



2725 Judge Fran Jamieson Way
Viera, Florida 32940

(321) 633-2000
www.brevardfl.gov

Parks And Recreation Department

Sanctuary Steward: Martha Pessaro
(321) 449-4720 martha.pessaro@brevardcounty.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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7th Annual Pioneer Day Festival Celebrates Merritt Island History on Feb.10

MERRITT ISLAND, Fla. -- The 7th Annual Pioneer Day Festival will celebrate the early settlers of Merritt Island at two of their historic sites. The event takes place from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 10, at Sams House at Pine Island Conservation Area and St. Luke's Episcopal Church located at 5555 & 6195 North Tropical Trail, Merritt Island. Guests will be taken back in history through art, music, food, presentations, archaeology, and nature.

The Sams House is a historical complex owned and operated by the Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program. The 1875 cabin is the oldest standing structure in Brevard County. A larger 1888 two story home is also located on site. John H. Sams, a citrus grower and the first Superintendent of Brevard County Schools, built both houses.

St. Luke's Episcopal Church was built in 1888 with the help of Sams, LaRoche, and Porcher family members. Many early pioneers, including John H. Sams, are buried in the church cemetery.

Pioneer Day planners have included activities from past festivals and added many new attractions for this family friendly day.

Parking is available at both locations for a suggested donation of \$1 per vehicle. Free shuttle service will be provided between the two venues.

Events at Sams House and Cabin include:

- Florida living history demonstrations and educational exhibits (archaeology, anthropology, historic encampments, spinning wool demonstrations and more)
- Presentation on prehistoric and historic dugout canoes by state archaeologist Julia Duggins
- 1888 Sams House exhibit: A History of Transportation used by the Sams Family and Pioneers of Courtenay
- Live music by Celery City String Band, Chris Kahl, and Pine Trio
- Crafts fair and farmer's market vendors
- Guided trail hikes throughout the day
- Children's crafts and games
- Food Trucks, BBQ and Kettle Corn

Events at St. Luke's Church:

- St. Luke's Cemetery Tour "An Archaeologist's Perspective," by Molly Thomas at 10:15 a.m.
- "The Discovery of Cape Canaveral and What Happened Afterwards," by Dr. Sonny Witt at 11:00 a.m.
- St. Luke's Cemetery Tour, "Founding Families," at 11:30 a.m.
- Homemade Soups (\$5) at 12:00 p.m.
- Cemetery Stroll where actors in period attire talk about life in their day at 12:30 p.m. – 2:00 pm.
- In Celebration of African American History Month: The Legacy of Dennis Sawyer, by Roz Foster, at 2:00 p.m.
- St. Luke's Cemetery Tour, "Through the Ages" at 2:30 p.m.
- Fish Fry Dinner (For ticket sales please call, 321-452-5260, \$9 advance, \$10 day of) Seatings available for 4:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.

For more information visit: www.mipioneerday.com and www.facebook.com/pioneerdaymerrittisland or call Sams House at Pine Island Conservation Center at 321-449-4720.

The Pine Island Preservation Society presents this great event in partnership with the St. Luke's Episcopal Church and the EEL Program.