

TavernTalk

Spring 2009, Volume 3, Issue 1

A publication of Michigan Historical Museum



Walker Tavern Through Time

Walker Tavern was constructed in the early 1830s. In the past 175 years the tavern has undergone many transformations – sometimes appearing well cared for and sometimes neglected and in need of paint; sometimes with a wide wrap-around porch, and sometimes not; sometimes big signs proclaim “Food and Lodging for Man and Beast” or “16 Fascinating Rooms including the Murder Room,” and at other times there are no signs.

What observations can you make about these photographs of Walker Tavern? Can you put the photographs into historical/chronological sequence? What details in the photographs give you clues to when they were taken?



At first glance you might think the photo on the right is the earliest. According to archaeological evidence, Walker Tavern originally had no front porch and the covered wagons remind us of those that brought pioneer settlers west. However the paved road and highway signs are sure giveaways that the photo was taken much later. W.C. Kodey took this photo when the Bicentennial Wagon Train passed Cambridge Junction. It was published in the *Daily Telegram* May 22, 1976.



Walker Tavern looks old and dilapidated in the above photograph, but this photo is actually the earliest of the four photos. It was taken before Rev. Frederick Hewitt, who purchased the tavern in 1922, began the restoration project that would turn Walker Tavern into a roadside tourist attraction.

Car models and clothing styles help to date photos. The roof of the car in the top right photo helps us place this photograph in the late 1920s to mid 1930s. The woman's kerchief and pedal-pushers in the photo on the right, as well as the signage and historic marker (erected 1959), help place this photograph in the late 1950s or early 1960s.



Friends of Walker Tavern

The Friends of Walker Tavern held its Annual Meeting on Thursday, December 11, 2008. All members were invited to attend. The Friends reviewed accomplishments for the year and elected the following board members for 2009:



Standing:

Debbie Howay, Treasurer; Bonnie McJennett, President; Charlene Goebel, Walker Mercantile; Julicanna Frost, Education; Cheryl Valentine, Secretary

Seated:

Larry Eichler, Site Improvements; David Brainerd, Farmers Market; Frank Bolak, Vice President

The Board thanks outgoing President Cletus Brooks for his can-do attitude and excellent leadership. He kept the Friends Board focused and moving forward. Under his leadership in 2008 the Friends of Walker Tavern spruced up the grounds including the parking lot, new signs, and new paint for the tavern. The board would also like to thank previous board members Claudia Miller and Dilla Miller for their service and their vision. Claudia was responsible for the kitchen herb garden and plantings of native flowers around the site. Dilla was the creative force behind the Walker Mercantile and the Pioneer Tea.

Who are the Friends of Walker Tavern?

The Friends of Walker Tavern is an auxiliary group committed to assisting with educational programs and special events, recruiting volunteers, and fund raising, with the purpose of promoting Walker Tavern to the community.

The Friends operate in support of the mission of Walker Tavern Historical Site which is to collect, preserve, and interpret the physical evidence and collective memory of travel in Michigan as witnessed from the crossroads at Cambridge Junction.

Walker Tavern was once a stagecoach stop on the main route between Detroit and Chicago. It stands at Cambridge Junction, the intersection of US 12 and M-50. Today Walker Tavern is a state historic park and part of the Michigan Historical Museum System. It is jointly operated by HAL and the DNR.

Friends Membership

Please join us in showing your support for Walker Tavern Historic Site. Join the Friends of Walker Tavern. Annual membership is:

\$20 - Site Supporter Membership

(Includes invitations to Friends of Walker Tavern events and voting privileges at Friends Annual Meeting.

\$40 - Basic Membership

(Includes an annual subscription to Michigan History Magazine, museum store discounts and discounts at other museums plus all supporter benefit.)

Make your check payable to:

Friends of Walker Tavern

Mail your check to:

Walker Tavern Historic Site
13220 M-50, Brooklynn, MI 49230

Recipe Corner

Last summer's Pioneer Cooking Program gave new meaning to the words, "made from scratch." Here participants take turns grinding and shelling corn to make Indian Pound Cake. The recipe follows. (Grinding your own corn is strictly optional.)



Campfire Indian Pound Cake

8 eggs

The weight of 8 eggs in powdered sugar

The weight of 6 eggs in Indian meal, sifted (finely ground cornmeal)

Half a pound of butter

One nutmeg, grated or a tea-spoonful of cinnamon

Stir the butter and sugar to a cream. Beat the eggs very light. Stir the meal and eggs alternatively into the butter and sugar. Grate in the nutmeg. Stir all well. Pour into a cast iron dutch oven, cover and heat over coals until batter is set.



Group Tours

Is your school, club, scout troop, church, or group of family and friends looking for a unique experience? Consider scheduling a special tour or program at Walker Tavern. Any group of eight people or more may arrange a custom designed tour at Walker Tavern Historic Site. Prices vary depending on activities chosen.

Participants in programs range from 4th grade students to members of the Red Hat Society. Programs and special tours offer opportunities to learn about Michigan's past through age appropriate activities that engage the hands and heart as well as the mind.

