

Working Americans

Whenever people or goods are moved from one place to another, transportation workers load it, haul it, tow it, truck it, fuel it, service it, and keep it rolling. Towboat deckhands don work vests and prepare the rigging for a midnight turn of grain and coal-filled barges coming up-river from Cairo bound for St. Louis; air traffic controllers carefully plot alpha-numeric readouts of traffic above D.C.'s National Airport; the yard engine at a midwest classification yard "shoves" a train of boxcars toward the hump as a brakeman cuts cars bound for several eastern destinations; a commissary cook fries sixty steaks for a flight from Kansas City to Los Angeles, while an inspector cautiously reads the oil on a 747 wing strut before buying the work of the day crew; and a sleeper team stops at White's for a cup of hundred mile coffee before making the South Charleston terminal with a load of 84 bills.

This year the Working Americans section presents the skills and lore found within the work days and nights

of transportation workers. The goal of this area is to put names and faces in place of services and machinery, to approximate as closely as possible the actual work place, the human feelings and the tone of the occupation. By focusing on the skills, styles, stories, jokes, beliefs and customs of contemporary workers, the Festival reveals the similarities and differences of occupational backgrounds. This presentation is the result of extensive planning and cooperation among the AFL-CIO, the U. S. Department of Labor, the Smithsonian Institution and its folklife scholars, the National Park Service, and transportation workers throughout the country.

The Exhibit

Visitors to the Working Americans section of the Festival will have three areas in which to share the occupational folklore and skills of workers in transportation. The first presents simulated work sites which will include areas for bulk freight trucking, maritime

skills, airline maintenance, and railroad maintenance of way. The second will be devoted to the performance of stories, jokes, personal experiences and other narrative expressions of transportation workers. The Working Americans stage will feature the performance of songs and music growing out of the work experience. The third area is the Learning Center. Here photographs of skills in the work environments, videotapes and sound recordings taken on-the-job can be experienced by the Festival visitor. By presenting the sights and sounds of work not simulated or transportable to the Mall, such as the scale of a 747 overhaul bay, the massive weight and power of a modern towboat, the complexities of a railroad classification yard and the ordered confusion of an aircraft factory, a more complete understanding of the other Working Americans areas will be possible. Regular workshops and scheduled discussions will deal with such topics as the safety considerations in these occupations, the twenty-four hour work rhythm of transportation workers and the similarities and differences found in the movement of people and goods by various transportation occupations.

Air Traffic Controllers

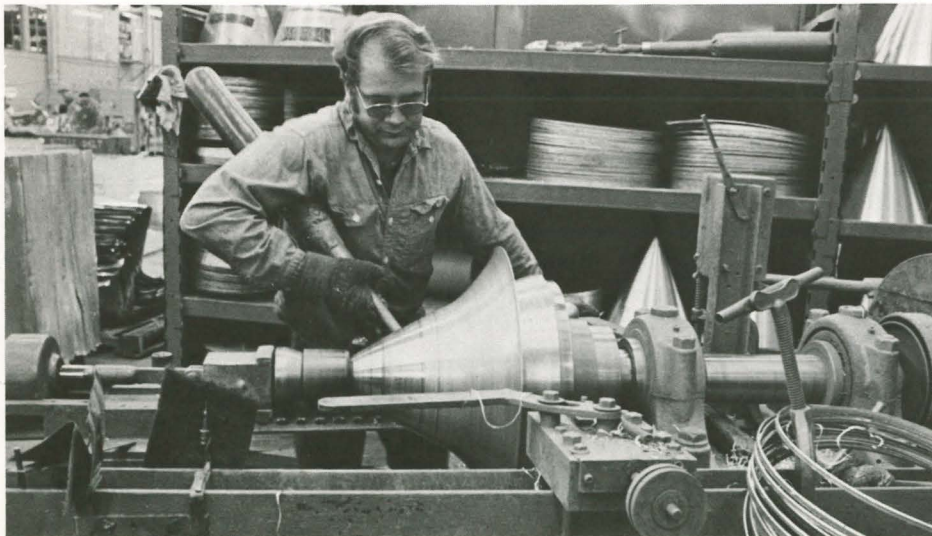
Air traffic controllers regulate the flow of vehicles through the roadways of the skies. Their work place is a dimly-lit room filled with radar screens and electronic communications equipment, but their actual area of responsibility is a three-dimensional piece of airspace. Each controller watches a particular volume of air, located geographically

Machinists skills and the ways in which workers relate to each other, to their tools, materials and products generate group awareness.

by map coordinates, bounded at the top and bottom by specific altitudes and continually changing due to the complexities of moving aircraft and weather conditions. A controller tracks and advises the pilot in his sector and then "hands him off" to a fellow controller as the plane passes into another area. Visitors will see demonstrations of this three-dimensional chess game and hear accounts of the interesting and dramatic events arising from the occupation.

