

Take a walk through history

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SANDUSKY

Many people attending Wednesday's Walking Tours event have lived in Sandusky for years. But a good chunk of the 50 or so in attendance learned a lot about their city in just one hour's time. For instance, without leaving Washington Park, many realized:

--The Beecher House, named after Sandusky attorney Lucas Beecher, played a key role in the Underground Railroad movement. The home's resident, Lucas Beecher, legally represented Benjamin Johnson, a fugitive slave who arrived in Sandusky during the 1830s. Beecher won a case that helped ensure Johnson's freedom.

--The Erie County Courthouse first opened in 1828 as a private academy later used as a school and for other educational purposes. The courthouse, still in operation today, debuted in 1874.

--Kilbourne Plat originates from Hector Kilbourne, a Freemason and the surveyor who made the original plat of Sandusky, then known as "Portland Township" in 1816. He laid out the streets to form the Masonic emblem.

The event's speaker and tour guide, Erie County Historical Society vice president Lou Schultz, presented these facts and more during the first occurrence, titled Washington Park part 1, in a yearlong series of events called Walking Tours. The jaunts help commemorate Sandusky's bicentennial, or 200-year anniversary. "This is a good way to bring history to the people and give them a chance to get familiar with it by touching the buildings and seeing the sites," said John Hildebrandt, the society's president. "It's a hands-on approach to our history."



Historical society president John Hildebrandt Wednesday holds an old photo of land near Washington Park while vice president Lou Schultz discusses it.

Register photo/ERIN McLAUGHLIN



Community members walk through Washington Park in downtown Sandusky for the year's first Walking Tours event Wednesday. See more photos online at sanduskyregister.com. Register photo/ERIN McLAUGHLIN

Want to go?

WHAT: Walking Tours

WHERE: The corner of Columbus Avenue and Washington Row by the Red Popcorn Wagon n

WHEN: 6 p.m. Among the tentative schedule:

- June 27: Underground Railroad
- July 25: Downtown Sandusky, part 1
- Aug. 22: Downtown Sandusky, part 2
- Sept. 26: Washington Park, part 2 n COST: Free

MORE: For additional information, contact the Erie County Historical Society at 419-702-0001.