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Lohman celebrates Fourth by looking back

by [Ryan Pivoney](#) | Today at 4:00 a.m.

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Stan Linsenbardt, of Jefferson City, visited with Jeremy Amick as he gave tours of Lohman's historic mill, the only one left in Cole County. Linsenbardt's family was from the Lohman area and he maintains a family farm there still. He attended the mill tours Sunday, July 3, 2022, as part of the Lohman community's Independence Day celebrations. (Photo by Ryan Pivoney/News Tribune)

Amid explosive fireworks, community barbecues and classic car shows, it can be easy to forget Independence Day is a celebration of American history.

But in Lohman, history was the cornerstone of its weekend celebrations.

The community, located 14 miles west of Missouri's Capital City, honored the country's founding with displays of rural Missouri history and tours of the only mill left in Cole County, in addition to fireworks, barbecue and a classic car show.

"As a whole, it's about being free as Americans and celebrating our independence, and about celebrating together, as one community -- as one family, basically," said Brian Schmutz, who was helping grill for the community barbecue. "And to reflect back

on the people that sacrificed to give us our independence and our freedom."

More than 100 people visited the history displays by mid-afternoon Sunday and most also stopped downstairs for the Lions Club's annual Fourth of July barbecue with pork steaks, chicken and bratwurst.

Schmutz, who served in the United States Marine Corps, said he sees the event as a way to serve and celebrate with his community.

"We're doing service, giving back to the community," he said. "Even though it's a small community, we feel that it's our duty to give back to the community as a whole. That's what we do as Lions."

Lohman has a population of 210, as of the 2020 census, and is part of the Jefferson City Metropolitan Statistical Area. A post office bearing the Lohman name dates back to 1882.

The Lohman Community Corporation owns the old schoolhouse that housed Sunday's community barbecue and history displays, which detailed the influence of area churches, schools, stores, people and events, such as the flood of 1993.

Keith Ziegelbein, president of the Community Corporation, said the event usually attracts visitors from Russellville and Jefferson City who have roots in and around Lohman.

"They have roots to Millbottom and Stringtown and all the old towns, like Millbrook," he said. "All these little towns that have disappeared, they have a relation to them. Patty Ott has put this all together and people come and say, 'Hey, I remember that.' or 'Oh, that's what that was about.'"

Ziegelbein said they began putting out the historical displays around 2016, and Ott has led the charge to update it with more information each year.

Ott was not available to interview.

Ziegelbein said the Lohman history exhibit and downstairs barbecue was a fitting use of the community space.

"We love it," said Denise Ziegelbein, Keith's wife. "It's great to let people know that our little town is still out here and we're still active."

Barb Stahlman, who lives between Lohman and Centertown, said her Fourth of July weekend was going well because she watched her neighbor's fireworks from her front porch.

She spent Sunday evening with family watching the city's fireworks from her back porch.

Barb and her husband, Leroy, began attending the Lohman community barbecue last year.

"I really enjoyed the displays upstairs and this year the mill is open and so I want to go over and see that," she said. "I'm really kind of a history buff, so he just comes along for the ride."

Local historian Jeremy Amick was leading tours of the Lohman Milling Corp's Centennial Mill, the only mill left standing in Cole County.

The first area mill was built in 1856 in Millbrook, about five miles south of Lohman, but burned down a few years later, Amick said. The first iteration of the Centennial Mill was built in 1876, but the owners built a new mill to be closer to railroad lines in 1906. That final mill is still standing in Lohman.

The 1906 mill featured three rolling mill machines and would process cornmeal and flour with steam engines.

Eventually, the steam engines were scrapped during the metal drives of World War II, Amick said, and the mill began using diesel engines before becoming a location to simply wholesale distribute goods, such as dog food.

Virginia Lister, the mill owner, said she was surprised by the number of people interested in touring the 116-year-old building, but she was happy to open her doors.

"It's history that's going to be lost," Amick said. "That's why she's so keen on sharing it, because it's in great condition and because of all the stories and different community members that were involved in it is fascinating."

Amick said the Fourth is usually when the Lohman community delves into its well-recorded history.

"This community, being a tight-knit, German, Lutheran community, kind of likes to maintain that cohesion and preserve that history that we don't see in a lot of places," he said.



Lohman's

Independence Day celebrations included a classic car show, community barbecue and fireworks, and assortment of historic displays. The community, located 14 miles from Jefferson City, celebrated on Sunday, July 3, 2022. (Photo by Ryan Pivoney/News Tribune)



Virginia

Lister owns Lohman's historic mill and showed visitors one of the rolling mill machines left in the building on Sunday, July 3, 2022. Lister said she was surprised by the amount of interest in the mill, but was happy to share a piece of community history. (Photo by Ryan Pivoney/NewsTribune)

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