

## Moving Towards the Bicentennial



No one any longer believes that America is the great melting pot. Ethnicity is the word. We now know that we are not all one, that our diverse origins and backgrounds persist in spite of the best efforts of educators and "Dick and Jane" readers.

This is simply the formal recognition of what has been for some time an unconscious, largely unvoiced assumption: that people remain different, and that our civilization is a pluralistic one. From July 3 through 14 the Smithsonian will celebrate this realization with its eighth consecutive Festival of American Folklife. Begun in 1967 as an effort to remind industrialized urban citizens of the persistence of crafts and the making of things—"taking the instruments out of their glass cases in the museums on the Mall, and showing out of doors, how they are made and how they are played," as we thought of it originally—we have steadily widened its scope.

With the collaboration of the National

Park Service, we have been able to extend our efforts from a few days to nearly two weeks, and have moved westward to the reflecting pool between the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial. The vastness of our audience and the numbers of our participants seem to demand a larger stage. By the time of the Bicentennial we expect to entertain ten times as many visitors with a Festival lasting all summer long.

Our themes have been chosen with the Bicentennial in mind. First, as always, comes "Regional Americans," this year featuring the folklore and industries of Mississippi. A second theme of importance is that of the skills and lore of the American working man and woman, "Working Americans." Then there is "Old Ways in the New World." Eight nations from Scandinavia to Africa will demonstrate their folkways alongside American counterparts. And fourth, emphasis on native American cultural expressions is one of our special themes.

With music and dance, with ritual and tradition, with food and folklore, the Festival of American Folklife brings a tangible reminder of our diversity to all who come to Washington this July. As the barker says, "Hur-ry, Hur-ry, Hur-ry!"

S. Dillon Ripley  
*Secretary, Smithsonian Institution*



The history of achievement in this country is a history of the men and women who, out of their daily toil, wove a unique pattern of living which has become our cherished heritage.

In its broadest sense, this is the theme expressed by the Festival of American Folklife. The National Park Service of the U. S. Department of the Interior is proud to be a partner with the Smithsonian Institution in bringing to the Mall folk performances and craftsmen and folklife expertise of the highest quality to be found in the country.

The 298 separate parklands which make up the National Park System today represent a huge repository of natural, historic and cultural resources at the disposal of Festival planners. Some of the participants in this year's program, from the featured State of Mississippi, are associated with the Park Service's Living History Program at Natchez Trace Parkway.

The Department of the Interior welcomes the opportunity to expand its involvement in past and contemporary folklife studies, to create living presentations in proper environmental contexts, and to further interest in "Living History" program in parks throughout the country.

We look forward to 1976 when the Festival of American Folklife will play a prominent role in the celebration of this nation's 200th birthday.

Rogers C. B. Morton  
*Secretary, Department of Interior*