

## *101 Creative Community Celebration Ideas*

### **1. Come Home to North Carolina**

To promote the sesquicentennial celebration, North Carolinians instituted a “Come Home to North Carolina” program. This involved the governor’s sending of personal letters, on behalf of any North Carolinian, to out of state friends and family inviting them to come home to visit. Throughout the program, USAir sponsored drawings who winners received two free tickets to North Carolina from anywhere in the country so that the winning citizen could fly any two people “home to North Carolina.”

### **2. Port Townsend Family Portrait**

Begun in 1985 by the Main Street Program of Port Townsend, and continuing to today, the Port Townsend Family Portrait invites residents and visitors alike to gather in a prominent downtown location for a group photo that is printed as a full-color poster. Advertising well in advance assures attendance of over 2,500 people...and throughout the years, they have documented the growth of children to adulthood, marriages and births. Posters are sold for \$5 as well as given to graduating high school seniors as a memento from the town and a reminder to come home for future town pictures.

### **3. Made in Iowa Party**

Local communities in Iowa were encouraged to developed community celebrations where everything from food to supplies were “home-grown.” A similar idea in Tennessee included a Made in Tennessee showcase where Tennessee made products were showcased in downtown store fronts.

### **4. Sigourney’s Sesquicentennial Homecoming**

To celebrate their sesquicentennial, Sigourney, Iowa, decided to host a variety of activities and invite all alumni from the high school to attend. At the center was a letter writing campaign soliciting funds for the celebration and to restore a fountain important in the community’s history, as well as encouraging people to come home for the celebration. Historic photos were placed in all the buildings lining the town square. People were invited to send in their memories of specific events or things they remembered happening in the downtown buildings on postcards, which were then displayed on-site. Mini-grants were given to ensure every building around the square was painted in time for the celebration.

### **5. Pied Piper Parade**

Decatur, GA hosts a Pied Piper Parade as part of their town’s Fourth of July celebration. Residents decorate their big wheels, tricycles, bicycles and wagons and join a parade led by the official Pied Piper, tooting a pennywhistle. Following the parade, everyone gathers in the town center for a concert, tales told by the Pied Piper, and songs. The event culminates with the evening fireworks display.

### **6. Honor Vets on Fourth of July**

Invite veterans from all over the area to participate in a pre-fireworks event that could take place throughout the day. One downtown honors its vets with dancing in the street to music from a relevant era (Big Band from the 1940s for WWII vets, music from the 1960s for Vietnam War era vets, etc.)

### **7. Homecoming for Outstanding Idahoans B People Make a Difference Day**

This event was a special day featuring the publication of a book on the people of Idaho. Many celebrities profiled in the book attended. The day also featured activities in the downtown Boise area including street entertainment, a strolling supper, window displays, music and dancing.

## **8. Centennial Garden**

To celebrate their Centennial in 1998, the Colorado Chautauqua Association restored a garden that was part of Chautauqua Park earlier in the century. Commemorative bricks were sold for \$75 each as a fundraiser to cover other costs for the Centennial celebration, and the garden itself creates a new gathering place and focal point for the historic district. The garden officially “opened” on July 4, 1998.

## **9. Local Celebrity**

Is there anyone famous who came from your town? Invite them home as the guest of honor for a homecoming celebration and offer events that allow current and past residents of your community to rub elbows with them.

## **10. Family Reunion**

Are there any big families in your community? Encourage them to organize a family reunion to bring back extended family living far away. Provide incentives to make the reunions as successful as possible. Do you have spaces that could be made available for large gatherings? Are there any special events you could offer that would make a trip back to your community more appealing as part of a family reunion? If the Illinois family is scattered between several towns, consider a collaborative effort to share the hosting responsibilities between several communities.

## **11. Public Art**

Unveil a new piece of public art such as a sculpture or a wall mural as a part of your celebration. Think about ways to relate public art to the heritage of your community. Is there a well-known local artist who lives, or has lived in your community whom you could commission to create a piece of public art? Can you use indigenous materials, such as a rock from a local quarry? Can the art make a statement about, or tell the story of the heritage of your community?

