

# Hundreds attend celebration at Bethabara

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More than 800 history enthusiasts and their families attended the 22nd Annual Independence Celebration held at the Historic Bethabara Park last Sunday.

Families who attended enjoyed a colonial puppet show, wagon rides, crafts demonstrations, strolling minstrels, a concert by The Historic Bethabara Concert Band, dramatic monologues, colonial dancing, bird walks and a children's parade.

The park was the site of the first German Moravian settlement in North Carolina. Settled in 1753, the site was to be a temporary settlement. In 1776 the Moravians formed a trading center when they relocated to Salem. The focus of this park has long been the celebration of American independence and frontier life. According to Lois Steichen, of Historic Bethabara, "This area served as a fort, a place to escape to safety during the French and Indian war. However, this fort was never attacked," she said.

The purpose of the Independence Celebration was to re-enact occurrences from the 1750s during the French and Indian War. The main attraction was the colonial puppet show based on historical events that took place in Bethabara. The events from the French and Indian War are recorded in Moravian records.

Rod Meyer, executive director of Historic Bethabara Park, developed the storyline for the production.

The puppet show titled "The Indentured Servant, or the Outlaw Captive" told the fictional story of an escaped woman, Thelma Louise, who led bands of marauding Indians in battles around Fort Duquesne, later renamed Fort Pitt. She led bands of Indians and outlaws during the French and Indian War against the English.

Chris Patrick, of the Theatre Alliance and the Little Theatre of Winston-Salem, was the narrator, and Angela Chance, Theatre Alliance and The Collective Theatre, served as puppeteer.



The wagon ride drew long lines during the Independence Celebration at Historic Bethabara Park.

The production covered events that took place in Bethabara such as Moravian Jacob Loesch defending himself against marauding Shawnee Indians with his Bible and attempting to lure them into a trap at the palisade fort. Another story in the show involved the infamous highwayman William Own, an ally of the French, who attacked the outlying cabins. Frontiersman Daniel Boone saved the Banner family, who early on befriended the Moravians of Bethabara.

Horse and wagon rides were exciting for those who participated.

The family of Jerry Hancock have used their horses for these rides for the last 15 years. They used a breed of workhorses called percheron.

"They are accustomed to hard work, and they were the perfect breed to use for several rides," he said.

Midway through the wagon ride, the horses stopped at the pottery field to offer the riders a bird

walk with Ron Smith. The walk took place as a part of the Audubon Adventures. Smith showed children how they can

become a N.C. naturalist. Smith distributed pamphlets that showed how to create a backyard nature preserve. In addition, it recorded



Little Delaney Gunyuzlu and her mother, Mary Gunyuzlu, took turns walking on stilts, a colonial game.



Colonial dances at the Independence Celebration included the "Haste to the Wedding" dance and the "Well Hall." People of all social levels participated in the dance.

tasty treats that would attract birds for a mini-research project.

Others enjoyed visiting the community church where Virginia Vannoy, a guide, discussed the various rooms. In the living room, she introduced a unique grandfather clock. She also showed the children a weasel which was used to spin yarn.

"I'm sure you have heard the phrase 'pop goes the weasel'; well, this is it," she said. Another interesting tidbit of information she shared was the beds were made with feather mattresses using thick cords instead of wood slats to keep the mattress secure. The cords had to be tightened with a wooden key. As a result, each night when the cords were tightened, the comment "Sleep tight" was generally made. Later they added, "Don't let the bed bugs bite."

Garden Talk with Reiley Woosley was interesting to the children and adults. The medicinal garden evoked many questions from those who took the tour. Woosley pointed out the lamb's ear plant that was used as the colonial bandage. The soft plant was attached to the wound with a

string, and was very comforting.

Some of the plants were used to calm mild stomachaches and other ailments. The vegetable gardens were in full bloom. As community gardens, they are tended by various families in the community. The beans were stuck with wooden sticks rather than steel rods, just as it was done in the 1750s.

Other attractions for the children included a demonstration of colonial games such as baseball, walking on stilts and the game called boule. In boule, the leader rolls a ball to one marker, and the following throwers attempt to reach the mark without touching the other balls in play. The colonial dance demonstration gathered a large crowd. Mike Kyle of the mounted militia and Wayne Woosley demonstrated gunfire during the war. Woosley pointed out that it took 1 1/2 minutes to load his gun before he could fire once. He shared the contents of his knapsack, which included such items as a canteen and other supplies for survival on the frontier.

The next event at Historic Bethabara Park will be held July 8 at 7 p.m.

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