

FOSTER

And His Little Dog Tray



BY OPAL WHEELER

Illustrated by Mary Greenwalt

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Stephen Foster and His Little Dog Tray

Written by Opal Wheeler

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STEPHEN FOSTER
And His Little Dog Tray



CHAPTER ONE



THE BRIGHT FOURTH of July sun smiled down upon the beautiful old oaks of Foster's Grove where the good town folk of Lawrenceville and the soldiers from the arsenal near by had gathered to celebrate the birthday of America.

There, in the cooling shade beneath the wide-spreading branches, bands from the village played merrily around the long tables that were piled high with good things, and at last all was ready for the special birthday dinner.

William Foster sat at one end of the rough log table with his happy children, waiting to lead the celebration. Suddenly from the arsenal across the rolling green, the cannon boomed a salute, and while the soldiers stood at attention, the bands began to play "The Star-Spangled Banner."

Father Foster smiled at his children, all lustily singing, "Oh say, can you see by the dawn's early light." The ground trembled again as the cannon boomed a second salute, and when all was quiet, William Foster began to speak.

"My friends, this is a joyful time for us all. Just fifty years ago today, America was born."

“Long live America!” “The land of the free!” cried the people again and again, and when the cheering stopped, William Foster went on.

The older children listened proudly to their tall father, while Dunning and little Morrison hungrily sniffed the meats roasting near by and hoped that the speeches would not be too long so that the dinner could begin.

At last the talking stopped, and while the bands played “Yankee Doodle,” the feast began. The older children sang between mouthfuls, for this was one of their favorite songs, while Dunning and Morrison swung their short legs under the table in time to the music.

Just as the celebration was ended, there was a crackling in the bushes and Father Foster turned to see Lieve, his little colored servant, looking at him with her large brown eyes.

“Marse Foster,” she whispered, her dark eyes shining, “the little one is here!” and turning swiftly, she darted away through the trees.

William Foster smiled at his children.

“There is a fine surprise awaiting us at home, and I think that it is time we went to see it.”

Leading the way through the woods, Father Foster and the children hurriedly climbed the hill and walked along

the low fence under the locust trees to the beautiful White Cottage that overlooked the winding Allegheny River.

Soon they were in a small room, looking with delight at the tiny new baby, sound asleep in his little crib. Mother Foster smiled at her happy family.

“What shall we call him, Mother?” whispered the children excitedly.

