

## 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





## OF PEOPLE AND THEIR CULTURE ... And the Pursuit of Happiness ...

by Alan Lomax

human resources.

History is filled with examples such as these, where workers demanded and fought for their rights, thus enriching the rights each of us today enjoys.

That involvement continues unabated, as America's free trade union movement daily exercises the First Amendment rights of freedom of speech and freedom of association so vital to a democracy. Freedom is made secure only when citizens exercise their rights vigorously.

The events of today are so important and consume so much of our attention that Americans sometimes forget to look back, to reflect on the people who built America. This bicentennial celebration offers every American the opportunity both to look back with immeasurable pride on how far we've come as a nation and to look forward to rededicate ourselves to the tasks that lie ahead—to the continued building of America.

The AFL-CIO, the largest free trade union center in the world, is proud to participate in the Working Americans exhibits of the 1976 Festival of American Folklife. We are proud of the workers whose skills you will see and the heritage that today's workers share with the patriots of 1776.

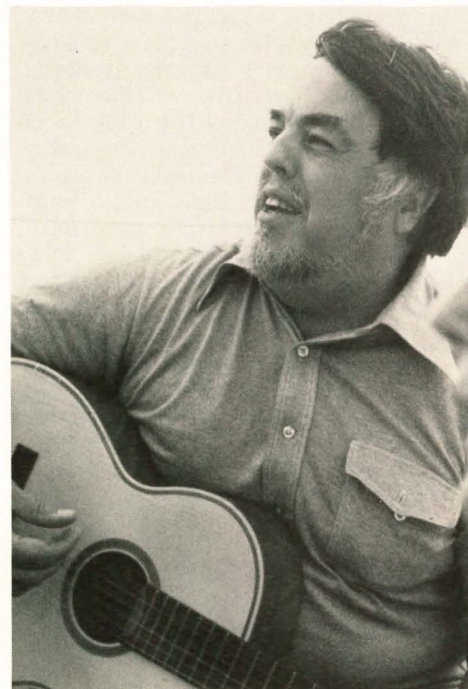
To working Americans, the Spirit of '76 is as alive today as it was 200 years ago.

How can we maintain the varied artistic styles which help to make this nation an agreeable place to live? One senses on every hand the oppressive dullness and the psychic distress of those areas where centralized music industries, exploiting the star system and controlling the communication networks, have put the local musician out of work and silenced folk song, tribal ritual, local popular festivities and regional culture.

Scientific study of cultures, notably of their languages and their musics, shows that all are equally valuable: first, because they enrich the lives of the people who use them and whose very morale is threatened when they are impoverished or destroyed; second, because each communicative system (whether verbal, visual, musical, or even culinary) holds important discoveries about the natural and human environment; third,

because each is a treasure of unknown potential, a collective creation in which some branch of the human species invested its genius across the centuries.

The only way to halt the loss of our national cultural heritage is to commit ourselves to the principle of cultural equity, as we have committed ourselves to the principles of political and social equity. Thomas Jefferson was certainly thinking of cultural equity when he wrote in the Declaration of Independence "that all men are created equal and endowed with the inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." We now understand that Jefferson's luminous phrase means more than the right of the individual to "do his thing." It means the right of every community or ethnic group to its own way of life, its own culture—the group heritage, customs, art and language that gives every human group its sense of identity, continuity and satisfaction. The importance given to national unity and quick communication has caused this nation to forget or devalue these all-important cultural differences, which are, in the Jeffersonian phrase, inalienable human rights. The rich variety of accent, of posture, of song, and of local custom has too often been sacrificed to mainstream conformity. Our ethnic heritage has not been melted down, but it has been degraded. Indeed, the pace of reduction of cultural differences has so accelerated that many assume their total disappearance. Yet there is another trend afoot. Culture pattern is tough, because it is both invisible and omnipresent.



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**Alan Lomax**, co-founder of the Archive of American Folk Song at the Library of Congress, has engaged in major collecting activities in North America and Europe. He was one of the principal architects of the American folk song revival, as editor of the first albums of field recordings as well as the first oral histories in this field. As Director of the Cantometrics Project, Columbia University, he is now involved in cross-cultural study of world patterns of expressive behavior.

We can retain our varied ways of pursuing happiness if we take pains now.

A first move against cultural pollution is to give all cultures a) a fair share of time on the airwaves and b) time in the classroom. When country folk, urban ethnics, or tribal peoples hear or view their own traditions, projected with the authority generally reserved for the output of Madison Avenue, and when they hear their traditions taught to their own children in school, something magical occurs. They see that their expressive styles are as good as that of others and, if they are permitted, they will continue them.

During the 1920's a few southern radio stations began to broadcast the music of the Appalachian mountains. Local audiences bought the products advertised on the programs, so that other southern stations followed suit, and today we have a vigorous modern southern rural musical tradition with several indigenous forms of orchestration that match in virtuosity the storied orchestras of Spain and central Europe. This occurred because talented carriers of a folk tradition were allowed to have their share of broadcast time.

Another instance—the flowering of Black orchestral musical in New Orleans—came about because Black musicians found steady, high-paying jobs and prestige in the amusement district, and they had time to reorchestrate and then record this local music for export to the whole world.

The Festival of American Folklife marks a further step forward. Our folk artists and craftsmen—the fiddlers, the blues guitarists, the blanket weavers, the cooks, the Mariachi musicians, the telephone linemen—brought from all over the United States and set down in the midst of the most powerful national symbols, step out onto the middle of the stage to receive the attention they deserve. They return home, stronger in their own eyes and more respected in their own communities. The principal effect of the Festival seems to be