

= My Old Kentucky Home State Park =

My Old Kentucky Home State Park is a state park located in Bardstown , Kentucky . The park 's centerpiece is Federal Hill , a farm owned by United States Senator John Rowan in 1795 . During the Rowan family 's occupation , the mansion became a meeting place for local politicians and hosted several visiting dignitaries . The farm is best known for its association with American composer Stephen Foster 's anti @-@ slavery ballad " My Old Kentucky Home , Good Night " . Foster was a cousin of the Rowan family , and was likely inspired to write the ballad both by Harriet Beecher Stowe 's anti @-@ slavery novel Uncle Tom 's Cabin and through imagery seen on visits to Federal Hill . After popularity of the song increased throughout the United States , Federal Hill was purchased by the Commonwealth of Kentucky , dedicated as a historic site , and renamed " My Old Kentucky Home " on July 4 , 1923 . Foster 's song by the same name was made the state song of Kentucky in 1928 . The Federal Hill mansion was featured on a U.S. postage stamp in 1992 , and it is one of the symbols featured on the reverse of the Kentucky state quarter issued in 2001 .

= = Federal Hill = =

Federal Hill , commonly known as " My Old Kentucky Home " , is a historic mansion that was planned and commissioned by Judge John Rowan and his wife Ann Lytle . The mansion 's original surrounding 1 @,@ 200 acres were also known as " Federal Hill . " The rear portion of the mansion was constructed in 1795 , additional space from 1799 ? 1802 , and was completed in the form of a five @-@ bay , three @-@ story mansion from 1808 to 1818 , using slave labor . With Rowan in residence , Federal Hill was a local power center in the realms of legal , political , and social events . Prominent visitors to the home included Marquis de Lafayette , Stephen Foster , Andrew Jackson , and Henry Clay . Judge Rowan occupied a Louisville residence during the majority of his later years and was rarely in residence at Federal Hill near the end of his life .

In 1839 , the house suffered fire damage to the third story and roof . Carpenter Alexander Moore was hired to repair the damage , as he had worked on the design elements and woodwork in 1818 . John Rowan , Jr. occupied Federal Hill after the death of his father . When John , Jr. died in 1855 , his widow , Rebecca Carnes Rowan , occupied Federal Hill until 1897 . The house then passed to their daughter , Madge (Rowan) Frost .

The imagery of Federal Hill and Harriet Beecher Stowe 's anti @-@ slavery novel " Uncle Tom 's Cabin " are cited as the inspiration for Stephen Foster 's anti @-@ slavery ballad known as " My Old Kentucky Home . " According to Morrison Foster , Stephen Foster 's brother , Stephen was an occasional visitor to Federal Hill . Stephen 's sister Charlotte also visited Federal Hill and courted Atkinson Hill Rowan who unsuccessfully proposed to Charlotte . In 1922 , the " My Old Kentucky Home Commission " purchased Federal Hill from Madge Rowan Frost , the last heir of Federal Hill farm . The Commission renovated the property and gave the farm to the Commonwealth of Kentucky for use as a state park , with the official dedication on July 4 , 1923 .

= = Architecture = =

Federal Hill is made primarily of brick fired on @-@ site and laid in the Flemish bond pattern . The mansion possesses a foundation crafted of limestone native to the surrounding countryside . The windowsills and mantels were finely carved by a free black craftsman . The mansion is designed in the Federal Style . Federal Hill has three floors traversed by a staircase located within a central hallway on each floor and an English basement . The first floor 's main rooms are a dining room , parlor , and library . The second floor consists of three bedrooms similarly spaced to the rooms below .

Auxiliary farm buildings associated with the mansion include the original springhouse . To the rear of the home the oldest section of residence can be seen . The ell consists of four rooms as well as the kitchen and smokehouse . The smokehouse was built as part of the existing structure , and not free standing as is most often seen . The rear ell structure served as the first residence for the family

while the primary residence was constructed . To the east of the house is the family burial ground . Behind the house is a flower garden . The slave cemetery lies beyond the flower garden . Documented but no longer existing buildings include multiple slave houses , a large stable due @-@ west of the mansion , an ash house , and a garden house .

= = State Park = =

The property was originally a State Historic Site , but it was passed to the Division of State Parks in 1936 with intentions to increase the amount of activities surrounding the historic mansion . Today , the tour focuses on the career of Stephen Foster , the life of enslaved servants at Federal Hill , Kentucky traditions , and information regarding 19th century daily life on a Kentucky farm . 85 % of the furniture exhibited inside the mansion was owned by the Rowan family . The Judge Rowan family coin silver is also exhibited there .

The mansion was renovated in 1977 , and again in 2006 . The 2006 renovation was funded by an anonymous donor . New floor coverings , elaborate wallpapers , and period window treatments were used to interpret the mansion to the period in which John Rowan Jr. occupied the mansion . The use of family letters , photos from the 1920s , and 1950s , assisted in the renovation . The 2006 renovation cost nearly \$ 1 @,@ 000 @,@ 000 . Tour guides dress in period costumes and as of 2015 , the tour has been altered to include the singing of " My Old Kentucky Home " by tour guides who also play in The Stephen Foster Story , a musical that typically is performed daily at the park from May until August of every year . Throughout the year , various events are held at My Old Kentucky Home State Park . Special Christmas candlelight tours are offered during the holiday season each year in which the mansion is decorated for the holiday and is lit by candlelight .

A new visitors center was added to the park in the 1990s , and houses a conference and wedding space , a giftshop , and kitchen . The gift shop contains items concerning the park and the state of Kentucky , especially books by Kentucky authors and Kentucky Derby items . The park also features the Kenny Rapier Golf Course , a regulation 18 @-@ hole golf course named for a previous Kentucky Commissioner of Parks and Bardstown native , that also features a fully equipped pro shop . The 39 @-@ site campground is available mid @-@ March to mid @-@ November .

= = State Quarter = =

On June 1 , 1992 , a 29 @-@ cent stamp was issued honoring the park . The Federal Hill mansion was also chosen to be one of the icons featured on the Kentucky State Quarter . To the right of the stately mansion , an inscription on the coin reads " My Old Kentucky Home . " It was the 15th state quarter , released on October 18 , 2001 , denoting the fact that Kentucky was the 15th state to join the United States . The official ceremony revealing the quarter was held in the park , and was said by then @-@ governor Paul E. Patton that the mansion and the accompanying thoroughbred were : " ... the two most visible , beloved symbols in Kentucky . "

= = The Stephen Foster Story and other outdoor productions = =

The park features an amphitheater that is home to the long @-@ running outdoor musical , The Stephen Foster Story , which is staged during the summer . It is the longest running outdoor drama in the state of Kentucky , having started in 1959 . It was written by playwright Paul Green . Matinees are performed in an indoor theater with air conditioning . Many Foster songs are performed , with the actors dancing in antebellum period costume , in a retelling of Foster 's life .

Recently , the amphitheater has incorporated new musicals into its performance schedule , in addition to The Stephen Foster Story . In 2008 , the amphitheater produced The Civil War in celebration of the Lincoln Bicentennial . In 2009 , a second musical , Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat , was staged . Other musicals have included The Wizard of Oz , and All Shook Up . In addition , the amphitheater hosts a summer concert series .