ful for spa-cious skies, For am-ber waves of grain,

Music by
 WILL C. MACFARLANE
 Municipal Organist, Portland, Maine

Maestoso
 1. O beau-ti-ful for spa-cious skies, For am-ber waves of grain,

Some of the nearly 900 compositions submitted as musical settings for Katharine Lee Bates' poem *America the Beautiful*. Courtesy Falmouth Historical Society.

ORIGINAL VERSION (1893)

O beautiful for halcyon skies,
 For amber waves of grain,
 For purple mountain majesties
 Above the enameled plain!
 America! America!
 God shed His grace on thee
 Till souls wax fair as earth and air
 And music-hearted sea!

O beautiful for pilgrim feet,
 Whose stern impassioned stress
 A thoroughfare for freedom beat
 Across the wilderness!
 America! America!
 God shed His grace on thee
 Till paths be wrought through wilds of thought
 By pilgrim foot and knee!

O beautiful for glory-tale
 Of liberating strife
 When once and twice, for man's avail
 Men lavished precious life!
 America! America!
 God shed His grace on thee
 Till selfish gain no longer stain
 The banner of the free!

O beautiful for patriot dream
 That sees beyond the years
 Thine alabaster cities gleam
 Undimmed by human tears!
 America! America!
 God shed His grace on thee
 Till nobler men keep once again
 Thy whiter jubilee!

TODAY'S VERSION (1913)

O beautiful for spacious skies,
 For amber waves of grain,
 For purple mountain majesties
 Above the fruited plain!
 America! America!
 God shed His grace on thee
 And crown thy good with brotherhood
 From sea to shining sea!

O beautiful for pilgrim feet,
 Whose stern impassioned stress
 A thoroughfare for freedom beat
 Across the wilderness!
 America! America!
 God mend thine every flaw,
 Confirm thy soul in self-control,
 Thy liberty in law!

O beautiful for heroes proved
 In liberating strife,
 Who more than self their country loved,
 And mercy more than life!
 America! America!
 May God thy gold refine
 Till all success be nobleness
 And every gain divine!

O beautiful for patriot dream
 That sees beyond the years
 Thine alabaster cities gleam
 Undimmed by human tears!
 America! America!
 God shed His grace on thee
 And crown thy good with brotherhood
 From sea to shining sea!

The original version was written in 1893 when Miss Bates was thirty-four years old and a professor of English Literature at Wellesley College and was inspired by the view from Pike's Peak. Revisions of the poem took place in 1904 and 1913 when Miss Bates had the final version copyrighted. Courtesy Falmouth Historical Society.

- Copy of "America the Beautiful" (authorized version) in the handwriting of Katharine Lee Bates.

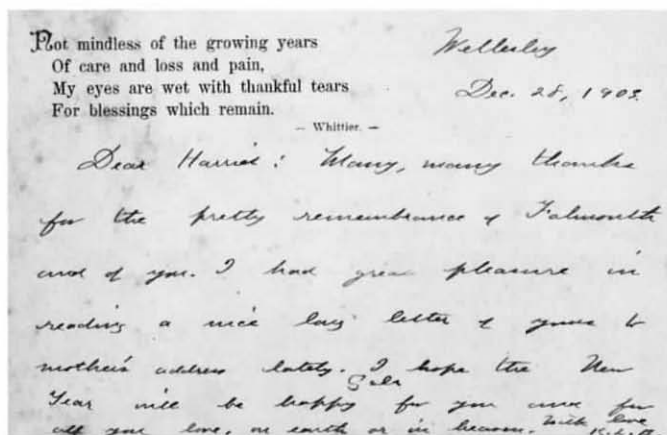
Original 1893 version first appeared in print July 4, 1895 in the *Congregationalist*. In 1904, Miss Bates rewrote it, "trying to make the phraseology more simple and direct." The new version was published in the *Evening Transcript* on November 19, 1904. Later,

the first four lines of the third stanza were altered and the poem in that form has remained the official version.

- In Memoriam, Katharine Lee Bates, June 1929. (A collection of the tributes to Miss Bates at her Memorial Service.) Well worth noting are the concluding remarks of Gamaliel Bradford: "Many years ago it was said: 'Let me make the songs of the country, I care not who makes the laws.' To

have put the expression of the highest and deepest patriotism into the mouths of a hundred million Americans is a monument so noble and so enduring that it seems as if no poet could possibly ask or expect anything more complete."

- "An Autobiography in Brief of Katharine Lee Bates" (privately printed 1930; reprinted with additions 1958.)



Katharine Lee Bates wrote many letters and postcards to her lifelong friend in Falmouth, Hattie Gifford, and some of them are found in the Chandler Jones collection. The above postcard written in 1903 was one of them. Apparently, in the Falmouth of that day, there was no need to advise the postmaster of the street address! Courtesy Falmouth Historical Society.

