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IN PROGRESS

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Roshni Bhakta shows mehandi work done by Rashmi Jhaveri, Photo courtesy R. Jhaveri

10 ANNIVERSARY

Where were you in January 1987?

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FROM THE EDITOR

If you are just meeting us, or if you've gotten to know PFP from one of our projects, we hope you will enjoy the abbreviated "growth chart" we include in this special birthday issue. While we can't possibly condense 10 years into a few pages, we thought people might enjoy getting glimpses of places we've been, people we've worked with and things we've done. Other articles in this issue reflect the work of the past six months. They provide a window on some of what we've accomplished in this, our 10th year. We're growing up and out. Our new traveling exhibitions program placed photos of local folk arts and culture in 26 sites across the region—from the Kensington Joint Action Council to the Down Jersey Folklife Center, from the Walt Whitman Cultural Arts Center to the Black Family Reunion Cultural Center. This past year, we also produced our first documentary videotape, "Plenty of Good Women Dancers: African American Women Hoofers from Philadelphia"— and showed it at 14 community screenings to wonderful and moving response. We offered nine workshops and gatherings, teaching folk arts, bringing people together, and helping artists and community organizations to sustain and fund the folk arts in their own communities. Over the course of this past year, more than 12,700 people came to a PFP program, saw an exhibit, learned to tap dance, or joined with others who believe that the quality of life of our neighborhoods is improved by a vital folk culture. Our publications, including our brand new children's book, "In My Heart I am a Dancer," reached at least another 5,300 people. And thanks to the continuing generosity of the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund, we grew as a staff, completed a strategic plan, improved our ways of working, asked a lot of questions, learned. It has been a wonderful year. We like being 10!

The artists in this issue were all involved in this year's programs. We introduce you to Chia Kue and Rashmi Jhaveri, gifted women who were featured guests at the folk artists' marketplace at this past year's Folk Art Auction. Both Chia Kue and Ione Nash are artists who have participated successfully in our technical assistance programs. Fieldwork for forthcoming programs also kept us busy all year, and PFP staff members write about their research and what will come of it in these pages. Stacey Ford describes work that will result in a fabulous social dance party this fall. (Please plan to come!) Teresa Jaynes shares excerpts from a gripping interview done for our Folk Arts of Social Change project and for the same project, former PFP staff folklorist Bill Westerman profiles the Still family's long connection to the Underground Railroad, and ways in which that history connects to present traditions and values. Fieldwork with activists is inspiring. In the worst of times, people have managed to hold on to a vision of equity and justice, and to develop powerful strategies for working towards that vision. We are 10, but we are *only* 10, and we are well aware that we are just beginning to learn our job, beginning to ask harder and better questions of all of our teachers: the artists and activists and locally rooted thinkers and chroniclers and historians. We are privileged to start a second decade in such company, and we hope that you are among them. If you are not yet a member, I invite you to join. In these hard times, we need your support more than ever. Our ability to do good work depends on turning occasional magazine readers into participants and supporters. Come to a PFP event this year. Meet the people described in these pages. Help us start our next decade by investing in the arts in our own city neighborhoods.

—Debora Kodish

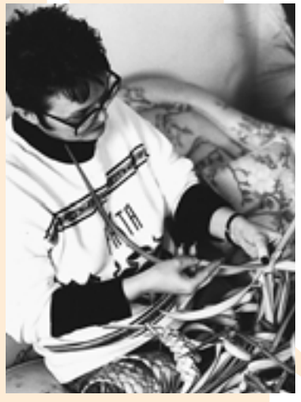
Over time, we've developed three kinds of responses to local needs: *public programs* to make local folk artists better known and understood, *services* to artists and grassroots folk cultural agencies to help support local culture in our communities (a key component to quality of life!) and *resources*—books, videos, magazines and an archive with more than 45,000 items—to preserve a record of the folklife of our city, past and present. Some highlights of those different programs are included here.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Where were you in January 1987?

We were moving into a small back room at the Samuel S. Fleisher Art Memorial. Shortly after that, we could be found in many corners of the city, talking to folk artists and to other people and groups working to keep culture alive and vital in our neighborhoods. We met hundreds of amazing and little-known artists whose works were significant and whose voices and points of view we came to believe in deeply.

Despite the often-touted diversity of the city's neighborhoods, we saw incredible neglect of folk arts (which we also saw as powerful, often challenging, alternative points of views rooted in people's experiences.) We saw some work that needed to be done, and we created an organization—with your help—to do it. As a birthday card to all of you—those whom we've gotten to know over the last ten years, and those whom we've yet to meet— we offer this growth chart.



1987/88

The 100th anniversary of the American Folklore Society, a national organization, was approaching, and we wanted to know more about the place of folklore in our city. We **opened an office** at the Fleisher Art Memorial, **began field research** into Philadelphia folk cultures, published the first issue of *Works in Progress*, and established our **archive** on Philadelphia folklife. As we met people and groups who were trying to preserve and support local folk arts and culture, we were able to offer them **technical assistance** in carrying out their plans. Our own research was focused on understanding how the city's many organizations supported folk arts, on the folklife of family businesses, and on Italian folk arts.

1989/90

This was the year we were gearing up for: the 100th anniversary of the American Folklore Society. A thousand folklorists from all around the world came to the city in October, and joined the Philadelphians who turned out for **Philadelphia Folklore Month.** For a citywide celebration of folklife, we organized 121

events offered by 70 organizations. The PFP and Fleisher created a major **exhibition** on the arts of our own neighborhood— **"Uses of Tradition: Arts of Italian Americans in Philadelphia."** We supplemented the exhibition with **palm-weaving workshops,** a book, and **walking tours** featuring dressed windows and Italian craftsmen's work. We worked with the Smithsonian and the Afro-American Historical and Cultural Museum to produce **"Stand By Me,"** a powerful ethnographic photo exhibition by Roland Freeman on African American expressive traditions in Philadelphia, based on fieldwork by Glenn Hinson and the PFP's Jerrilyn McGregory. Our fieldwork was focused on family businesses, traditional gardening, Italian folk arts, and African American folklife. We offered **workshops** on grants for folk cultural organizations and on doing oral history, and our **technical assistance** resulted in support for apprenticeships and projects involving Hal Taylor, who carved European-style marionettes, and Blanche Epps, a traditional gardener, and for a Latino festival organized by Iris Pagan at Thomas Eakins House.

1990/91

On the eve of Lithuanian Independance, our new **community concert** series presented the Lithuanian Folk Song Quartet in a moving (SRO) concert that was their first performance outside the Lithuanian community. Our second concert event featured tap dancers LaVaughn Robinson and Germaine Ingram in an intimate **performance and discussion.** We curated two **exhibitions** as part of the "Art in City Hall" program. **"Passing on Traditions: Sixteen Master Folk Artists,"** co-curated with the Folklife Center of International House, examined the history of state support of master/apprentice partnerships. **"Preserving Traditions,"** a PFP exhibition, introduced a wide range of local folk arts, past and present. Brief catalogs accompanied each show. Our annual grants workshop led to **technical assistance** for apprenticeships and projects involving Chamroeun Yin, a Khmer classical dancer wno had just moved to town, Mom Sak, a Khmer beadworker, and the Cambodian Association of Greater Philadelphia.

1991/92

Intensive fieldwork went into a photographic **exhibition** using both family pictures and images by Khmer and American photographers. **"Bamboo Shoots Grow Up to Be Bamboo: Cambodian Folk Arts in Philadelphia"** opened at the Fleisher Art Memorial and traveled to United Communities of Southeast Philadelphia. Also at Fleisher, Cambodian master musician Koung Peang and his *phleng kar* ensemble performed "*kat sao*," **a**

traditional haircutting ceremony that is part of a Khmer wedding. A powerful grassroots **gospel community concert** featured Reverend Carolyn Bryant and the Preston

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Photos this page, clockwise from top left: Alpha Kappa Alphas stepping at the Greek Picnic, 1988. Photo: Jerrilyn McGregory. Blanche Epps teaches gardening, 1990. Photo: Jan Greenberg. Pegg Kidwell weaves palms. Photo: Teresa Jaynes, 1995. Tawaddud Rey, Isaac Maefield, Jr., and Beatrice Maefield with one of her son's canes, c. 1983. Photo Al Whitney, courtesy Isaac Maefield.

Photos this page, l-r: Cambodian wedding, 1990. Photo: Thomas B. Morton. Koung Peang playing a tror, c. 1990. Photo: Thomas B. Morton. Terrence Cameron and one of his steel drums. Photo: Thomas B. Morton

Singers. We held our first **Folk Art Auction,** published a **resource** volume, the *Guide to Philadelphia Folklife Resources*, describing 301 groups that in different ways present, preserve, or support local folk culture. Four brief **"Videos on Folk Arts"** illustrated folk gardening, mummery, palm-weaving, and Khmer arts. Our annual grants workshop and followup **technical assistance** resulted in support for apprenticeships and projects involving Chamroeun Yin, Khmer classical dancer, Phally Doung and Son Ren, Khmer folk dancers; Chia Ker Lor, Hmong basketweaver and Furman Humphrey, African American carver.

Photos this page, l-r: Confesor Melendez, cuatro-maker, 1990. Photo: Thomas B. Morton. Koung Peang prepares for a lakhon bassac performance. Photo: Bill Westerman, 1992. Leendavy Koung dances roam vung, 1992. Photo: Bill Westerman, 1992.

1992/93

We began our work in folk art education with "Representing Folk Culture," a **workshop for teachers** on moving past stereotypes, combined with a resource fair that introduced Khmer musical ensembles to teachers and community groups. We curated a multicultural photo **exhibition, "You, Me and Them: Photographs by Thomas B. Morton."** At a Cambodian music **concert**, the Koung Peang and Van Pok ensembles presented *pleang kar, roam vung*, and *lakhon* music. Our field research included two collaborations. In the **Cambodian Community Documentation Project,** seven Khmer youth and two folklorists worked together to document Khmer artists and folk art traditions in the city. In the **Antecedents to ODUNDE Project,** researchers explored traditions of festivals and gatherings in South Philadelphia's historically African American neighborhoods. About forty Cambodian American students were drawn into the **Khmer Arts Education Project:** classes and apprenticeships that began at the Fleisher Art Memorial and spilled into the Cambodian neighborhoods of South Philadelphia. Artists instructed students in their own homes. At different periods, folk painting and drama "classes" occurred every day of the week. Three to six artists acted as masters and teachers, while older students often instructed younger ones. We helped the Southeast Asian Mutual Assistance Associations Coalition (SEAMAAC) with the **Southeast Asian New Year's Project**, involving fieldwork and publications in five communities. A new project on **multicultural issues and the law** examined ways in which culture affects justice. We began research on African American tap dance with our **Philadelphia Tap Initiative**. We held our second **Folk Art Auction,** republished our *Guide to Philadelphia Folklife Resources*, issued two working papers, and kept up publication of *Works in Progress*. We offered grants workshops and convened a roundtable meeting of traditional artists. Our **technical assistance** won support for apprenticeships and projects involving: Lao traditional dance and Southeast Asian New Year traditions (Hmong, Lao, Vietnamese, overseas Chinese, Khmer); Eang Mao and Raky Mao received grants for Khmer painting. Furman Humphrey received support to teach African American woodcarving. Many grassroots groups also benefitted: our technical assistance raised $55,000 for/with traditional artists and community groups.