## **12. Public Art Contest**

Hold a contest to invite artists to submit ideas for a new piece of public art that relates to the heritage of your community. Announce the winner during your celebration, and be sure to offer opportunities for the media to find photo opportunities and cover the story.

## **13. Celebration Scrapbook**

Invite current and past residents of your community to send in photos and comments about their positive experiences growing up and living in your community. Compile the best into a published “celebration scrapbook” that provides a unique and personal perspective about what makes your community special. Be sure to let people know up front if they can expect their photos back or not, and consider offering a special “pre-publication” rate that will help you gauge how many books to print.

## **14. Giant Celebration Scrapbook**

Invite current and past residents of your community to send in photos and comments about their positive experiences growing up and living in your community. Create a poster-size scrapbook using oversized copies of the most interesting old photos and comments. Think about attractive ways that you could protect the scrapbook pages and highlight this cache of local history. Display the giant scrapbook in a public location, and invite those who peruse it to add comments of their own at the end.

## **15. Time Capsule**

Host a contest to invite residents to submit ideas for items that should be included in a time capsule for your community. What makes your community special today, and what do you want future generations to know about your community? Announce the winners and host an event during your celebration to place the time capsule in a safe location for a future generation to unearth.

## **16. Man/Woman of the Century**

Contact current and past residents of your community and invite them to vote a “Man of Century” and “Woman of the Century” for your community. Be sure to have them tell you why their nominee deserves this honor. Winners can be current or past residents, but must be still living. Honor the winners by making them the guests of honor at your celebration.

### **17. “Best of...”**

Sponsor a contest to identify the Best (...place to go for dinner for an anniversary, place to stay, place to find that perfect gift, place to watch a sunset). Include as many categories as you think are appropriate. Invite all residents to vote and announce the winners at your celebration. Use the list of winners as a “locals guide” for visitors coming to town.

### **18. Community Picnic**

Sponsor a community-wide potluck picnic with a twist B everyone votes for the best dish, and the winners take home prizes donated by local merchants. Who knows, perhaps you even run the winning recipes in the paper as a follow-up, or saving the winning recipes to compile into a cookbook featuring local specialties.

### **19. High School Reunion of the Century**

Invite all of the high school graduates back to town for your celebration, and host reunion celebrations by decades with appropriate events. Recruit organizers for every decade to help put together activities and contact graduates to encourage them to come back for this once in a lifetime event.

### **20. Downtown Progressive Party**

Historic Nashville, managers of the downtown Main Street project, hosted a progressive dinner party in a historic row of warehouses. The idea was to get people to come downtown again and to encourage appreciation for these Victorian buildings to build interest in their restoration and preservation. Each part of the dinner was held in a different building. Food was provided by local restaurants, and each stop featured a different kind of music.

### **21. Little Rachel’s Garden Party**

The Hermitage holds a 19th-century style party for little girls ages 8-12 based on the American Girl doll series. (Little Rachel was Andrew Jackson’s granddaughter.) Girls come dressed up for tea, crafts and 19th century games and bring their favorite American Girl doll.

### **22. Celebration Flags**

Each county in Tennessee was asked to create a unique “county flag” with symbols representing their county. Participants recruited everyone from quilt clubs to prisoners to design the flags. Many counties had contests and selected the winning design which gave additional publicity to the celebration. All of the flags were unveiled at a mall in Nashville which had underwritten the project.

### **23. Saving Our Documentary Heritage**

Many Tennessee communities were interested in saving their historical documents as part of their bicentennial project. The state Tennessee 200 office partnered with the Tennessee State Library and Archives to create a series of workshops across the state on how to preserve historical records. TSLA employees conducted the workshops and Tennessee 200 was responsible for publicizing the series, recruiting participants and handling logistics for each workshop. A traveling exhibit was also created a loaned to communities highlighting the many ways that archives are important to preserving history.

