The Louisiana-French gave a spectacular performance before the huge crowd along the reflecting pool on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. during the week of July 4, 1976, the high point of America's 200th anniversary celebration.

French-Louisiana musicians, singers, dancers and cooks were invited by the Smithsonian Institution to perform, during the week of July 4, 1976, at the Festival of American Folklife in honor of the nation's Bicentennial celebration. They joined French-speaking peoples from France, Quebec, New Brunswick, Haiti and French-speaking New England, in a major cultural reunion. The result was a vital and emotional learning experience, not only for the visitors to the Festival, but especially for the participants themselves who had the opportunity to share and compare their culture with folk performers from French speaking areas of the world and share their parallel heritages. The Louisiana-French came away from the festival feeling less isolated and prouder of their own culture due to the tremendous reception given them both by the visitors and other participants.

The Louisiana-French not only discovered the other French language cultures, they also discovered themselves. In this session, performers from throughout South Louisiana came together to perform before an enthusiastic crowd of festival visitors. Some friendships were renewed, such as that of Nathan Abshire and Lionel Leleux who played together for the first time since the early thirties.

(The photographs were taken during the French-language cultural confrontation at the Festival of American Folklife by Elemore Morgan, Jr., who traveled to Washington to document this extraordinary event. Coordinator and presenter for the Louisiana-French delegation was Barry Jean Ancelet, Cultural Coordinator for CODOFIL.)
Above: Bois Sec Ardoin was a crowd pleaser with his French accordion. His hometown is Duralde, Louisiana.

Left: Mrs. Lulu Landry of Abbeville sings for people from throughout the entire nation.

Below: The experience was an emotional one and Nathan Abshire of Basile expressed some of that emotion in his farewell to the enthusiastic overflow audience which so well received the delegation from French-Louisiana.