

# *A Cherished American Heritage* *by Russell E. Dickenson*

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The Festival of American Folklife on the Washington Monument Grounds celebrates the joy of being an American. We of the National Park Service are proud and delighted to join again with the Smithsonian Institution in bringing you this annual event, which has become a tradition in the Nation's Capital.

In a broad sense, the Festival celebrates our achievements as a country of working people—a citizenry that can trace its histories and traditions to many lands. This mixture has melded together to create a cherished American heritage.

The Festival has been described as America's family reunion, for it is here that so many people join together to participate in an event in which we all have common ties. The 1980 Festival is a cross-section of the customs, the traditions, and the arts brought to this land. They have lived on through the years, and the Festival provides an opportunity to bring these many traditions under one umbrella.

As the Federal agency charged with protecting our country's greatest natural, historical, and cultural resources, the National Park Service brings to the people it serves a unique chance for enjoyment, education, and inspiration—all in a setting where much of our country's history has been made as well as remembered in the monuments and memorials to America's leaders.

Whether this is your first festival or your 14th, we hope your time here will be enjoyable and memorable and that you will also take a moment to visit the parks of our Nation's Capital.