### **24. World War II Veterans Survey**

Tennessee 200 and the Tennessee State Library and Archives partnered to conduct a survey of World War II veterans in Tennessee. TSLA wanted this information as part of Tennessee’s historical record. Tennessee 200 was responsible for publicizing the survey, and TSLA received and cataloged each survey. More than 7,000 surveys were received during the year.

### **25. Volunteer 200 Day**

To kick off the bicentennial, Tennesseans across the state were asked to participate in Volunteer 200 Day. The theme of the day was “A Heritage of Service,” and the event was organized through the local celebration committees. Everyone was asked to selected projects related to the community’s heritage. Projects ranged from painting historic buildings to cataloging cemeteries.

### **26. Read Across Tennessee**

A summer reading program was developed for libraries to encourage children to read books about Tennessee and about Tennesseans. Children reading a required number of books received a certificate. This project could be expanded to include bookstores and could be tailored for adults as well as children.

### **27. History Bibliography**

Tennessee historians compiled a reading list of books by Tennesseans, about Tennessee and about Tennesseans which could be placed in all libraries, schools and bookstores across the state.

### **28. Letters to the Editor**

A community in Pennsylvania researched all of the letters to the editor from its 200-year history. The letters reflected many changes in the community over the years and addressed major issues ranging from the Civil War to Civil Rights. A playwright compiled the letters into a play which was presented to sell out crowds and gained national publicity.

### **29. Heritage Trails**

Several heritage trails were developed by the Tennessee Department of Tourism focusing on topics such as music and history. A trail guide publication was produced and markers were placed at each site along the specific trail. This project could be used by Main Street communities to lead visitors along a Trail of Main Streets.

### **30. Welcome Center Days**

State welcome centers provide a great venue for showcasing local crafts. During National Tourism Week in May, many communities or organizations reserve a welcome center near their community. Committee members set up displays of crafts, serve lemonade and cookies and hand out information on things to see and do in their community.

### **31. Bike Ride**

A Bicentennial Bike Ride in Tennessee was planned to travel past significant historic sites in the state. Plans included permanent markers for the route and a map so that future bikers could follow the same history-themed route.

### **32. Time Capsules**

A time capsule was provided to each county in Tennessee with the request that they be filled with artifacts representing that county. All of the time capsules were buried simultaneously in a ceremony. A book was published and sold to commemorate the event which listed each county and the artifacts placed in the time capsule.

### **33. History of the General Assembly**

In recognition of the importance of the General Assembly in the decisions made governing the state, Tennessee celebrated the 200th anniversary with a special presentation. A history of significant decisions made by legislators was researched and written from historical records. Current legislators presented this historical record in a lively presentation at the State Capitol. This project could also be implemented locally with city councils or county commissions.

### **34. Heritage Days**

Activities were planned to be of interest to children and adults with a general interest in history in a festival-like setting. The program included a number of components including exhibits including historic book publishers, genealogical research companies, etc.; workshops on topics such as preserving historical records and researching family histories; lectures on topics related to state and local history; and entertainment with historical dramatizations.

### **35. Treasures from the Past**

The Tennessee State Museum created a sampler exhibit with artifacts not generally on display that were all from Tennessee and told part of Tennessee's history.

### **36. Greenways Trails**

As part of the 200th birthday of the state, a goal of 200 miles of new greenways was set in the state. Several media events were held around the state to announce new greenways projects or to unveil completed greenways.

### **37. History of Tennessee Flower Show**

Garden clubs across the state gathered for a special flower show at the State Capitol. All of the entries had to reflect the theme of the state's history, and many used the state flower as part of their exhibit.

### **38. Treasures from the Trunk**

A college home economics department created reproduction clothes which might have been worn by Tennesseans between 1796 and 1996. This collection was combined with authentic clothing from each time period and made available across the state as a traveling exhibit.

