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[ca. 4/7/76]



USIA AND THE BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION



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For three years, both the occasion and the spirit of the Bicentennial celebration have been a focal point for USIA's planning and program production. Programs dealing with the history, culture, present-day society, democratic ideals and international objectives - ideas and concepts with which we deal regularly - have been placed in the context of a now two-hundred year old evolving and involved society whose ideals still reverberate around the world.

All of our programs, of course, are presented overseas; but the major exhibits, photographic displays, videotapes, films, radio broadcasts and pamphlets are produced in Washington. These are the elements - along with American speakers - which are the centerpieces of programming by our overseas posts.

For example, we are distributing 1700 copies of an exciting display called "Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness" which will form the core of a variety of programs in the field. The display deals thematically with the underlying philosophy of our country, the concepts which go far in explaining our nation.

We have been the managers overseas of the widely-acclaimed exhibit "The World of Franklin and Jefferson", designed by Charles and Ray Eames.

Our Motion Picture Service will employ satellites to televise live some of the activities which will be held across the country on July 4 and 5.

The Voice of America is producing special documentaries which portray the history and character of each of the states.

Our Press Service has published major Bicentennial issues of our most prestigious magazines - Horizons, Dialogue and America Illustrated - issues which are comprehensive and eye-catching.

But each of these, and many others which are only illustrations selected from a complete list of USIA's activities, deserve to be and are more fully described in the sections that follow.

INFORMATION CENTERS SERVICE (ICS)

Much of the regular ICS output--illustratively, bibliographies and the selection of books for our libraries--has been focusing attention on Bicentennial themes. However, ICS has undertaken some special and major projects to commemorate the celebration, including the illustrations which follow:

"Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness": The Formation of the United States

This 1200 square-foot paper display package spans the colonial and early federal periods from 1607-1826 and portrays the fundamental concepts which have motivated this country for the past 200 years.

We will send 1700 copies to our posts, cultural and civic organizations, universities and colleges throughout the world; and it will form the visual core of an educational package useful for American studies programs overseas.

Reflections: Images of America

This major photography exhibit is a visual essay on American culture and national character, depicting the diversities and unity of our society, the continuity and the change.

Although it was developed for showing in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, it has now been offered to other areas.

Overseas American Studies Conference

The Agency is conducting a major effort on behalf of the Bicentennial to foster academic and research activities abroad on the United States, in cooperation with the Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and American foreign experts in the American studies field.

This endeavor centers on a series of regional seminars scheduled for Salzburg, Tehran, Tokyo,

Lagos and San Antonio (in the U.S.). These will lead to a major international conference in Washington under the auspices of the Smithsonian Institution, the National Endowment for the Humanities, The American Council of Learned Societies and State/CU, and culminate in follow-up activities supported by USIA posts around the world.

Blacks in American Society

The visual centerpiece of this multi-media project, which explores the historical and contemporary achievements by Black Americans, is a display, "The Black Presence in the Era of the American Revolution". It was adapted for use in Africa, Latin America and Europe from a display first shown at the National Portrait Gallery and will be used with supporting speakers and materials.

Performing Arts in America: A Retrospective

This multi-media program is a comprehensive review of American theater, opera, musical comedy, dance and music in America, from about 1910 to the present. It includes 40 portrait illustrations of jazz immortals; an eight unit exhibit showing actors as chroniclers of their times (based on an article by Harold Clurman); a one-hour videotape featuring Walter Terry, the dance critic.

America in Retrospect and Prospect

Again, a multi-media program, one designed to feature prestigious American speakers on themes of both historical perspective and overall trends in American society.

The speakers, buttressed by pamphlets, videotapes, books and other supporting material, include:

James Hutson, Library of Congress
Historian Oscar Handlin, Harvard
Ralph Ketcham, Syracuse University
James Michener, Author
Michael Kammen, Cornell

The videotapes will feature such leading authorities as Bernard Bailyn, Seymour Lipset and Martin Diamond, with Robin Winks of Yale as series coordinator.

American Literature

This is a series of nine projects on American literature covering the major themes of American writing, chiefly novels, essays and poetry, since 1800.

All of the programs will include films, videotapes, slides and books.