Commercial Aircraft Machinists and Maintenance Workers

There are two basic kinds of passenger-carrying aircraft being manufactured and flown in this country—the smaller corporate and private planes produced by the general aviation industry, and the large commercial jets operated and maintained by the major airlines. This portion of the Working Americans section seeks to explore the general aviation field by presenting the skills involved in the fabrication of a single-engine airplane's nose piece on the spinning lathe, the sub-assembly of fuselage and control panel sections and the machining of aluminum gears and parts. The commercial aircraft presentation will present repair and maintenance of an engine pylon section from a 727 aircraft, the recycling of parts which are taken down and rebuilt by hand by a "junkman" and the constellation of skills involved in the repair and maintenance of the small jet engine now found on most 727's and 747's—the auxiliary power unit (APU). Workers in both the general aviation and commercial fields will also share their unique occupational lore—one which combines the excitement and mystery of airplanes with a distinct pride and confidence in their work.



Railroad Workers

One of the most pervasive occupational and cultural symbols in America, the railroads and the people who work on them, will also be featured in this year's Festival. A four car display, track laying and maintenance of way skills area, signaling area and a mock-up locomotive engine will become staging areas for skill demonstrations, storytelling and singing sessions by contemporary railroad workers.

Workers in Trucking

Although the truck driver recently has captured the attention of the popular media, his or her relationship to the dispatcher, dockworker, yardman and mechanic in the hauling of freight has been less clearly understood. To elaborate on the interrelationships of contemporary trucking a working break bulk loading dock is a staging area for dockworkers, drivers, dispatchers and mechanics to display and discuss their skills. A mock truck stop, complete with 100 mile coffee, stories of jack-knifed rigs, narrow escapes and a jukebox filled with truckers' music is another demonstration area. At both the skill area and the Working Americans stage, truckers will sing the songs of the dock and the road. A feature presentation will be a truckers Rodeo on June 28 and 29 performed by members of the Washington, D. C. Trucking Association. Since its inception in 1937, the Rodeo has served the trucking industry by spotlighting the skill of the professional truck driver. Drivers compete on written safety tests, inspections for equipment defects and the most exacting test—the obstacle course.

Deep Sea and Inland Boatmen

The past experiences of inland boatmen and deep sea sailors have gen-

erated a lively repertoire of folklore. Today, however, the size of supertankers and line boats pushing bulk cargoes through inland waterways has added a dramatically increased scale to the work environments of these men and women. Consequently, it has not been possible to bring actual working vessels to the Festival. However, timberheads, cavils, and buttons can and have been placed on the Mall to illustrate rigging, tying off, knot tying, and splicing skills. Storytelling sessions, monitoring of boat-to-boat communications, singing, and signaling will also be offered in appropriate skill areas and on the Working Americans stages.

Smithsonian Museum Exhibits

There are also many permanent and temporary exhibits in the Smithsonian's Museums of History and Technology and Air and Space that provide visitors with an opportunity to increase their knowledge of the people and equipment involved in transportation—both past and present. The first floor of the Museum of History and Technology contains permanent exhibits of farm machinery, road vehicles (including a 1930 Mack Truck Bulldog and a rare 1912 Knox tractor), American merchant shipping, and a railroad hall that includes a PS 4 Pacific type locomotive, the Southern Railway's No. 1401. The North hall of the Arts and Industries Building and the quonset hut on Independence Avenue feature aircraft and air technology from the first flying machines to the sophisticated equipment used in our space program and will be open through September 1, 1975.

The skills of the seafarers—"Tying off" a hawser on the bow of a towboat—are demonstrated by Working Americans.

Participants

Members from—

Air Traffic Control Association

President: Joseph P. O'Brien

Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers

President: Burrell N. Whitmire

Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees

President: Harold C. Crotty

Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen of America

President: Charles J. Chamberlain

International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers

President: Floyd E. Smith

International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Warehousemen and Helpers of America

President: Frank E. Fitzsimmons

Seafarers International Union of North America

President: Paul Hall

United Transportation Union

President: Al H. Chesser

District of Columbia Truck Rodeo

Chairman: Gerald F. McCully

American Federation of Musicians

Hal C. Davis, President
in cooperation with

THE MUSIC PERFORMANCE TRUST FUNDS

Kenneth E. Raine, Trustee

Music Performance Trust Funds

The music for this occasion is provided by a grant from the Music Performance Trust Funds, a public service organization created and financed by the Recording Industries under agreements with the American Federation of Musicians.

John Benson: *Singer, fiddler*

Saul Broudy: *Singer, guitarist, harmonica player*

Mickey Clark: *Singer, guitarist*

Elizabeth Cotten: *Singer, guitarist*

John Jackson: *Singer, guitarist*

Louis Killen: *Singer, concertina player*

Lewis London: *Singer, dobroist*

Bruce Phillips: *Singer, guitarist*

Jim Ringer: *Singer, guitarist*

Bodie Wagner: *Singer, guitarist*

Gerret Warner: *Singer, guitarist, banjo player*

Jeff Warner: *Singer, guitarist, banjo player*

