

Event helps mark Sandusky's bicentennial on Fourth of July

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Register photo/ERIN MCLAUGHLIN

Siblings Kennli, 2, and Jackson Hughes, 6, share a slushy during the Fourth of July Stars and Stripes celebration in Washington Park on Wednesday in Sandusky. More photos at

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SANDUSKY

On Wednesday, the nation's annual birthday party was a 200th anniversary party for the City of Sandusky, too.

The city's bicentennial celebration this year included a Stars and Stripes Celebration with a full schedule of events at Washington Park in downtown Sandusky. Sandusky may be all grown up now, but in 1820, it had a population of about 300. Ron Davidson, special collections librarian at Sandusky Library, offered that fact and many more when he gave a talk in the cafeteria at the Adams Building on daily life 200 years ago and 100 years ago. In those days, a log house was a major building. The city had a lot of growth by 1918, but transportation in the city was much different than it is now. Davidson showed a photo of a trolley and explained, "That's how most people got around in those days."

History lectures were offered all day at Adams. The attractions also included booths for various organizations, concerts, and a ceremony from local masons dedicating two cornerstones.

Sandusky Science Lodge No. 50, 304 Wayne St., also is marking its 200th anniversary. One of the cornerstones unveiled in Wednesday's ceremony at Washington Park will go in front of City Hall, while the other will go in front of the Science Lodge building. Hector Kilbourne, the first "worshipful master" of the lodge, also was a surveyor who laid out Sandusky's streets in the center of town. He arranged the streets to show the compass and square that is the symbol of masonry, giving the city an unusual street design that persists today. Sandusky is the only city to be designed in the shape of the masonic symbol, officials said after Wednesday's ceremony, which featured Rick Schau, grand master of the Grand Lodge of Ohio, who's the state's top mason.

One of the people at the park Wednesday, Sue Hoelzer, 72, Sandusky, said she's very excited by Sandusky's bicentennial celebration. "I love the old things, the old buildings," she said. "I love what they're doing downtown." Tony Myers, another Sandusky resident, said he showed up because he needed a break from editing videos for his Team Optimus gaming and entertainment channel on YouTube. "It's kind of like the town history's reaching a milestone," he said. "That's never a bad thing."

Here's another historical fact: Sandusky is the home of Toft's Dairy. Free Toft's Bicentennial Butterscotch Toffee was given away at Wednesday's celebration to help everyone enjoy the celebration. It was really good, too.