### **39. Folklife Festival**

The state of Iowa celebrated its sesquicentennial with a folklife festival highlighting folk artists from throughout the state. All forms of a folk arts including painting, carving, sewing and others; folkways such as traditional cooking styles, and folk music were included in the festival.

### **40. State Quilt**

To commemorate Iowa's sesquicentennial, each county created a square for a state quilt. The pieces were combined into one quilt which was displayed throughout the state.

### **41. A Capitol Celebration**

Citizens from across the state of Iowa gathered at the State Capitol to witness re-enactments of important dates in the state's history. Costumed re-enactors performed, and the governor participated by reading messages from previous governors.

### **42. Folk Music Directory**

During the bicentennial year, the Tennessee Arts Commission compiled and published a list of folk music groups in the state. Each listing included the size of the group, the contact person, a description of the type of music performed, cost and equipment needed.

### **43. Symposiums on the Future**

High school students could be asked to write essays on what they see as the future B of their lives, their community or their state. Areas of focus could range from technology to environment, religion, politics, family, or jobs. The best essays could be presented at high school graduations in May.

### **44. Historical Moments**

The Smithsonian Institution produced a series of historical moments in celebration of 150 years of history. Well known celebrities were featured in the spots asking a historical question then providing the answer using an artifact from the collection. This could be adapted to a local radio or television PSA using well known locals.

### **45. Planting the State Tree**

The state of Tennessee presented a state tree to each county to be planted in celebration of the bicentennial. These provided good media events and the opportunity to announce upcoming events and projects.

### **46. Century Farm Awards**

Middle Tennessee State University's preservation department researched family farms in Tennessee to identify all of those that had been in the same family for a century or more. A book was compiled and a traveling exhibit was created showcasing these family farms.

### **47. Famous Writers Conference**

As part of Tennessee's Homecoming '86 celebration, famous writers from Tennessee were invited back to the state. A reception was held in their honor and a discussion panel featured the writers talking about current events and their writings.

#### **48. Time Slices**

In Iowa, libraries organized a reading and discussion series. Communities could choose one Time Slice at a time until they had covered the four-part series on the history of the state. Scholars and historians lead the discussions and many also included oral history projects, lectures and panel discussions, exhibits, writing projects and video histories.

#### **49. Day in the Life Photos**

Local photographers could be invited to participate in a project to document "A Day in the Life of a Main Street Town." Photos could be taken in all participating Main Street communities. The photos could then be compiled into an exhibit for each community and a commemorative book. Awards could be given for the best pictures.

#### **50. Photographer's Guide to the Area**

A tourism organization in Southeast Tennessee published a photographer's guide to the three-county area. The guide included maps, the locations of beautiful scenic views and recommended times of day for the best shots. The guide was publicized through photography magazines, photography schools and film developing businesses.

#### **51. Theme Packages**

Communities could develop themed travel packages around a special event or exhibit to include meals, accommodations and a commemorative guide and other elements. The package could be promoted through local tourism bureaus and the state tourism office.

#### **52. Create a Culture Card or Passport Card**

Historic sites, arts groups and event and festival planners can work together to create a special card which provides reduced admission or discounts on purchases at the site, performances and events. The card can be distributed locally and through tourism outlets. The card can be stamped at each location. Participants visiting a certain number of activities will receive a prize such as a commemorative T-shirt, poster or book.

#### **53. Recognition of Oldest and Newest Businesses**

The state of Tennessee created a media event to locate and recognize the oldest business in the state and the newest. The project provided a media opportunity to request businesses to send in histories about their business and many of these were publicized as well as the winners in the oldest and newest categories. This project could also be implemented on a local level.

#### **54. Official Documents Exhibit**

To kick off the bicentennial, the rarely-seen founding documents of Tennessee including the state Constitution were put on display and taken across the state for citizens to enjoy.

#### **55. A Child's Life**

The city of Knoxville researched and wrote an original program on what life would have been like for a child in Knoxville in the 19th century, what children's lives are like today, and what they will be like in the future. The program was produced as a video titled "A Child's Life in Knox County: Past, Present and Future," for use in the local museum.

