Ascertainment and Synopsis: On April 15, 1973, President Richard Nixon issued a call to action to the communications industry, enlisting their help to spread the bicentennial message to every citizen. He felt that the nation's communications media would have the unique opportunity to bring the initiative, the ingenuity and the enthusiasm of all our citizens to one another in a great shared experience. He reminded the nation that our bicentennial celebration would not just be a time for reviewing the past, but also a time for looking to the future, for building upon the ideals of the founding fathers and for keeping the spirit of the American Revolution alive.

On June 1, 1973 the National Bicentennial Organization also extended a request for participation by the media in the bicentennial celebration. As they saw it, the bicentennial era would be a time to re-assess the past, re-affirm basic American beliefs especially those we so often take for granted; and emphasized that television could be the means for America to achieve total citizen involvement in the commemoration and in the continuing effort to improve our quality of life.

On July 4, 1973, J. Irwin Miller, industrialist, suggested in the Christian Century Magazine that the bicentennial celebration should be a time for us "to restate what America of 1976 ought to be, and to state it with a daring and foresight comparable to that of our ancestors. For the achievements which we so much admired in our founding fathers was their ability to make a new statement about how people should live together and govern themselves."

On January 21, 1974, Newsweek Magazine, in an article entitled "Back to the Small Town" reported that between March, 1970 to March, 1973 more people moved away from metropolitan areas including the suburbs than moved into them, reversing a flow that has lasted 100 years. The researchers found that most of the people moving to the small towns of America felt driven there by the hassles of city life--dirt, noise, danger, excessive pace, and impersonality. The main attraction of the small town was the tranquillity, friendliness, sense of community and human proportion that was characteristic of small town life.

An article appearing in "The Budget" the weekly newspaper of Sugarcreek Ohio, On June 27, 1974, stated that "the 30 years floodtide of country youth moving to the big cities" had slowed considerably. They cited the increase in non-farm-type jobs and increased opportunities for a fuller and richer life for the small town resident as being the main reasons for the reversal.

On October 1, 1974, at a Community Leaders Luncheon, Mr. Gohdan Futey, Director of Bicentennial for the City of Cleveland, expressed the opinion that "the responsibility of the Bicentennial Commission and the news media to inform the community and create awareness of the forthcoming celebration.

Howard Schwartz
Producer-Director
At the same luncheon, Mr. Jonathan Fister, Coordinator of the All Nations Festival, felt that there were many important facets in the Greater Cleveland Area's history that should be brought to the attention of the people, to instill in them a sense of pride and understanding. He felt that the media had the best access to the public and could best educate them about the development of the area in context with the Bicentennial observance.

Mr. Meredith Colket, Director of the Western Reserve Historical Society, stated at the same Community Leaders Luncheon, (Oct. 1, 1974) "that the Montage (documentary film) unit could develop a number of programs about the various facets in the history of Cleveland." He cited as an example, the history of the Ohio-Erie Canal which helped transform Cleveland into the 16th largest city in the Western Reserve.

On October 2, 1974, a letter complimentary of an earlier scheduled bicentennial program was received by the producer of the Montage series. Mr. David J. Davis, committeeman, Fort Laurens Research and Restoration Committee, felt that documentaries such as "Fragments of Time," originally aired January 6, 1974, created awareness of life 200 years ago. "Since our country's history is a part of the country's cultural fabric, it should be held for inspection, in order to develop a better understanding of ourselves." He then expressed the desire that "Fragments of Time" be repeated since programs of that type would kindle interest in the Bicentennial and also be well received.

On February 6, 1975, the Public Affairs Director of the Station received from the Greater Cleveland Bicentennial Commission guidelines for the three themes of the Bicentennial. Heritage '76 would emphasize the preservation, restoration and beautification of an area to reflect its unique architectural, cultural, geographic and economic heritage. Festival USA would emphasize enabling all citizens to expand their knowledge and appreciation of their country. And Horizons '76 would be a call to all Americans to engage in some project or activity that would lead to a better quality of life for all Americans.

According to the March 27, 1975 issue of Senior Scholastic, the Gallop Poll and the NISO Poll (National Institute of Student Opinion) had found that most Americans wanted to live in a small town. In the resulting sociological study conducted by students for Senior Scholastic, it was found that small town population had increased by 4% since 1970. The reasons for the move to small town America were found to be less violence, less pressure, and less pollution. Because of the smallness, a citizen felt he had greater control over the community and how it was governed.

The March 31, 1975 issue of the U.S. News and World Report in an article entitled "Out of the Cities, Back to the Country," revealed that according to the U.S. Census Bureau-nonmetropolitan areas grew 4.3% while large cities increased only by 2.8%. One of the main reasons for the move to small communities was that Americans were getting fed up with the high cost of living, soaring crime rates, and breakdown of services in big cities. More and more Americans were coming to prefer a simpler life and were searching for values reminiscent of those that our ancestors developed in the small communities that made up America's origins.

