

Of Our National Heritage . . .

by Gary Everhardt
Director, National Park Service

history of their culture. And so, when they come into the Smithsonian museums, rather than feeling that they have walked through some invisible barrier into the past, they should enter without any sense of a barrier, carrying the present with them and realizing that the past is alive, that the past is a part of them, and that the past has messages for them. . . ." (1971)

" . . . We are a conservation organization, and it seems to us that conservation extends to human cultural practices. The possibility of using a museum that is essentially a historical documentary museum as a theater of live performance where people actually show that the objects in cases were made by human hands, and are still being made, practiced on, worked with, is a very valuable asset for our role as a preserver and conservatory of living cultural forms, and it should be understood in those terms. It is not a kind of razzle-dazzle, a vaudeville show that we put on. It is, rather, a demonstration of the vitality of those cultural roots which surround us and are so often overlooked. . . . It is worthwhile being proud, not fiercely proud, but gently and happily proud, of the continuance of these cultural roots and their observances and practices which we celebrate. . . ." (1973)

The Smithsonian Institution, in its presentation of the Festival of American Folklife, has been attempting for ten years to demonstrate some of the possible ways to interpret these ideas. Our Festival is only one. What we have hoped—and have seen come to pass in many places—is that our Festival would illustrate the many roads to the better understanding of our varied cultures, that our visitors would return home to create their own celebrations out of their own cultural resources in their own local museums and schools. In the summer of the Bicentennial, may you find at our Festival not only a shared delight in the beauty of craft, music and dance, but a deeper commitment to the creative energies which everywhere inform the human spirit.

The story of America is the story of many people who settled a new land, helped it grow, and fought to keep it free. Some of these people are well known to everyone—heroes like Washington and Lincoln whose monuments overlook this Festival. Others, who developed the homely skills that we celebrate here, will forever be anonymous. All were guided by the same beliefs: that each person is entitled to pursue the lifestyle of his choice.

The Festival of American Folklife is an expression of these beliefs that we are different in many ways, but we are still one nation, one people whose individual differences have helped shape a great nation.

The National Park Service is pleased to combine our resources and talent again with the Smithsonian Institution in bringing to the National Mall this Bicentennial edition of the Festival of American Folklife. A major celebration for the nation's 200th birthday,



this year's program is the culmination of nine years of Festivals on the Mall.

You will find here 200 years of music and dance, crafts and food, based on rituals and traditions in some cases even older than the nation itself. You will find here people who out of their daily toil weave a unique pattern of living which has become our cherished heritage. Everywhere you look there will be America—even in the performances of our friends from abroad, whose national traditions have contributed so much to the richness of our own culture.

As you think about our heritage during visits with the many participants in this year's Festival, we hope you will enjoy the familiar beauty of its setting, the National Mall and the adjoining new Bicentennial Gardens.

The Mall has a unique history of its own and has been the site of many events of significance in our history.

In recent years it has taken on a new importance as we become more environmentally aware of our beautiful parklands and concerned about protecting them from overuse and pollution. The millions of Festival-goers and others who gather at the Reflecting Pool each year make the area a natural laboratory for testing ways of making mass use compatible with environmental preservation. You will see only lightweight, non-polluting electric vehicles used on this site. Their practicality was demonstrated here in past Festivals, and their use is now being adapted to other parks. Your seats at the main stage are recycled logs, and the grass you walk on is being maintained with new methods to help it recover from millions of footsteps.

And so we have a beautiful setting for this depiction of our colorful and durable national heritage.

Welcome to the National Mall and to this three-month tribute to the skills and accomplishments of the ordinary people who have made our 200th birthday a true cause for celebration.

The Spirit of '76

by George Meany
President, AFL-CIO

In 1976 America celebrates its bicentennial—the 200th anniversary of the birth of freedom on this continent. One hundred years ago, when America celebrated its centennial, the theme was the industrial revolution—the machines that run the country, not the people who built it.

This time it is going to be different. Machines, buildings, monuments are not what makes America great. It is her people—the workers who build, clothe, feed, communicate, entertain and transport us.

Present at the birth of this country were the craft workers of Boston, who refused to work for the British troops and demanded the same rights as landed English gentry. Prominent in the building of America were the mechanics of Philadelphia who formed a workingman's party to fight for free public education and an end to debtors prison.

It was precisely that free public education, secured by working people in the early 19th Century, that freed American workers from the tyranny of ignorance and permitted full development of this country's precious

