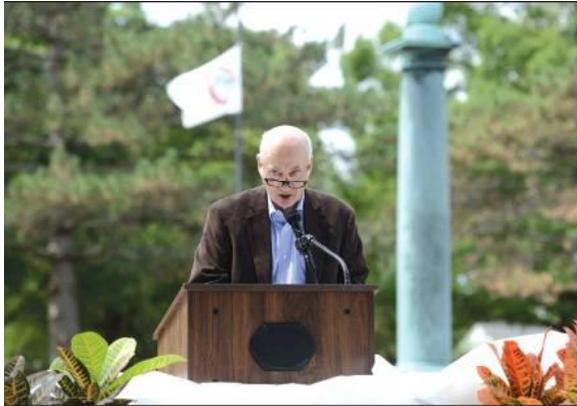


MAKING HISTORY - 10 major events help shape city
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SANDUSKY

A local historian crammed 200 years of history into 10 monumental moments he believed best shaped Sandusky's two-century existence. John Hildebrandt, who serves as the Erie County Historical Society's vice president, and formerly worked as Cedar Point's general manager, put



Local historian John Hildebrandt speaks about the history of the Cholera Cemetery on Aug. 8 in Sandusky.

together the list, called "The 10 Most Significant Events in the history of Sandusky, Ohio." "I thought it was be interesting, and a little fun, to look at all the events in the city's history and pick a top 10 in terms of significance," said Hildebrandt, who also serves on the city's bicentennial history committee. "This list is subjective, of course, but I did vet it with fellow historians." Hildebrandt, who credited the Sandusky Library for research purposes, recently presented the list to city commissioners, offering some insight on a few events as well.

In no particular order:

1. The cholera epidemics of 1849, 1850 and 1852 - JH: Half the city fled for their lives. Over 400 died over the period of the epidemics. It was a terrible thing, and it's great we still pay tribute to the victims of the epidemics. The fact we did such a great job restoring the (Cholera Cemetery) is great.

2. Erie County created from Huron County, Sandusky named county seat, in 1838 - JH: When Ohio became a state, there was no Erie County, just a Huron County. Then, in the 1830s, they decided to break it up into parcels. There were two competitors (for the county seat): Sandusky and Huron. They were similar in size in those years. There were three commissioners appointed to look at the whole situation and make a recommendation. The word was they were leaning toward Huron. Then, one fateful day, they were in Huron to investigate in the summertime, and there was a tremendous thunderstorm out on the lake. There was flooding in the Huron River. They were actually marooned on a parcel of land for about six or seven hours. Meanwhile, in Sandusky, Sandusky Bay provided refuge for three or four ships at least from the storm and came out as the hero. The story is that sort of made things lean toward Sandusky's way.

3. George Boeckling gains control of Cedar Point in 1899; Hotel Breakers, Coliseum, Electric Midway follow - JH: What had been a local resort, he transformed into a regional destination, even a national destination. A man of brilliance, foresight, guts, determination, a classic entrepreneur. He ran the park until he died in 1931. It had a great effect on Sandusky.



4. The era of big-box manufacturers from 1890 through 1970 - JH: Sandusky was proud home of companies like Hinde & Dauch (right), Scott Paper, American Crayon, New Departure Hyatt, General Motors, Ford, Chrysler. Those were the glory years of manufacturing in the city and obviously had a tremendous impact.

5. Tornado devastates Sandusky in 1924 - JH: Not often thought about today, but it killed 90-some people. It wiped

out 150 homes and 25 business. It was a tremendous event in the history.

6. George Roose and Emile Legros announce plans to invest \$16 million in Cedar Point, create the “Disneyland of the Midwest.” - JH: They picked up where Mr. Boeckling had left off. By the late 1950s, Cedar Point was sort of downtrodden, had been for 20, 30 years. These two gentlemen, one from Toledo, one from Cleveland, wanted to buy the property and raze everything to the ground, turn it into a housing project. But the city didn’t like it, the county didn’t like it, the residents didn’t like it, the state didn’t like it. They were the only ones who liked it. They had to punt for a couple of years and decide what to do. They hired a consulting firm out of California, people who had done work for Disney, which, of course, had just started and was starting to get big. They said, “Take a look at this, see whether it’s worthwhile.” They came back and said, “Yes, get the baby boom going. You got better transportation, the economy is growing, people are looking for recreation. Put money into it as amusement park, take some chapters from the Disney book, and you might have something.” So they took the report to the bank and borrowed \$16 million. The legacy of Cedar Point today goes back to these two gentlemen.

7. Sandusky Mall opens in 1977, U.S. 250 development takes off; Downtown Sandusky loses its retail mojo

8. Firelands Regional Medical Center acquires Providence Hospital in 2000; Three hospitals are now one

9. Kalahari Resorts opens in 2005; Indoor water parks create second season

10. Sandusky residents approve income and admissions tax increases in 2014; partner with Cedar Fair, Bowling Green State University and others for downtown development

Honorable mentions:

The Ohio Veterans Home opens in 1888.

Prohibition takes place in Sandusky from 1919 through 1931.

BGSU Firelands opens in 1967.

The Moseley Channel opens in 1937, allowing continued development of Sandusky as a coal port.

The Sandusky Plaza opens in 1957.