RAGS, PAPER, AND THE PRINTED PAGE
Workshop Series

The Folklife Center is organizing a series of symposia-workshops at the Library of Congress to demonstrate and discuss four traditional crafts: the weaving of rag rugs, paper cutting, bookbinding, and the decoration of eggs. In November Irene Miller will bring her Union Custom loom from Oakland, Maryland to explain how her “hit and miss,” “striped,” and “twisted” rag rugs are produced. The rugs are made in three stages: first the rags or filler, which may be the remnants of family clothes, plastic bread wrappers, or funeral ribbons, are stitched together; next the rags are woven into the warp on the loom, and, finally, the fringe is tied off. Mrs. Miller has been making rugs for 40 years and has developed a distinctive, highly recognizable style.

In early December the Center plans a paper-cutting workshop to present Polish, German, Chinese, Japanese, and Latin American paper-cutting traditions. The program will demonstrate paper-cutting techniques, explain the different approaches used, and discuss the historic development of papercuts in each culture.

BUNKHOUSE ON THE MALL
Exhibit on Buckaroo Life

A photograph of buckaroo Herb Pembroke offering onlookers a dip of snuff greets visitors to “Buckaroos in Paradise: Cowboy Life in Northern Nevada.” This exhibition of approximately 250 original artifacts, including an entire bunkhouse, explores a traditional way of life in the American West—the “cowboy trade” as practiced in Paradise Valley, Nevada. The exhibition opened at the Smithsonian’s Museum of History and Technology (recently renamed the National Museum of American History) on October 1, 1980, and will be on display for six months. Fieldwork for the exhibition was provided by the major field research project conducted in Paradise Valley by the American Folklife Center over a two-year period.

The exhibit views the life of the buckaroo from three major perspectives. First is the geographical and historical setting in which the cowboys have worked in the valley since the 1880s. Second are the tools and materials used by buckaroos in their work, in crafts, and in other activities. Third is a view...
DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

Perhaps because the American Folklife Center was created in the Bicentennial year, this column has often cited 1976 as a benchmark. But with the passage of each succeeding year I am more persuaded that it was a benchmark not only for the Center but for the cultural life of the nation generally.

For folklorists working in the public sector, festivals provided the chief imaginative focus and the chief public forum for professional energies in the early and middle 1970s. The Smithsonian's Festival of American Folklife, begun in 1967 and elaborated during the early 1970s to a culmination in the summer-long Bicentennial Festival, led the way, and a host of state, regional, and metropolitan festivals were influenced by the Smithsonian's model effort. Celebration of the Nation's diversity suited the national mood, and "folk festivals" (I am of course speaking of the modern multicultural genre, not the community-rooted folk festival which it complements) were catapulted into national prominence because they both reflected and informed the mood.

A scant four years have passed, but the mood has changed, and so have the focal activities of folklorists working in the public sector. Festivals go on, of course, at both the local and the national level—and there are signs that they may rise again into national prominence. But many folklife professionals have been spending more time and energy on another kind of presentation, the exhibit. Folk art and folklife exhibits are suddenly proliferating in the nation's museums, libraries, cultural centers, and other public places. Although they are sometimes accompanied by workshops and live demonstrations, they of course lack the celebratory intensity and human interaction of live presentations like festivals. What they seem to offer instead is a quality of serenity and reflectiveness, accessible to individuals or small groups rather than large festive crowds.

For those of us involved in the production as well as the viewing of exhibits presenting American folklife, it is worth observing that exhibits have tended to fall into two categories. One type tends to be organized like an anthology from a state, region, or other grouping, and to separate for the sake of contemplation the various folk cultural strands present within that larger unit. As we contemplate the separate strands, we are struck by their beauty and vitality—just as we were struck in the anthology-like regional folk festivals by the beauty and vitality of the various ethnic or subregional traditions presented there. The Center's 1978 exhibit of Georgia folk art and folklife tended toward this approach. A second type of exhibit adopts a more integrative approach to folk culture; it places more emphasis upon demonstrating how the various strands of folk culture work together in recombinant cultural fashion to synthesize new and complex cultural wholes. Our recent "buckaroo" exhibit perhaps belongs to this type.

