



Courtesy Photos

Living historians and visitors at the Virginia Museum of the Civil War in New Market compete in a paper dart throwing contest at the museum. The eighth annual Jacob Bushong Birthday Party will take place from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. on Aug. 22 and will feature cake and ice cream, period games and music.

Happy Birthday, Bushong

New Market Civil War Museum To Host 19th-Century Party

Story by MATT GONZALES / DN-R

Most people have experienced their own birthday party, a celebration of another year of life alongside family, friends and cake and ice cream.

What may be surprising is that these celebrations are not exclusive to 20th or 21st century individuals. The folks at the Virginia Museum of the Civil War have recreated what it was like to experience a 19th-century birthday party with an annual celebration in honor of the Bushong family patriarch.

The eighth annual Jacob Bushong Birthday Party will take place 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Aug. 22 at the Virginia Museum of the Civil War, 8895 George R Collins Pkwy., New Market.

The episode will be an annual living history event that highlights family celebrations, as was the case 200 years ago.

"This is a way that we can show what might have gone on during the celebration of a special life event," said Stacey Nadeau, supervisor of historical interpretation at the museum. "We chose Jacob's birthday because he is the family patriarch, and we look at ways he



Living historians at the Virginia Museum of the Civil War churn ice cream during the annual Jacob Bushong Birthday Party. An instructional dance session will be held as part of the festivities.

might have celebrated."

One aspect of his birthday party would have included cake, a tradition that stretches into the 21st century. Befittingly, the museum representatives will provide cake and ice cream for those in attendance, as the Bushongs would have done for their extended family members.

The celebration primarily will be a time to "spend together and interact," according to Nadeau. In doing so, board games will be played — including a reproduction of one of the oldest games, Mansion of Hap-

piness — and children's activities will take place, including hoops to roll and stilts on which to walk.

There will be a number of local musicians on hand to engage in a 19th-century jam session of sorts, where anyone with an instrument can join along.

Period music will be played throughout the event, during which an instructional dance session will take place that will be "very similar to the Virginia Reel," said Nadeau.

Visitors to the Virginia Museum of the Civil War in New Market enjoy cake and ice cream with volunteers and living historians for Jacob Bushong's birthday celebration. Bushong, who moved from Lancaster County, Pa., settled on the property that is now the New Market museum around 1814. His original home, like the one he built years later, still stands on the property today.

Courtesy Photo



Bushong Family Settled On Land That Is Now Museum

Bushong

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"We're going to be having fun as a family," said Nadeau, figuratively likening the museum historians who will be leading the event with the Bushong family.

"Any guest can instantly be part of extended family," she added.

Jacob Bushong moved from Lancaster County, Pa., and settled on the property that is now the New Market museum around 1814. In 1818, he married Sarah Strickler and set out

to build a farm and a family. Bushong's original home, like the one he built years later, still stands on the property today.

The celebration, said Nadeau, gives a window into the Bushong family life that we don't often get to see today. We hear about impactful events or how battle affects a family, but much of the smaller, more intimate aspects of their lives, such as a grandfather's birthday party, have been largely overlooked.

"[This event] gives us the ability to

compare their lives to ours and see what remains the same and what has changed over the years," she said.

The event is free with paid admission to the park. Admission to the park for visitors ages 13-64 is \$10, seniors 65 and older is \$9, children ages 6-12 is \$6 and youths 5 and under is free.

For information, visit vmi.edu/vmcw or call (540) 740-3101.

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