



# Lowell Folk Festival: Twenty-Seven Years Down the Road

Sue Andrews,  
Assistant Superintendent for Operations  
Lowell National Historical Park  
National Park Service

# A National Park in Lowell, Massachusetts?

An Historical Landscape of America's Industrial Revolution: add culture, community, and partnerships



# Lowell Folk Festival

## Brief History



1987 – National Folk Festival for three years

1989 – What's next? Keep going with

the Lowell Folk Festival

Why Lowell?

- Community's cultural diversity
- Park's mission to engage cultural community
- Vision of leaders to make it succeed.

## Lowell Folk Festival: Founding Leaders



Joe Wilson, Sandy Walter, and Zenny Sperounis



# Lowell Folk Festival: AN AMAZING TRANSFORMATION EACH YEAR

Annually and Over the Years



# Lowell Folk Festival: COMMUNITY

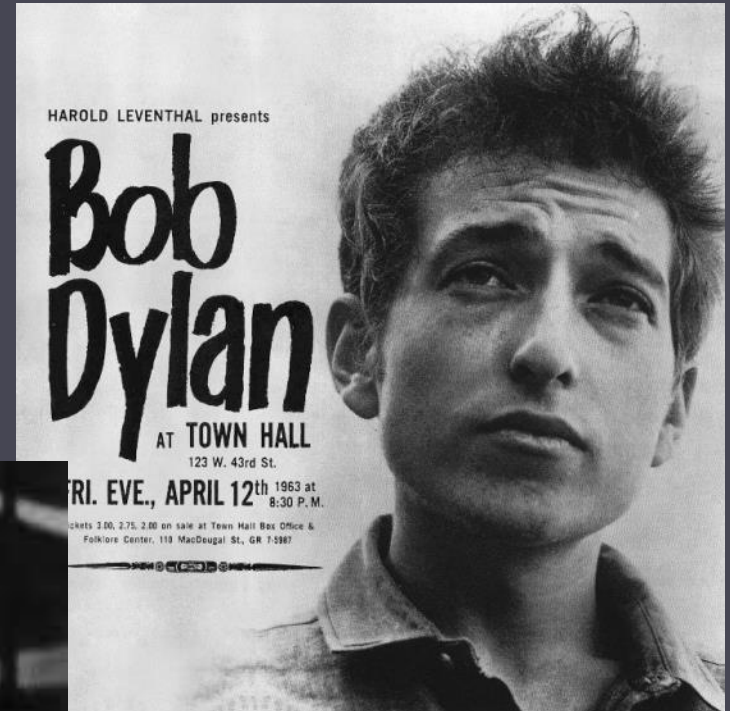
Many Nations of Lowell Carry Flags in Kick Off Parade





# Lowell Folk Festival

The Lowell Folk Festival is not...



## Lowell Folk Festival: MUSIC





# Lowell Folk Festival: MUSIC

The Lowell Folk Festival is...



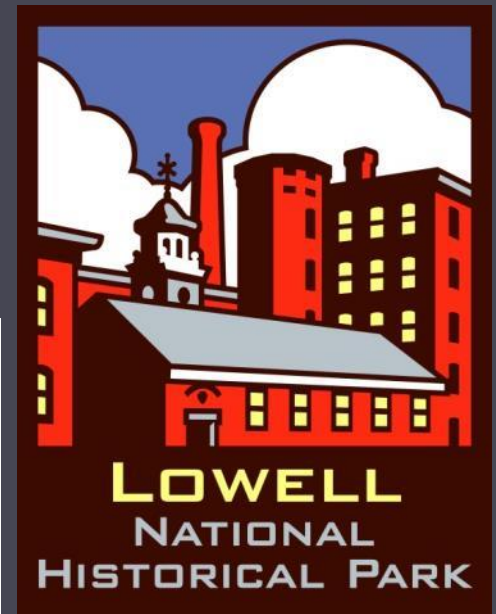
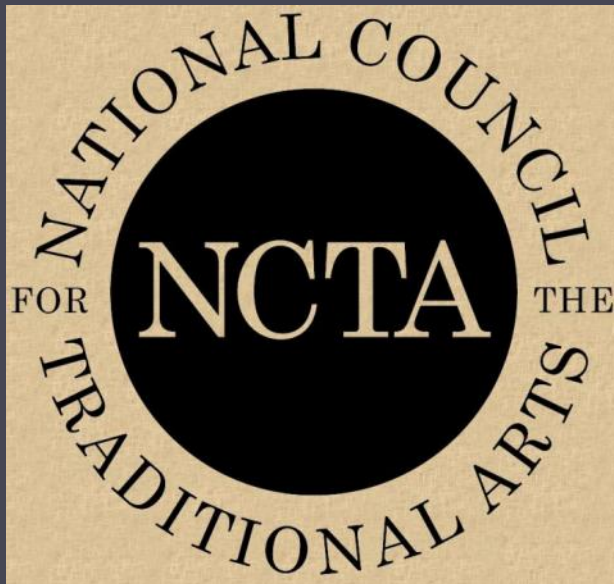
Gospel: Maggie Ingram  
and the Ingramettes

Columbian:  
Los Gaiteros de San Jacinto



Chinese yankin:  
Zhentian Zhang

# Lowell Folk Festival: PARTNERSHIPS





# Lowell Folk Festival: BEYOND THE MUSIC

## TRADITIONAL CRAFTS DEMONSTRATIONS





# Lowell Folk Festival: BEYOND THE MUSIC

FOODWAYS DEMONSTRATIONS: In 2013, Fried Dough of Five Nations



# Lowell Folk Festival: BEYOND THE MUSIC

## ETHNIC FOOD SALES





# Lowell Folk Festival: PRODUCTION





# Lowell Folk Festival: CHALLENGES



# Lowell Folk Festival: A FEW LESSONS LEARNED

**VOLUNTEERS:** The community connection and a necessary source of staffing





# Lowell Folk Festival: LESSONS LEARNED

## SPIN-OFFS

Examples:

Lowell Folklife Series: Continuing the Spirit of the Festival Year 'Round

Wood Burning Kiln: Park partners with traditional Cambodian ceramicist and Middlesex Community College bring this to life.





# Lowell Folk Festival: BEST PRACTICES

**Seamless Experience,**  
Smile, the public loves  
the event, whatever the  
partnerships are at the  
moment.

**Communications:**  
Debriefing after Festival  
Handling issues  
professionally

**Whack-a-mole:**  
Vigilance and  
acknowledge that when  
focus goes to one area,  
another may raise up.



# LOWELL FOLK FESTIVAL

You are invited to join us, next year, or any year,  
during the last full weekend of July...  
July 25-27 in 2014!