The World of Franklin and Jefferson

This major exhibition was created by the noted design team of Charles and Ray Eames for the American Bicentennial Administration. USIA has managed the exhibition overseas. A major statement about the origins and emergence of the new nation, The World of Franklin and Jefferson spans the 120 years of the lives of the two founders, covers the establishment of the Republic and the beginning westward movement. The exhibition has had highly successful showings in Paris, Warsaw and London and is returning to the U.S. for showings under ARBA auspices. It is tentatively scheduled for Mexico City in 1977.

MOTION PICTURE AND TELEVISION SERVICE (IMV)

The Motion Picture Service has been producing Film and TV specials, cooperative programs, Bicentennial student films and other categories of visual material for placement on host country television, special film festivals and materials to reinforce seminars, speakers and other programs. Some examples:

Salute by Satellite

This will be a mixture of television material prepared in advance and live satellite feeds from the United States to a number of countries overseas, enabling foreign viewers to witness the major elements of our Bicentennial celebration as they occur on July 4 and 5.

Century III

A look at America's and the world's future concerns in a series of half-hour programs, produced by IMV. The series will cover, for example, Communications in the U.S., The Mind and the Brain, Life on Earth and Cities.

Reflections

These programs are one hour in-depth portraits of outstanding living Americans (e.g. Margaret Mead, Samuel Eliot Morison) discussing their life work.

Open-end Documentaries

Eight-to-ten minute films produced for television placement on subjects of current interest within the United States. They are offered to representatives of foreign television stations resident in the U.S., who introduce the films on camera.

Bicentennial Student Films

USIA awarded special grants to students to produce films on a variety of topics that would commemorate the Bicentennial year. Here's a sample of the titles: Scott Joplin, King of Ragtime; 200; Chicago Literary Renaissance; An American Tune; Tarpon Springs and They Came to Here From Over There.

Regional and One-country Films

Many of IMV's productions are designed for one area or one country. Illustratively:

Black Presence in The Era of the American Revolution - A series of films which will support the many "Afro-American History" weeks conducted by our posts throughout Africa, as the centerpiece of their Bicentennial programming.

Two Century Arab-American Dialogue Series - Five films which are part of the overall project of the same name, produced for Arab countries in which we operate. The project is described in greater detail in the section dealing with programs in the field.

Brazil '76 - Four films for television placement in Brazil, produced at the specific request of the post.

VOICE OF AMERICA

Many of VOA's routine broadcasts are devoted to Bicentennial coverage - special features, spot reports on topical developments, speeches, special events, conferences.

But this has been supplemented by new features on the Bicentennial theme, some of which are:

Citizens by Choice - 15-minute documentaries examining the history of immigrant groups in America.

States of the Union - 15-minute documentaries sketching the history and character of each of the American states.

Two Hundred Years Ago - Six dramatic-documentaries based on key events in the American Revolution.

Bicentennial Diary - Daily 2-minute "on this day" treatments of events from June 1, 1774 to July 4, 1776.

VOA American Issues Forum - 30-minute interview/discussions with experts and authorities on weekly themes outlined in Forum project sponsored by ARBA and National Endowment for the Humanities.

American Perspectives - 5-7 minute expositions of prominent Americans' reflections on past, present and future, as expressed in VOA interviews.

Bicentennial Profile - Short, narrative expositions of historical figures' lives and achievements.

Bicentennial Postcard - Short, narrative descriptions of historic sites.

VOA Forum series:

Conflict in America--A History of Domestic
Confrontations

Cavalcade of American Music--1776-1976

Views from Abroad--Perspectives on

Contemporary American Society

History of American Technology

PRESS AND PUBLICATIONS SERVICE (IPS)

By the very nature of a press service, IPS has produced, as part of its ongoing operation, a variety of material on Bicentennial themes for the wireless file and ad hoc responses to field requests. But it has also been engaged in Bicentennial productions that deserve special attention.

Press Material

A basic packet entitled "America's Bicentennial" was sent to posts in August of 1975. IPS is now producing monthly Bicentennial packets which are keyed to themes of the American Issues Forum.

Some of the subjects:

- A Nation of Nations
- Land of Plenty
- Certain Inalienable Rights
- Business in America
- America in The World

Pamphlets

Pamphlets are important for use in multi-media programs (produced in the field and in Washington) and for distribution to the appropriate foreign institutions. IPS is issuing four separate series of Pamphlets under the general heading "USA - 200 Years Later":

Facts About America - Covering These United States, Farming Housing, The Economy at Work, Occupations and other basic aspects of the American experience.

