

BEAUTIFUL OHIO

Ballard McDonald, Lyrics; Mary Earl, Music; 1918; Wilbert McBride, Adopted Lyrics; 1989

The first lyrics for "Beautiful Ohio" were written by Ballard MacDonalD (1882-1935) and composed by Mary Earl, a pen name for Robert A. "Bobo" King (1862-1932), of New York City. In 1918, he went to work for Shapiro-Bernstein Music Publishers under a contract to produce four songs per month. One of the songs he produced during that period was "Beautiful Ohio". The music for the song was adapted from a waltz of the same name. It was originally written as a love song whose lyrics depict a 'paradise of love divine.'

A bill passed by the Ohio General Assembly in 1969 made it the state's official song and in 1989 adopted an amendment which changed the original words to a new set, written by Youngstown attorney, Wilbert McBride. These lyrics gave a much more accurate portrayal of Ohio by including things such as the state's cities and factories, rather than two imaginary lovers.



Though "Beautiful Ohio" was originally written as a waltz, one version of the song is a march arranged by Richard Heine. It is commonly performed by The Ohio State University Marching Band when traveling, including their appearance in the 2005 Inaugural Parade of President George W. Bush and at the 2009 Inauguration of President Barack Obama.

~Tull