

Grace Collier
(1921 – 2000)



Grace Louise Husted Collier (1921-2000), a Kansas native, was a great friend and supporter of the historic Santa Fe Trail. She was fascinated with its history and was active in the promotion of the route, history of the commerce of the prairies, and preservation of Trail remnants. She served as executive director of the Santa Fe Trail/Highway 56 Association, forerunner of the Santa

Fe Trail Association (of which she was a charter member). She worked closely with William Wheatley of Clayton NM, president of the Highway 56 Association. Grace, residing at Great Bend KS at the time, organized the 1961 Santa Fe Trail/Highway 56 caravan to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Kansas statehood and the 140th anniversary of the opening of the Santa Fe Trail. The caravan followed the Trail from Missouri to New Mexico and held parades in some 30 cities with crowds of up to 40,000 people. This was the first attempt to organize an ongoing association to preserve, protect, and promote the Santa Fe Trail, and the remaining assets of the Highway 56 Association were donated to the Santa Fe Trail Association soon after it was founded in 1986. Grace, her husband Kent Collier, and their children often traveled the old Trail, and she knew many Trail enthusiasts along the route. Grace collected Trail history and compiled an extensive calendar of events, a project deserving an annual Santa Fe Trail calendar but never published. She received a Santa Fe Trail Association Award of Merit in 1987. She always had a great love for the Santa Fe Trail and treasured her “Trail friends,” of whom there were many.