



America the Beautiful

Pike's Peak and Garden of the Gods, Colorado

While sitting at my desk, minding my own business (is that possible?) and reading email, I came across an article from Friday's Epoch Times series "Epoch American History". The title of the article is rather long for a title: "How a view From Pikes Peak Inspired America's Most Famous Poem."

First we learn how Pikes Peak in Colorado got its name. After two other names didn't stick, finally it was named for an American leader of a geographic expedition, Zebulon Pike. With only 23 armed men in his group, he faced down 500 Pawnee warriors who had been set up by the Spanish to keep Americans from moving further west.

During this expedition, Pike noticed what he called a "small blue cloud" in the distance, which turned out to be Pikes Peak. He and three others tried to climb the mountain but turned back due to the approaching winter weather.

After that interesting tidbit, we discover Katharine Lee Bates, an English teacher and later professor at Wellesley College, who was invited to become a visiting professor of English



at Colorado College. While there, she and other teachers rode burros to the summit of Pikes Peak, where the spectacular views inspired her to write the first four lines of what became our unofficial national anthem "America the Beautiful".

Why do I bother with this story? For a few reasons. First, it impressed me and inspired me to remember from elementary school days the appreciation of God's gift of this country to those of us lucky enough to live here. Second, it's refreshing and a needed change from all of the frustrations we face as our nation's moral foundations crumble. Third, maybe it will lift your own spirits some, also.

Here are the first four stanzas, out of eight total. Read it again, for the first time. Then we included some pictures of Pikes Peak and the view from its summit. I hope the printing job does



them justice. (Remember Bill Lembright's article on what Heaven might be like? Not all sterile-looking marble palaces and streets of gold, but gorgeous scenery like this!)

Linda Gimmel



America the Beautiful

by Katharine Lee Bates

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!



View from Pike's Peak Summit



On The Lighter Side of Serious Stuff . . . from the Web

