

## **SFTA—THE EARLY YEARS**

by Marc Simmons

For the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the SFTA—2006

The beginnings of the Santa Fe Trail Association trace back to a preliminary organizational meeting in 1986 at Trinidad, Colorado. A number of previous attempts over the years to establish such an organization, long-term, had failed. However, the Fort Lamed Historical Society built and dedicated in 1974 the beautiful Santa Fe Trail Center just outside Larned, Kansas. Though a local facility, it assumed the mission of interpreting the entire Santa Fe Trail. In 1980 the Center began holding a Rendezvous in even-numbered years, a two-day conference that featured lectures, tours, and historical entertainment. The Rendezvous proved highly successful, being warmly embraced by the public. This suggested that the day was not far off when a new interstate Trail association could not only survive, but flourish.

A new dawning of public interest for western trails was now apparent, but it needed to be mobilized through effective leadership and establishment of grassroots rather than strictly scholarly organizations. That formula suggested that the hour had arrived for action on the Santa Fe Trail. An effort in that direction was soon under way.

The key figure in what followed was Joy Poole, then administrator of the Baca and Bloom Houses museum in Trinidad, Colorado, a Santa Fe Trail site operated by the Colorado Historical Society. In late 1984, Poole was able to persuade Society president Barbara Sudler and director of education Marianne Lorenz to sponsor a trail symposium in Trinidad. Located at the northern entrance to Raton Pass, the community offered all the facilities necessary for a successful Santa Fe Trail gathering.

Initially, the idea was to invite mainly scholars and museum administrators who had a connection to Trail history. But the event was to be open to the public, to accommodate residents of Trinidad and the surrounding area who might have an interest in the subject. First projections were that as many as 50 to 100 people would be interested in attending, a number considered optimistic.

In January 1985, Marianne Lorenz wrote to Ruth Olson of the Santa Fe Trail Center at Larned with a request for the names of Trail experts who might be willing to serve as consultants for the proposed symposium. Olson referred her to Marc Simmons and he provided Lorenz a list of knowledgeable persons that were likely candidates as advisors or lecturers. A planning meeting was then scheduled for August 22 at the offices of the Colorado Historical Society in downtown Denver. Among those in attendance, besides Simmons and Poole, was Sylvia Mooney of Kansas City, who had helped save the Cave Spring site in neighboring Raytown and was a strong advocate for the formation of a new Santa Fe Trail Association.

Prior to the planning meeting, Joy Poole visited Simmons at his home in Cerrillos, New Mexico, and explained a larger purpose she had in mind, one that coincided with the wishes of Sylvia Mooney. The upcoming symposium in Trinidad had the potential of attracting a sizable Santa Fe Trail constituency. Why not use the occasion to organize an association on the order of OCTA, to see whether such a body could now survive? Poole asked Simmons to serve as provisional president during the organizational stage, inasmuch as his published books had made his name familiar to Santa Fe Trail enthusiasts. He agreed.

The Denver meeting, intense and productive, carved out an interesting symposium and drew up a plan to seek outside funding. It was agreed to extend invitations to two major speakers: author David Lavender on Bent's Fort, and Prof. Sandra Myres addressing Women on the Santa Fe Trail. A number of Trail luminaries were also asked to appear on a series of panels, among them Jack D. Rittenhouse, Leo E. Oliva, David Dary, Ruth Olson, David Sandoval, and Bill Pitts. Significantly, the last item on the planning meeting's agenda was this: Discussion of strategies for organizing a group of Santa Fe Trail scholars and interested publics into a Santa Fe Trail Association. Joy Poole had managed to get this subject added, so that now it appeared as an official and specific part of the program.

Joy Poole took charge of the symposium arrangements in Trinidad and assisted the Denver office as well in seeking grants and corporate funding. Eventually, substantial financial aid was received from the Colorado Endowment for the Humanities, the Trinidad Historical Society, the American Association for University Women, the Ballantine Family Charitable Fund, and the Colorado Historical Society. Trinidad State Junior College provided a venue and valuable logistical support.

