

Dean Kamen's "Independent" North Dumpling Island

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General Information

Source:	NBC Today Show	Resource Type:	Video News Report
Creator:	Garrick Utley/Lucky Severson	Copyright:	NBCUniversal Media, LLC.
Event Date:	07/03/1988	Copyright Date:	1988
Air/Publish Date:	07/03/1988	Clip Length	00:06:25

Description

Inventor Dean Kamen has declared North Dumpling, his private Island near Connecticut, a separate nation, complete with its own currency, customs office, and a government office called the Department of Redundancy Department.

Keywords

Dean Kamen, Humor, Inventor, Inventing, North Dumpling, Island, Nation, Independence, Independent, Home, House, Lord Dumpling, Government, Customs, Currency, New York, Country, Rules, Regulations, Laws, Redundant, Redundancy, Department of Redundancy Department, Bureaucracy, Bureaucrats, Red Tape, Navy, Dick Rutan, Jack Kamen, Family, National Anthem, Satire, Parody, Reality, Imagination, Creativity

Citation

MLA

"Dean Kamen's "Independent" North Dumpling Island." Lucky Severson, correspondent. *NBC Today*

APA

Severson, L. (Reporter), & Utley, G. (Anchor). 1988, July 3. Dean Kamen's "Independent" North Dumpling Island. [Television series episode]. *NBC Today Show*. Retrieved from <https://archives.nbclearn.com/portal/site/k-12/browse/?cuecard=71170>

CHICAGO MANUAL OF STYLE

"Dean Kamen's "Independent" North Dumpling Island" *NBC Today Show*, New York, NY: NBC Universal, 07/03/1988. Accessed Sat Apr 4 2015 from NBC Learn: <https://archives.nbclearn.com/portal/site/k-12/browse/?cuecard=71170>

Transcript

Casino Restores Its Orchestrion Nickelodeons

JANE PAULEY, anchor:

Well, usually nostalgia and the gambling spirit don't go together, but there is a place in Nevada where they do mix. Boyd Matson reports from Reno.

BOYD MATSON, reporting:

Good morning from Reno, Nevada. When you walk into any casino in this town, there is a sound that is like music to the ears of all gamblers--that noise of coins hitting the metal trays at the bottom of slot machines. But if you go into Harold's, they not only have the slots, they've got machines that people are putting quarters into, expecting an entirely different kind of music. This music is the real thing in an age of synthetics and substitutes, these old nickelodeons providing listeners with a front-row seat before a live band. It's not a jukebox or a tape recorder or a radio. Folks, these instruments are right there before your very eyes. They have been offering up a veritable symphony of music with every coin dropped since the turn of the century. In this old Coinola orchestrion, you get drums, xylophone, piano, triangle, tambourine, flute pipes, and a woodblock. Technical triumphs of their time, today they remain monuments to precision craftsmanship. Listening to a school kid practice will tell you the violin is difficult to master even with years of lessons but this Violano Virtuoso flawlessly cranks out one melody after another.

Before the nickelodeons go on display in Harold's Club, they looked like this--just an empty shelf surrounded by a lot of loose parts in a warehouse waiting to be restored. This isn't actually a nickelodeon, it's a concert orchestrion. When it's finished, hopefully, a lot more air than that will be going through the two hundred thirty-six wooden pipes that make up an original player pipe organ. And when it's restored, it will be worth about sixty thousand dollars.

Harold's Club has one of the largest collections of antique nickelodeons in the country, which means they also have on their staff Greg Taylor, one of the few people able to repair and restore these machines. Greg and his partner Bill Sawyer spent months in this shop getting a nickelodeon in working condition.

Sometimes it means building a part from scratch, and always it means being part musician.

GREG TAYLOR: I felt I've always had a fairly good ear for music. You know, I could tell when something was in tune and when it was out fairly well. My only experience really has been just working with these machines and just getting a feel for it. The thing that intrigued me about the music machines is the music itself. It-- it does do more than just move. It-- it makes-- makes music and it-- it's entertaining.

MATSON: The nickelodeons began heading for the scrapheap about the time of the Depression. They were getting too expensive to manufacture and the quality of pre-recorded music had surpassed the sound of these people-less bands. As an engineering feat, nickelodeons remain intriguing to watch when their gears grind into action and the paper rolls starts turning with its holes cueing each instrument to life. As a band, well, the sound isn't perfect but you don't have to pay it union wages and when you realize each nickelodeon is now worth more than ten times its original value, then the rinky-tink music is a reminder that some parts of our past should always be preserved.

For TODAY, Boyd Matson, NBC News, Reno, Nevada.