



Colorado

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The Colorado State Song

Where the Columbines Grow

words and music by A.J. Fynn

Verse 1

Where the snowy peaks gleam in the moonlight,
 Above the dark forests of pine,
 And the wild foaming waters dash onward,
 Toward lands where the tropic stars shine;
 Where the scream of the bold mountain eagle
 Responds to the notes of the dove
 Is the purple robed West, the land that is best,
 The pioneer land that we love.

Chorus

Tis the land where the columbines grow,
 Overlooking the plains far below,
 While the cool summer breeze in the evergreen trees
 Softly sings where the columbines grow.

Verse 2

The bison is gone from the upland,
 The deer from the canyon has fled,
 The home of the wolf is deserted,
 The antelope moans for his dead,
 The war whoop re-echoes no longer,
 The Indian's only a name,
 And the nymphs of the grove in their loneliness rove,
 But the columbine blooms just the same.

Verse 3

Let the violet brighten the brookside,
 In sunlight of earlier spring,
 Let the fair clover bedeck the green meadow,
 In days when the orioles sing,
 Let the golden rod herald the autumn,
 But, under the midsummer sky,
 In its fair Western home, may the columbine bloom
 Till our great mountain rivers run dry.

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White and Lavendar Columbine

During the summer of 1893, Katharine Lee Bates was inspired to write "America the Beautiful" while perched on the top of Pike's Peak in Colorado, gazing in wonder at the world all around her. Three years later, in 1896, A.J. Fynn came upon a beautiful mountain meadow covered with columbines. The waves of wild Rocky Mountain Columbines, white and lavender, were the inspiration for his song, "Where the Columbines Grow," the official Colorado state

Aquilegia caerulea

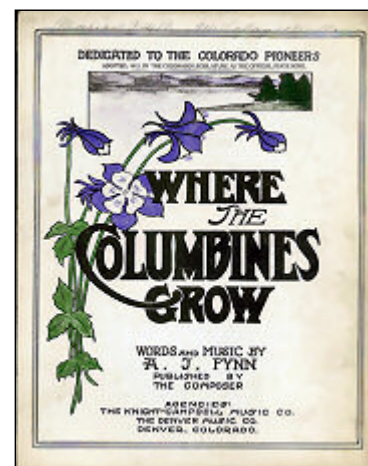
song.

Arthur John Fynn was born (1857) and educated in New York. In 1889, he moved to Colorado to teach, first in Central City and later in Alamosa. In 1898, he joined the Colorado University faculty and received his doctorate.

His inspiration for the song came while traveling by horse and wagon to visit Indian tribes in the San Luis Valley, Mr. Fynn happened upon Schinzel Flats, resplendent in blossoming columbines. This vision provided the inspiration, but he didn't put his inspiration to paper until many years later.

His wife urged him to pick up his pen. And that, he finally did in 1909. Dr. Arthur John Fynn began to write. "Where the Columbines Grow" was first published by Mr. Fynn and first performed in 1911.

"Where the Columbines Grow" was quite popular and received many favorable reviews and an endorsement from the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). In 1915, after legislative debate, "Where the Columbines Grow" was adopted as the official state song on May 8, by an act of the General Assembly. Citation: Senate Bill 308, 1915; Colorado Revised Statute 24-80-909.



Courtesy of University of Colorado
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Critics complained that the song's lyrics did not contain the word "Colorado" and in 1916, the Colorado Federation of Women's Clubs unanimously voted for repeal. The actions of the clubs pushed the Colorado General Assembly to sponsor a song competition in 1917. Before a joint session of the legislature, four songs were offered for vote. "Where the Columbines Grow" won the competition handily with 34 votes. "Skies Are Blue in Colorado," by Jim Ramey, placed a distant second with 17 votes.

The song's detractors weren't satisfied however and in 1947, Senator John J. Harpel proposed substituting a military march, "Hail Colorado." In 1960, Senator Allegra Saunders wanted to drop it, but the Daughters of Colorado protested. In 1969, Representative Betty Ann Dittmore initiated a bill to have "Colorado," also known as "If I Had a Wagon" made the state song. This bill also failed to dethrone "Where the Columbines Grow" and died in committee. In 1976, the state legislature wouldn't even look at a Colorado march song written by a member of the Territorial Daughters of Colorado.

In the early 90s, a fourth-grade class in Fort Collins, wanted to change the Colorado state song from 1915's "Where the Columbines Grow" to 1972's "Rocky Mountain High," by John Denver. Then, in 1998, the Fort Collins fourth-graders were at it again. At Kruse Elementary School, they wanted to replace "Where the Columbines Grow," with "The Colorado Song" about the place "where I can walk a mile high." But there was also Johnson Elementary School in the same city, lobbying for John Denver's "Rocky Mountain High." Deja Vu!

Since its adoption of "Where the Columbines Grow," the General Assembly has been pressured to pick a different song but hasn't. We think "Where the Columbines

Grow" has earned its place in history.

COLORADO STATUTES

TITLE 24 GOVERNMENT-STATE

Article 80 STATE HISTORY, ARCHIVES, AND EMBLEMS

24-80-909. State song. That certain song entitled "Where the Columbines Grow", the words of which were written by A. J. Fynn and the music of which was composed by A. J. Fynn, is hereby adopted as the official state song of Colorado to be used on all appropriate occasions.

History

Source: L. 15: p. 446, § 1. **C.L.** § 491. **CSA:** C. 152, § 9. **CRS 53:** § 131-8-9. **C.R.S. 1963:** § 131-8-9.

Source: The Denver Post, (<http://www.custerguide.com>), November 20, 2004

Source: Colorado State Web Site, (<http://www.state.co.us>), November 20, 2004

Source: Matthew Bender & Company, Inc., (<http://www.bender.com>), November 20, 2004

Source: Colorado Central Magazine, (<http://www.cozine.com>), November 20, 2004

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