While this work moved forward, important trail-related events were occurring on another front. Legislation had been introduced in Congress to designate the Santa Fe Trail as a National Historic Trail under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service. In the absence of any advocacy body for the Santa Fe Trail, OCTA moved to fill the gap and take up its cause in congressional halls. In fact, OCTA went so far as to invest \$2,500 from its own meager treasury toward the lobbying effort. In early April it sent a delegation to Washington composed of OCTA president Tom Hunt, vice-president Barbara Magerl, and members Sylvia Mooney, Gregory Franzwa, and Marc Simmons. Franzwa, indeed, was the chief architect of the pending legislation.

Initially, Poole had intended to wait until the symposium to form a Trail association. But now she began to feel pressure to move things a bit faster. For one, the trail bill in Washington was having problems and needed all the support it could get. For another, the Trinidad community, including businessmen, the college, and the local historical society were willing to contribute money and were eager to see an association established, with the hope that its headquarters might be placed in their town.

Therefore, in September of 1985 Poole went ahead and incorporated the new body, using the name Santa Fe Trail Council, under the laws of the State of Colorado. Shortly afterward, she applied to the Internal Revenue Service for tax exempt status. Council was used instead of Association on the recommendation of Simmons, who felt that the new organization should make plain that it had no connection with the defunct Santa Fe Trail Highway Association. It proved to be a mistake, since the word council had a limiting connotation, not appropriate for a popular promotional body as was envisioned. Of greater concern was a fear of confusion with the soon to be organized Santa Fe National Historic Trail Advisory Council. The misstep had to be corrected one year later at the Hutchinson Symposium in 1987, when Association was substituted for Council in the organization's name.

Although Poole had managed to incorporate the Santa Fe Trail Council, the entity as yet had no structure and no clear map of the direction it would take in the future. It was anticipated that those things would be dealt with at the Trinidad gathering, scheduled for September 12 and 13, 1986. Poole discussed with OCTA president Hunt the possibility of

the Council becoming a chapter of that already-flourishing organization. He admitted that as a possibility, but also suggested that some other sort of affiliation, with a higher status, might be more suitable.

In Trinidad, on the afternoon of September 11, prior to the opening symposium reception, Poole and Simmons had a meeting with Leo Oliva, Merrill J. Mattes, and several others to discuss the prospects for the new Council. The possibility of affiliating with OCTA was considered and Mattes mentioned some problems that would have to be overcome should that course be taken. By then, however, sentiment was already building in favor of the Council following an independent route. Everything at that point hinged on the response of those attending the symposium.

It was at this small preliminary meeting that historian Leo Oliva volunteered to edit a quarterly newsletter for the Council. Several possible names were discussed, including Trail Siftings and Converse of the Prairies, which was a takeoff on Josiah Gregg's classic book Commerce of the Prairies. The latter name, suggested by Oliva and favored by Simmons, was ultimately passed over in favor of the now-celebrated Wagon Tracks. Nevertheless, Converse of the Prairies survived as the title for the book review section. And, another regular feature, Council Trove, contained primary documents.

To almost everyone's surprise, the Trinidad Symposium drew 230 registrants. As it turned out, scholars and museum administrators, the original target group, were in the minority. The bulk of the participants were ordinary folk, many of them living along the Santa Fe Trail in one of the five trail states. Most had never attended a serious historical conference such as this, and they were enthralled by the heady mix of lectures, panels, tours, and other special events. They would return home and spread the word up and down the trail that something new and exciting had burst upon the scene. The successful program formula that worked so well in Trinidad would serve as the framework for all later symposiums.

Marc Simmons opened the proceedings with a keynote address that ended with the ringing phrase: "The Santa Fe Trail lives on!" Those words subsequently were used on promotional literature of the Council. The highlight of the several presentations, however, was that delivered by David Lavender on the second day of the program, his subject being, "Bent's Fort—Outpost of Manifest Destiny." Another popular speaker was Jere Krakow, a National Park Service historian, who gave a slide-illustrated overview of the Santa Fe Trail. The lectures were later published in book form by the Colorado Historical Society.

Several special events were warmly praised by those in attendance. A traveling exhibit of Santa Fe Trail photographs was displayed at the Baca House during the opening reception. Famed historical chef Sam Arnold (who died June 8, 2006) was host for a buffalo roast one evening at Bent's Fort National Historic Site. And on Sunday after conclusion of the symposium, 70 diehard participants signed on for an AmTrak ride over Raton Pass, with Don Berg, owner of Uncle Dick Wootton's ranch at the top of the pass, pointing out landmarks over the train's loud speaker.