1993/94

Based on field research in local Cambodian communities, we curated **"Giants, Kings and Celestial Angels: Teaching Khmer Arts in Philadelphia."** Featuring works by Peang Koung, Eang Mao, Sipom Ming, Chamroeun Yin, and their students, this exhibition was shown at the Fleisher Art Memorial and the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Eleven **workshops and community gatherings** brought artists together around issues of equity and access, grant opportunities, project planning, and law and culture issues. Our **technical assistance** leveraged about $110,000 in grant funds for traditional artists and grassroots cultural organizations. We were busy with **advocacy and organizing** for public funding for arts. Fieldwork began for our **"Art Happens Here"** project, and we worked to identify folk artists in West Philadelphia, in partnership with the Haddington Development Corporation. We held another great **Folk Art Auction.** In our **Law and Culture** project, interviews with lawyers and legal consumers centered on parajudicial features that are aspects of culture—matters that are outside the written record of a case but that may be the most significant features in a legal transaction. A series of workshops and a working paper resulted. Rhythm tap dancers gathered for a series of **Philadelphia Tap Initiative** rehearsal sessions under the direction of project director, tap artist, and PFP Board co-chair Germaine Ingram. Cambodian American students again participated in the **Khmer Arts Education Project,** an experimental arts education project intended to increase arts education opportunities for Cambodian children, and, with PFP's help, to make the Fleisher Art Memorial more accessible to this community. This was the second year for this program, sponsored by the Pew Arts Education Development Project. **"Hucklebuck to Hip Hop"** documented and presented African American social dance as a vital folk art form in South Philadelphia. This exciting project was undertaken by ODUNDE, with PFP support in the form of research, technical assistance, and grant-writing. It resulted in fabulous community dance parties. We continued to offer technical assistance for publications coming out of the SEAMAAC **New Year's Project.** Three volumes appeared, on Hmong *kwv txiaj,* Khmer New Year's celebrations, and Vietnamese New Year traditions, all as collaborations between SEAMAAC, the Cambodian Association and the Hmong United Association. We completed a modest survey of Native American Arts in the Philadelphia area. Technical assistance won grants for Hmong artists to teach rhymed improvisatory courting poetry to young people, for Ethiopian krar music, and for Chayale Ash and Golde Goldman to teach Yiddish theater and folksong.

Photos this page, l-r: Crystalyn Moses jumps double-dutch at Shaw Middle School (from "Art Happens Here" exhibition). Photo: Teresa Jaynes, 1995. Baba Crowder. Photo: Thomas B. Morton, 1993.

1994/95

Three sold-out performances of **"Stepping in Time,"** an exhilarating revue of veteran African American entertainers, drew on Germaine Ingram's insights and leadership and two years of interviews and planning. **"Art Happens Here"** let us move our exhibitions outside the Fleisher's walls and into community-based agencies, literally reinvesting in diverse city neighborhoods. We built a wide range of connections in the process. We installed 122 photos in eight different sites. Programs included **eight exhibitions** and **seven public programs** at Taller Puertorriqueño, the Point Breeze Performing Arts Center, the Mill Creek Jazz and Cultural Society, the Southwest Belmont Community Association, the Free Library of Philadelphia Kingsessing and Haverford branches, and the Italian Market Florist, and on SEPTA busses. Artists exhibited included Italian palm-weavers, Lao plaiters, Hmong basket-makers, African and African American drummers, dancers, and singers, Cambodian dancers, painters, musicians, folk opera actors and wedding specialists, graffiti artists, drill teams, steppers, hairbraiders, storytellers, quilters, gardeners, doll-makers,

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Right: Arlene Heath, singing at the Redeemer Baptist Church (from an "Art Happens Here" exhibition in Point Breeze). Photo: Teresa Jaynes, 1995. Below: Painting a "piece' at Taller Puertorriqueño, 1984. Photo: Sandra Andino

gospel singers, and more. Our publication program continued to grow. Three thick issues of *Works in Progress* introduced folk arts, artists, and issues, and our bilingual **lakhon bassac book** finally saw print (and was celebrated at a publication party). This was the first American book on Cambodian folk opera, and it was based on interviews with many local people. Technical assistance efforts diversified, reaching individual artists as well as grassroots folk cultural agencies, and blossoming into several "free school" sessions. **Organizing and advocacy** continued around issues at the National Endowment for the Arts and the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. Collaborations with the Fleisher, ODUNDE, SEAMAAC, and the Hmong Association have borne real fruit. As the year ended, our Cambodian Arts Education Project became institutionalized, with Chamroeun Yin joining the Fleisher faculty, and incubating his own dance company. ODUNDE's social dances—"Hucklebuck to Hip Hop" cabarets—have turned into permanent features, and a book on the subject was published. *Hucklebuck to Hip Hop* established the significance of African American social dance as a folk art form, and engaged community members in discusssions about the history of their own arts. We continued offering technical assistance to new publications coming out of the SEAMAAC New Year's Project and to programs organized by the Hmong Association. We began working with the Office of Curriculum Support of the School District of Philadelphia to develop an **Anti-Racist Asian Folk Arts Education Project**, and a team of students, teachers, and artists worked together to develop model curriculum and pilot programs. Amid all this activity, we offered a range of programs bringing people together: **workshops, community gatherings, artists' breakfasts,** and a fabulous **Folk Art Auction** featuring an **artists' marketplace.** We launched our first **archive rehousing and computerization** project. Our transformation into an agency with a full- and part-time staff (rather than many contract teams) made a great difference in our ability to function. Technical assistance helped many artists and grassroots organizations accomplish projects, including Edith Hunt, tap dancer and Baba Crowder, drummer (who was able to visit Ghana, his life-long dream).

1995/96

We offered 10 public programs this year, including six **workshops** for artists and grassroots folk cultural agencies, a **publication party** for artists featured in *Works in Progress*, and **community concerts.** One featured the Native American a capella women's ensemble Ulali, co-sponsored with Fleisher and United American Indians of the Delaware Valley. A second concert, presented with Fleisher, featured Chamroeun Yin, Khmer court dancer. The Ulali concert came out of "Art Happens Here" fieldwork conducted in 1994. The trio, led by Pura Fé, a local singer, had not previously performed locally, despite their growing reputation; they subsequently performed for the national Folk Masters series and elsewhere. We turned some of our past work into **traveling exhibitions** and sent them on the road: "Uses of Tradition: Arts of Italian Americans in Philadelphia," "You, Me and Them: Photographs by Thomas B. Morton," "Giants, Kings and Celestial Angels: Cambodian Arts in Philadelphia," "ODUNDE African American Festival: Twenty Years on South Street," "Plenty of Good Women Dancers: African American Women Hoofers from Philadelphia," and "Keep It Real." The exhibitions traveled to 10 sites in Pennsylvania and New Jersey reaching an estimated 7,250 people. The **Anti-Racist Asian Folk Arts Education Project,** our collaboration with the Office of Curriculum Support, changed its focus to develop tools for artists and teachers. A **children's book** on Chamroeun Yin and a **slide-tape/video** on Asian American youth and their response to folk arts were the first products. Through the **Cambodian Narratives Project,** we interviewed 12 local storytellers; the publication will be added to the Asian Folk Arts Education series. We began working with Mal O'Connor, of the Center for Applied Research, on **strategic planning.** The PFP moved to our own space. We were one of three independent folklife centers around the US to receive a prestigious Lila Wallace -Reader's Digest Fund award. We mourned the loss of talented and young artists, and friends, to the epidemic of violence: Leab Koung, Rey Nuñez, and Shafeeq Murrell.

1996/97

We proudly presented **"Plenty of Good Women Dancers: African American Women Hoofers from Philadelphia,"** the first public programs in Philadelphia to bring attention to the little-known and long-overlooked history and arts of African American women tap dancers. At nine **public previews** of a documentary videotape we got solid feedback from those attending. Our completed **videotape premiered** to a SRO house (250 people) at the Philadelphia Clef Club of Jazz and Performing Arts. The event included live performances and a public reception. Additional **public screenings** reached both school groups and the general public. A riveting tap dance workshop with Jeni LeGon and Edith Hunt allowed young tap dancers at the Point Breeze Performing Art Center and a diverse crowd of other tap dancers to work with the masters. Our new **traveling exhibition,** also called "Plenty of Good Women Dancers," was installed at the Philadelphia Clef Club of Jazz and Performing Arts for six months. It, too, opened to an SRO reception. Our six traveling exhibitions (listed under 1995/96) reached 16 sites around the region, from Kensington to Bryn Mawr, from Camden to Harrisburg, and many points in between. We rehabbed six existing exhibits from "Art Happens Here," which also remained installed in community sites. Two more children's books were in the works, as well as a second series of slide/tape shows on video. Our **workshops and technical assistance** resulted in local folk artists and grassroots folk cultural organizations receiving fellowships from major foundations and public funders. These included Frito Bastien, Haitian painter, Mogauwane Mahloele, South African musician, Ione Nash, dancer, Kulu Mele Dance Ensemble, African dance troupe, Hawa Moore, Liberian singer, Chia Kue, Hmong needlework artist, and Pang Xiong Sirirathasuk Sikoun, Hmong paj ndaub artist.

