

Our history is something we all hold in common, that we all share. It is one of the threads that bind us together as a community and as a country. An exciting and rich chapter in our national history is the story of the Santa Fe Trail. Through a variety of commemorative and educational programs the Santa Fe Trail Association attempts to promote public awareness of and appreciation for this historic pioneer route. By authorizing the creation of local chapters, the association hopes to expand its activity and reach a wider audience.

Organization

Persons in a community, county, or multi-county area wishing to form a SFTA chapter should meet, select a slate of officers, and appoint a committee to prepare a set of bylaws. Dues (if any) and a schedule of meetings may be included in the bylaws. Besides the usual offices of president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and program chairman, these special offices may prove useful: reporter, whose duties are (1) to prepare publicity releases for meetings and other chapter activities and to distribute these to the media and post them on public bulletin boards; (2) to furnish the *Wagon Tracks* editor with regular reports of chapter activities, and librarian, whose duties are to take charge of the circulation among members of basic Santa Fe Trail books accumulated by the chapter (see below); and to coordinate a program to assist local libraries, schools, and museums in the acquisition of trail books, maps, and similar materials; and to collect ephemeral matter as news clippings, magazine articles, travel brochures, etc. related to the trail, for deposit in a Santa Fe Trail vertical file at the public library.

Affiliation

Upon the formation of a chapter, the new president may apply for official recognition and affiliation by addressing a request to the SFTA president, supplying the date of the organization of the chapter, copy of chapter bylaws, and a list of chapter members. All such members must be members in good standing of the Santa Fe Trail Association.

Upon receipt of this request, the SFTA president (1) may take no immediate action, deferring the matter until the next regular meeting of the SFTA board of directors, who shall have the sole authority to grant final recognition to a new chapter; or, (2) the president may grant conditional recognition to the chapter which will remain in effect until the next board meeting when a final decision, accepting or rejecting the application, will be rendered by the directors. Notification of that decision will be sent to the chapter by the SFTA president. Upon official acceptance by the board, the

chapter will be issued a charter certificate.

Once certification has been gained, changes in chapter bylaws should be submitted to the SFTA board for approval.

All actions of a chapter should be consistent with the bylaws of the Santa Fe Trail Association.

Chapter Programs

All chapters are at liberty to develop the direction and content of their programs. The following activities, however, are offered as suggestions:

1. It is important to have informative and entertaining programs to maintain member interest at regularly scheduled meetings, whether quarterly, bi-monthly, or monthly. Lectures, slide presentations, films, book reviews, etc. that deal with local trail sites will generate the greatest interest. But programs that give an overview of trail history or deal with a more general subject (such as trail legislation) are useful for variety and should not be neglected.

2. Cooperative programs arranged with local historical societies can be productive, attracting added public attention to both organizations.

3. Sponsor a half day or all day outing and tour, open to both members and non-members, to local trail sites, with knowledgeable speakers making a presentation at each location. Other sites of historical interest can be included.

4. Cooperate with the local museum or library in preparing an exhibit on the Santa Fe Trail.

5. Develop activities to raise funds for the purchase of trail books to be donated to the public library or school libraries.

6. Accumulate a small but basic chapter library of paperback books on the trail to circulate among members.

7. Sponsor the showing of a traveling trail exhibition, of the kind available from some state and federal agencies.

8. Provide speakers on trail subjects to local service organizations, women's clubs, schools, senior centers, etc. In addition to history there may be a desire to emphasize the economic and educational advantages deriving from modern interest in the trail.

9. Sponsor an essay contest for students on a specific trail subject or subjects. Examples: *Wildlife Seen on the Trail*; *Women's Trail Diaries*; *Trail Sites I Have Visited*; *Famous Trail Forts*; *Life in Santa Fe During Trail Days*; etc.

10. Participate in annual historical celebrations that relate to the trail. A real contribution can be made here since many of these celebrations are long on amusements and short on historical content, although the two are not mutually exclusive.

Sample activities:

- (a) Sponsor a historical entry in the parade.
 - (b) Sponsor an outside historical speaker or a historical film at a convenient time during the celebration.
 - (c) Prepare a special article on trail history for the local newspaper, to be published during the celebration.
 - (d) Maintain a booth or table at an appropriate location selling trail books, maps, etc., and handing out SFTA literature. This serves as both a fund-raising and educational activity. Books in quantities of five or more can be ordered at a discount from some publishers and unsold copies can be returned. Good items to sell: *Santa Fe Trail Trivia*, by Leo and Bonita Oliva; *Following the Santa Fe Trail* by Marc Simmons; *Trail of Commerce and Conquest*, by Jack D. Rittenhouse; *Trail Dust*, by Gene and Mary Martin; and *The Santa Fe Trail*, by William E. Brown. Addresses of the publishers will be provided by calling The Patrice Press at their toll-free number, 1-800-367-9242.
 - (e) Assist in arranging participation of reenactment groups such as mountain men, a cavalry troop, Indian dancers, etc.
11. Arrange guide service to local sites for authors and groups planning Santa Fe Trail bus tours passing through the area.
 12. Sponsor the writing and publication of a brochure or booklet on local trail sites.
 13. Carry out an inventory of local trail landmarks, structures (such as stage stations, historic residences, etc.), ruts, markers, monuments, and other points of interest.
 14. Conduct a program to research and map a particular stretch of the trail.
 15. Assist members in arranging travel plans to SFTA symposiums or to the Santa Fe Trail Center's Rendezvous programs in Larned.

CHAPTER GUIDELINES

The Santa Fe Trail Association