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Culture bash

American Indian fete draws thousands to Liberty Park; Native eats, treats delight crowd

By Kathryn Jones
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Liberty Park was a flurry of color, sound and pageantry this Pioneer Day for the Native American Celebration in the Park.

Started 12 years ago, the annual celebration attracted thousands who popped by the park to fete Utah's American Indian heritage, listen to music, watch the tribal dancers and sample vendors' dizzying array of food.

This year's gala kicked off with a noon powwow. Dancers from all over the county, along with some from Japan and Tahiti, joined in the intertribal fun. The festivities drew many onlookers from the Days of '47 parade, which wrapped up at the park just a short walk away from the American Indian celebration.



Festival-goers check out the wares offered by vendors at the annual Native American Celebration in the Park. Thousands attended this year's event, held in Liberty Park during Pioneer Day festivities. (Kathryn Jones/Close-Up Correspondent)

"This is our second year" coming here, said West Valley City resident Scott Bitter. "We mostly like sharing it with our . . . 4-year-old, who likes everything: Indian stuff, the pizza and the parade."

Dalibor Gacdos, a visitor from the Czech Republic, also was happy to be there. He met the Bitter family at the parade, came with them to the Native American celebration and said he was glad to be able to "practice [his] English."

Along with the powwow, the event featured colorful displays of American tacos and abundance,

and amateur musicians. p.m. capped off the celebration.

Catherine Thompson, a jewelry vendor. "We used to we just started selling jewelry this year."

Marlou and Albert Nells, who also sell Indian jewelry, who live in Utah. The Flagstaff, Ariz., couple were extra money while vacationing with their family. But

"We're not used to this," said Marlou Nells, adding

Children of all ages cooled off a bit at the Children's Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation Economic

Adults and children alike got their hearts pumping Money Tour vault. Others took shelter underneath trees music.

Navajo Cal Nez, the founder of the event, touts the celebration as one of the largest one-day festivals in the nation.

"We want to further educate all cultures when they come," said Nez, who lauded Utah Gov. Jon Huntsman Jr. for his support, as well as festival sponsors.



Quitus plays the sampanias. (Kathryn Jones/Close-Up Correspondent)



The intertribal grand entry celebration is conducted during the Native American festival at Liberty Park. The annual celebration began 12 years ago and is celebrated during Pioneer Day in Utah. (Kathryn Jones/Close-Up Correspondent)

Indian jewelry, pottery and crafts. Navajo other taste-tempting treats were there in as was the music plied by professional

An ear-popping fireworks show at 10 "This is our first year here," said camp out every year for the parade, and

heard about the event from their children happy to spend some time earning a little they were not ready for the heat. that Flagstaff was cooler.

Corner, which was sponsored by the Development Corp.

trying to grab cash from the Fun of the and umbrellas to eat and listen to the