

# Event celebrates Bush park

## Heritage of family farm marked by activities

By **Queenle Wong**  
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The farm heritage of Bush's Pasture Park is a history lesson that some Salem residents seldom learn.

But it was a tale that resident Wendy Harney was eager to tell her son on Bush Family Farm Day, an event hosted Saturday by the Bush House Museum.

"I studied history in school, and I've been coming here since I was a kid," said Harney as she juggled bean bags from a pioneer games booth. "I think it's important that he knows the history of the neighborhood that he lives in and what used to be here."

The Bush House Museum was the farm residence of the Asahel Bush family from 1878 until

1953 when the full ownership of the house was transferred to the city of Salem. The farm, now known as Bush's Pasture Park, included a conservatory, barn — now the Bush Barn Art Center — and an ice house. Asahel Bush II was the editor and publisher of *The Oregon Statesman* in the 1850s.

"We really wanted to let people know that this once was a working farm with cows and chickens and big vegetable gardens and it's an event that we really hope will grow and build on year after year," said Ross Sutherland, Bush House Museum's director.

A cool breeze amid the sound of fiddle music drifted through Bush's Pasture Park as families trickled in to learn about the park's origins.



Joel Bennett, 8, of Salem plays fiddle at Bush Family Farm Day, a celebration of farm heritage of Bush's Pasture Park.  
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Rose Parks (left) of Willamette Heritage Center at the Mill, helps Logan Harney, (from left) Julian Alaniz, Jocelin Alaniz, and Ayana Scruggs try various pioneer games at Bush Family Farm Day. KOBBI R. BLAIR / STATESMAN JOURNAL

Various educational booths from the Oregon State University Extension Service surrounded the museum, giving participants tips on gardening and composting. The event, sponsored by Salem Electric, also included children's activities such as pioneer games and art.

Rose Parks, outreach instructor for the Willamette Heritage Center at the Mill, was teaching families how to play pioneer games.

In a game known as "Graces" or "French Hoops," players tossed a hoop back and forth using two wands.

Parks said it's important for kids to realize how things are the same yet

different.

"I used to tell kids that instead of a Barbie dream house or Xbox, this would be your toy," she said.

The event also attracted families that were just looking for activities that were appealing to their children.

Andrea Balcavage came to the event with her husband and two daughters, who are interested in animals and nature.

"I kind of have a black thumb, but having them has kind of encouraged me to do better," she said.

Balcavage said she didn't know about the park's history until she heard about the event. On the car ride to the park, she shared the story of the park's origins with her

daughters.

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