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KATHARINE LEE BATES

From Sea to Shining Sea

Melinda M. Ponder

The Story of the Poet of “America the Beautiful”

“How I loved this splendid biography! Melinda Ponder brings Katharine Lee Bates to life as never before. And what a fascinating, remarkable woman she was – so much more important in the history and literature of our country than I had realized.”

--Doris Kearns Goodwin, Pulitzer Prize historian

“Finally, a full portrait of the wise and witty woman who wrote the words that best express our love for America. Melinda Ponder’s rich narrative is a timely reminder that intellect, integrity and a rigorous respect for truth are the real pillars of patriotism.”

--Lynn Sherr, former ABC New correspondent and author of *America the Beautiful*

“We all know ‘America the Beautiful,’ but only now do we learn the fascinating story of the woman who wrote it--along with so much more. This book is a stirring tribute to a brilliant and deeply patriotic American whose message we need to hear today.”

--Stephen Kinzer, historian and author of *The True Flag*

“A carefully researched and thoroughly entrancing life tale of a brilliant and accomplished woman whose many achievements have too long been eclipsed by the enduring success of her poem, ‘America, the Beautiful.’”

--Megan Marshall, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Margaret Fuller and Elizabeth Bishop*

While the “Star Spangled Banner” is the United States’ national anthem, it is Katharine Lee Bates’ “America the Beautiful” that resonates for many as the true American anthem. Why? Her words speak of the beauty and love of our land, our people, and our country. Her words are full of hope and possibility, and that has never been more important than today.

In **KATHARINE LEE BATES: *From Sea to Shining Sea*** (Windy City Publishers, August 2017, \$17.95) biographer Melinda M. Ponder delves into the remarkable life of the woman behind this nationally treasured poem. Teacher, poet, community builder, and patriot, Katharine Lee Bates challenged Americans to make their country the best it could become in its values and literature.

Drawing on extensive research in Bates family diaries, letters, and memoirs, Ponder brings Katharine to vivid life in her journeys from her childhood in Falmouth, MA during late 1800s, where she felt she had been “rock’d in a clamshell,” to Wellesley College, Boston, Oxford, Spain and Egypt.

Although her passion was poetry, Katharine’s three alluring suitors (two men and a woman) pulled her into major reform movements in a changing America. She was a dynamic woman with public triumphs, an anti-war activist poet during America’s tumultuous growth into a world power, who suffered personal heartaches as a single woman faced with choosing between marriage and a career.

She refused to let an impoverished childhood in a Cape Cod village or the closed doors of the male-only bastions of the ministry, graduate schools, or the Yankee literary establishment prevent her from creating an inspiring life. This book is for those who love her song and those who root for the unlikely triumph of a complicated woman “from sea to shining sea.”

For further information, please contact Jennifer Richards at Over the River Public Relations: 201-242-9637, jennifer@jrichardspr.com. And visit: www.melindaponder.com.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Melinda M. Ponder became intrigued with Katharine Lee Bates’ story when she attended Wellesley College and studied English – in the same English Department that Katharine Lee Bates established at the school decades earlier. Ms. Ponder continued her academic career as a published literary critic with an M.A. in American Studies and a Ph.D. in English and American Literature from Boston College and then as a college professor.

Ms. Ponder has written and published numerous articles and essays on Katharine Lee Bates, and reviewers have praised her sympathetic treatment of Bates’ work and personal life. She has given many talks and interviews surrounding the life of Katharine, including on the A&E Network, Monitor Radio, BNN News, as well as for the Falmouth Historical Society with panelist Lynn Sherr.

In addition to her fascination with Katharine Lee Bates, Ms. Ponder is also a Nathaniel Hawthorne scholar, and she has published two books on this subject: *Hawthorne and Women* and *Hawthorne's Early Narrative Art*. Her essays and articles on Nathaniel Hawthorne and other American and British authors have appeared in *Genre*, *The Chicago Tribune*, *The Essex Institute Historical Collections*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, and *The Nathaniel Hawthorne Review*. Ms. Ponder was born in Indianapolis, traveled East to pursue her academic career, and her home is now in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

KATHARINE LEE BATES:

From Sea to Shining Sea

By Melinda M. Ponder

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