Groups may picnic, tour the site, and play old-time games. Participants in past programs learned traditional crafts like tin punching, quilting and weaving and made examples to take home. They practiced Native American skills such as grinding corn, identifying plants, and using sign language. While looking over a life-size replica of a covered wagon, they debated what goods to pack for a trip west to Michigan. They visited a French Fur Trader's camp and explored wilderness survival skills with him.

Call 517-467-4401 to discuss the possibilities for bringing history to life for your group.

Volunteers Paint Tavern



Walker Tavern has a bright new look thanks to the determination of over 35 community volunteers. Last August volunteers, headed up by Larry Eichler, a retired fire chief from Hillsdale, scraped the old paint from the tavern and brushed on new. They used brushes rather than sprayers or rollers in order to keep the appearance of a 19th century tavern. Valspar Paint and Lowe's of Adrian donated the paint. Volunteers from the Friends of Walker Tavern provided snacks for the workers each day. Richard Thomas, of Thomas Woodworking in Clinton, created new shutters for the tavern using the old shutters as a pattern. The shutters will be installed in the spring.

Tavern Talk is a publication of Walker Tavern Historic Site. Editor, Cheryl Valentine. Visit our website at: www.michigan.gov/walkertavern

Wild time at Walker Tavern



Actors left to right: Kelly Reid, Joyce Drake, Dustin Miller, Rich Bailey, Ni Gordon and Doug Miller.

Walker Tavern summer staff interpreters, Ni Gordon and Kelly Reid, wrote and produced an original play about Walker Tavern in the stagecoach era. The play is based on both historical fact and folklore surrounding Walker Tavern. It takes what we know about historical characters - Fitch Reed helped enslaved people escape on the Underground Railroad, Sylvester Walker opposed abolition, Francis Dewey drove a stagecoach and often stopped at Walker Tavern, Silas Doty achieved fame as an outlaw - and brings these people together in an imaged encounter at Walker Tavern. The play invites audience participation and visitors become the stagecoach passengers. "A Wild Time at Walker Tavern" was produced several times over the summer with different actors participating. Allegiance Family Medicine sponsored performances at the Walk Through Time event.

Walk Through Time

A Walk Through Time invites visitors to experience over 250 years of Michigan history. Historical reenactors, musicians and performers bring the people, cultures, and events of the past to live action.

Moving from station to station visitors might encounter a Native American weaver or spear-thrower, march with a regiment of Revolutionary War soldiers, or dance to music enjoyed by their great grandparents. They can compare and contrast the encampments, uniforms and equipment of soldiers at different times in history.

"It's like entering a time machine" commented one visitor to last year's Walk Through Time. "You travel back in time and who knows what you will find."

Don't miss your chance to time travel Saturday, June 27 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.



Walker Tavern Historic Site
13220 M-50
Brooklyn, MI 49230

2009 Calendar of Events

Mark these events and programs on your calendar today. You won't want to miss any of the fun planned for the 2009 season. The site opens May 23. Every Sunday, May 24 – Sept. 27, enjoy our colorful Farmers Market 10am to 2pm with fresh produce and locally produced products. **Exceptions:** Walker Tavern will be closed June 13 & 14 and Aug. 15 & 16 as they are MIS Race Weekends.)

Major Events

Site clean-up and hot dog roast

Sun., May 3, 1-4 p.m.

Farmers & Friends Picnic

Baseball History program - 11 a.m.

Potluck picnic - noon

Vintage Base Ball Game - 1 p.m.

Sun., May 31

Walk Through Time

200 years of Michigan history

Sat., June 27, 10 a.m.- 4 p.m.

Walker On Wheels

Vintage cars & trucks (50 years+)

Sat., August 8, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Frontier Fest

Pioneer crafts, music and lifeways

Sat., Sept. 5, 10 a.m.- 4 p.m.

Victorian Halloween

Old-time family fun

Sat., Oct. 24, 1 - 4 p.m.



Wednesdays at Walker

These programs were created for adults and kids to have fun together and learn about Michigan history. The cost is \$5 per person per class. Preregistration required.

Pack Your Wagon

Surviving on the frontier

Wed., June 17, 1-3 p.m.

Pioneer Cooking

Prepare, cook & eat an open-fire meal

Wed., July 1, 1-3 p.m.

Feathercombing: A Lost Art

Make a decorated clay tile

Wed., July 15, 1-3 p.m.

Quilts in Pioneer Life

Join a quilting bee

Wed., July 29, 1-3 p.m.

On the Sauk Trail

Native American activities

Wed., Aug. 12, 1-3 p.m.

Bring the Past to Life

Learn to be a historic interpreter

Wed., Aug. 26, 1-3 p.m.

Walker Wheels BBC

Experience the gentlemanly game of base ball the way it was played during the Civil War. For more information visit the Wheels website:

www.michigan.gov/walkerwheels

May 31, 1p.m. Walker Wheels vs. The Inmates of Wood County Ohio

June 28, 1p.m. Walker Wheels vs. The Northville Eclipse

July 12, 1p.m. Walker Wheels vs. The Swampers of Hartwick Pines

Aug. 9, 2 p.m. Walker Wheels vs. Wahoos of Royal Oak

Aug. 23, 1p.m. Walker Wheels vs. Mighty River Hogs of Midland

