

# Welcome!

Ralph Rinzler

*Mr. President, I join in commending the Smithsonian and those who participated in the first of what I hope will be an annual event. In this day and age of constant technological advancement and restructuring of society, it is well to remember the antecedents from which it is founded.*

*Likewise, our society today is the outcome of the different forces and different people which make up our past. That is why the study of history is so important, not just as an academic exercise, but as a guide to an understanding of the present and as a roadmap to the future.*

Sen. E. L. Bartlett (D-Alaska)  
*Congressional Record, Aug. 18, 1967*

The Senator from Alaska was one of several members of the 90th Congress who read statements into the *Record* in praise of the first Folklife Festival. That 1967 event presented 58 traditional craftsmen and 32 musical and dance groups over the 4-day Fourth of July weekend. The National Park Service estimated attendance at 431,000. The two crafts-demonstration tents and one daytime concert stage occupied the grassy areas of the Mall opposite the Museum of History and Technology. No public events were scheduled inside the museums; evening concerts were held on the steps of the Museum of History and Technology, and a 2-day interdisciplinary conference comparing folklife studies and programs in the United States and abroad brought together American and foreign scholars.

A decade later, the Smithsonian Festival is back on a portion of the Mall adjacent to the museums, with the shorter format that preceded 4 years of expanded Bicentennial events near the Lincoln Memorial. But 1977 also marks several substantial changes. Approximately half of the events are being held within the museums, many within the exhibitions. The July Fourth weekend was exchanged for the Columbus Day weekend to take advantage of cooler weather and to permit local school groups to attend. Programing was originated by museum staff, then reviewed by the newly estab-

lished Folklife Advisory Council, to broaden the base of staff involvement in the research, planning, and presentation of this and other folklife endeavors.

These changes are reflected in the program of this year's Festival. Some presentations such as the Virginia, African Diaspora, and Family Folklore components will be familiar to veteran Festival-goers. In the museums, within exhibitions that have been highly successful—such as *A Nation of Nations*—the Festival provides a living component for the 6-day period. Lecture-demonstrations—one dealing with stereotypes of Native American music, another with hammered dulcimer, a third with music of India—supplement concerts within the *Hall of Musical Instruments*.

A new type of presentation, developed by folklorists and historians of technology in conjunction with the Energy Research and Development Administration, focuses on energy use. Traditional food production is seen in historical perspective from early Native American methods through colonial and emerging 19th-century mechanization to contemporary practices—with a glance into future possibilities. In Sen. Bartlett's words, we hope this serves "as a guide to an understanding of the present and as a roadmap to the future."

In keeping with our move to the harvest season, the cover of this program is a photograph taken in July 1977. A folklorist and aerospace engineer sought out the Pennsylvania Amish farmer who used his old-style, horse-drawn reaper to harvest the 3 acres of wheat purchased for processing at this Festival. Most farmers now use a combine that simultaneously reaps, threshes, separates, and bales the stripped stalks as straw. The very wheat pictured is being threshed, flailed, ground, and finally used in the hand-shaped loaves that are baked in a brick oven—and tasted by Festival visitors.

We welcome you to this 11th annual festival, and would be grateful if you would send your comments and suggestions to the Folklife Program, Smithsonian Institution, L'Enfant 2100, Washington, D.C. 20560.

*Threshing, 1977* (photo by Ralph Rinzler)



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