

Alton area residents celebrate freedom with Juneteenth

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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The 24th Annual Juneteenth Celebration attracted not only Alton area residents, but politicians for fellowship and a celebration of freedom at James H. Killion Park on Saturday in Alton.

The celebration has grown each year to a point where now it is a massive festival, loaded with booths and boundless amounts of things for families to do at the park.

Juneteenth is the oldest known celebration of the ending of slavery in the United States. It was on June 19th, 1865 that Union Soldiers, under Major General Gordon Granger, landed in Galveston, Texas with news that the Civil War was over and the enslaved were free.

Marquato Rattler, the chairperson for Juneteenth, said it is “amazing” what it has become in Alton.

“It is great we can come together as a community and let people know about our African American heritage,” she said. “This means a lot to me every year.”

Alton Mayor Brant Walker was present on Saturday, enjoying the crowd and simply proud to be from the host city.

“It is a huge event,” he said. “It is nice to see so many turn out and support the celebration. I used to have a booth as a vendor before I became mayor. It is nice to see 150 years of freedom marked for all Americans.”

Madison County Auditor Rick Faccin was also in attendance and he purchased multiple meals for his family to take with him.

“It is a great event,” he said. “I am glad to be a part of it. It is great for the city of Alton.”

Steve Kimbraugh, an Alton precinct committeeman, said it was a wonderful day with a lot of food.

“This is great for getting people together,” he said.

Some of the key performances were: a Boys and Girls Dance Routing, Senior Services Plus Aerobics demonstration, Hayner Public Library’s Juneteenth Puppet Show, Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White and his tumblers, a Hool a Hoop demonstration, the 4Ever Young Positive Rappers from Alton Middle School, poet Neil Moffet and much more.