—Debora Kodish

Photos this page, l-r: Libby Spencer teaches young dancers at the dress rehearsal for "Stepping in Time," 1995. Photo: Jane Levine. Drill team (from the "Art Happens Here" exhibition "Roots of Rhythm"). Photo: Thomas B. Morton, 1993. Edith Hunt and Germaine Ingram at the opening reception for "Plenty of Good Women Dancers." Photo: Teresa Jaynes, 1997

Painted women:

Rashmi Jhaveri's henna arts

Mehandi is the art of applying henna in intricate, lacelike designs on women's hands and feet. Now that tattooing and other body arts are increasingly popular, *mehandi* is beginning to gain wider recognition, and to be done outside South Asian ritual events and special occasions.

Living in New Jersey, Rashmi Jhaveri is an Indian *mehandi* artist active in the greater Philadelphia area. Born in 1965, in Gujarat, India, Ms. Jhaveri learned to create *mehandi* as a child by watching other women applying henna in preparation for weddings. By the time she was 15 or 16, she and her sisters were already learning this traditional art. Every *mehandi* artist creates her own individual designs, but she must first learn the technique and its meaning in the wedding ceremony. Soon after their informal apprenticeship, Rashmi and her sisters were going to friends and neighbors' houses to do *mehandi* for the women of these households. Ms. Jhaveri continued to develop her knowledge, and over the years she has become a ritual specialist on matters related to Indian Hindu wedding ceremonies. She knows how the bride should dress (including subtle details that differ by region of India) and how her hair is braided with flowers. She also is skilled at painting a bride's forehead with the traditional makeup: a delicate beaded line of red, white and gold that follows the line of the bride's eyebrows, meeting at a *bindi,* or jewel, in the center of the forehead.

These are social, not solitary, arts. Three to four days prior to the wedding, women will often have a "*mehandi* party" with members of their extended family and friends. The bride has her *mehandi* done, usually covering her hands (from the tips of her fingers to just below the elbow) and her feet (from her toes to the mid-calf). Many of the other women attending will also have *mehandi* done for the wedding, but it is usually a small design on the hand, not nearly as elaborate as the bride's. "They want to show their joy for the bride, and this is a way to do that," says Ms. Jhaveri.

In 1995, soon after marrying Biren Jhaveri, Rashmi joined her new husband in the United States. They settled in Edison, New Jersey, and now operate a jewelry store in nearby Iselin, selling jewelry imported from Biren's family's business in India. Selling the jewelry worn for weddings leads naturally into Ms. Jhaveri's *mehandi* work. Posted near the phone are photos of brides with whom she has worked. When customers see the photos, they immediately want her to do the *mehandi* for their own weddings. Other business is generated by word of mouth. Since the *mehandi* lasts for about a month, other women see it and ask about the artist. Word spreads, and Ms. Jhaveri is very well known.

Ms. Jhaveri has developed new designs, worked out in more than a hundred drawings. Light pencil on newsprint, the drawings are simple outlines of hands (including palm, wrist, and forearm) and feet (ankle to mid-calf). The outlines are filled in with intricate designs relating to the natural world, like birds, leaves, and flowers. Ms. Jhaveri also uses some abstract, geometric patterns—for example, a checkered pattern interlocked with a reversed swastika. Associated with marriage, this pattern is often used in *mehandi* designs. It can also be found in Hindu temples and in *rangoli*, decorative and ceremonial floor painting. Ms. Jhaveri uses many traditional motifs in her *mehandi*, and some of the designs that are appropriate and popular for weddings have numerous ancient and symbolic associations: the peacock, musical instruments, coconuts (exchanged between the bride's and groom's families), and pictures of a bride and groom. Formerly, the bride was carried to the ceremony in a litter while the groom followed on horseback. Although this is seldom done today, both images continue to be used in *mehandi*.

Each artist brings her own style to *mehandi* so every design is unique. While most artists create their own *mehandi* patterns, the art has become so popular that books of patterns are now available. Ms. Jhaveri feels that copying a design is much harder than creating something as she works. She

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Left: Roshni Bhakta, in her wedding mehandi, done by Rashmi Jhaveri. Other unidentified photos are also of Ms. Jhaveri's work, from her clients. Photos courtesy Rashmi Jhaveri

Rashmi Jhaveri at work, and with her notebooks. Photos: Teresa Jaynes, 1997

doesn't even copy her own designs, using them chiefly as a source for ideas. Even when a customer asks Ms. Jhaveri to reproduce a *mehandi* design from a book, she never copies a pattern exactly. More often, because of her reputation, her customers give her complete artistic freedom.

Other variations that affect Ms. Jhaveri's *mehandi* painting have to do with how Indian women cope with life in America. Occasionally, a bride will ask for partial *mehandi* to avoid attention or potential problems at school or work. Ms. Jhaveri feels that while the back of the hand is painted for fashion's sake, it is essential that the bride have *mehandi* on her palms at least. In the wedding ceremony, the bride holds a leaf and betel nut in her open palm while the groom cups his hand over hers. It is important for the bride's hand to be covered in *mehandi*.

Each artist brings her own style to mehandi so every design is unique

The tradition of *mehandi* has varied widely over time and space. In small cities and towns in northern India, Ms. Jhaveri recalls that the men also have *mehandi* done for their wedding. A much simpler form, it consists of five large dots on the palm (one large dot in the center surrounded by four smaller dots in each corner). The other traditional ceremony where women have *mehandi* applied is Kadva Choth, an annual day on which women gather in temples to pray for their husbands' health and prosperity. Here in the Philadelphia area, where temples are not always available, such gatherings occur at people's homes, and women have *mehandi* applied the day before the ceremony. Nor is *mehandi* used only for ceremonies these days. Indian women also use *mehandi* for engagements, baby showers, and even simply for fashion's sake.

In her business, Ms. Jhaveri often does *mehandi* for secular purposes and on non-Indian women. In such instances she may change her design to better suit the customer, her reason for having it done, or other special circumstances. For instance, many of the motifs connected to marriage would be inappropriate to other occasions. Ms. Jhaveri also has pragmatic concerns to consider when she does *mehandi* at festivals (and at the artists' marketplace at the PFP Folk Art Auction). She creates designs specifically for these events, often without much Indian symbolism, "so that people can understand them better," she says. In order to keep the price low and accommodate long lines of customers, Ms. Jhaveri preserves the quality of her designs, but simplifies them a little, using geometric shapes (circles, diamonds, and rectangles) that people can combine in many multiple ways.

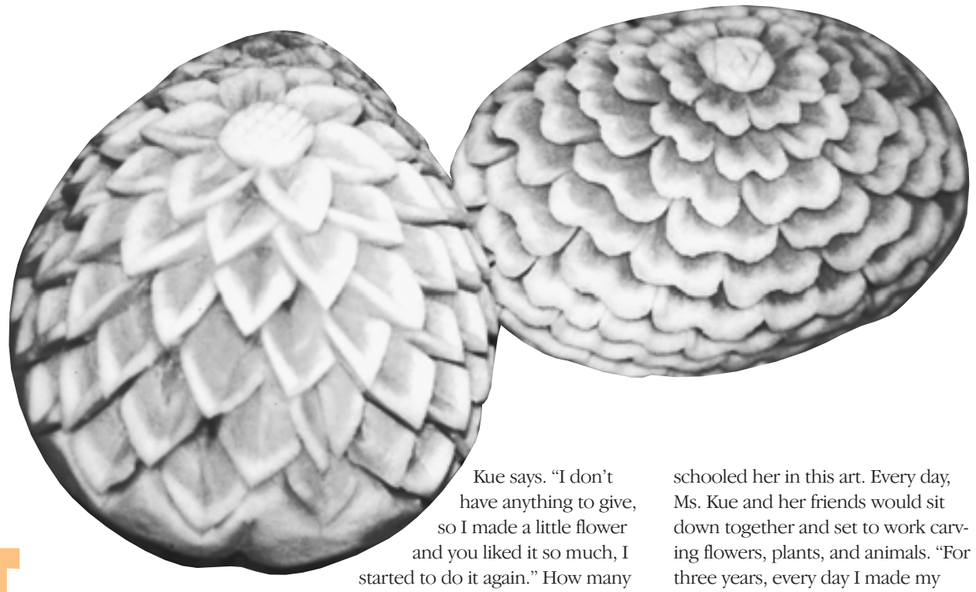
Ms. Jhaveri is aware of other changes in style, as well. She has been told that 50 years ago women had the whole hand dyed in solid henna color, without designs. She attributes some changes to the current availability of powdered henna, which makes a finer paste, in turn allowing more intricate designs.

Like many other *mehandi* artists of her generation, Ms. Jhaveri brings henna powder fom India. She mixes the henna with lemon juice and eucalyptus oil, allowing the mixture to stand overnight, or for 12 hours. Recipes vary. Some artists mix the powder with tea water instead of lemon juice, but Ms. Jhaveri feels the design does not last as long. She also makes the cones, similar to pastry tubes, with which she applies the henna. Whereas, women used to grind their own henna, now some women even buy henna pre-mixed in cones that look like toothpaste tubes. Technology has changed, but *mehandi* remains a popular women's art form.

During the *mehandi* party, women talk with one another while Ms. Jhaveri creates beautiful patterns with henna. Once the *mehandi* has completely dried on the women's skin, she moistens the design with a small cotton cloth dipped in sugar water and lemon juice. When the resulting paste has dried and fallen off, a small piece of cloth heated and infused with the aroma of cloves is then patted on the design very slowly, over and over. The sugar, lemon, and heat all act to "set" the dye, producing a darker, richer, and long-lasting color. Done five hours to two days before a wedding for optimal effect, *mehandi* eventually fades. Ms. Jhaveri's customers send her wedding photos and letters, thanking her for her guidance and attentive artistry. While the beautifully designed *mehandi* is temporary, most women preserve a record both of their special day and of themselves in *mehandi*.

