CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER

Financial Section B

CLEVELAND, SUNDAY MORNING, JUNE 7, 1959

This is an oil portrait of Daniel Decatur Emmett, done by a Mount Vernon artist, Irene Kinney. It hangs above the fireplace in the composer's little home.

Dan Emmett Whistled 'Dixie' Into History

By GEORGE J. BARMANN
Plain Dealer Staff Writer

MOUNT VERNON, O., June 6 — The soft pizzicato of autumn rain was playing along the streets of New York that Saturday night, in 1859, when Dan Emmett, his fiddle fixed in its case under his arm, left the theater and started back to his boarding house.

He hadn't gone more than a block or two when Jerry Bryant, for whom he was working as a musician, with Bryant's Minstrels, caught up with him, and they squeezed into a musty doorway of a tobacco shop. Neither felt like much, really. The show was slipping. Attendance was bad.

"Dan," said Bryant suddenly, "our numbers are getting stale. I got to have a fresh tune. Can't you compose a new walk-around . . . something that'll catch with the boys . . . that'll take their minds off this war talk . . . something in the git-up and git style?"

"That's a big order, Mr. Bryant," he said, "but I'll see what I can do."

'You Better Have It'

"Yes," the minstrel man said, "I got to have something by Monday. Dan, you better have it by then or . . . well, or you'll wish you were in Dixie."

Two days to write a song, Emmett thought. A man can't do a piece like that. But he sat in his kitchen chair there by the window all night. No use, though; it wouldn't come. Next day, Sunday, was cold and wet, and he was still staring out at the shapes of brick and dripping roofs.

"What a morning," Dan said to his wife, Catherine, who had come into the room. "I wish I was in Dixie."

"You show people," she said, "you keep saying about being in Dixie. What's it mean?"

"Well," he said, "it's a common expression. When things aren't going well where you are, you wish you were in Dixie . . . in Dixie . . . in Dixie."

For Daniel Decatur Emmett, minstrel, musician and man from Mount Vernon, this was the magic moment. Years later, in an interview with a reporter from the New York News, he was recalling that morning in the boarding house.

Jumped Up and Got Tin Whistle

"Suddenly," he said, "I jumped up, took my tin whistle, and sat down to the table to write. In less than an hour I had the first verse and chorus. After that, it was easy. When my wife returned, I sang it for her. 'It is all finished now except the name,' sez I. What shall I call it? Sez she, 'Call it I wish I was in Dixie's Land.'" I agreed, and we gave it that name. 'How do you like the song?' sez I. 'I like it first rate,' sez she, 'and if the Bryants don't like it, they wouldn't like anything.'"

It took immensely. It was unforgettable. It became the marching song, the national air, of the South—the song that saved a show and helped split a nation.

When Jeff Davis was inaugurated president of the Confederacy, down in Montgomery, Ala., they played "Dixie." They rattled it out at Gettysburg and at Bull Run and at Appomattox Court House. And it was played for Mr. Lincoln at the White House.

And Daniel Decatur Emmett was a Northerner and a Union soldier and the son of an abolitionist.

Here in this community, the seat of Knox County, Dan Emmett, composer and father of the American minstrel show, is to be honored this month. His "Dixie" is 100 years old this year.

On June 25, 26 and 27, Mount Vernon will most remember Dan Emmett. There will be a minstrel show, given by the Elks Club, and speeches and a parade and other ceremonies. And, of course, there will be "Dixie."

'Yes," said H. Ogden Wintermute, an antiques dealer, authority and writer about the composer, "I imagine we'll play 'Dixie' often."

Wintermute and Dr. Robert L. Eastman once established the Daniel Decatur Emmett Birthplace Museum, in the old Emmett home, but it didn't do well. Dr. Eastman now rents the house to Dr. Joseph W. Allman, who uses it as his office.

The little white house with a green tin roof was threatened with destruction in 1954, and Dr. Eastman and Wintermute and several other citizens rescued it and moved it from its original site at S. Mulberry and W. Ohio Streets to N. Gay Avenue.

"I don't know why it didn't go over the way we hoped," Dr. Eastman said. 'I guess maybe it would have if it were in the South. That's what my wife, Catherine, says, anyway. She's from Richmond. His being a Yankee and writing 'Dixie' just won't do, she says."

On the front of the house is a half-hidden plaque: "The birthplace of Daniel Decatur Emmett, 1815-1904, author of 'Dixie' and founder of minstrelsy." Above the mantel in the tiny living room, the doctor's reception room, is an oil of Dan by Irene Kinney, a local artist.

