

America The Beautiful

Lyrics by Katharine Lee Bates,
Music by Samuel A. Ward

D7#5 G.....bo7 D.....em. am bm C D G gmrranD:d & TD7#5ted
by Tom Arri 2009

G.....bo7.. D.....(D)... do (dinD) em (em) A c#m c#o D A G

6

D A G em A G f#m D f#m f#o C G.....D.....D#5..

11

G.....A.....D: OUTRO..... do (dim.)

16

C9 G (End)...

20

Wikipedia:

The words are by Katharine Lee Bates, a former English professor at Wellesley College. In 1893, Bates had taken a train trip to Colorado Springs, Colorado, to teach a short summer school session at Colorado College, and several of the sights on her trip found their way into her poem:

The World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, the "White City" with its promise of the future contained within its alabaster buildings.

The wheat fields of Kansas, through which her train was riding on July 4.

The majestic view of the Great Plains from atop Pikes Peak.

On that mountain, the words of the poem started to come to her, and she wrote them down upon returning to her hotel room at the original Antlers Hotel. The poem was initially published two years later in The Congregationalist, to commemorate the Fourth of July. It quickly caught the public's fancy. Amended versions were published in 1904 and 1913.

Several existing pieces of music were adapted to the poem. The Hymn tune composed in 1895 by Samuel A. Ward, was generally considered the best music as early as 1910 and is still the popular tune today. Ward had been similarly inspired. The tune came to him while he was on a ferryboat trip from Coney Island back to his home in New York City after a leisurely summer day, and he immediately wrote it down. Ward died in 1903, not knowing the national stature his music would attain. Miss Bates was more fortunate, as the song's popularity was well-established by her death in 1929.

At various times in the more than 100 years that have elapsed since the song as we know it was born, particularly during the John F. Kennedy administration, there have been efforts to give "America the Beautiful" legal status either as a national hymn, or as a national anthem equal to, or in place of, "The Star-Spangled Banner", but so far this has not succeeded. Proponents prefer "America the Beautiful" for various reasons, saying it is easier to sing, more melodic, and more adaptable to new orchestrations while still remaining as easily recognizable as "The Star-Spangled Banner." Some prefer "America the Beautiful" over "The Star-Spangled Banner" due to the latter's war-oriented imagery. (Others prefer "The Star-Spangled Banner" for the same reason.) While that national dichotomy has stymied any effort at changing the tradition of the national anthem, "America the Beautiful" continues to be held in high esteem by a large number of Americans.

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