On the evening of September 12, 1986, there occurred the inaugural business meeting of the Santa Fe Trail Council. Most of the symposium participants were on hand. Simmons, presiding, outlined the events leading up to the formation of the organization. He noted that two years before during a museum conference at the Hilton Hotel in Santa Fe, Joy Poole had first proposed the holding of a Santa Fe Trail symposium to Simmons,

Ruth Olson, and Bill Pitts. They all agreed that it was a great idea, scarcely believing at the time that it could actually happen, and happen of the size and scope as seen ultimately at the Trinidad gathering. At the business meeting, Simmons made the first public reference to Joy Poole as the “mother” of the new Council.

He then introduced to the assembly a board of directors, composed of two representatives from each of the trail states (Missouri, Kansas, Colorado, Oklahoma, and New Mexico), plus seven at-large representatives (a number later reduced to two).

They were, from Missouri, Mark L. Gardner and Sylvia Mooney; from Kansas, Ruth Olson (secretary) and Leo E. Oliva; from Oklahoma, Bill Pitts and Daniel Muldoon; from Colorado, Joy Poole (vice-president) and David A Sandoval; from New Mexico, Marc Simmons (president) and Dan Murphy; and at-large, John Tarabino (treasurer), Leslie Wildesen, Michael E. Duncan, Jere L. Krakow, Barbara Peirce (1987 symposium coordinator), Adrian Bustamante, and Michael E. Pitel (publicity coordinator).

This board had met for the first time just prior to the business meeting to discuss and offer revisions to the proposed bylaws. These had been drafted by Poole using the bylaws of OCTA as a model.

In addition, the board had agreed that the Council should hold a biennial symposium in September of odd-numbered years. That would avoid a conflict with the Santa Fe Trail Center’s Rendezvous held regularly in even-numbered years. It was decided to hold a symposium the very next year, 1987, to begin the odd years’ schedule. Barbara Peirce, a board member, had already proposed her home town, Hutchinson, Kansas, for the symposium site and had obtained a letter from James H. Stringer, president of Hutchinson Community College, offering his campus as a meeting place.

Simmons explained all of this at the general business meeting and noted that the officers, board, and bylaws would have strictly provisional status until the Hutchinson Symposium, at which time the Council's structure, with any needed revisions, would be given final approval. He then asked the assembly to approve these actions necessary to launch the Santa Fe Trail Council. A motion was so offered and passed by a voice vote.

It had become apparent by now that the Council would be taking its own course, independent from OCTA. Simmons introduced to the assembly Merrill Mattes, a member of OCTA's executive board. He made a brief presentation on the need for trail organizations to cooperate in the achievement of common aims.

With business out of the way, two lighter matters remained on the agenda. One was the presentation of Awards of Merit to persons who had made exceptional contributions to the Santa Fe Trail. The honorees were Earl Monger, a longtime volunteer at the Santa Fe Trail Center in Larned; William Wheatley of Clayton, for his work with the old Santa Fe Trail Highway Association; Ralph Hathaway, for preserving trail ruts on his farm near Chase, Kansas; Amelia J. Betts and Katherine B. Kelley who had developed a trail marker program in Douglas County, Kansas; Paul Bentrup, trail activist from Deerfield, Kansas; Alta B. Page, who had donated the Boggsville, Colorado trail site (110 acres) to the Pioneer Historical Society of Bent County; and, Gregory Franzwa, for his work on the Santa Fe Trail legislation.

Earl Monger was ill and unable to attend. His handsome award plaque was delivered to him in the hospital and he died on October 23. The award to Amelia J. Betts had been presented posthumously. She had been a steadfast advocate of a trail organization, but

sadly had not lived to witness the formation of the Council. The awards presentation would become a permanent and popular feature of all future symposiums.

The second event held after the business meeting was a book raffle, a large number of trail volumes having been donated by authors, booksellers, and publishers. The aim was twofold: to get Santa Fe Trail books into the hands of readers, and to raise money. Almost \$300 was produced by the raffle and the amount was used to establish a marker fund for the trail. A second book raffle was held the following year in Hutchinson, but that was the last. Unlike the awards ceremony, it failed to arouse enthusiasm and was allowed to lapse. Nevertheless, the sum from the initial raffle remained significant historically. It was the first lump of dollars raised by the Council to benefit the trail.