—Teresa Jaynes

Rashmi Jhaveri is available for bridal mehandi *or any other occasion. She can be reached at Natraj Jewelers, Tuesday-Sunday, noon to 8 P.M. (732) 283-0899. Ms. Jhaveri will be demonstrating* mehandi *at a PFP "Rent Party" this spring. Stay tuned for details.*



Carved birds and flowers: Chia Kue's edible art

Twenty years ago and many thousands of miles away, Chia Kue carved beautiful birds and flowers out of fruit. This was part of her life as a young woman in Xieng Khovang, Laos, but war, marriage and coming to the United States caused her to abandon fruit sculpture. This past year, wanting to bring a gift for the PFP's 10th birthday, Ms. Kue thought of fruit carving, took out the tools that she had carefully kept all these years, and set to work. When she walked in the door at our 10th birthday party, she set the crowded room abuzz. She had created extraordinarily beautiful flowers and leaves out of watermelons, turnips, cantaloupes, pumpkins, carrots, cucumbers, and more. It was a truly amazing display, and we were honored. Although we had come to know Ms. Kue for her mastery as an artist in sewing traditional clothes for Green Hmong women, we all learned that, as is true of many traditional artists, her "art making" is not limited to a single discipline. "I wanted to do a little gift for the Folklore Project," Ms. Kue says. "I don't have anything to give, so I made a little flower and you liked it so much, I started to do it again." How many other extraordinary gifts and skills remain hidden until chance or opportunity or a random circumstance brings them into plain sight? After Ms. Kue brought her beautiful *blas ntxuj mci* to us, we invited her to display them at the annual folk artists' marketplace that occurs at our Folk Art Auction. Here, too, they caused a sensation and led to jobs and commissions for Ms. Kue—for work in an art form she had set aside for 20 years!

Ms. Kue first learned how to carve fruit as the young bride of a Thai man. Festive events—parties, weddings, and special occasions involving family and friends, as well as her new husband's business associates—happened every week or so in Laos. Elaborate fruit carving was a regular part of the food presentation at these occasions. Although at 14 she was already adept in other kinds of handcrafts, this young Hmong woman had never seen sculptured fruits. Other women, including her new Thai family, friends, and neighbors, schooled her in this art. Every day, Ms. Kue and her friends would sit down together and set to work carving flowers, plants, and animals. "For three years, every day I made my flowers, so they were very beautiful," she recalls. If a special occasion or celebration was coming up, everyone would contribute to one elaborate display. Once the party began, their painstaking work would be completely eaten within a couple of hours. A slightly more permanent display of carved flowers was done in a different medium. The women made a fragrant clay soap from a powdered mix specifically to create everyday house decorations.

The chisels Ms. Kue brought from Laos and carefully saved for twenty years are small and comfortable in her hand. Each type of chisel has a different blade with a distinct angle and shape. "I just think about what a flower looks like and I make it," she says with a broad smile as her daughter pulls from her refrigerator examples of roses cut from beets and butterflies carved from carrots. How does she choose what to carve? She gets an image in her head, then begins carving and sees where it takes her.

Ms. Kue recalls that the most common pattern carved by other women was a type of "feather" that resembles the pointed scales of a fish. She herself often uses this pattern to create a chrysanthemum bloom effect. She has made up other patterns on her own— for example, a shape that looks like an open flower petal—and devised distinctive ways of carving particular fruits and vegetables, patterns and designs that take advantage of their form and consistency. Ms. Kue was taught how to carve a pumpkin into a single flower, but now she carves three interlocking flowers. This is quite an achievement, for pumpkin meat is firm and sticky. Pumpkins must be carved very slowly. Any fruit requires clean cuts and a steady hand.

Laos has significantly more fruits than the United States, and the fruits available here in Philadelphia offer far less variety in color and shape than those of her home country. In Laos, Ms. Kue could carve a mango that she had just picked from the tree, "so it's not gummy like mango that you buy here. The same with pumpkins." Being able to pick the fruit from her own garden allowed Ms. Kue to use fruits at varying stages. A single type of fruit could be carved in various colors depending on ripeness: yellow, light green, dark green, ripe red orange. Once carved, the fruits lasted much longer. Here, things are different: "In this country to make it really nice, most of the fruits and vegetables you can't eat right away and you have to cook it first…. Here a pumpkin will be carved into a bowl to put sauce or food in, and in Laos they would carve the bowl out of a papaya so that once it's empty you just eat it."

Everything was edible. Nothing was wasted. Forethought went into the carving, since it was all meant to be eaten. For example, in a watermelon carved like an open flower, each petal was carved individually and then put back in place. Guests could easily "pick" one petal at a time to eat. "Once the party started back in Laos, everyone went up and immediately started eating," Chia's daughter Ka adds. "After the party, everything was gone! They're not like American people where everyone just grabs a little bit. Everything's gone and cleaned up, that's it!"

How Ms. Kue creates a display depends on the occasion. The carvings she has done in conjunction with PFP events feature many elements, arranged so that people can see the range of her work. In contrast, a wedding usually has a theme, and the display is much bigger and more elaborate. "Weddings [are] very big. I would [carve] a really big watermelon into two peacocks facing each other." As for the carvings that we have seen so far, her daughter laughs and says, "This is nothing!"

The origins of fruit carving are unknown to Ms. Kue. She assumes that it is an old art that came, one way or another, "from the ancestors." She believes that few women in Thailand now want to learn the art, and that it was much more common in the past, although it may still be done for the king and queen or in very expensive restaurants. Dr. Joyce White, an Asian specialist, similarly conjectures that much of Thai cuisine, from elaborate preparation to ways in which food is presented (including the food displays described here), is derived from the traditions of the royal court, and in imitation of royalty's habits.

Ms. Kue was surprised when people at Philadelphia Folklore Project events responded so enthusiastically to her work— she never thought that people would like it. "If people like my work I will try to do more and better carving than you have already seen. The better you practice, the better you are…" Already she is thinking about how she can carve traditional Hmong needlework designs in fruits…

—Teresa Jaynes

As a result of her appearances at PFP events, Ms. Kue has been hired to do displays for several parties and a wedding. If you are planning an event and are interested in talking with Ms. Kue about a carved fruit display, please contact her through her daughter Ka Xiong at 610-352-8052.

Examples of Chia Kue's carvings, and Ms. Kue. Photos: Teresa Jaynes, 1997

“I do not do recitals”: Ione Nash, dancer and teacher

Ms. Ione Nash. Photo courtesy Kenneth Burton

Ms. Ione Nash is nearly legendary for her skill and impact as a dancer and as a teacher of dance. Virtually anyone in this town who knows African dance, or Haitian dance, or what used to be called “interpretive” dance, knows—and was likely taught or influenced by—Ms. Nash. At 73 years of age, Ms. Nash is not only still dancing—intense, athletic, powerful, fully in the dance; she is as active as ever, teaching 14 to 17 classes a week, in three different community-based arts programs, and choreographing and performing with her students. Inspiring because of her physical skills and her absolute determination and commitment, she loves to dance, and she loves to teach dancing—and it shows. And this is just part of why she is so sought after as a teacher, and so deeply respected by her students.

And yet, until this past spring, when she was honored with a $10,000 George Bartol Arts in Education Award, she had never received an award or any formal recognition of her talents and her incredible gifts to the community. She has continued to dance and to teach for nearly 50 years. Her first (and only other) grant came two years ago: $2,500 from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts to create a brochure and document her work. Both of these awards came about with the help of the Philadelphia Folklore Project. We are proud to have helped bring some long-overdue and greatly deserved recognition to Ms. Nash, who is a genuine community treasure.

As a teacher, she is amazingly perceptive and skilled—able to give a student exactly what each one needs, to help each meet new challenges and rise to new levels. A parent (and former student) says, “You get individual attention…she does not miss anything, she will show you how to do it right… She will work you…to the best of your ability. She will not accept anything less, and that gives kids a confidence. ….Kids learn how to expect the best from themselves.” Ms. Nash sets an inspiring and empowering example. She puts so much into it herself that “it makes kids try more.” Ms. Nash is committed to passing on dance traditions to the next generation. She knows that dance can “help young people to develop self-esteem and their own body motion and a comfort with their own bodies.”

Many people understand that art can provide young people with discipline, with avenues of expression, with alternative languages—but Ms. Nash takes all of these insights to another level because she truly believes, and acts on the belief, that her children can be serious dancers, serious performers. She expects great work from them, and she teaches them how to produce great work. This means that she opens to her students the full range of what art can be. “First thing I tell people is that I do not do recitals,” she says. “I teach the children how to perform… not ‘Oh, doesn’t she look real cute on stage,’ and not in a costume but not really doing anything. What I do, when you put on that costume, you’re dancing when you hit the stage.” She takes every one of her students seriously, and that changes how they think about themselves and how they think about dance. Many of her students have gone on to dance in companies around the city. She is far too modest to make claims, but for more than 40 years she has been an “inside secret,” known in the community, unacknowledged and unsupported outside it. Generations of students have recognized her gifts as a teacher—and found their way to her and stayed. “Some kids now, I had their mothers,” she says.

Ms. Nash acts on the truth that talent is everywhere, and she finds and nurtures that talent. She treats young people as professionals, and they rise to the challenge. Neither she nor many of her students had advantages. They make great art, and they make the city better because of it.

Searching for a single anecdote that would best communicate Ms. Nash’s significance, I heard the same story from many people. Again and again, students, parents, dancers (former students), and coworkers all spoke of how Ms. Nash moved people far beyond what they thought they could accomplish.

Many tell of individual students who blossomed, of young people who came from families with problems and who found in Ms. Nash not only art, but a foundation, a source of values to hold on to. People note how Ms. Nash “brings total consistency and dedication and discipline” to her work. Aura Eldridge came to the Village of Arts and Humanities at age seven, and truly found herself through Ms. Nash, becoming “a rising star.” A current student, 11-year-old Lynn German says, “They need more teachers like her. She helped me do better. She gives you a dream until you fulfill it…. I think that people should know that she is incredible…. She is very old and she is a great dancer. When we see her dance, it is pretty helpful because we know that we can do it and that’s how we get our dreams and that’s how we start fulfilling them.” Lynn’s mother, Christina German, agrees: “Ms. Nash won’t settle for less.” Kids adapt to Ms. Nash’s high expectations: “Anything you achieve, you have to work hard. She takes her dancing seriously and that communicates to the kids. Ms. Nash went that extra mile for [my daughter], and she does that for all of them.”

Ione Nash was one of the first teachers at the Village of Arts and Humanities, and Lily Yeh says that the she was a major key to the Village’s success. “She has always been there,” says Ms. Yeh. “In our first performance, with people with little experience, she took the whole thing [to a different level]…. She sees what is possible and trains people. She is undaunted, whatever the hindrances, and she takes people somewhere they never dreamed they could go. She has determination and a wealth of knowledge. Her presence made many things possible.”

Ms. Nash is personally modest and unassuming and does not call attention to her own stature and influence. Her career in dancing started in 1950, when she was in her late 20s. She had been discouraged from dancing when she was young, and only took it up when she could manage it for herself. She was first drawn to ballet but expanded to modern, jazz, tap, and interpretive dance (as African dance was called at the time). In 1960, when she opened her dance school in the 5800 block of Germantown Avenue, Ione Nash was the first African American to open a business on that street. She had to go to court to keep the right for her drummers to perform. Times have changed. But nearly 35 years later, Ms. Nash is still dancing and still teaching—and the vitality of the local African dance scene can partly be credited to her early and continuing efforts.