#### **56. Downtown Tour**

The Main Street community of Paris, Tennessee researched each building in the historic downtown area and produced an audiotaped walking tour. The cassette and audio equipment can be rented at the chamber of commerce office for a small fee.

#### **57. Keepsake Calendar**

Memphis produced a calendar containing historical facts for each day about the state and the city.

#### **58. First Ladies' Cookbook**

A well known Tennessee cookbook author created a celebration cookbook focusing on Tennessee's former and present first ladies. Recipes were contributed by the first ladies and other well known Tennesseans. The

cookbook was unveiled at a First Ladies Tea, a reception in honor of the first ladies. The event was well publicized as it was the first time the first ladies had all been together.

#### **59. Local History of Race Relations**

The city of Pulaski undertook a project focusing on the development of race relations including an oral history, interpretive exhibit and theater presentation.

#### **60. Century Citizens**

For its centennial celebration, the state of Idaho sought to identify all citizens who were 100 or more years old. A Century Citizens project could include awarding certificates from the governor for all Century Citizens, conducting oral histories, putting together an exhibit and writing press releases on each person.

#### **61. History Educator Award**

Idaho created an annual award to recognize educators who excelled in teaching history to children. An award such as this could be presented in each community or statewide and it could include history teachers, museum and historic site educators.

#### **62. Take Pride in Idaho**

This awards program focused on individuals who had made significant contributions to protect the environment and the state's natural resources. This project could also include publicity highlighting what needs to be accomplished to preserve the natural environment in a state.

#### **63. Architectural Survey**

The state of Idaho conducted an architectural survey of buildings throughout the state as part of its celebration. This project could result in a keepsake photography book showing how architecture has changed through the years.

#### **64. Kentucky Encyclopedia**

The state of Kentucky chose a legacy project for its bicentennial the publication of an encyclopedia of the state. The book included themes including education, medicine, economics, tourism, military history, ethnic groups, literature, political history and religion. Kentucky leaders, journalists and historians contributed entries for the book.

#### **65. Washington Portraits**

The state of Washington's celebration commission chose theater groups to form a traveling exhibit acting as famous Washingtonians and historical characters. This group traveled through Washington school and various festivities, teaching through acting about the lives of these characters.

#### **66. Wyoming Good Will Ambassadors**

A program was developed to select Good Will Ambassadors from around the state entitled the Centennial 100. This honorary distinction was based upon outstanding citizenship and contributions to their individual communities.

#### **67. Conrad Family Album of "Marvelous Moms"**

Baby pictures of local moms were displayed inside many downtown businesses in Conrad, Iowa (pop.965). Customers had to enter participating stores in order to view the photos and fill out a contest entry blank. The object was the match the photo to the right person from a list of possible candidates. And to let everyone know just "who was who," the photos with revealed identities were placed on a "Quilt of Moms," which was displayed at both a downtown store and a local theater production of a play called "Quilters."

#### **68. Downtown Celebrity Look-A-Like Contest**

Got any celebrity looks-a-likes in your downtown? Maybe you do and maybe you don't. But here's a great way to find them, or at least those who come closest. Hold a celebrity look-a-like contest. Downtown Chippewa Falls, home of Titanic star Leonardo DiCaprio, contest was a big success. Almost any celebrity will work and it is a great way to get look-a-like hopefuls and their admirers to your downtown.

### **69. Downtown Honors Its Roots**

The Canal Corridor Association of Chicago, Illinois has initiated a program to honor the men and women who built the I&M Canal Passage. Individuals with ancestors who lived in the Corridor 100 years ago or more are encouraged to submit a family tree and short narrative family history. All applicants receive an I&M Canal Pioneer Certificate and special recognition at sesquicentennial events. In the coming year, the Association will collect oral histories from selected pioneers and, with funding provided by the Illinois Humanities Council, will offer public programs on the importance of knowing your family's histories. A pamphlet will be published which features the stories of canal pioneer families.