Up in Mound View Cemetery, a red granite stone shows Dan Emmett's burial place. The inscription says that his song "inspired the courage and devotion of the southern people and now thrills the hearts of a reunited nation."

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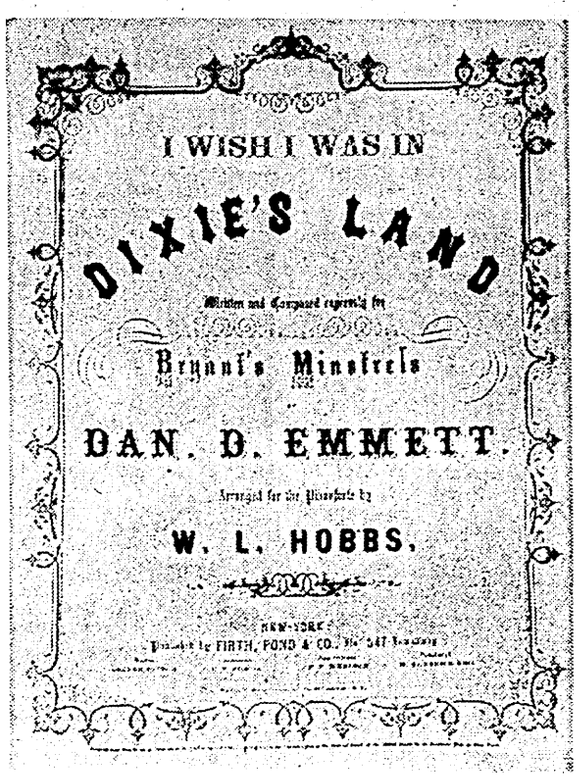
Miss Ann Baltzell of Mount Vernon sets in place a Civil War veteran's grave marker by Dan Emmett's stone in Mound View Cemetery.

Plain Dealer Staff Photos by William A. Ashbolt

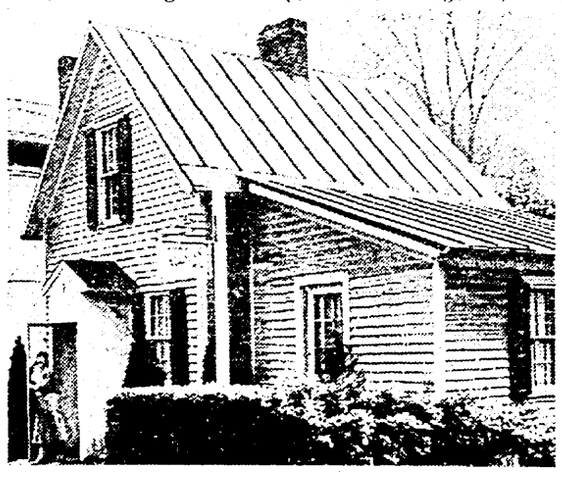
Dr. Robert Eastman H. Ogden Wintermute

Mementoes of Dan Emmett, his trunk and some of his songs delight these men, leaders of the program to celebrate "Dixie's" anniversary.



The frontispiece of Dan Emmett's famous song.

Joan Blubaugh sits on a boulder, with Emmett plaque, in front of the Knox County Memorial Building.



This was Daniel Decatur Emmett's home in Mount Vernon.

U.S. DEBATE STILL SIZZLES

Can Arms Replace Men?

EDITOR'S NOTE—The size, shape, and role of U.S. ground forces in any future war has produced sharp debate in Washington. It is an argument in which the entire free world has a big stake — and which is far from settled. Here is an analysis of the Army manpower conflict.

By BEM PRICE

WASHINGTON, June 6 (AP)—There's a 64-page, recently declassified and little-noticed document in the Pentagon which bears the unrevealing title "Department of the Army Pamphlet No. 201-1."

Basically, the pamphlet outlines sharp differences between the Army and President Eisenhower over the role of ground forces in any future war.

The Army insists that it needs additional manpower to meet the problems of the atomic age, while Eisenhower indicates he will be satisfied with a smaller army containing what former Defense Secretary Charles Wilson called "more bang for a buck."

Essentially the argument over the role of manpower in the atomic age has been going on in the Pentagon, Congress and the executive branch since the end of World War II.

The debate was intensified in September, 1957 when Wilson ordered the second 100,000-man cut in the Army in two months on the grounds that "the people in the country are in no mood to spend more dollars."

Wilson ordered the Army to drop to a manpower level of 900,000 by June 30, 1958. President Eisenhower's budget calls for a further reduction to 870,000 by next July 1.

Discussed Situation at March Conference

Eisenhower discussed the military situation at a March 11 news conference in response to questions about U.S. defense posture in relation to the Berlin crisis.

