

# Old Folks At Home (Way Done Upon the Suwannee River)

A FLORIDA GEOGRAPHY AWARENESS WEEK RESOURCE

## Introduction

**Level: HIGH SCHOOL**

**Sources:**

<https://dos.myflorida.com/florida-facts/florida-state-symbols/state-song/>

<https://www.tampabay.com/archive/1997/01/31/foster-s-lyrics-put-state-song-on-endangered-list/>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old\\_Folks\\_at\\_Home](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Folks_at_Home)

<https://pages.stolaf.edu/americanmusic/2021/12/08/stephen-fosters-intent-and-impact-with-old-folks-at-home/>

<https://www.heraldtribune.com/story/news/2007/01/27/racist-screed-or-enlightened-work-state-song-stirs-up-folks/28524879007/>

<https://www2.biu.ac.il/hu/mu/min-ad/07-08/Kushner-Reflections .pdf>

## Timeline

- First performed by Edward P. Christy's blackface minstrel groups
- <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/foster-performers-and-artists/>
- Florida's state song in 1938
- "darkies" changed to "brothers" at the dedication of the new Florida Capitol building (1978)
- <https://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/os-xpm-1988-03-27-0030040080-story.html>
- Remnant of "still longing for the old plantation"
- Dialect changed at Florida Folk Festival (1955)
- [https://www.musick8.com/html/current\\_tune.php?numbering=128&songorder=11](https://www.musick8.com/html/current_tune.php?numbering=128&songorder=11)

- <https://floridahumanities.org/im-florida-need-i-say-more/>
- Jeb Bush’s governor inauguration (2003)
- “still longing for my old plantation” to “still longing for my old connection”
- [https://www.netstate.com/states/symb/songs/fl\\_swanee\\_river.htm](https://www.netstate.com/states/symb/songs/fl_swanee_river.htm)
- Charlie Crist (2007) used “The Florida Song” - Charles Atkins
- <https://www.theledger.com/story/news/2007/01/03/new-governor-dumps-old-song/25856718007/>
- Crist, Tony Hill, Ed Homan, FMEA – new song contest created the state anthem “Florida (where the sawgrass meets the sky)”
- <https://dos.myflorida.com/florida-facts/florida-state-symbols/state-anthem/>
- Old Folks at Home became the state song with revisions from Stephen Foster Memorial, University of Pittsburgh

Original lyrics by Stephen Foster, 1851 <sup>[8]</sup>	State Song of Florida, as revised in 2008 <sup>[5]</sup>
<p>Way down upon de Swanee Ribber, Far, far away, Dere's wha my heart is turning ebber, Dere's wha de old folks stay.</p> <p>All up and down de whole creation Sadly I roam, Still longing for de old plantation, And for de old folks at home.</p> <p>Chorus All de world am sad and dreary, Eb-rywhere I roam; Oh, darkeys, how my heart grows weary, Far from de old folks at home!</p> <p>2nd verse All round de little farm I wandered When I was young, Den many happy days I squandered, Many de songs I sung. When I was playing wid my brudder Happy was I; Oh, take me to my kind old mudder! Dere let me live and die.</p>	<p>Way down upon the Suwannee River, Far, far away, There's where my heart is turning ever, There's where the old folks stay.</p> <p>All up and down the whole creation, Sadly I roam, Still longing for my childhood station, And for the old folks at home.</p> <p>Chorus All the world is sad and dreary Everywhere I roam. O dear ones, how my heart grows weary, Far from the old folks at home.</p> <p>2nd verse All 'round the little farm I wander'd, When I was young; Then many happy days I squander'd, Many the songs I sung. When I was playing with my brother, Happy was I. Oh, take me to my kind old mother, There let me live and die.</p>

<p>3rd Verse  One little hut among de bushes,  One dat I love  Still sadly to my memory rushes,  No matter where I rove.  When will I see de bees a-humming  All round de comb?  When will I hear de banjo strumming,  Down in my good old home?</p>	<p>3rd Verse  One little hut among the bushes,  One that I love.  Still sadly to my memory rushes,  No matter where I rove.  When will I see the bees a humming,  All 'round the comb?  When shall I hear the banjo strumming,  Down in my good old home.</p>
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**Level: ELEMENTARY**

“Lift Every Voice and Sing”

“Orange Blossom Special”

“Where the Orange Blossoms Grow”