From 1958 to 1960, Ms. Nash was one of 10 dancers to perform with Saka Acquaye of Ghana and his African dance ensemble. From 1960 to 1963, Ms. Nash danced as a partner to Arthur Hall. She founded her own company in 1960. Ms. Nash has choreographed more than 600 dances, many of which have been performed by her many generations of students. Her work and her students are her legacy. The George Bartol Award is belated but well-merited public recognition of Ms. Nash’s significance.

—Debora Kodish

Ms. Nash continues to teach and perform. For information about performances and classes, contact Kenneth “Skip” Burton at 215-463-7205.

Kenneth “Skip” Burton, drummer. Photo courtesy Kenneth Burton

Where there is music, there is dance: African social dance in Philadelphia

Dance—the kind people learn from one another and from family— is a fundamental folk art. It is also practiced in many different Philadelphia communities. But not all communities have venues, sites, that can sustain social dance, or the musicians who make so many dance parties come alive. A lively and local dance scene is an important part of quality of life for many people, and a vital way for communities to come together. Over the last year, the Philadelphia Folklore Project has created a Social Dance Project to gain a clear picture of where social dance happens, the types of music that are played and danced to, the musicians and dancers involved, and the significance of these gatherings to local communities. We have become especially interested in the situation of immigrant communities with strong dance and music traditions in their native lands: Ghanaians, Senegalese, South Africans, Kenyans, Ivoiriens, Liberians, and Haitians. Musicians, dancers, merchants, taxi drivers, parking attendants, chefs, civic leaders, and others were willing to talk to me about traditional social music and dance and how these arts (or their absence) have influenced their cultural experiences since moving to Philadelphia.

Some recurring themes emerged. People wanted me to understand that in many African and Caribbean countries music and dance are used to celebrate and mark the significant events in a person's life, and also to teach values, pass on history, and support communal working relationships. It became clear that many Africans from different countries share a history of actively participating in music and dance at a very early age. One of the most disturbing things I learned is that there are very few opportunities for live African traditional music and dance in Philadelphia.

Music is part of the essence of many African countries' culture and life. And according to some Africans, "where there is music, there is dance." In contrast to the western view of music and dance as a form of entertainment, Africans from different countries and regions know of music and dance as a functional part of their existence. It is not seen as separate from the spiritual, social, political, and economic aspects of community and life. It is not used as a diversion or distraction from everyday life; rather it supports the existence of the community.

Kofi Yamoa is a Ghanaian musician, dancer, historian, and leader of a cultural dance troupe named AFARI (African Arts and Resource Institute). During the 1970s and 1980s, this Philadelphia-based group of six to 10 Ghanaian musicians and dancers performed traditional music and dance at parties and spiritual gatherings, and also offered school workshops for children. Local Ghanaian observances of life cycle events like birth, coming of age, marriage, and death all called for music, and AFARI provided it. At each of these celebrations, particular songs, music, and dances marked the given event. For example, Lariba Asamoah, one of the dancers from AFARI, described how a high-tempo, rhythmic Ga song and dance called *kpanlogo* is now performed at social gatherings at the sponsor's request or the performers' discretion. *Kpanlogo* was traditionally used to welcome the fishermen home and to celebrate a bountiful and safe return. Separated from those original functions, it is enjoyed both for the pleasure of the dance and music and for what it represents for people—including a connection to their homeland.

Reflex, a local Haitian band, includes percussionist Yvens Saintcyr. Photo: Stacey E. Ford, 1997

People—especially dancers and musicians—were eager to talk about the way dance *used to be* in their lives. Vox Augustin, a Haitian lead singer for the group Reflex learned the social dance called *kanpa* while attending a family gathering as a child. Bibi Jepkemboi, a Kalenjin/Nandi from Kenya who has lived in Philadelphia for seven years told of courting dances held for young people from neighboring villages or communities where each dance has specific rhythms and movement. Liberian musician Hawa Moore recalled dances used for celebrating and for work: marking the season for planting crops, encouraging the farmers and people of the village to prepare for the labor that leads to a fruitful harvest, for fishing, and for other workday tasks done communally. Songs and dances made work easier and joined people together in their efforts. Like Ms. Moore, Siso Sibiko, a 27-year-old South African dancer, told of learning to dance at the age of five. Annual festivals and events that celebrated ancestors and kings included music and dancing by the people of her community. She watched her elders and was encouraged to participate, from an early age. Kormassa Shareff, a former member of the Liberian National Dance Troupe, learned traditional songs and dances at the Sande Society school when she was eight. Among the various life skills taught to the children in this "bush school" or "secret society" are traditional drumming and dance. These schools aim to equip youths to participate constructively in their community; knowledge of traditional music and dance is a necessity.

Many forces have served to interrupt these traditions. Ms. Jepkemboi learned many of the traditional songs and dances from friends, since her family, which had converted to Christianity, did not allow them. The Christian colonizers' active disapproval destroyed many cultural traditions. Luckily, not all of the converts fully relinquished their traditional beliefs and customs; others actively practiced indigenous arts as an act of defiance. War and violence have also interrupted various music and dance practices. Steve "Big Steve" Worjloh is a well-known Liberian singer and songwriter currently living in Philadelphia. Despite his increasingly popularity, he was forced to leave his country for his own safety. His experiences have made him keenly aware of the ways in which the current generation of children, especially those most affected by civil war in his country, have lost touch with the communal heritage of music and dance.

Artists living in Philadelphia struggle with the task of maintaining their musical culture. Because of the lack of performing opportunities here, many artists have left for cities where there are venues and audiences receptive to African and Caribbean music, like New York and Washington, D.C. Philadelphia-based African families usually hire musicians and dancers from these cities to perform at weddings, funerals, or baby-naming ceremonies.

The artists still living in Philadelphia attribute the lack of performance opportunities to several factors. According to Samba Sela, a Senegalese Djembe drummer from the Soninke ethnic group, African music is not marketable here because the larger community does not understand the music or the language of the

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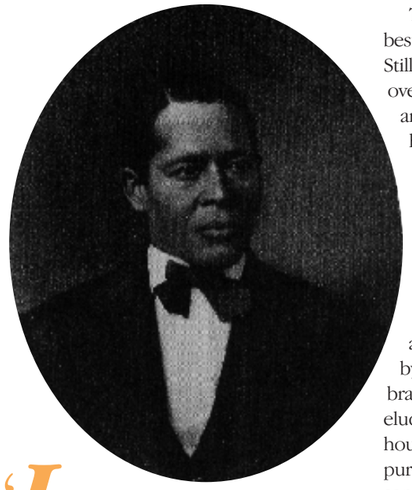
Photo: Ivoirien musician Jess Sah Bi plays a musical bow. Photo: Stacey E. Ford, 1997

"Tell the story to the children": *William Still and the Still Family Reunion*



William Still, Photo courtesy The Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection.

"Like millions of my race," declared William Still in the introduction to the second edition of his book, *The Underground Rail Road Records*, "my mother and father were born slaves, but were not contented to live and die so." A leader of the Underground Railroad from 1847 through 1861, William Still wrote these words here in Philadelphia, at the beginning of a 780-page volume of collected stories, testimonies, letters, and reminiscences first published in 1872 and revised in 1879 and 1886. "The reasons," he continued, "which years ago led me to aid the bondman and preserve the records of his sufferings, are to-day quite as potent in convincing me that the necessity of the times requires this testimony…. The race must not forget the rock from whence they were hewn…Like other races, this newly emancipated people will need all the knowledge of their past condition which they can get…Here, therefore, is the best possible reason for vigorously pushing the circulation of this humble volume—that it may testify for thousands and tens of thousands, as no other work can do."

Thus began a book that became a bestseller over the next 30 years. Still's book consisted of the stories of over 200 Underground Railroad arrivals in Philadelphia, detailing, in his words, "the escapes of many men, women and children, from the prison-house of bondage; from cities and plantations; from rice swamps and cotton fields; from kitchens and mechanic shops; from Border States and Gulf States; from cruel masters and mild masters;—some guided by the north star alone, penniless, braving the perils of land and sea, eluding the keen scent of the bloodhound as well as the more dangerous pursuit of the savage slave-hunter; some from secluded dens and caves of the earth, where for months and years they had been hidden away waiting for the chance to escape; from mountains and swamps, where indescribable suffering from hunger and other privations had patiently been endured…Not a few…arriving, of course [with] hardly…rags enough on them to cover their nakedness, even in the coldest weather."

A clerk for the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society at 5th and Arch Streets, William Still began his interviews in an attempt to help runaway slaves find their relatives in the North, but he realized too that the narratives had historical significance. Still interviewed hundreds of fugitives who came through Philadelphia—as many as 95% of whom stayed overnight with him and his wife, Letitia, at their home at 5th and Poplar—taking meticulous notes on travel methods, physical descriptions, and, equally important, details of plantation life and mistreatment in the South. He hid these notes in the attic of a building in Mt. Lebanon Cemetery for up to 20 years before he felt the stories were safe to publish. Working, of course, without tape recorder, Still had to rely on his careful notes and his memory, yet he refused to ornament the testimonies or letters of the refugees or any participants in his collection, noting: "In the use of these various documents, the writer begs to assure his readers that the most scrupulous care has been taken to furnish artless stories, simple facts,—to resort to no coloring to make the book seem romantic, as he is fully persuaded that any exaggerations or additions of his own could not possibly equal in surpassing interest, the original and natural tales given under circumstances, when life and death seemed equally balanced in the scale."

The publication party for Still's book, held in 1870, was itself historically significant. It was organized by William Still's brother Dr. James Still, known as "the doctor of the Pines," in Indian Mills, New Jersey. The event was a celebration of the suspension of the Underground Railroad and a celebration of freedom as well, notes Clarence Still, a local historian and descendant of William's brother Charles. And it was also a reunion of the entire Still family—the first of 128 consecutive annual family reunions the Still family has organized in the Camden County area every August. The 122nd was actually the largest (over 700 relatives and guests came to Clarence Still's house); an average of 400 people have come to gatherings in recent years.