The dedicated and extremely competent Barbara Peirce assembled one of the finest symposium programs ever (for September 24-27, 1987), with just the right balance between formal presentations, tours, and social events. The distinguished historian David J. Weber delivered a major address, and the most popular presentation was given by Dr. Peter D. Olch whose slide-illustrated lecture was titled: "Bleeding, Purging and Puking Along the Santa Fe Trail."

The board meeting, preceding the program, proved most productive. Since founding of the Council at Trinidad the year before, memberships had swelled to 454 and according to Secretary Ruth Olson new applications were arriving almost daily. A report by treasurer John Tarabino showed that finances of the organization were sound, the largest expense being printing costs for *Wagon Tracks*.

The board discussed developing a logo for the Council. Leo Oliva proposed that a contest be held during the coming year for selection of the logo and offered \$100 as a prize for the winning entry. The idea won approval and the new logo was unveiled two years later at the next symposium.

The board expressed a strong wish to see the lectures given at Hutchinson published in book form, as had happened with the Trinidad lectures. The Colorado Historical Society had published the latter under the title: *The Santa Fe Trail, New Perspectives*. Joseph Snell, executive director of the Kansas State Historical Society, who was in attendance, volunteered to publish them. They appeared in 1988 titled, *Adventure on the Santa Fe Trail*, and edited by Leo E. Oliva. These two early publications represented significant contributions to trail studies and lent the new organization considerable respectability.

Bill Pitts was called to the chair to preside over a discussion of the new bylaws. Vigorous debate ensued over a number of points. One of the most important was a proposal to change the last word in the organization's name from Council to Association. A minority of the board led by Joy Poole opposed the move, but it passed. Leo Oliva had brought a computer to the meeting so that he could enter revisions as they were adopted. Thus, upon the board's approval of the final document, a copy was ready to be presented on the following evening, September 25, at the general membership meeting.

Mark L. Gardner delivered the report of the nominating committee, with names proposed for new officers and board members. Simmons declined a regular term as president, for health and personal reasons. The board, however, prevailed upon him to reconsider, citing the need to maintain continuity in this early stage of the Association's existence.

Joseph Snell accepted the nomination for vice-president, and Ruth Olson became the secretary-treasurer. Those latter two offices were now combined in a single person. The headquarters of the Association were established at the Santa Fe Trail Center, Larned. A formal agreement was also entered into with the Fort Larned Historical Society whereby the Center became “the official archive and repository for the Association's documents, records, and other assorted memorabilia.”

As the last order of business, David Gaines of the National Park Service reviewed the progress and success of recent Congressional legislation on the trail. On May 8, 1987, President Ronald Reagan had signed the bill adding the Santa Fe Trail to the National Historic Trails System. Gaines noted that the NPS was required to conduct a comprehensive survey of the trail and also form an advisory council to consult on the project. Santa Fe Trail Association members would be involved in both activities.

The next evening, September 25, after a banquet, the reorganized Santa Fe Trail Association held its general membership meeting, at which the members by voice vote approved the new slate of officers and the revised bylaws. President Simmons displayed the framed original Santa Fe Trail bill signed by President Reagan, given to him by Bill Richardson (D-NM), one of the cosponsors of the legislation in the House of Representatives. Simmons turned the document over to Ruth Olson, so that it could become item number one in the Association's archives at the Santa Fe Trail Center.

After a book raffle, Awards of Merit were presented. Among the recipients were Isabel D. Campbell, a guiding spirit in the founding of the Santa Fe Trail Center; bibliographer Jack D. Rittenhouse; Mary and Leo Gamble of Springfield, Colorado; Independence historian Pauline S. Fowler; and OCTA, whose president, Dick Ackerman, was on hand to accept the accolade for his organizations legislative efforts on behalf of the Santa Fe Trail. At this time, a new honorific designation was announced, that of Santa Fe Trail Ambassador. The first two ambassadors to be named were Paul Bentrup and Les Vilda.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Barbara Peirce was congratulated for her monumental efforts in staging a spectacular symposium. When presented with a box of long-stemmed roses, she gushed, “My goodness. I've never received flowers in a box!” It was a moment that SFTA members who were present could not forget. Tragically, Barbara died of cancer on March 28, 1995, at the age of 56.