America and the Arts

This cultural series includes such representative titles as Jazz, Where It Came From; Motion

Pictures, USA; Theater in America and Contemporary American Architecture.

Paperback Library Series

Three important books available for presentation as a boxed set to individuals and institutions - An Outline of American History, An Outline of American Geography and an Outline of American Government.

American Almanac Series

A series which includes America in Pictures, Lincoln - Man of the People, Gallery of American and Agriculture USA.

Magazines (Bicentennial Issues)

The Horizons USA Bicentennial issue entitled "America Today and Tomorrow" is now being distributed worldwide.

The Dialogue Bicentennial issue, "Idea of America 1776-1976," was distributed in March.

America Illustrated's January issue features the Bicentennial and includes a "Bicentennial Calendar", an English version of which has been offered to USIS posts worldwide.

Festival Bicentennial 1976

IPS is reprinting this U. S. Travel Service publication for tourism promotion by USIS posts. There are English, Spanish and French-language versions.

USIA PROGRAMMING OVERSEAS

Everything that we have described so far comes to bear on the programming conducted by our posts throughout the world. Many of the Washington productions are the principle elements in field programming while others are supporting elements of both the regional and one-country activities which take place in the various geographic areas.

The sections that follow depict some, but not all, of the program activities which have been scheduled by our posts throughout the world.

EUROPEAN PROGRAMS

Many of our European posts will use major Washington productions as the focal point for both multi-country and one-country projects. The World of Franklin and Jefferson, for example, has been successfully shown in three European capitals; America in Retrospect and Prospect will be programmed in as many as 15 European countries; and 20 posts will use the photographic exhibit Reflections: Images of America.

Greece - Our post has already completed the presentation of U.S. books and periodicals on Bicentennial themes to three Greek Universities and is planning a major program in conjunction with the Agency's Reflections exhibit which will also stress Greek and Greek-American contributions to American scholarship, arts and statecraft.

Yugoslavia - USIS will produce a multi-media program (film, videotape, exhibits and speeches) highlighting the historical contributions of Yugoslav-Americans to U.S. society.

Germany - "200 Years of German-American Relations" - Top level speakers will participate in conference on the past, present, and future of political, economic and cultural relations. The Bonn conference is scheduled February 18-20.

Soviet Union - In January of 1976, our post began a series of lectures by noted American historians, a series that will continue through the latter part of the Bicentennial year. The subject; "Significance of the American Revolution."

EAST ASIAN PROGRAMS

Our East Asian office will be circulating 24 feature films, covering various periods of American history, in Thailand, Burma, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and the Philippines. These films have all been acquired by the Agency.

Here are just a few examples of other kinds of programming to be undertaken in East Asia.

Japan - USIS Tokyo is producing a major thematic program focusing on the dynamics of American society and consisting of a series of speakers including Richard Scammon, Director of the Election Research Center; James Farmer, former Director of CORE; David Brower, President of Friends of the Earth. There will also be an electronic dialogue with John Gardner, Common Cause.

Australia - USIS has undertaken both planning and media support for the Australian-American Association's Bicentennial celebration in March. Specific support includes a major Bicentennial exhibit, a book display and an exhibit of the U. S. Performing Arts for the Sydney Opera House.

Indonesia - The post organized an American studies seminar in January, 1976, featuring American specialist Linda Brown with key scholars at the University of Indonesia as part of a project to establish an American studies program.

Philippines - The post provided facilitative support for an evening of Aaron Copland music with the Manila Symphony in November of 1975 to kick-off Bicentennial programming. It has given additional support for the March

Festival of the Arts featuring the Contemporary Chamber Ensemble travelling to Manila under CU sponsorship. USIS is co-sponsoring with the Manila Symphony Orchestra performances of Bernstein's Mass in April.

NEAR EAST PROGRAMS

The major regional Bicentennial projects is aimed at the Arab World and is entitled, "The Two-Century Dialogue." The idea behind the project is to develop a Bicentennial program with specific relevance to Arab audiences. The project emphasizes linkages between the two cultures, highlighting Arab-American relations--political, economic, social and cultural--since the establishment of American independence.

Other illustrative programs follow:

Morocco - As part of its Bicentennial program, USIS Rabat and the American Embassy plan to open a museum of Moroccan-American friendship in the 400 years old legation building in Tangiers.