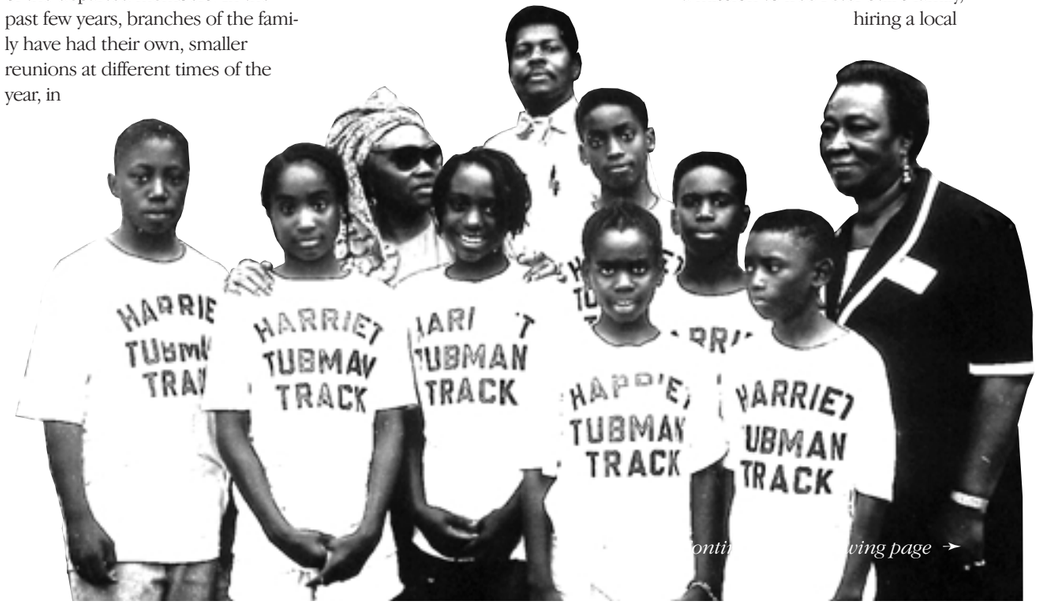
Still's Day in Lawnside begins with a Sunday church service at Mt. Zion United Methodist Church. This is the day that has been set aside by the church for the Still's Day celebration; it includes a performance by four elder members of the Camden branch of the family who have organized a fine gospel quartet (now augmented by younger family members on electric instruments). After church, family members proceed to the Still home for lunch. For many years the entire reunion took place at the church, with lunch served during a break in the middle of the service. But for roughly the last 10 years the reunion has outgrown this arrangement. Now, the Still Family Reunion Committee provides enough barbecued chicken and ribs, corn on the cob, green beans, and potato and macaroni salad for all, though most of the families who come bring their own picnic as well. There is music and dancing, with finger paints for the children and every year a decorative cake donated by the Norris E. Still family in memory of the departed members. In the past few years, branches of the family have had their own, smaller reunions at different times of the year, in Vineland and Mt. Laurel, New Jersey, while representatives—official and unofficial—from other families, like the Tubmans, the Harpers, the Lippincotts, the Purvises, and the Anthonys, have come too.

One day a man named Peter purchased his freedom with the help of a local Jewish merchant in Alabama and escaped on the Underground

William Still took the time to record the stories,

Railroad, arrived in William Still 's office. Peter was trying to locate his parents, who, he had heard, had escaped to New Jersey when he was a child. As William Still interviewed Peter, he learned that his parents and the visitor's shared the same names and many other significant characteristics. "By this time," wrote William Still, "I was simply thunderstruck, so to speak. I had to summon all my powers of control in the presence of the stranger, so fully was I convinced by this time that he was one of my long-lost brothers. I scarcely knew what to do for a little time, but by and by I dismissed the pilot, saying I would look further into the case after I got done with my mailing, and would take care of the stranger overnight…Before intimating to my brother the discovery I had made, I allowed a full hour to pass, meanwhile plying him with a thousand questions touching his entire life. Then, seating myself by his side, I said: 'I think I can tell you all about your kinfolk—mother, father, etc.,' and went on to say, 'You are an own brother of mine.' As anxious as he had been all his life to find his lost parents and relatives, this news was at the moment too good for him to fully credit. He was as one dumbfounded. I went on to assure him of the truth of all I had said by narrating our family history in detail."

William Still's organization devised a mission to free Peter Still's family, hiring a local



Harriet Tubman track team at the 1994 Still family reunion; Still family reunion t-shirts. Photos: William Westerman, 1994

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Sign announcing the 124th "Still's Day." Photo: William Westerman, 1994

Quaker named Seth Concklin to pose as a slave trader to purchase the family's freedom in Alabama. Concklin indeed found the family in Alabama and brought them as far north as Indiana, before the entire group was captured. Peter Still's family was sent back to Alabama; Concklin's body was found on the banks of the Cumberland River, William Still wrote in his opening chapter, "drowned, with his hands and feet in chains and his skull fractured."

It is easy for us to forget today that the Underground Railroad was completely illegal, that the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 made sheltering and assisting runaways a crime punishable by fines and prison, that the runaway slaves we celebrate today were more often seen as the "illegal aliens" of their day. Illegal, too, was all the "fieldwork" William Still conducted. Still's book is rich in information on the workings of the Underground Railroad, right down to methods of disguise and code-words for runaway slaves, such as "packages," "boxes," "the goods," and even "hams." Without that hazardous written record, the strength of the oral tradition notwithstanding, many of these details would have been lost. The Still family is remarkable not only for the strength of its oral tradition, poet, storyteller, publisher, and family historian Gloria Tuggle Still remarks, but also for the strength of its written tradition.

So, members of the Still family come together every year to renew ties and, as the title of one of Gloria Tuggle Still's poems suggests, "Tell the Story to the Children." People regularly come from New York, Washington, and as far away as Alaska, Japan, Canada, England, Germany and Ecuador. The family rolls are filled with doctors, scientists, educators, musicians, athletes, a composer, a congressman, a former mayor of Lawnside, the inventor of saltwater taffy, and other accomplished descendants of William, Peter, Dr. James, and all their siblings. But blood relationship is not essential; for many who have married into the family, or who have an interest in the work of the Underground Railroad, the connection with freedom is more spiritual than biological. Though the Railroad suspended operations when it was no longer needed, its inspiration and work continue through memories kept alive by the sharing of family stories. William Still began as a clerk of the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society, and eventually ran it. Serving on its board after slavery had been abolished, he and the Society itself were involved in desegregation activities in Philadelphia in the late 19th century; the Society has not been disbanded yet.

and record them for the future, not only for their historical value not only so that

Clarence Still is a prominent historian in southern New Jersey. His books and articles on the history of African Americans in Camden County include works on Civil War soldiers, local abolitionists like Peter Mott and the Quakers of Haddonfield, and the history of Lawnside, one of the first towns in the state to be settled by African Americans. In addition to using written, archival sources, and books and articles handed down in his family, Still has become the repository of many oral traditions. But he acknowledges the existence of more legends, more history, than he will ever be able to record. "You can never pull it all together," he says, thinking about the family reunions. "Every time you talk to somebody they have a different slant. Every year you find out something new." Other historians of the Underground Railroad, most notably Charles Blockson of Temple University, who has published several books on the Underground Railroad and whose archive at Temple is an unparalleled resource, would agree that this kind of historical work is a lifelong experience, a painstaking bringing together of scores of stories, years of meetings and reunions, the knowledge of many shared bit by bit with those in succeeding generations.

William Still took the time to record the stories, not only for their historical value, not only so that "in some way or other some of the bleeding and severed hearts might be united and comforted," and not only for their merit as "sad and thrilling stories." For him the enterprise was also functional, part and parcel of the work of rescuing and housing refugees, part of the struggle for the abolition of slavery, and a struggle that continued with his desegregation activities later on. What William Still realized during times of crisis, Clarence Still and Gloria Tuggle Still and so many others realize today: their work is not just historical research, but the continuation of that road to freedom. This is why the Still family reunions continue to draw large numbers and have the primacy in the family that they do. They are about being together, and being family and sharing stories, but they are also about the hard work and satisfactions of being free.

"in some way or other some of the bleeding and severed hearts might be united and comforted"

—William Westerman

Among his other work, Clarence Still is involved in the restoration of the 1844 Peter Mott House, in Lawnside, New Jersey. Peter Mott was a free black man and an Underground Railroad agent who worked directly with William Still in moving passengers, and Mr. Still holds that Mott's is the "most outstanding house in New Jersey." The restoration of the Peter Mott House is a project of the Lawnside Historical Society, for which Mr. Still serves as President of the Board of Trustees. This historically significant building has been moved off its foundations, rebuilt and replaced on the foundation through the commitment and dedication of the community. $100,000 of the $260,000 project cost has been raised. Donations are still being accepted by the Lawnside Historical Society, P.O. Box 608, Lawnside, New Jersey 08045.

William Still's Underground Rail Road Records *is still in print and is available from the Johnson Publishing Company in Chicago. It is also available at most libraries. William Westerman, a former PFP staff person, undertook this work as part of a project exploring the current legacies of the Underground Railroad. This work was supported by a grant from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.*

Doing the Electric Slide, and a banner with handprints of attendees. Both from the 1994 Still family reunion. Photos: William Westerman

Facing down a death squad: a labor organizer in Honduras

Teresa Jaynes interviewed Mike Finley and Denys Everingham about their work as activists and organizers, as part of the Folk Arts of Social Change project. Here Mr. Finley talks about a powerful experience in Honduras in 1984.

Mike Finley: When I went to Central America, that had a big impact on me because I spoke at a labor rally in Honduras. I was invited to speak there. Philadelphia sent 36 unionists to Central America in one year, in 1984. We all went to Nicaragua and then six of us were going to do a side trip to Honduras from Managua. So, you know, we all go to Nicaragua, it's under Sandinista rule — everybody's happy, gets along great and we visit the right wing and the left wing and everybody —the dissidents.

And then six of us went over to Tegucigalpa [the capital of Honduras] and at this time death squads were rampant in Honduras. They had a titular, you know, a facade civilian government. There was a general named Alvarez. The US embassy was running the country. US troops had made Honduras into a base. Salvadoran troops were in Honduras being used on the border. This was officially denied, but Salvadoran troops were in Honduras attacking Nicaragua across the border. US Green Beret advisors and special units were fighting.

So we go to Honduras, and we visited several trade union people and had to have secret meetings with their Disappeared Committee and human rights group, and one day the Hondurans invited me and another guy from Philly to speak at the labor rally that they were holding. I spoke in Spanish and the other guy spoke in English. Right after the rally, a death squad started to follow us. They followed us the rest of the day.