On the last evening of the Hutchinson Symposium, September 26, the newly elected governing board held a brief business meeting, the first under the Santa Fe Trail Association (SFTA) name and under the revised bylaws. Among other things, it approved a budget proposal for the coming year prepared by Joy Poole and required by the IRS. Seven standing committees were created to carry on the Association's work in the interval between symposiums. The board meeting adjourned with instructions to reconvene for an interim meeting the following year during the Rendezvous at the Santa Fe Trail Center, Larned. Off-year meetings at the Rendezvous, thereafter, became standard practice.

Over 350 participants had registered for the Hutchinson Symposium. Press coverage, as in Trinidad, was laudatory and abundant. This latest success helped expand the rolls, so that by November 2, the Association could announce the admission of its 500th member. This healthy condition put to rest any doubts over whether the organization could not only survive but prosper.

The symposiums that followed Hutchinson were Santa Fe (1989), Arrow Rock (1991), La Junta-Bent's Fort (1993) and Larned (1995), the latter rounding out the first decade of the Association's existence. Each one proved to be a stunning success. The symposiums, along with *Wagon Tracks* and the dozen chapters that had been founded along the trail became true showpieces of the organization. Quite a few members, who had never before been associated with a formal historical group, found a home in the SFTA, made new friends, and acquired in-depth knowledge about the Trail. They would be the first to say that their lives have been immeasurably enriched by the experience.

### **SFTA—MATURE YEARS**

by Hal Jackson, President of the SFTA 2001-2005

After reading Marc's comments concerning the early years of the Santa Fe Trail Association, I was struck by accomplishments of our Association pioneers in such a brief period. When you read it you, too, were aware that Marc was surprised at how many people truly loved the old Trail and were willing to help preserve and promote it.

That first period might be labeled the "youthful" one, a time of excitement and exuberance. Such youthful periods are followed by times of maturity. It is this period about which I write. The struggles and challenges of the early era were followed by more problems and different solutions, but the Association has remained strong.

Especially important in this period is the ever-increasing cooperation between the Association and the National Park Service. Some in the Association view this cooperation with suspicion and would like to keep the NPS at arm's length. Others find their support, financial and technical, to be invaluable.

Following Simmons's format, here is a look at the mature years of SFTA.

The third SFTA symposium was held at Santa Fe September 28 to October 2, 1989, with 550 people in attendance. The coordinator for the symposium was Adrian Bustamante and he did a remarkable job.

By this symposium, late 1989, Ruth Olson reported that there were 861 members in the SFTA. These were from 35 states and West Germany. David Gaines of the National Park Service encouraged the SFTA to join in a cooperative agreement to help manage the Trail. Also, guidelines for the creation of chapters along the Trail were approved. The first four chapters were Cimarron Cutoff, Texas Panhandle, Wagon Bed Spring, and Heart of the Flint Hills.

New officers were chosen and Marc Simmons passed the gavel to Joe Snell. Tim Zwink became vice-president while Ruth Olson continued as secretary/treasurer.

The fourth SFTA symposium was held at Arrow Rock, Missouri, September 27-30, 1991. This symposium was sponsored by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources and Richard Forry, site director at Arrow Rock State Historic Site, was symposium coordinator. This symposium was a resounding success with some 350 registrants. The SFTA had surpassed 1000 in membership as reported by Ruth Olson at the symposium.

New officers selected at Arrow Rock were Bill Pitts as president, Mark Gardner as vice-president, with Ruth continuing as secretary/treasurer. The Association was thriving at this time. A successful symposium at Santa Fe, the western terminus of the SFT, was followed by another successful gathering at Arrow Rock near the eastern end of the Trail.

Bent's Old Fort NHS became the centerpiece for the next symposium held September 23-26, 1993. The coordinator for this symposium was Don Hill, superintendent at Bent's Old Fort.

Several very important matters were raised at this symposium. Mark Gardner brought up the matter of celebrating the 175th anniversary of the founding of the Trail (that would be in 1996). Harry Myers assumed the duty of working on this important project.