### **70. Downtown Birthday Bash**

The City of Decatur, Georgia, celebrated its 175th birthday with a downtown birthday bash featuring a 6-foot wooden cake decorated with 175 candles in special candle holders. Businesses, residents, schools, artists and organizations were invited to get in on the fun by decorating a candle holder to be placed on the cake. Participants could either make the candle holder from scratch, or buy one and decorate it themselves. Candles were auctioned off at the end of the event. Celebration activities included musical entertainment and a fireworks display, along with visits from Decatur City commissioners and mayors, both past and present.

### **71. Downtown Magazine**

Main Street Enid, OK produced and circulated the four-color magazine appropriately called Main Street Enid to more than 20,000 residents of Northwest Oklahoma free of charge. The magazine, which is over 30 pages long, features the history of downtown Enid, projects (including photos illustrating downtown makeovers), people and many success stories from downtown business owners, merchants and volunteers. Advertisements covered the cost of production and distribution.

### **72. HandMade in America**

HandMade in America is a nonprofit group whose goal is to make North Carolina the center of handmade objects in the U.S. One of the ways they have implemented this goal is to develop a system of self-guided "trails" that present their craft heritage to the visitor. A guidebook, filled with descriptions and pictures of crafts and the people who make them, studios, galleries, restaurants, historic inns, and other places of interest, divides the 21 western mountain counties into seven driving trails. In two years, they have sold 21,000 copies of the guidebook all over the nation.

### **73. Downtown Buffalo 100 Good Things Going**

Downtown Buffalo held a contest to invite community members to write in about what they liked about the downtown. Winning entries received a pair of tickets to bring two friends or family members home to Buffalo to enjoy the good things happening downtown. Colorful posters were printed displaying a list of things people like about downtown.

### **74. Downtown Artwalk**

Downtowners from Delray Beach, Florida's Pineapple Grove District are creating a new Artwalk with sculptures, murals, obelisks and information kiosks to be scattered throughout the area. Visitors will be able to walk to each exhibit independently or to take a conducted trolley tour. Selected sculptures will remain on display for a year when artists will be given the option of putting their work up for auction. While the main purpose is to entertain, stimulate, educate and draw more people to the district, the organization also sees benefits through additional jobs and businesses. In addition, teachers will be encouraged to hold arts-related classes in area like sculpting, painting and glass blowing for children.

### **75. Second Story Tour**

Sequin, Texas hosts an annual "Second Story Tour" to encourage people to rediscover the district's historic and architectural treasures. This self-guided tour features historic buildings with more than one floor. Participants from the last tour received a print of a watercolor of a historic building and complimentary cold drinks. A fundraising dinner featuring a social hours, silent auction and entertainment followed the tour.

### **76. Day of Public Thanksgiving**

Charlottesville, VA hosts an annual Day of Public Thanksgiving where residents are invited to step back into history and mingle with statesmen, soldiers and others from the Revolutionary War. The event features

recreations of historic events that occurred in Charlottesville, including military skirmishes, political town meetings, religious gatherings and festive music, dancing and games for the entire family. Historians in authentic costume portray famous characters as they roam through the streets of downtown.

#### **77. “Bars and Bordello” Tour**

Port Townsend, WA had a rather colorful past as a Victorian era seaport community. During the annual Victorian Festival, volunteer actors recreate “scenes” from this era on-site in downtown historic buildings. Small vignettes are enacted in 10 different locations.

#### **78. “World’s Fair”**

Dallas, TX is hosting an exposition featuring an enclosed pavilion in the middle of a downtown park along with several geodesic domes/theaters to represent a different theme that mixes small town festivals and world’s fair ideas. Food, games, educational exhibits and interactive computer activities will also be available.

