

Festival at Walker Tavern Sept. 1 Celebrates Frontier Life in Michigan

LANSING - Experience the sights, sounds and tastes of Michigan's frontier at Walker Tavern's third annual Frontier Fest on Saturday, Sept. 1. The festival will feature an exhibit of livestock breeds popular during the settlement era, a workshop on old-time music, pioneer and Native American craft demonstrations, and hands-on children's activities. Activities start at 10 a.m. and run until 4 p.m. at Walker Tavern Historic Site. Admission is \$3 for adults, \$1 for children 5 to 12, and free for children under 5.

Visitors may bring their own food and have a cookout in the site's newly updated picnic area, or purchase a variety of frontier-style treats from food vendors. Offerings will include pulled pork sandwiches, baked beans, biscuits and gravy, kettle corn, shaved ice, fresh-squeezed lemonade, corn dogs and Walker Tavern root beer.

The sounds of bluegrass, country, folk, gospel and other early music will enliven the festival grounds from start to close. Anyone who enjoys playing and singing the old songs is invited to join in a free workshop of pre-Civil War music led by Eddie Josephs from 1 to 2 p.m. on the Visitors Center front porch. Bring your fiddles, guitars, dulcimers and other early instruments and join Eddie, or get your own jam session going on the lawn throughout the day.

Traditional craftspeople will demonstrate "lost arts" including gourd painting, quilting, leatherwork, spinning, potting, weaving and chair caning. Other vendors will sell antiques, collectibles and watercolor paintings.

New this year will be an exhibit of farm animals like those that might have been seen on an Irish Hills farm before the Civil War. It will include four-horned Jacob sheep, dark Brahmas (chickens descended from those raised on the Firestone Family Farm), mammoth jackstock (a donkey breed originally developed by George Washington) and Irish Dexter cows (also known as cottage cows, brought from Ireland by early settlers).

A hands-on activity center in the backyard of the tavern will give visitors a chance to try a variety of pioneer and Native American crafts, including candle-dipping, corn husk dolls, tin punching and pumpkin painting. At 2 p.m. there will be old-time games and contests, such as sack races and an egg toss.

Entertainment schedule:

Visitor Center Front Porch

11-11:45 a.m.: Tom Montelauro - mandolin

1-2 p.m.: Frontier Music Workshop

2-2:45 p.m.: Eddie Josephs - 19th-century music

3-3:45 p.m.: Tom Montelauro - mandolin

Barn Stage

1-2 p.m.: Jammin' Grandmas - dulcimer music

2-3 p.m.: T & J Duo - old-time favorites

Walker Tavern is located in Brooklyn, next to the Michigan International Speedway, in the Irish Hills region. Situated in Cambridge Junction State Park, at the historic crossroads of M-50 and the U.S. 12 Heritage Trail, Walker Tavern is just 35 miles west of Ann Arbor.

Regular hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesday to Sunday, through Sept.

1, 2007. The historic site is partially handicap-accessible. For more information visit www.michigan.gov/walkertavern or call (517) 467-4401, TDD (517) 373-1592.

Walker Tavern is jointly administered by the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of History, Arts and Libraries. As part of the Michigan Historical Museum System, it is fully accredited by the American Association of Museums.

The Michigan Historical Museum System is a division of the Michigan Historical Center, an agency of the Department of History, Arts and Libraries. Dedicated to enriching quality of life and strengthening the economy by providing access to information, preserving and promoting Michigan heritage and fostering cultural creativity, the department also includes the Library of Michigan, the Mackinac Island State Park Commission, the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs and the Michigan Film Office.