But whether folk art and folklife exhibits isolate or integrate, anthropologize or synthesize, they exploit a quality of communication that seems in harmony with the contemplative mood that has set in since the Bicentennial. That they have come into national prominence of late doubtless results from the fact that, like "folk festivals" a few years back, these exhibits are both reflecting and informing the current national mood.
PUBLICATIONS CURRENTLY AVAILABLE *

Publications of the American Folklife Center:


No. 3—Folklife and Fieldwork by Peter Bartis. A 25-page layman’s introduction to fieldwork and field study techniques.

No. 4—Ethnic Broadcasting in the United States by Theodore C. Grame. A 165-page study of the history of ethnic radio and summary of field survey.

No. 5—Maritime Folklife Resources. A 129-page indexed directory of institutions across the country with maritime folklife holdings.


American Folklife Center. A general brochure on the Folklife Center.

Where to Turn for Help in Folklore and Folklife. A brochure listing government programs offering financial, technical, or research support for folk cultural projects.

Folklife Center News. A quarterly newsletter.

* Unless otherwise indicated, available from the Center upon request at no cost.

GREETING CARDS

The American Folklife Center has published four new greeting cards featuring photographs from the 1978 Blue Ridge Parkway Folklife Project. Packet of six cards and envelopes, no greeting—$3.

Lone Star Quilt—by Mrs. Carrie Severt, Alleghany County, North Carolina. Multi-colored star pattern on blue background.

Tumbling Star—quilt section by Mrs. Lura Branscome Stanley, Laurel Fork, Virginia. Red and dark green on white quilted background.

Yo Yo Quilt—section of quilt by Mrs. Elizabeth Smith, Surry County, North Carolina. Multi-color.


Cutting Carrots for Canning—Mrs. Carrie Severt, Alleghany County, North Carolina. Full color.

Wooden crèche or Nativity scene—on display at the Folklife Center; carved by Gloria Lopez Cordova of Cordova, New Mexico. Natural wood colors with blue background. Packet of six cards and envelopes—$3.

Order cards from the Information Office, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540. Prices include postage; orders must be prepaid.
into the bunkhouses where buckaroos have spent their leisure hours.

Like much of the West, northern Nevada is rugged country, dry and sparsely populated. For many decades Paradise Valley has offered a traditional, rural way of life, anchored in cattle raising and farming. The years of national growth after World War II brought improvements in communication to valley ranches and a growing dependence on machinery; the working conditions of the buckaroo began to change rapidly. Yet, despite the social and economic pressures of modern ranch life, the buckaroos have maintained many of their traditional ways, sustained by a sense of independence and inventiveness. Taken together, the artifacts and images in the exhibit offer a glimpse of what life in Paradise Valley has been, and what it continues to be today.

The section on geography and history offers an overview of ranching in the area from 1875 to 1945. An old medicine chest, portraits of early valley settlers, and an 1880 lithograph of a Paradise Valley ranch lend a period atmosphere to the display; the items set against these backdrops include old furnishings, pieces of clothing such as leather and brass cuffs and “cowboy boot” shoes from a rancher’s wardrobe, books, ledgers, and other objects which capture the flavor of ranch life.

“Tools and Crafts” contains examples of leather and rawhide work, including saddles, halters, and stirrup “taps,” a hair rope, branding irons, bits, and spurs. These are used by working buckaroos and many are made by them during their free time. A few of the more complicated halters and bridles are displayed on models of horses’ heads. Still photographs are used in this section to show some buckaroo activities in detail.

