

Our American Cultural Heritage: Old World Traditions in the New World

by Russell E. Dickenson, Director,
National Park Service

The National Park Service welcomes you to the annual Festival of American Folklife. We are pleased to co-sponsor with the Smithsonian Institution this celebration of our nation's heritage. The Festival site is the National Mall, which is administered by the National Park Service. The Mall is one of the more than 330 areas administered by the National Park Service; it is particularly significant that the Festival is held on such lands, as National Parks are set aside to provide a full representation of the American story and to relate the achievements, customs and cultures of its people. The Festival serves this purpose, telling the American story through music, crafts and celebrations.

The National Mall was set aside in 1790 under the L'Enfant Plan for the city of Washington. Extending from the Capitol to the Washington Monument, the Mall comprises 146 acres and is bordered with dynamic monuments, memorials and magnificent museums and art galleries which pay tribute to America's place in the arts, sciences and history, and reflect the cumulative genius of its people.

This year's Festival will focus on the cultural traditions of the state of New Jersey, the nation of France, and the communities in this country where French traditions are still strong. Visitors will have the opportunity to see how Old World traditions meld with their New World counterparts to form our cherished American cultural heritage.

We hope your visit will be enjoyable and will include a few moments to partake of the natural beauty found in the parks of our Nation's Capital.

