

Walker Cabin School Tour Guide

Welcome to the tour! Here are some brief instructions for giving school tours:

- Check in with Lori Wolf or the coordinator for the day to let her know you will be doing the cabin tours.
- Set up the cabin as you regularly would for tours (see instruction card).
- Put up the ropes in the cabin. There are two, going from the front door to the back door, keeping the students in between the fireplace and the kitchen area.
- The students start out the day on the front steps of the Nature Center, then move to the classroom where they have a presentation. They usually start coming down to the cabin around 10:30ish. They begin their walk, coming down from the classroom, Butterfly Garden, to the cabin. You can see/hear them coming!
- Each group waits on the porch until you are ready for them.
- The tour can be anywhere from 5-10 minutes, depending on time constraints.
- Here is a guide with general information for the students (adjust to age groups):

Begin by welcoming them to the Walker Cabin! Tell them that the cabin is about 100 years old, built in 1919-1920 by Frank Walker with his wife, Hortense. They raised their 12 children here. Explain that this was their Winter cabin because it had access to a road and the water in the creek. They also had a Homestead house, Summer cabin, and were building a 4th home. All furniture/items in cabin are from the 1920's (not original to the cabin, except for the table, which Frank made). Originally, they had a dirt floor and no front porch. The movie crews poured the cement floor and added the porch later.

Ask, "Can anyone turn on the light switch?" Tell them there was no electricity or running water...point out the oil lamps, fireplace, wood-burning stove, pitcher for water and chamber pot. Discuss that life was hard, and they would have to bring water from the creek until they dug the well near the Heritage Trail. You can ask questions about how they bathed, washed clothes, etc... Demonstrate the washing and tub (I put the tubs and accessories in the cabin by the stove), iron and ironing board.

Talk about the parents' bedroom and children's bedroom that was on the back. Point out the rope mattress, and if they've heard, "Sleep tight, don't let the bedbugs bite."

Point out "Fancy Rock" fireplace, and that they sold it to other homesteaders.

Ask how Frank made money for all 14 of them....gold mining/panning, renting out the cabin and property for filming movies (talk about how much they got paid by looking at board).. Mention "Gunsmoke," William Hart, stagecoaches, cowboys, horses, etc...). Also, talk about other money-making ventures like fertilizer, chickens, spring water, camp, selling "Fancy Rock" and clay.

Did the children go to school?? Yes! Describe station wagon/bus, or they walked to school (Newhall/Sulphur Springs Elementary Schools). They had to wear shoes, and they got 1 pair of shoes a year! Tell them to think about how many shoes they have! Otherwise, they played and worked in bare feet.

Life was not easy. The children had chores: washed clothes, took care of each other, graded the road, cared for livestock (chickens, pigs, cows, horses, protected chickens and turkeys from coyotes)....

Discuss that their playground was all around the park, mountains, trees. (They had to lookout for rattlesnakes, coyotes, mountain lions, etc...)

End with the fact that Frank sold the land to the State of California, not to oil companies or land developers, so we could enjoy the park! That's why the Walkers and Frank Walker are so important.

- Feel free to add "Walker stories", depending on your time. This is just a guide, taken mostly from the "Docent Menu".
- Take questions....the students LOVE to ask questions!
- Most of all, HAVE FUN!!!

9/30/25