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8th Annual Pioneer Day Festival Celebrates Merritt Island History on Feb. 9

Merritt Island, FL. - The 8th Annual Pioneer Day Festival will take place from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 9, at Sams House at Pine Island Conservation Area and St. Luke's Episcopal Church located at 5555 & 6195 North Tropical Trail on Merritt Island. This festival will celebrate the early settlers of Merritt Island at two of their historic sites. Guests will be taken back in history through art, music, food, presentations, archaeology, and nature.

This family friendly day includes activities from past festivals as well as new attractions. Parking is available at both locations for a suggested donation of \$1 with free shuttle service between the two venues.

Events at Sams House and Cabin include:

- Florida living history demonstrations and educational exhibits include archaeology and anthropology, historic reenactors, encampments with artifacts on display, and spinning wool demonstrations.
- Live music throughout the day by Celery City String Band, Chris Kahl, Pine Trio and more
- A pioneer parade through the grounds at 10:45 a.m., led by drum and fife, of those dressed in period attire
- Local exhibitors from the Florida Historical Society, Florida Public Archaeology Network, Field Manor, Space Coast Spinsters, and many others
- Crafts Fair and Farmer's Market vendors such as The Green Marketplace, Mrs. Mango and Company, Spade and Trowel Garden Club, and others
- Pine Island guided nature trail hikes throughout the day
- 1875 Sams Cabin pioneer history exhibits and gift shop
- 1888 Sams House exhibit featuring education and antiques on display (John Sams was the first Superintendent of Brevard's public schools)
- Children's crafts and games such as cow milking, rope tossing, and corn husk dolls
- Pine Island Preservation Society tent with vintage pins, doilies, pioneer bonnets, hiking sticks, nature-themed t-shirts, note cards, postcards and gifts for sale
- Food trucks

The Sams House at Pine Island is a historical complex owned and operated by the Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program. The 1875 Sams Cabin onsite is the oldest standing home in Brevard County. A larger 1888 two-story home is also onsite. John Sams, a citrus-grower and the first Superintendent of Brevard County Schools, built both houses.

The Center is located at 6195 N. Tropical Trail, 1/2 mile west of SR 3 and 5 miles north of SR 528. For information please call, (321) 449-4720 or visit <https://www.facebook.com/samshousepineisland>.

Events at St. Luke's Church include:

- St. Luke's Cemetery Tour - "An Archaeologist's Perspective" - by Molly Thomas at 10:15 a.m.
- "St. Luke's Chapel: A Gem of Carpenter Gothic Architecture" (presented in the historic chapel) at 11 a.m.
- St. Luke's Cemetery Tour - "Founding Families" at 11:30 a.m.
- "Pioneer Music" – played in the historic chapel at noon
- Homemade soups (\$5) offered at noon
- Cemetery Stroll – meet many of the historic figures found in this early Merritt Island cemetery at 12:30 – 2 p.m.
- "Rebuilt and Remade: Florida citrus in the early 20th century" at 2 p.m.
- St. Luke's Cemetery Tour - "Through the Ages" at 2:30 p.m.

This year St. Luke's is offering an array of topics. Visitors can learn about the architecture of St. Luke's historic chapel built in 1889. This chapel is an outstanding example of Carpenter Gothic architecture, a uniquely American architecture. During the presentation of "Rebuilt and Remade: Florida citrus in the early 20th century", the audience will learn more about the heyday of the citrus groves in Florida, from its mechanization to the rise and fall of the cooperatives and the influence of African Americans in Florida citrus. Also available are guided cemetery tours, each with a unique theme. In addition to the tours St. Luke's will also conduct a Cemetery Stroll from 12:30 – 2 p.m., where volunteers dressed in period attire talk about life in their day. Some of the volunteers are Sams' family descendants.

The historic chapel onsite was built in 1888 with the help of Sams, LaRoche, and Porcher families. Many early pioneers, including John Sams, are buried in the church's cemetery.

The church is located at 5555 N. Tropical Trail, just 1.1 miles south of Sams House at Pine Island. For information please call (321) 452-5260 or visit <http://www.stlukesmi.org>.

For more information regarding this event please visit: www.mipioneerday.com and www.facebook.com/pioneerdaymerrittisland.