Another important issue raised was that of a dues increase. An increase from \$10 to \$15 for an individual and from \$15 to \$20 for a family was instituted. A drop in membership was one result of this increase. This was to happen again for the SFTA in a later year.

A new award was introduced at this symposium, the Jack D. Rittenhouse memorial Stagecoach Award for lifetime achievement in research and writing about the Trail. First recipients were Leo and Bonita Oliva. A list of all awards presented over the years is found elsewhere in this issue.

Bill Pitts was reelected to a second term as president and Mark Gardner to a second term as vice-president. Ruth Olson continued as secretary/treasurer.

The sixth symposium was held at Larned, Kansas, September 21-24, 1995. Program coordinator was Steve Linderer, Superintendent of Fort Larned National Historic Site. Support, financial and logistical, came from a wide variety of local sources.

The SFTA board had found the need to hold meetings between symposiums and rendezvous. The need for annual audits and requirements that the IRS imposed on 501C3 organizations were discussed at the board meeting.

Bill Pitts ended his second two-year term as president and handed the gavel to new president Ross Marshall. Mike Olsen was elected vice-president.

The first symposium sponsored by a SFTA chapter was held September 24-28, 1997. The Cimarron Cutoff Chapter hosted 400 participants in three venues: Elkhart, Kansas; Boise City, Oklahoma; and Clayton, New Mexico. Coordinators were David Hutchison, Helen Brown, Phyllis Randolph, Sue Richardson, Dan Sharp, and Bonnie Heimann.

It was a very successful symposium and it set the bar very high for succeeding chapters. Subsequent symposiums have been hosted by various SFTA chapters up and down the SFT. Opening ceremonies were held in Elkhart with Marc Simmons giving the keynote address. From Elkhart the symposium went to Boise City and finally ended at Clayton. This "migrating" meeting was difficult to coordinate but turned out to be great experience.

New officers were Margaret Sears as president, Sam Arnold as vice-president, and, of course, Ruth Olson continued as secretary/treasurer.

In November 1997, Dave Hutchison and Helen Brown gave a check for \$6467 to the SFTA. From 1997 onward any surplus funds from hosting a symposium were to be divided equally between the host chapter and the SFTA. The goal of a symposium is not to turn a profit but to provide a venue to show off the SFT. Registration cost is always kept as low as possible.

In 1998, the SFTA joined the Santa Fe Trail Center and the Fort Larned NHS as host for the Rendezvous. The Rendezvous are held in even-numbered years and it was fitting for the SFTA to help in planning and executing these important meetings.

President Margaret Sears called the board to Larned for a retreat in November 1997. Several board retreats have been held subsequently.



An important item during 1998 was the funding of the Santa Fe Trail National Scenic Byway. The Long Distance Trails office of the NPS started a Passport Stamp program as well as refurbishing the two NPS traveling exhibits. The SFTA began an aggressive program of mapping the SFT in 1998 as well. Phil Petersen, a professional surveyor and longtime SFTA member, was appointed chairman of the mapping committee. Phil put on training workshops along the Trail to help local members accurately map the trail.

Another dues increase resulted in a 12% drop in membership.

In November 1998, Margaret Sears announced the creation of two new positions: NPS Long Distance Trails Liaison under the eye of Faye Gaines and Anna Belle Cartwright would direct the SFTA Museums Project.

By early 1999 the SFTA was involved with the Partnership for National Trails. This group sponsored a workshop on Historic Trails in Kansas City. The Partnership has been instrumental in obtaining increased funding for the NPS National Historic Trails. SFTA has received many thousands of dollars supporting trail mapping, workshops, our headquarters, to name a few. The first NPS Cost-Share program was received by the SFTA to help support the Council Grove symposium.

The second chapter-sponsored symposium, by Heart of the Flint Hills Chapter, was held in Council Grove, September 23-26, 1999. A total of 383 Trail aficionados attended this very successful gathering. Program coordinator was Deanne Wright and the whole Council Grove community helped out. Margaret Sears was reelected president and Sam Arnold continued as vice-president. Of course Ruth Olson Peters continued as secretary/treasurer.

A new service was added in 1999. Speakers Bureau grants of up to \$250 were made available to chapters to help them entice good speakers to address their meetings. A very important event was reported in May 2001. Lone Elm Campground was purchased by the city of Olathe, Kansas. This site was a very important one for both the Santa Fe traders and the migrants headed for Oregon and California. It is now (2006) fully developed with historic section and recreation section.