#### **79. Downtown Bike Maps on the Web**

The Louisville Downtown Management District helps draw attention to Web sites that show bike paths and points of interest in the downtown area. Sponsored by the City of Louisville Public Works Department in partnership with local bicycle clubs and other city agencies, the site displays shared-road bicycle paths, off-road routes, bike parking facilities, restrooms and water fountains. The maps will help encourage visitors to get up close and personal with the downtown’s hidden architectural treasures, not to mention ice creameries and soda fountains.

#### **80. Sister City**

In 1996, Newark, IL hosted its sixth annual international reunion of “Newarks of the World” to celebrate July 4. The event attracted 54 representatives from seven cities in the U.S. and a delegation from the UK’s Newark-on-the-Trent, the mother of all Newarks. The basic idea is to host a get-together with other communities with the same name as your town.

#### **81. Vintage Postcard Display**

A new resident to Springfield, MA discovered an extensive collection of early 20th century chromolithography postcards collected by her late grandfather of Springfield sites. They were placed on display in an exhibit open to the public. Attendees were encouraged to write their memories in a book after viewing the collection.

#### **82. Downtown’s Cookin’**

Merchants and other business people in downtown Henderson, NC were asked to submit their best recipes for a Historic Henderson Cookbook. Many stores displayed the book, which is sold at a local bookstore. The goal was to generate favorable publicity for downtown, as well as to publicize and promote the historic buildings in downtown by featuring them in the book. A spin is to include “historic” recipes, as well as contemporary and launch the book as a special event to link good eating and history.

#### **83. Chautauqua Birthday Book**

School children in grades 4-9 were invited to tour Chautauqua Park in Boulder, CO and work with art teachers to draw the historic buildings, write their own history of Chautauqua, create word search and crossword puzzles and write stories and poems about this historic district. The children’s art and writings were combined into a 20-page 100th Birthday Book By Kids for Kids. The centerfold of the book featured a scavenger hunt to lead children (and their parents) to many of the historic landmarks. If the child was able to find all the answers, a prize awaited at the final stop on the hunt B the Chautauqua Gift Shop. Ten thousand copies of the booklet were printed and given out free of charge over the summer of 1998 at the Chautauqua Centennial events and at the Chautauqua Dining Hall to diners with children. The books were released just in time for the major July 4 celebration.

#### **84. A Minute of History**

A local news station carried one-minute history spots during the 350th anniversary of the founding of Rhode Island in 1986. The spots were researched by the Rhode Island Historical Society and prepared by the local TV station. The spots aired during the evening news throughout the entire anniversary year.

### **85. Bringing History to Life**

The Rhode Island Historical Society got a grant to allow actors from the local, well known repertory theatre to take on the roles of famous Rhode Islanders as part of the 350th anniversary celebration in 1986. The actors rehearsed a variety of historical vignettes to perform across the state, and also were prepared to interact with audiences B in character.

### **86. Chautauqua History Events**

To celebrate the Centennial of the Colorado Chautauqua in 1998, the Colorado Chautauqua Association sponsored a variety of history-based events. One event was "Teddy Bear Day," a Victorian tradition where children bring their teddy bears to tea (although in this case, every child who came to this free event went home with a new teddy bear and had a chance to see a puppet show about Teddy Roosevelt and the Teddy Bear.) Another was a game of baseball B played in costume and according to the rules of baseball from 1900. A vintage baseball team challenged a "pick-up" team at Chautauqua Park as a part of the July 4th festivities.

### **87. Reissue Chautauqua History Book**

The Chautauqua Centennial provided the ideal impetus to update and reissue a popular coffee table book showcasing the history of Chautauqua. As the author was a local historian and Boulder resident, there were numerous opportunities for lectures and book signings throughout the year to promote the new edition.

### **88. Oral History Video**

A local television station worked with the Colorado Chautauqua Association to prepare a video that included interviews with many of the aging Chautauqua residents. Their reminiscences of life at Chautauqua over the past century have now been captured for future generations. The video ran on public television and was also offered for sale by the Chautauqua Centennial Celebration Committee.