They watched us —we stayed at this hotel, they had us watched there. Next morning we went to a union hall, and upon coming out they were out there waiting for us, and they had their vans and their sunglasses and Uzis, you know, sports clothing — you knew them. And they said, "You guys are going with us"—they tried to take us. They're pointing guns at us. And the Hondurans put themselves between them and us, and we had a screaming session. That's the day my hair started going gray, and I learned a lot of nice words [in Spanish] that day. We refused to get in their vans — tinted glass, no license plates, typical death squad vehicles. And the Honduran [unionists] are saying, "Don't go with them, don't go with them."

And we didn't. It's twelve noon in downtown Tegucigalpa and they're not accomplishing their goal. They're not going to shoot us there. And there's two reporters there taking pictures and stuff. So they started getting real nervous. All of a sudden the army appeared —trucks, machine guns, pointing them at us, from out of nowhere. And behind the army was a car with Texas tags with a white, blond guy in the back seat with a walkie-talkie directing the operation from the embassy. So the army says, "You're supposed to go with these men." And we say, "We're not getting in those vans." And we had a screaming argument with the army. The Hondurans are standing between them and us and we negotiated. The death squad guys split without us, and the army says, "Well, you're under arrest, you've got to come with us." And an army truck pulls up, "Get in there." We say, "We're not going in your truck either." We were due to leave that day and the army says, "We know you're leaving today and we want to escort you to the airport and make sure that you get on the plane." So we said, "We'll go in our own vehicles and you can escort us." So that's what happened, but we were under arrest. They arrested the six of us, the two North American reporters and two Honduran labor leaders who volunteered to go with us, including the head of their number-one left-wing trade union, who was a survivor of several assassination attempts. (His predecessor had been killed.)

So they took us to the airport under armed guard. As we walk in, six US Air Force officers are standing there laughing at us. They took us into a giant waiting room. They cleared the whole waiting room out for us and sat us down in chairs and just pointed guns at us and we just waited. We knew the US government was behind it, so we started saying, "We want the embassy here, we want the embassy here." Even though we knew that it was their job. So, they're stalling —they're on the phone a lot. And while we're waiting we can see out the window US Air Force 130s landing every 10 minutes with US and Salvadoran troops getting out constantly. So, finally, the US consul shows up. It's clear he's hostile to us. And we said, "What are we under arrest for?" And he said, "You guys have violated Honduran law." "What law?" we asked. "You insulted the national dignity." (Because in my speech the previous day I made a reference to them shooting their own people. Also, this was broadcast on the radio station and we appealed to US troops to disobey orders — that's really what I think upset them.)

Mike Finley and Denys Everingham. Photo: Teresa Jaynes, 1997

So, we had a big session with him. He said, "They're going to throw you out off the county." And we said, "We're leaving anyway." And he said, "They want to send you to El Salvador." We said, "We're not going to El Salvador, then we're really in trouble!" So he said, "You got to get on that plane." And we said, "We're not getting on that plane. You'll have to beat us. You'll have to knock us out. And we're not leaving anyway until these two Hondurans are released." (They had thrown the reporters out. They did release them.)

So, this is taking five hours and by this time there's a crowd outside the airport. The Honduran union had mobilized people. There's all kinds of media. They don't know what to do. The US consul is clearly in charge of the whole thing. He's snapping orders, speaks very good Spanish to all the Honduran officials and they scurry every time he talks. So one thing led to another and we basically won our point. They released the Hondurans and we got on the plane for Managua. They took 75 dollars from each of us, they photographed us, fingerprinted us, and put secret code numbers in our passports. They also stole a photograph that I'd been given of two AIFLD officers stationed in Honduras from my bags. (AIFLD is the CIA-financed labor arm that the US runs through their embassy with Kirkland's approval. Lane Kirkland was the President of the CIO at the time).

So, we got back to Managua. We learned several months later that one of the Hondurans who helped save us from the death squads was assassinated and another one had her house blown up twice and she's now in exile in Costa Rica. We had her up on tour here in Philly just before her house got blown up.

That I'll never forget, never forget that. I have that passport with those numbers still. I had to get a new passport because I didn't know what those numbers mean. It could mean "deport upon—." "We're banned from returning to Honduras…. "

We had six people from trade unions, one of which was the head of AFSCME in Philadelphia, Tom Cronin. Upon our return to Nicaragua, we read in a pro-government Tegucigalpa newspaper a telegram (in Spanish). It was from Irving Brown, who at that time was head of the AFL-CIO International Affairs Department, and Bill Doherty, who was the director of the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD), addressed to the leader of the most right-wing labor confederation (CTH), Victor Artiles. (Of the three labor confederations in Honduras, CTH was the most conservative, and it was widely known that they worked hand-in-hand with AIFLD.) The telegram stated, "We don't know who these so-called union people are. As far as we're concerned they're not with the AFL-CIO. Do whatever you need to do." These guys tried to have us killed! They knew who we were. We were there as an official delegation. We had a guy who was a high-ranking official in AFSCME, another guy from

Continued on following page ➔

WORD OF MOUTH: (continued)

the machinists', we had a vice president of the postal workers' union. They wanted us dead….

When we came back we did a lot of followup. We talked at a lot of labor meetings about what we experienced. We published a written report —gave out thousands of copies to workers. A lot of labor committees did stuff like that, they would send delegations down and come back and use the evidence [of what they saw first hand] to back up our general argument. We deliberately tried to put on these tours of people who were still walking the fence on issues. We didn't just want the choir to go down and cheer on the Sandinistas. We tried to get conservative trade union officials to go with the delegations, and they would come back hopefully changed and join us. The present leader of the AFL-CIO is John Sweeney. He was the former president of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). The AFL-CIO would run counter tours. Sweeney also went on a counter tour, but he ended up joining the national body of the labor committees when he [returned from Central America]…. He became president of the AFL-CIO for other reasons (unrelated to that experience), but I think Lane Kirkland is out partly due to [the work we did with Central America]. You know, and if Kirkland was not out, Sweeney would not be in. Although Sweeney was elected specifically for some of the organizing that SEIU has done —specifically a domestic reason.

Denys Everingham: Yes, but… a lot of the people who were doing the Central American work ended up getting involved more heavily in their unions. And turning their unions into more responsive organizations to members who were being hurt [by US intervention policies]... a lot of progressive activists became involved in unions [because of the Solidarity movement]…

—Mike Finley and Denys Everingham. The audiotaped interview and full transcription are in our archive.

Mike Finley is currently a Staff Representative in Trenton, New Jersey for Communications Workers of America (CWA), local 1039. Denys Everingham is Organizing Director and Recording Secretary for Service Employees International Union (SEIU), Local 36 in Philadelphia. If you work in a place that you think needs a union, call Denys at SEIU at (215) 563-9851.

Are you a member of the Philadelphia Folklore Project?

If so, you receive this magazine 3x each year and you help ***support the work*** described in these pages. PLUS you get Great Benefits.

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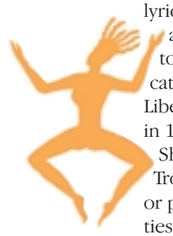
***Please* join us.** You can use the form on p. 31.

CITY TRADITIONS: (continued)



lyrics. Kofi Yamoa from AFARI, with a similar perspective, attempts to address this issue through education. Saah Tamba, a dancer from Liberia who moved to Philadelphia in 1991 and joined Kormassa Shareff's new Liberian Dance Troupe, has also found few public or private performance opportunities. Ms. Shareff also cites the lack of Liberian drummers. Though she and Hawa Moore have performed at Liberian weddings, the money that they receive is not enough to pay the members of the group, which can include three to five drummers and percussionists and four to six dancers. Without adequate compensation, surviving financially in America while maintaining culture through dance and music becomes a challenge.When the need to survive wins the battle, a very important piece of the culture of these immigrants is lost.

The loss of this culture surely affects the adults who remember the role that music and dance played in their lives. It also affects the first generation of children born in this country who have no real conception of the purpose of music and dance in their cultural heritage. For their parents and elders, music and dance teaches about self-love, acknowledgment and appreciation of a higher being, and the importance and value of community, but these dimensions of music are difficult to pass on to children whose culture of music and dance is dominated by the popular culture of America.

Music and dance of various African and Caribbean countries is vital to maintaining and passing on of these rich cultures. It is how values and history are taught. It is one of the means by which a sense of community is built and maintained. It can be a way to bring communities together despite differences. It is a way to mark and remember cultural heritage and history.

It is our intention to support the artists who can provide a social dance scene for these and other immigrant communities. We want the music and social dance of these communities to come out of the closet for the education and enjoyment of the entire Philadelphia community. Maintaining and preserving the cultural arts that have created a strong foundation and sense of pride in these communities, and making that experience available to African, Caribbean, and other ethnic communities would be a benefit to many.

—Stacey E. Ford

Look out for PHILLY DANCE AFRICA, our fall social dance party and workshops with African dancers and musicians.
See the fall calendar on p. 30 for details, and SAVE THE DATE:
NOVEMBER 8th!

We Loan Exhibits:

Traveling exhibitions on Philadelphia folk arts and culture available now!

Borrow some of our pictures for your walls. . . and get to the heart of community traditions important to diverse folks. Six exhibitions can now be rented—they show how people use folk arts today in diverse urban neighborhoods, as essential tools for living. Let us know if you want to bring pictures from our neighborhood to yours. Six exhibitions are available:

Uses of Tradition: Arts of Italian Americans in Philadelphia explores the meanings of some of the beautiful and useful folk arts that Italian immigrants brought to this region over the last one hundred years—from the stonecarving, stained glass and mosaic work that ornament our grand buildings to the family and regional craft traditions carried on in more private settings, like palm-weaving and window displays. This exhibition considers the meanings and uses of inherited traditions in peoples' lives. 54 matted and framed photographs with 17 interpretive text panels.

You, Me and Them: Photographs by Thomas B. Morton is an extended essay on how culture is created, reshaped and attacked in our multicultural society. Photographs by this thoughtful African American photographer represent more than twenty years of his documentation and exploration of culture-making in communities of color in the Philadelphia area. Morton has attended community festivals and celebrations, witnessed weddings, funerals, momentous performances, triumphs and tragedies. Included are images of Korean, Hmong, Vietnamese, African American, Puerto Rican and Jewish people that testify to the ways in which folk arts are important in peoples' lives. 27 framed and matted photographs with text panels.