Las Vegas, New Mexico, was the scene of the symposium held September 27-30, 2001. Held a bare two weeks after the tragic events of 9/11, it was almost a miracle that more than 300 participants attended. Many people canceled, including the entire group of flyers who were not allowed to fly at that time.

Steve Whitmore was coordinator for the symposium and Corazón de los Caminos the host chapter. Margaret Sears passed the presidency to Hal Jackson while Anne Mallinson became vice-president. Ruth Olson Peters continued as treasurer while Mike Olsen became secretary as a result of a change to the bylaws dividing the secretary and treasurer position. Another nice feature at this symposium was a trail ride in which 39 riders made their way from Point of Rocks Ranch in New Mexico to the Rock crossing of the Canadian River.

At the Spring board meeting in Lexington, Missouri, the category of life membership was approved by the board and later ratified by the SFTA membership.

The NPS began a weekly program in conjunction with AMTRAK on the Southwest Chief that runs from La Junta, Colorado, to Albuquerque, New Mexico. Volunteers were trained (no pun intended) to ride along and provide information about the SFT on this segment of the railroad.

Jere Krakow, a longtime friend of the SFTA, became superintendent of Long Distance Trails for the NPS in 2002. Jere was involved in the original mapping project accomplished (and published) by Greg Franzwa.

In 2002, the SFTA began a grant program to assist scholars conducting research on SFT topics. This program has been very successful and several of the grantees have reported their findings in Wagon Tracks.

It was in early 2003 that planning began on a major marker site just west of Gardner, Kansas. The SFTA was the lead organization in the development of ideas for the site and the NPS, OCTA, and others joined in. In 2006 funding was obtained (more than \$200,000 was needed).

Also, in 2003, NPS funding was received for the first series of teacher workshops. Chris Day and Marcia Fox developed the workshops to help teachers in elementary and middle school classes incorporate the SFT in their teaching plans. Workshops were later held in Council Grove, Lamar, and Las Vegas. Fifty five teachers attended these great events.

In August 2003, Jere Krakow honored (and surprised) the SFTA by sharing an award that his Long Distance Trails office had received. His staff had won the Intermountain Region Garrison Gold Award of \$2000 of which Jere passed on \$1000 to the SFTA for its fine work.

Anne Mallinson, vice-president of the SFTA, served as coordinator for the symposium held September 24-28, 2003, in Kansas City. About 300 attendees met, heard great presentations, and took a variety of educational field trips.

At the general meeting, President Jackson announced that he, Anne Mallinson, Ruth Olson Peters, and Mike Olsen would continue in office as each was reelected.

In May 2004, we found out that the NPS will provide three-year funding for a manager position. A search committee was appointed by President Jackson and after many months of scanning over one hundred applications, three finalists were invited to Larned for interviews. Clive Siegle was selected as our first manager and began his duties October 1, 2004.

A tall pole marking the center of the old town square at Old Franklin, where the Santa Fe Trail began, was placed on March 16, 2005. Weather had delayed the erection of the pole for many months. Chief workers in this project were Leo Oliva and Denny Davis.

The picnic shelter at Point of Rocks, New Mexico, was completed in November 2004. Faye Gaines, a SFTA board member and owner of the Point of Rocks Ranch, partnered with the NPS, Corazón de los Caminos Chapter, the State of New Mexico, and the Boy Scouts on this project. Completed were a picnic shelter, parking area, pedestrian turnstile, restroom (supplied by Scenic Byway Program), and wayside exhibits.

Quivira and Cottonwood Crossing Chapters co-hosted the symposium held in McPherson, Kansas, in September 2005. Janel Cook did a remarkable job coordinating this symposium. More than 300 Trail folks were in attendance at McPherson.

At the general membership meeting, Hal Jackson introduced new board members and officers. George Bayless was introduced as president, Joanne VanCoevern the new vice-president, Kathleen Pickard secretary, and Ruth Olson Peters continues as treasurer.

By February 2006, the SFTA-sponsored Zebulon Pike Bicentennial celebration was in full swing. A web site for the Bicentennial was up and running and plans were being made for recognition events all along the SFT.