

## **LITHUANIAN FOLK DANCE FESTIVAL**

On the 30th of June, 1957, in Chicago, 111., at the International Amphitheatre, the Lithuanians of the United States and Canada, assembled for a folk-dance festival. Thirty folk-dancing groups, from all parts of the United States and Canada, assembled to recreate the national dances of their far away homeland. Each group, dressed in the best national costumes, blended into a colorful pattern, evoking many memories in the hearts of their audience.

The repertoire for the afternoon consisted of Lithuanian folk dances, songs, and games. There were the work dances — each representing the performance of a particular task, in the life of an agrarian people. Malūnas, which represents the turning of a windmill; Kalvelis — portraying a smith at his tasks; Rugučiai—the harvesting of grain. There were the wedding dances: Mikita — to be danced by the uninvited guests; Kepurine — the farewell dance for the bride; Sadute — danced at the home of the bride by her closest girl-friends on the eve of the wedding. This last one has only been recently stylized from a booklet printed in occupied Lithuania and was particularly well received by the audience. There were the dances and songs designed for sundry occasions — for village dances and festivals. Each has been passed on from generation to generation of villagers. Then they were recorded by folk-lorists, and received their final form at the hands of choreographers.

In America, this was the first dance festival of such magnitude held by Lithuanians. They have been held in Lithuania, and on a small scale in the United States. In all, approximately 500 dancers and 700 school children, from Lithuanian Catholic grammar schools in Chicago, who played several national games, participated in this festival. It was well received, both by the thousands of Lithuanian exiles in the United States and Canada and by the numerous American guests.

**K. S.**



*Lithuanian Folk Dance Festival Photo by V. Valaitis*



*: The Folk Dance "Sadute". Photo by V. Valaitis.*