Giants, Kings and Celestial Angels: Teaching Cambodian Arts in Philadelphia. Work by Peang Koung, Eang Mao, Sipom Ming, Chamroeun Yin and their students. This exhibition introduces four Cambodian artists: a mask-maker and folk opera director, a costume-maker, a temple painter, and a dancer/mask maker. The focus is on how they try to teach Cambodian arts here in Philadelphia, sharing Khmer values along with Khmer arts. 24 framed and matted photographs with 7 original drawings by students and text panels.

"Plenty of Good Women Dancers:" African American Women Hoofers from Philadelphia. Glamorous film clips, photographs and dancers' vivid recollections convey a portrait of veteran Philadelphia women hoofers prominent during the golden age of swing and rhythm tap (1930s-1940s). This exhibition focuses on women who "came up" from the 1920s through the present. Restricted to few roles, unnamed in credits, these African American women dancers have remained anonymous within and outside of the entertainment industry and sometimes even in the communities in which they reside. The exhibition offers us a glimpse into an era often viewed only through the perspectives of male tap dancers, agents, and entertainment impresarios. It honors the artistry and rhythmic innovation of these dance pioneers. 50 framed and matted photographs in six panels, with two additional text panels.

ODUNDE African American Festival: Twenty Years on South Street. Photographs by Thomas B. Morton. ODUNDE is one of the oldest African American street festivals in the country. It has grown into a dynamic event that draws more than 200,000 people every year. Included are vivid images of the Egungun dancer, a batá battery, the procession and offering, drummers, dancers, and celebrants. Photographs show the arts that are at the heart of a twenty-year-old African American street festival that has persisted, despite opposition and gentrification. 30 matted and framed photographs with text panels.

Keep It Real. Graffiti has become increasingly controversial. But the debate over graffiti is usually one-sided, with all young urban graffiti writers and artists grouped together and treated as vandals and worse. This exhibition pays attention to some of the opinions and experiences of a group of eleven young men who paint elaborate graffiti. Each is represented with a zsingle color photograph of his work—chiefly "pieces" (short for "masterpieces"), with some memorial walls They ask why there is money to arrest graffiti artists, but not for schools or jobs. The exhibition raises questions about disinvestment in urban communities, and controversies over what is public and private property. 11 large-format matted and framed photographs with text panels.

About Our Exhibitions: Our exhibitions are user-friendly, and appropriate both for agencies with no previous exhibition experience, and for museums. Exhibitions come in well-labeled crates, with detailed packing, installing, and repacking instructions. Photographs and panels have wire backs, and are easy to hang.

Exhibits cost $250- $500 for each six-week rental. We provide insurance for the exhibits. Shipping costs are the responsibility of the borrower and must be arranged through our office. Organizations that serve low-income or underserved communities may be eligible for reduced fees. (Please call us for more information).

Interpretive, educational and marketing materials (such as postcards, posters, videos, and related PFP publications) are available for many of the exhibits. We also provide borrowers with sample news releases, photographs, and captions.

Please call Teresa Jaynes (215-468-7871) with any questions about our traveling exhibitions program, or for further information.

We Publish Books:

✯ In my heart I am a dancer

By Chamroeun Yin. Edited by Deborah Wei and Debora Kodish. Photos by René Marquez

A beautiful children's book about a Cambodian dancer, mask-maker, gardener, friend and neighbor. The book, in a simple way, punctures stereotypes by showing many sides of this Cambodian man, a survivor of the Khmer Rouge regime. Edited from his words. **NEW!** *1986. (Grades K-4), 32 pp., full color, photographs.* ***$12.95***

✯ The Giant Never Wins: Cambodian Lakhon Bassac (folk opera) in Philadelphia

Stories by Koung Peang and Pun Nhiv. Essays by William Westerman with Prolung Khan Ngin. Translations by Leendavy Koung, Chiny Ky, Prolung Ngin and Debora Kodish. Edited by Debora Kodish

Eight stories (in Khmer and English) recounting the plots of lakhon bassac, a lively and entertaining folk drama tradition. Essays explain the background, history and art of lakhon bassac, Cambodian folk opera, as practiced and remembered by Cambodians who now live in Philadelphia. Based on three years of fieldwork in Philadelphia. 1995. *186 pp., photos, glossary.* ***$15***

✯ Uses of Tradition: Arts of Italian Americans in Philadelphia

By Dorothy Noyes. Foreword by Richard N. Juliani.

Pictorial and textual descriptions of the varied folk arts that Italian craftspeople brought to Philadelphia, and how they changed the face and feel of the city through the introduction of these traditional arts. Vivid and moving descriptions of Philadelphians creating stone carvings, wood carvings, stained glass, plaster work, innovations in mummers' costumes, palm weavings and other significant folk traditions. *1989. Illustrated, 80 pp.,* ***$10***

✯ ODUNDE presents "From Hucklebuck to Hip Hop." Social Dance in the African American Community in Philadelphia

By John W. Roberts.

An ODUNDE project. Based on interviews with African American dancers from Philadelphia, this book explores the dances, settings, style and significance of social dance, literally from hucklebuck in the 1940s to hip hop in the 1990s. *1995. Illustrated, 123 pp.,* ***$10***

✯ Order form: p. 31

✯ Call us for a full listing of resources on local folk culture.

Dance

★ Philly Dance Africa: Workshops & Party

Don't miss a chance to dance to fabulous African roots music—world beat from Ghanain, South African, Liberian, Haitian and Ivorien musicians and dancers who now live here in Philadelphia. Learn *kpanlogo, konpa* and other social dances from the African diaspora and then get out on the floor and party! African and Caribbean food and beverages will be available. **Philly Dance Africa** features South African musician Mogauwane Mahloele, Ghanaian musicians Nii Armah Hammond and Ishamal Adjin-Tettey, Ghanain dancer Victoria Laryeaa, Liberian musician Hawa Moore, Liberian dancers Kormassa Bobo Shareff and Saah Tamba, Haitian band Reflex, and others.
(See article, p. 18)

November 8
6-8 PM Dance Workshops
8-10:30 PM Dance Party
Urban Education Foundation
48th and Market Streets
Free parking in guarded lot (enter from 48th St.)
Admission: $10 ($5 PFP members)
Co-sponsored by the Ga-Adongbe Association of Pennsylvania and others…

Concert

★ Sacred Journeys

Kule Mele African Dance Ensemble and Atzilut in a concert of Afro-Cuban and Jewish sacred musics. Kule Mele will present a series of orisha dances, usually seen in bembés honoring the deities. Atzilut will draw on the Judaic mystical legacy of kabbala, calling on Middle Eastern and Mediteranean traditions along the way. Part of the Philadelphia Fringe Festival. Co-sponsored with the Painted Bride Art Center.

September 21
8 PM
Painted Bride Art Center
230 Vine Street
Admission: $15
($7.50 PFP and Bride members)
Tickets: 925-9914

Exhibits

★ Folklife Exhibits Keep on Touring

"ODUNDE: Twenty Years on South Street" is one of five different PFP photo exhibitions that can be seen around the region this fall.

Until September 9
The Village of Arts and Humanities
2254 Germantown Avenue
FREE
For dates, places and times for other exhibitions, call us: 215-468-7871

Programs for Young People

★ Philly Dance Africa

Here's a chance for young people to learn to dance kpanlogo and more. Musicians and dancers from Africa will teach popular social dances from their homelands. Get a head start on the big dance party on November 8.

October 25
4 - 5:30 PM
Point Breeze Performing Arts Center
1717 Point Breeze Avenue
FREE, RESERVATION REQUIRED

★ Cambodian folk–tales: storytelling

Philadelphians know great stories about the tricky rabbit, the clever man Ah Chey, and other heroes who outwit the rich and powerful. Come hear them tell stories passed down in their families. In Cambodian and English. From a new children's book being prepared by the PFP.

September 24
October 15
November 12
3:30-4:30 PM
The Free Library of Philadelphia-South Philadelphia Branch
Broad and Morris Streets
FREE

Information & Technical Assistance

★ Funding opportunities for folk artists and grassroots cultural groups: info session

Learn about grant programs and get information that will help you plan ahead for the year's grant deadlines.

September 9
6:30-8:30 PM
Philadelphia Folklore Project
1304 Wharton Street
FREE

Works in Progress

Works in Progress, the magazine of the Philadelphia Folklore Project (PFP), is published three times a year. We depend upon subscriptions and donations to cover the costs of the work described in these pages and the magazine itself. To subscribe and for more information, please use the form below, or call: 215-468-7871
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Thank you to all.

Please Join!

About the Philadelphia Folklore Project

Folklore means something different to everyone—as it should, since it is one of the chief means we have to represent our own realities in the face of powerful institutions. Here at the Philadelphia Folklore Project, we are committed to paying attention to the experiences and traditions of "ordinary" people. We're a 10-year-old independent public folklife agency that documents, supports and presents local folk arts and culture. We offer exhibitions, concerts, workshops and assistance to artists and communities. We conduct ongoing field research and we organize around issues of concern. We maintain an archive and issue publications and resources. We urge you to join—or to call us for more information. (215-468-7871)

Join and get the shirt off our back!

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WORKS IN PROGRESS

Calendar

September

9

Workshop
Technical Assistance for Artists & Organizations
PFP OFFICE
1304 Wharton St.
6:30-8:30 FREE

21

Concert
Sacred Journeys: Kulu Mele & Atzilut
Painted Bride
230 Vine St.
8:00
$15 ($7.50 members)

24

Storytelling
Cambodian folktales
Free Library-S. Phila.
Broad & Morris
3:30-4:30 FREE

October

15

Storytelling
Cambodian folktales
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Broad & Morris
3:30-4:30 FREE

25

Dance Workshop
(for young people)
Philly Dance Africa
Point Breeze Performing Arts Center
1717 Point Breeze Avenue
4-5:30 PM FREE
RESERVATION REQUIRED: 215-468-7871

November

8

Dance Party & Dance Workshop s
Philly Dance Africa
Urban Education Fdn.
48th & Market Sts.
6-8 Workshops
8-10:30 Dance Party
$10 ($5 PFP members)
Co-sponsored by the Ga-Adongbe Association of Pennsylvania and others.

12

Storytelling
Cambodian folktales
Free Library-S. Phila.
Broad & Morris
3:30-4:30 FREE

1997

Details are inside...