### **89. FrancoFete**

Louisiana is gearing up for a year-long celebration called FrancoFete '99 to commemorate 300 years of French influence in Louisiana. Over 500 events are planned statewide including a summer exhibit on Degas and New Orleans at the New Orleans Museum of Art.

### **90. 40th Anniversary**

To celebrate the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Providence Preservation Society, 40 outstanding preservationists were identified in Providence and a formal gala was held in their honor. The gala program included write-ups on each outstanding preservationist, and a "preservation medal" was awarded to each honoree. The event served as a fundraiser for the organization.

### **91. Centennial Cottage & Chautauqua Tent**

To celebrate their Centennial, the Colorado Chautauqua Association restored one of their rental cottages to its turn-of-the-century appearance. The Centennial Cottage will continue to be used for rentals. It will also be featured on tours of the historic district and hopefully, will serve as a model for future restorations of other historic cottages in Chautauqua Park.

In addition, one of the original tens from Chautauqua's early pre-cabin days was located, restored and featured at a variety of events throughout the year including the major July 4th celebration. The tent was furnished just as the early c 1900 tents were, and guided were on hand to offer tours and provide security.

### **92. Pecan Festival**

Pecans are Okmulgee's claim to fame, as they are grown all around the town. The Annual Pecan Festival in Okmulgee, OK has been celebrating this local farm product every June since 1983. They began to bake bigger and bigger pies until they captured the world record in 1989 with a 40-foot diameter pie. Though they have since scaled back on the size of the pies to a more manageable 10-foot diameter, the baking of the giant pecan pies and other cooking demonstrations are still a dramatic centerpiece of this local event.

### **93. Waterfire**

To celebrate the revitalization of their waterfront, an event called Waterfire was sponsored in Providence, Rhode Island. Large dished were constructed in the middle of the river to hold bonfires up and down the river

adjacent to the downtown. Bands appealing to a variety of musical tastes were stationed at key points along the riverwalk. Galleries and shops stayed open late to take advantage of strolling evening guests. Originally conceived as a one-time event, Waterfire proved to be so popular and so successful at bringing large numbers of people downtown it has now become a regular summer happening.

#### **94. Wagon Train**

The citizens of Tellico Plains recreated the route of the early settlers through Southeast Tennessee with a wagon train ride. People could sign and pay to ride on all or part of the ride. Guides provided the history of the trip along the way and an arrival celebration was held at the conclusion of the trip.

#### **95. Bicentennial Iris Garden**

Garden clubs across the state each planted an iris garden (Tennessee's state flower) in the shape of the state in a location selected in their community. Ceremonies were held to dedicate the gardens in each county.

#### **96. Tennessee Song Musical Production**

Performers were selected to present a musical history of Tennessee performing songs that were popular throughout the state's history and songs that were specifically about Tennessee. The production traveled across the state performing at special events in various communities.

#### **97. Spirit of Tennessee**

A train was the setting for exhibits focusing on the development of business and commerce in Tennessee over 200 years. The exhibits transported visitors from the state's beginnings to its latest advancements in business. A similar business exhibit could be done of the history of businesses downtown areas which could travel from one Main Street community to another.

#### **98. Public Bandstand**

The city of Rogersville in East Tennessee selected as a bicentennial project the recreation of a bandstand that had once stood at its town's center. The bandstand was built with donated materials and labor and now serves as a focal point for community concerts and events.

#### **99. TennFest**

In Crossville, Tenn. bicentennial organizers decided to develop a new annual festival focusing on celebrating the state's history and culture through performing and visual arts. New plays were developed, all crafts were Tennessee creations and music was Tennessee based.

#### **100. Countywide Tour of Homes**

Organizers in one community put together a tour of homes that encompassed the entire county and reflected changing styles of architecture and decoration throughout the years. Flyers were printed to accompany the tour detailing different architectural styles and pointing out unique decorative elements.

#### **101. Living History Classroom**

A West Tennessee community located the last remaining one-room school building in the county and moved it to a central location in town. The school was restored and is now used as a living history classroom.

