

DIXIE
by Heber Jones

Every place has its unique name
because of the people who staked their claim.

Utah's Dixie, like the rest,
was named by people who thought it best.

In the years that formed the world,
no one knew where the red sand swirled.

People came and people went;
for the most part, history skipped the event.

Then, in 1861 a new history was begun
in this land where the Virgin river does run.

People from the South gathered as one
to grow cotton under the Dixie sun.

Brigham sent Pratt and Snow
to guide the group and keep them in toe.

They gathered up a likely group
and marched away like an army troop.

Away they went, three hundred strong,
to build a community with muscle and song.

Where the Virgin River meandered and flowed
was the very place the group did go.

They found a spot between two hills
with two running streams to power their mills.

They set up camp east of the site
and danced in the tent while it rained all night.

They laid out the town in nice, neat squares
until each family called one theirs.

They occupied the land as they were charged
and dutifully named their town St. George.

They went to work most every day,
except for the one used for rest and to pray.

Their past lives were largely forgotten
as they hoed the weeds and picked the cotton.

Sugarcane from a fiery vat
became molasses on Price flat.

Towns and farms on small plots grew
from Zion's mighty canyons to the Beaver Dam's slough.

Adobe, stone and willows made their precious homes
and soon the valleys glistened with spires and domes.

Timber from the north and timber from the south
roofed humble houses in the constant drought.

The mighty Virgin River and the Santa Clara too
were harnessed for production tho' they broke ranks a time or
two.

The water from these desert streams was spread upon the ground
and brought forth the luscious fruits for which Dixie is
renowned.

Homes, schools and churches spread out across the land,
but it was the growing children that made Dixieland so grand.

Erastus sent them scurrying across the burning sand
to build the Kingdom in Dixie as per Brigham's firm command.

They filled the lower valleys and crossed the mountains too,
lived by subsistence agriculture on the many things they grew.

The second generation knew not the dreams of old
their primary focus was on buying things with gold.

They set up shops and mercantiles and owned the teams they
drove; they crossed the basins north and south and to the west
did rove.

The numerous little children grew up like mom and dad,
but some left their birthplace to gain things they never had.

Many went to Mexico, Arizona and Nevada too;
others crossed the line and went away to school.

A century passed in Dixie with little that was new.
The communities kept growing and saw tourists coming through.

The world came to Dixie after World War II
and brought the seeds of change that are familiar to me and you.

Cars, trucks and airplanes became commonplace
and young folks came home with memories they could not erase.

Bloomington, Washington, and Santa Clara too,
have grown beyond the boundaries the old folks knew.

Schools, stores and shopping malls, are now the rule;
and all the people gathering here think Dixie is so "cool."

What has happened in this land where Snow is just a name
and all the golfers carry clubs to play a simple game?

What has happened in this land where Germans once were Swiss,
where lovers in the moon light now greet with a "Dutchman's"
kiss?

What has happened in this land where lizards dread the sun
while people from all 'round gather here to have their fun?

What has happened in this land beneath the Basin's rim,
where the farmlands of yesterday now gleam with the builder's
trim?

What has happened to this land from which the young left to roam
and are now greeting their offspring in their new Dixie home?

Is it just a plot of ground on which one's mind is set:
or is it more a state of mind, once conceived, you can't forget?

Whatever view you might possess of Dixie as a land;
set your eyes upon the skies with your feet in the burning sand
and you will find your heart and mind in a state you understand.