The bunkhouse recreates the look and feel of a bunkhouse or line camp cabin in which buckaroos live on the main ranch or on the range. The build-
ing itself, a board and batten structure built by the Recanzone family for their ranch hand "Coyote John" Schneider about 1920, was bought by the Smithsonian from Robert Cassinelli and transported back to Washington for the exhibit. Its principal occupant is a life-size model of Chuck Wheelock, seated on a bunk with a cup of coffee in his hand. The mannequin was sculpted in clay by the Smithsonian's Vernon Rickman from a photograph of Wheelock, combined with measurements taken from his clothes. The figure was then cast in fiberglass and outfitted in the clothing. Although seated inside the bunkhouse, the figure is wearing a hat, because no one remembers seeing Chuck Wheelock at work without one. The bunkhouse is furnished with items which have seen recent use in daily buckaroo life: the bed, a bench and table, various styles of hats, a "warbag" and pouch for personal gear, reading material, and cooking utensils.

Complementing the principal exhibit sections are an eight-minute film clip of a fall roundup and cattle drive on the 96 Ranch, maps, and still photographs.

The curator of the exhibit is Richard E. Ahlborn of the Smithsonian's Community Life Division; Deborah M. Bretzelfelder designed the presentation layout. The director of the field project for the Folklife Center was Howard W. Marshall.
The excerpts and photographs on these pages were taken from the 120-page publication *Buckaroos in Paradise: Cowboy Life in Northern Nevada* prepared by the American Folklife Center to accompany the exhibit of the same name on display at the National Museum of American History. The richly illustrated publication rounds out the exhibit portrait of buckaroo life in Paradise Valley through a detailed essay on certain aspects of contemporary buckaroo life and the development of that style of life, followed by a catalog for the exhibit artifacts.

The publication essay "Buckaroos: Views of a Western Way of Life" by Howard W. Marshall opens with a brief description of the region and a short history of Paradise Valley. From the start, the valley had both family and corporate ranches. In the early days large numbers of buckaroos were hired on all ranches, while today it is the corporate ranches who use most of the hired labor and help keep buckaroo traditions alive. The essay examines such subjects as the Spanish influence on the terminology of the buckaroo trade, and outlines the broad range of skills and abilities needed to manage livestock, create and maintain horsegear and other equipment, make hay, paint fences, and bake biscuits. It delves into some of the customs and attitudes which determine buckaroo dress, describes the line camp cabins and bunkhouses, and tells something about what buckaroos think of their lives.

A complete list of exhibit artifacts prepared by Richard E. Ahlborn follows the essay. Grouped into the three main exhibit topics, "Background to Buckaroo Life," "Tools and Crafts," and "Bunkhouse," the artifact entries are listed under subtopics such as "costume," "foodways," and "saddlery." Each entry gives a description of the item and approximate date when it was produced, with measurements and other information. The publication is generously illustrated with photographs of buckaroos at work and during their free time, of valley ranches, and line camps, historical photographs, and pictures of many of the exhibit artifacts.

The catalog was published through the Center's Elizabeth Hamer Kegan Fund, greatly assisted by a generous donation from the Garvey Kansas Foundation of Wichita, Kansas.
In the Great Basin range cattle industry, the vaqueros came first—not Anglo or black cowboys, but Hispanic California horsemen. In the Spanish colonial days before the cattle business developed, vaqueros worked mostly for hide and tallow companies in California. Later, as Anglo ranches and herds were being built up, the European-American pioneers employed Mexican vaqueros, and the vaquero traditions of horsemanship, equipment, and language greatly influenced other working cowboys. By the time the open-range cattle business reached its heyday in the generation after the Civil War and family and corporate ranches were thriving in northern Nevada, vaquero was the word used for cowboy. The legacy of expertise imparted by the oldtime vaqueros lives on in Paradise Valley, in the riatas and horsegear made by traditional "rawhiders" like Frank Loveland and the everyday use of Hispanic California-style, center-fired saddles with "taps" covering the stirrups.