Yet in an article appearing April 16, 1975 in the "Times Reporter" of Dover, Ohio, Colman McCarthy called to our attention that for the most part rural America has been neglected and ignored by our society and government in the area of social services, health care and adequate housing. Since 1960, 146 bus companies have ceased operating mostly in cities of less than
25,000, and the Department of Transportation does not feel authorized to help rural communities. Although 4/5 of the nation's total population lives in rural America, and half of the nation's poor, only 33% of the food stamps distributed by the Department of Agriculture reach these people. Also shacks and tin-roof shanties in rural areas comprise 60% of the nation's substandard housing; but there is no public housing authority in the country side. Mr. McCarthy went on to remind his readers that "a few decades ago, the sum of those small and quiet parts of America's life added up to most of what the nation treasured in itself." Yet today rural America's problems have been all but forgotten. He asked for an admittance on the part of government to the debt owed rural America, and the process of deterioration halted.

In view of the aforementioned requests for Bicentennial programming, the observed trend of many Americans to once again seek out that quality of life that was so much a part of America's early heritage; as well as the need to halt the deplorable shunning of the nation's responsibility towards the poor of rural America; plans were developed by the WKYC-TV producer to do a documentary that addressed itself to these topics.

While researching the theme of small town America, the producer discovered the small community of Roscoe Village in Coshocton, Ohio. With more investigation it became apparent to him that Roscoe Village was a community rich with bicentennial heritage, a prime example of the small town ethic, and a community that rose from its decay and neglect to regain the original charm it possessed as a thriving canal town during the 1800's.

On April 17, 1975, the producer met with Mrs. Pat Brown, Public Relations Director of the Roscoe Village Foundation, to discuss in detail the history of Roscoe Village, and the feasibility of filming there. Roscoe Village, it was learned was an important part of the Ohio-Erie canal during the 1830's and 40's when Ohio's economy was quite dependent on this mode of transportation. But when the railroads proved faster and more efficient than canal boats, Roscoe Village was by-passed en favor of Coshocton. Roscoe Village was all but deserted by merchants and businesses, leaving many of its original buildings to stand abandoned. Then in 1968, a retired resident had the vision and the means to begin a program of restoration, that transformed Roscoe Village into a canal town, circa 1830's again.

A program in the regularly scheduled documentary series Montage, "Roscoe: A Blessing in Disguise," telecast May 18, 1975 at 10:30-11:00PM and repeated May 25, 1975 at 1:00-1:30AM, commemorated the Bicentennial of the United States by examining the history of Roscoe Village, the role it played in the development of the state of Ohio, and the efforts of its residents to preserve that history.

Roscoe: A Blessing In Disguise" follows the path the village took from booming canal town, to rural slum, to historic site. By visiting the quaint shops, the museum, and the restored homes and businesses of Roscoe, the Montage viewers learned what an important transportation center Roscoe was; and they also saw what a community could do to insure the preservation of their ancestors traditions and contributions.

Mrs. Pat Brown, Public Relations Director of the Roscoe Village Foundation discussed with Montage the important part Mr. & Mrs. Edward Montgomery, played in the restoration movement by providing the impetus for it during their retirement years. She also pointed out that Roscoe Village was always a community rich with those values often referred to as small town ethics of friendliness, neighborliness, and community involvement which in this instance was apparent in a project to restore, beautify, and preserve their heritage.
also appearing in the program are Clyde Finnell and Marshal Jacobs, residents of Roscoe for early sixty years; and Mrs. Lucy Foster who more recently moved to Roscoe Village in order "to be part of something very important." Clyde Finnell seemed to speak for all the townspeople when he said, "I wouldn't trade this place for anyplace. I've been everywhere.... Roscoe's is the place for me."
Pursuant to the FCC Rules, Section 73.654 (g), the following information is required:

List name(s) of cooperating organization(s) including address and officers:

Participants: (Name, address, title and/or affiliation, minor-age)

Mrs. Pat Brown, 381 Hill Street, Coshocton, Ohio--Public Relations Director, Roscoe Village Foundation

Mr. & Mrs. Edward Montgomery, 381 Hill Street, Coshocton, Ohio 43812 Founders, Roscoe Village Foundation

Mrs. Lucy Foster, 473 Whitewoman St., Roscoe Village, Coshocton, Ohio Resident

Mr. Clyde Finnell, Roscoe Village, Coshocton, Ohio, Resident

Mr. Marshall Jacobs, Coshocton, Ohio--Canal Boat Builder