Iran - USIS Iran plans its Bicentennial programming around a prestigious lecture series featuring American historians and social scientists, and special exhibits and film-and-theater events at the Iran-American Societies in Tehran and the provinces. The post also is actively engaged in promoting American Studies programs. USIS is working closely with the Government of Iran's Bicentennial Committee, chaired by the Empress Farah. As one of its efforts during 1976, the Bicentennial Committee will commit funds to establish chairs of American Studies at National and Pahlevi Universities.

Kuwait - USIS Kuwait is planning an "America Week" in early April 1976 in cooperation with the Kuwait Hilton Hotel. The program will include the Agency's Bicentennial exhibit, a U.S. Department of Agricultural food exhibit, colonial period costumes, a wide array of ICS Bicentennial material and an American film festival.

India - USIS New Delhi plans a series of Bicentennial lectures and seminars to be held at all four branch posts in 1976. The program is divided into two broad themes, Heritage '76 and Horizons '76. The series was launched late last year with a prestigious keynote address by the noted American historian, John Hope Franklin. Another USIS India Bicentennial program involves the use of American feature films. The idea is to present a panorama of American history as reflected in feature films based on novels and plays by American authors.

AFRICAN PROGRAMS

All USIA posts in Africa will receive the exhibit "Black Presence in the Era of the American Revolution", which will be the centerpiece for their Bicentennial programming. Many of the posts will combine this with the exhibit "Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness" along with appropriate videotapes, magazines and other supporting materials.

Illustrations of other programs planned for Africa include:

Nigeria - African Regional American Studies Conference- This is one of five conferences being held throughout the world. It is being planned by an African Regional Planning Committee of African and American scholars, with assistance and funding by USIA, CU and the Carnegie Foundation. African scholars of American studies will attend from many parts of Africa and will return to their countries to conduct followup workshops and conference.

Ethiopia - USIS will produce a multi-media program "Afro-America History" at the Africa Hall of the Organization of African Unity building in Addis Ababa. The material will include lectures, a jazz group, panel discussions and an exhibit.

Ghana - A major USIS effort in Ghana will be a Trade Fair Exhibit "200 Years of Farming in USA", with emphasis on U.S. farm life, food production and equipment.

Ivory Coast - A three day seminar for college and graduate level students will be devoted to American studies, with emphasis on Black-American history.

Tanzania - A lecture series, "History of the American Economic system", will use an American visiting specialist, films, videotapes and appropriate publications.

LATIN AMERICAN PROGRAMS

The major regional effort for Latin America was the American Studies Conference held in San Antonio and that brought together American studies scholars from the area.

To date, our posts have reported over 420 individual projects dealing with the Bicentennial.

Some examples follow:

Argentina - a former International Visitors Program grantee has been scheduled to give a series of lectures which will include "The American Revolution and its Influence in Argentina" and "A Personal View of the U. S. "

Brazil - the post will produce a major documentary on Dom Pedro II's visit to the U. S. in 1876.

Chile - USIS has undertaken a joint program ("The Western World in the Eighteenth Century - on the occasion of the Bicentennial") in cooperation with the embassies of France, Great Britain, the Federal Republic of Germany and the Office of Cultural Advisor to the Chilean Government. Special months have been assigned to each participating embassy for a program that will run throughout the Bicentennial year.

El Salvador - The USIS Speakers Bureau, which is made up of Chamber of Commerce members (80 percent Salvadoran) is organizing multi-media lectures on Bicentennial themes.

Mexico - Our post has undertaken a cooperative effort, approved by the Mexican Secretariat of Education, that will result in the publication and distribution of 500,000 copies of a school text on Spanish contributions to the U.S. The book is intended for first-year secondary students in the Mexican school system.

Venezuela - A Bicentennial communications seminar, focusing on freedom of the press provisions of the U.S. and Venezuelan Constitutions is scheduled in April. Pierre Salinger, Eric Severeid, Helen Thomas, Eli Abel and James Goodsell are among those expected to participate.

The programs we have described are representative of a comprehensive effort by our program elements in Washington and our overseas posts to use the Bicentennial to underscore concepts basic to American society and our foreign policy objectives. Although these have always been the programmatic goals of USIA, the celebration of our 200th year has given them--and hopefully our audiences--special meaning and clarity.