He said, "I don't think an army of 870,000 is a small army. Actually there has been an effort to relate the Berlin situation to the fact that we should have a lot more ground forces."

"What would you do with more ground forces in Europe?" The President asked. "Would you start a ground war? You wouldn't start a ground war in that region if that were going to make the only way you had to enforce your will. You have got to go to other means."

Asked if he were confident that the Army as now constituted could handle a "brush fire" situation, the President replied:

'I'd say this: if we can't then the war's gotten beyond a brush war, and you've got to think in much, much bigger terms."

By Army definition, a "brush fire" war is anything less than a total nuclear holocaust in which national survival is not clearly at stake.

While the Army concedes that this nation must have a massive atomic capability, the pamphlet, which was compiled at the direction of Army Secretary Wilber M. Brucker, states:

"While all-out atomic war initiated by the Soviets presents a very grave threat, aggression short of general war appears more likely to occur. In the approaching era of atomic plenty, with resulting mutual deterrence, the Communists will probably be inclined to expand their tactics of subversion and limited aggression."

The Army also says:

"There will never again be a war involving major powers without the use or threat of atomic weapons. The threat will force the opponents to deploy and fight the same as if atomics were being utilized.

"Atomic weapons are in themselves inconclusive. Sizable ground forces must be used if the enemy, his people and his land are to be brough under control.

"This fact . . . is in direct contradiction to the mistaken concept that atomic weapons can somehow replace ground forces."

In brief, the Army says that it must be prepared to fight any kind of war—and this means more men.

Just how many men will be needed, the Army is not sure. Beginning in September some 1,200 troops will be deployed at the combat development center at Fort Ord, Calif., in an effort to find out.

The Fort Ord center already has figured that the next war will be fought without front lines, that a 90-man unit might be scattered over an area 10,000 yards wide and 15,000 yards deep, and that men will gather quickly for short, violent battles and then disperse even more quickly lest they become an atomic target. The object will be the destruction of opposing forces rather than seizure of territory.

Supply Will Be Complicated Chore

Supply for these scattered forces will be an enormously complicated and manpower-consuming chore.

The Army says that if limited yield atomic weapons are used even more manpower will be needed and casualties will be higher.

In defense of the proposed reduction, Secretary of Defense Neil H. McElroy told the House subcommittee on defense appropriations in January an 870,000 - man army this year will be better than last year's 900,000-man force because of the Army's higher mental requirements and incentive pay plan.

By having a career force of bright men, the secretary contended, fewer men would be needed for training purposes and since smart soldiers rarely are lost to duty because of disciplinary infractions the Army will gain manpower heretofore wasted in prison stockades.

The Real Judge

When the President spoke about going to "other means" than ground warfare and thinking in "much, much bigger terms" if a brush war flamed out of control, he did so against the background of the House budget hearings.

During one exchange Rep. Mahon (D-Tex) observed to Gen. Nathan Twining, chairman of the joint chiefs of staff: "A big atomic war would be the end of civilization as we know it." Twining agreed: "It would almost be."

Mahon also stated during one hearing that "a limited war is more likely." Secretary McElroy agreed.

The Army's chief of staff, Gen. Maxwell D. Taylor, told the congressmen he believed a powerful U. S. Army, coupled with a clear intent to use it when national interests were threatened, might prevent Communist attempts to nibble the free world to death in a series of limited wars.

Such a force, he said, might have prevented some of the 17 localized conflicts which have broken out since World War II.

While Taylor said he could live with Army Secretary Brucker's original recommendation of a 900,000 - man army, he made it plain to the lawmakers that he considered an army of no less than 925,000 necessary for the nation's safety.

Ever since former Secretary of State John Foster Dulles announced the administration's doctrine of "massive retaliation" in January 1954, the Army has steadily shrunk in size.

This whittling away of Army manpower produced reaction in Congress.

On April 29 the Senate passed an amendment to the military appropriations bill directing the secretary of defense to maintain an army of no less than 900,000 men.

Whether this will prevent President Eisenhower from carrying out the scheduled reduction to 870,000 men is speculative. Congress can appropriate the money but it cannot force the executive branch to spend it.

The voice passage of the amendment, yet to be approved by the House, was accompanied by only one brief speech by Sen. Allen J. Ellender (D-La.).

"I remind the senators," said Ellender, "that while the President is commander and chief of the Army and Navy, it is Congress which is charged under the Constitution with raising and supporting armies. . . . I believe it is time the legislative branch put its foot down and served notice on the executive branch that we will . . . exercise our responsibilities in this area of national defense."

The final word is yet to be spoken in the debate over whether weapons can be substituted for manpower on the ground.