Vaqueros were probably not a year-round fixture of the local scene in the early days in northern Nevada. They drove herds into the territory, providing breeding stock for ranchers, but the earliest farmer-ranchers did not or could not use many hired riders. Families helped neighboring families with cooperative labors, and the community's different herds of cattle "ran in common" on the open range. The first full-time, wage-earning vaqueros were probably employed by the big companies that for different reasons bought out small ranches in the county, slowly acquiring title or control of huge tracts and many small ranches that became "headquarters," foreman's homes, or buckaroo camps. Outfits like the Milpitas Land and Live Stock Company (with holdings in California, Nevada, and Idaho), Miller and Lux, and the butchering firm of Godchaux and Brandenstine (with headquarters in the San Francisco area), typified the large corporations that were influential alongside the family ranches in Nevada's growth. In time, the absentee-owned companies of the early days and later locally run corporations like the McCleary Cattle Company were bought out by corporations like today's Nevada Garvey Ranches, Inc., with head offices in Wichita, Kansas.

Buckaroos live most of the year in some sort of house on the home ranch, but those who work for the big corporations spend weeks at a time out on the rangelands tending the cattle. They go to and from the camps in trucks, hauling horses, equipment, and supplies as they go. The buckaroo camps are without plumbing, electricity, or other luxuries of civilization. Working "on the mountain" and "on the wagon," many men like it that way. There is solitude, there is work, there is the land.

Many a long afternoon on the mountain (working cattle through the BLM or Forest Service grazing allotment) is spent in camp, when the day's work is done, and the hours are whittled away by an assortment of pastimes. Dave Hiller, a Nevada Vaca corporation cowboy in 1979, spent hours making horse gear from miscellaneous materials salvaged from the home ranch. The steel spurs he makes are not for the cases in the stores in town, but for his job. Bunkhouse furniture is homemade out of lumber high-graded from the ranch, and some buckaroos make their own riatas, macardies, and hackamores as well as lead ropes and other equipment. There is a great pride of workmanship in everything handmade, whether a piece of equipment is created from scratch or decorated to make it one's own.
COLORADO CONSULTANCY

The American Folklife Center has been assisting the Rocky Mountain Continental Divide Foundation in Colorado to do research and develop plans for an outdoor museum of high altitude life and work. The foundation, made up largely of residents of Summit County, Colorado, expects eventually to develop living history and other museum displays to interpret the southern Rocky Mountain region from northern New Mexico to southern Wyoming, with the high country of Colorado's Middle Park at the heart.

Center staff member Howard W. Marshall is assisting the foundation in the planning and design of the future museum. During August he conducted two weeks of fieldwork in the Blue River Valley area of Colorado, working in and near the towns of Frisco, Dillon, and Kremmling. The brief exploratory field visit was intended to locate resources for the development of the museum and to help the foundation implement productive research techniques. Accompanying him were three interns who exchanged their research and interviewing services for the experience of participating in the field project: Elke Dettmer, a folklore graduate student from the University of California at Berkeley, Barbara Orbach, a former intern in the Archive of Folk Song now studying at UCLA, and Ron Emrich, training in historic preservation at Columbia University. Local services and assistance were provided by John D. Farr of Summit County, representing the foundation.

Throughout their two-week field trip, Marshall, Dettmer, and Orbach documented traditional architecture and material culture on several pioneer ranches in the 9,000-foot Blue Valley. They also interviewed local residents about ranching history and aspects of regional folklife, such as hay meadow irrigation techniques, homemade snow skis, traditional German cooking, and construction of log houses and outbuildings with lodgepole pine. The team was in the valley during the haying season and was able to photograph the mowing and traditional hay stacking procedures on the Knorr Brothers ranch from start to finish. Emrich conducted archival research on the fieldwork area in Denver.

The Rocky Mountain Continental Divide Foundation plans to continue field research to establish a broad documentary base of information before the museum master plan is completed. Marshall spoke to the Rocky Mountain Folklore Caucus at the October meeting of the American Folklife Society in Pittsburgh about his work, and is preparing a report for presentation to the foundation.