

As an example of the rich diversity of folk culture which can be found within a given region of the United States, the 1968 Festival of American Folklife is focusing on the state of Texas. It is hoped that a presentation of the lore and crafts of one area may illustrate the vitality of cultural survivals, and also stimulate interest in further study and public recognition of this culture.

This presentation of folklife is produced by the newly formed Institute of Texan Cultures. Traditional food of the Southwest will be prepared and served by the San Antonio Conservation Society.



*Covered Wagon. Symbolic of Texas culture. One of the focal points of the Institute of Texan Cultures.
Photo: Kilpatrick's*

INSTITUTE OF TEXAN CULTURES

The Institute of Texan Cultures was established for the immediate purpose of preparing a creditable exhibit for Hemisfair and for the long-range program of presenting the people of Texas with the real drama of their own history and tradition. The 59th Legislature of the State appropriated \$4.5 million for an appropriate Texas State Exhibit for Hemisfair and directed that due consideration be given to the construction of a facility that would

suit the long-range purposes of the project.

The definitive aim of the Institute is to provide a statewide educational communication center concerned with subjects relating to the history and culture of the people of Texas. Collecting, organizing and interpreting information on Texas subjects will continue in order to produce audio-visual programs for the classrooms, museums, libraries and television programs of the State. In May 1967, \$5.5 million was appropriated to create exhibits, expand the building, and

provide the Institute with operating expenses for two years.

Tracing the flow of immigration by each group, the exhibits show the evidences still clear on the Texas scene today of their origins and impact. The story is told as much as possible in terms of individuals, and even Texans will be due some surprises when they look at the plain historic record of who they are and from whence they came.

Contrary to popular legend the Negro, Irishman, Italian and Englishman were playing their roles in Texas long before the

first Anglo-American crossed the Sabine. The oldest continuous settlement in Texas is that of the Tigua Indians who emigrated from New Mexico in 1680 and are still at Ysleta in the El Paso area. They built the first European edifice in the State, the Mission at Ysleta. An examination of any single phase of Texas' development shows the melding of forces from many heritages. In the oil industry, it was a Virginian who drilled the first producing well; a Czech who brought in the spindletop gusher; and the grandson of a Pole who controlled much of the industry in this century.

Each exhibit area is designed to give some feeling of the type of people it represents. In structure, design, and music it will create an atmosphere emphasizing the factual story told by its pictures and relics. A central dome contains the dramatic highlight of the show which is a 36-screen ultramodern film and slide presentation. On the large screen the colorful events of Texas life such as the blessing of the shrimp boats at Galveston and "A Night in Old Fredericksburg" are shown with details from these events appearing simultaneously on the smaller screens.

After Hemisfair, in October

1968, the enrichment in depth of each of the sectors of the exhibit will begin in earnest. The emphasis will be shifted from time to time to individual areas of the exhibit so that attention can be focused on a single group. Portions of the exhibit will be circulated to the Texas museums and libraries.

Since the primary function of the Institute will be to bridge the gap between the academic historian and the people of Texas, the first step of the Institute will be the development of a central collection of historic pictures. This is essential to the production of films, exhibits, and publications. This vast reservoir of pictorial material will be available to the museums, schools and television stations of the State. The Institute will also serve as a central index for research material to the State of Texas.

Certainly the examination of any single phase of Texas history shows the melding of forces from many heritages. Twenty-five major cultural groups came together to lay the foundation of the Texas of Today. We hope that all visitors to the central exhibit will see at least a part of their own heritage and will recognize that they, along with many others, will determine the future of the State.