In this very brief autobiography (seven pages), Miss Bates describes her childhood: "Spent in Falmouth, then twenty miles from any railroad, a friendly little village that practised a neighborly socialism without having heard the term. The village school gave the rudiments of education and the elder children went on to Lawrence Academy across the way, but

Katharine had not attained that dignity when, shortly before her twelfth birthday, the family moved to Grantville (now Wellesley Hills). She was a shy, near-sighted child, always hiding away with a book. It was in vain that unclothed dolls were given her to beguile her into sewing. She would promptly spin a romance that left them wrecked on a desert isle and obliged to wrap themselves in raiment of leaves secured by thorns and grasses."

- Pictures of Katharine Lee Bates as a young child in Falmouth and as a young lady of high school age.
- Pictures of two murals at Wellesley College illustrating "America the Beautiful."
- Originals of letters written by Katharine Lee Bates to Harriet L. Gifford.

One letter to Harriet includes a charming story about Hamlet, her second collie: "My heart is still with dear old Hamlet; although his face has been scarred by a fight, and his teeth are almost falling out, and he is rheumatic, and altogether deficient in those charms which Charlie felt so strongly when Hamlet barked at the Master of the house, some eight years ago! But he loves us and keeps close by and looks after all our affairs. He even tries to run my Wednesday afternoon seminar, a grand term which merely means a group of graduate students meeting for three hours once a week instead

of three times a week for one hour, as classes do. These girls arrive at two or earlier and at four we usually pause for coffee and cake and then come back and work until half-past five. But often I am so absorbed in the thing we are doing that I forget to notice the hour. I can't say how it is with the girls, but Hamlet comes bustling in exactly at one minute of four and plants himself in front of me with his paw upon my knee, gazing up with reproachful pleading

eyes - since the cake is the only part of the seminar that interests him - until I remember the hour."

- Correspondence between Mrs. Chandler (Dorothy) Jones and Mrs. George Sargent Burgess, niece of Katharine Lee Bates and author of her biography "Dream and Deed."
- A very complete set of news clippings over the years relating to the preservation of the Katharine Lee Bates birth place and the Falmouth Centennial celebration of her birthday on August 12, 1959.

- One reel of 16 mm film of Falmouth's Centennial Celebration of her birthday taken by Chandler Jones on August 12, 1959.

The above items as well as many others from the Society's Katharine Lee Bates Collection will be on display this summer at the birthplace of Katharine Lee Bates at 16 Main Street which will be open for public viewing from 2 to 4 p.m. from July 22, the 100th Anniversary of the writing of "America the Beautiful," to August 12, the birth date of Miss Bates. Donald and Patricia Elichalt, who lease the property from the Society, have very kindly agreed to make the front portion of Miss Bates' birthplace available for public viewing during the above times and dates.

The Society is delighted to have this exceptional collection donated by Chandler Jones. Mr. Jones made the point that he remembers as a youth of about sixteen meeting Katharine Lee Bates on her visits to Falmouth to see her close friend Harriet L. Gifford. He noted that it was the custom of the Jones family on Sunday afternoons to walk from 16 Main Street up Palmer Avenue to the Gifford House beyond Oak Grove Cemetery and while there they would sometimes see Katharine Lee Bates.

Falmouth Primary School.

Report of *Katharine Lee Bates*
for two weeks ending *Jan 31st 1867-8.*

RECITATIONS, &c.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.
<i>Arithmetic</i>	5	5	5	5	5
<i>Geography</i>	5	5	5	5	5
<i>Spelling</i>	5	5	5	5	5
<i>Department</i>	5	5	5	5	5
<i>Arithmetic</i>	5	5	5	5	5
<i>Geography</i>	5	5	5	5	5
<i>Spelling</i>	5	5	5	5	5
<i>Department</i>	5	5	5	5	5
Total, . . . 75 65	Average, . . . 5 5				

5 denotes faultless recitations and deportment; 4, good; 3, fair; 2, poor; 0, wholly deficient.

Will Parents and Guardians please to cooperate with the teachers, by examining and signing this Report? also, by frequent visits to the school?

S.S. Moore Teacher.

Examined by *Cornelia F. Bates*

The perfect report card of Katie Lee Bates when she was eight years old and attending the Falmouth Primary School. It is signed by her teacher, S.S. Moore, and Katie's mother, Cornelia F. Bates. Katharine's school was the old Village School on Main St. which was built in 1856 on site of present Town Hall Square. Building is now Odd Fellows Hall on Chancery Lane. Courtesy Falmouth Historical Society.