

Presenting America's Cultural Heritage

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Ever since 1973, the National Park Service has been a co-sponsor of the Festival of American Folklife on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. We are proud to join with the Smithsonian in celebrating this, the 25th annual Festival. The Festival is a nationally and internationally acclaimed model of research and public education, which informs our citizens and foreign visitors about the rich and diverse cultural heritage of our nation and the larger world.

This year also marks the 75th anniversary of the National Park Service. The National Park Service is actively at work, every day throughout the United States, to preserve and protect the natural, historical and cultural heritage we all hold so dear. The National Park Service is a steward for the American people of Yellowstone National Park, Grand Canyon National Park, the Statue of Liberty, the Lincoln Memorial and literally hundreds of other natural areas, historical sites and monuments that grace the landscape and the public consciousness of our nation.

We have worked with numerous local, state and regional agencies throughout the United States to promote the preservation, understanding and interpretation of folklife and grassroots cultural traditions. We have cooperated closely with the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress in developing cultural conservation policies and specific research projects with Lowell National Historical Park and now an Acadian Cultural Center in Maine. Ongoing festivals, performance programs and skills demonstrations

such as the National Folk Festival held at America's Industrial Park in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, and others at Jean Lafitte National Historical Park in Louisiana, Golden Gate National Recreation Area in California, Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, Chamizal National Memorial Park in Texas, Blue Ridge National Parkway in Virginia and North Carolina, Cuyahoga National Recreation Area in Ohio, and Virgin Islands National Park on St. John testify to our commitment.

This year, at the Festival of American Folklife and beginning in October at Columbus Plaza, Union Station and in other venues, the National Park Service will develop exhibitions, programs and publications to mark the Columbus Quincentenary. The Quincentenary provides an opportune moment for all Americans to re-examine and re-consider the history of our hemisphere and its varied peoples and cultures. The National Park Service is proud to play a key role and to join with the Smithsonian to make that history accessible to the broadest public. In visiting the National Mall and many other national parks, sites and monuments, one can observe not only remnants of that five hundred year history, but also its results in the practices and beliefs of living cultures. Understanding how our cultural history was made is of great importance for Americans and for all the world's people. It is a knowledge that we can build upon as we begin to shape our history and culture in the next five hundred years.