

TRAIL OF COURAGE LIVING HISTORY FESTIVAL

Fulton County Historical Society, Inc.

37 E 375 N, Rochester, IN 46975

Phone 574-223-4436 Mon. - Sat. 9 to 5

Website: www.fultoncountyhistory.org E-mail fchs@rtcol.com

The 2026 annual Trail of Courage Living History Festival will be held **Sept. 19-20. Hours: Sat. 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Sun. 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.** This event will be our 50th since 1976! **Friday Sept. 18 will be School Tour Day.** You can volunteer to give a presentation to groups of students or you can visit with other participants and just enjoy the day. No set-ups will be allowed from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. because of the schools. This must be enforced for insurance purposes.

WE CORDIALLY INVITE YOU to apply to participate in this exciting event. A variety of activities is planned for this year including a full schedule of history-related programs on the Chippeway Village stage and the Hillside Amphitheater stage, muzzle-loading shoots, authenticity competitions for camps, booths and participant clothing, demonstrations of traditional crafts and skills, Indian and pioneer dancing for all, canoe rides, and much more. Please consider making application to be a part of it all!

HISTORIC CAMPS - In order to eliminate fussing, quibbling and cussing, we will assign campsites. Pre- registered folks get the spots they have had in previous years. Those who register when they arrive will take what is left - show your participant's packet to the Camp Commander so he can show you your campsite. Do not set up camp until you know which camp is yours or you might have to move. You will be assigned a camp within your correct historic period. See application for list of these categories. Your pre-registration must be in by Aug. 15. All first-time participants must pre-register and be accepted by review of the Steering Committee. Please read carefully all of the enclosed literature before filling out an application, and be aware that by signing your application you agree to abide by all Trail of Courage rules and policies.

THE PRIMARY PURPOSE of the Trail of Courage is to educate the public, and to preserve and promote an accurate picture of life in frontier Indiana, as well as other areas and time periods of North American history, including the French & Indian War, voyageurs, Revolutionary War, War of 1812, Woodlands and Plains Indians, Western Fur Trade and Frontier Indiana. Authenticity in dress and camp or set-up is required for participation. Please make your camp, your clothing, your trade goods, and everything you bring as authentic as you possibly can. It will be appreciated, and many will be rewarded with recognition and praise.

WE ESPECIALLY HONOR the courage of the American Indians. We want to commemorate the Indian way of life and revitalize and adopt their respect and treatment of the environment. Conservation of Mother Earth is greatly needed now, and we can learn a lot from the American Indians. As we have done each year since we began this festival in 1976, we recall the courage of the Potawatomi on the forced removal from Indiana to Kansas in 1838, called the Trail of Death because so many died along the way.

TRAIL OF COURAGE is not a craft festival or a rendezvous -- it is much more. It is an event aimed at educating each of us in various facets of our country's history through the life styles, tools, crafts and foods of 1700-1840 historic periods. When combined, these separate elements can form a "time machine" which can transport us and the public back in time where we can celebrate our successes, learn from our mistakes, and carry a proud legacy into the future. But this is possible only if we respect all races and nationalities and their many contributions.

GENERAL ADMISSION: For the visiting public the price is Adult \$10, children 6-11 \$5, age 5 & under free, students on bus \$5 each on school day. Your friends can earn free admission by helping FCHS before, during or after. Contact FCHS to sign up to work.

TRAIL OF COURAGE - GENERAL INFORMATION

LOCATION: 4 miles north of Rochester, Indiana, on west side of New U.S. 31 and north side of Tippecanoe River. Entrance is off of county road 375N by Fulton County Museum, Round Barn Museum, and Living History Village.

REGISTRATION: Pre-registration is encouraged - a late fee is assessed after the deadline, Aug. 15. Campsites and trading areas are assigned by the Camp Commanders. Registration form must be filled out completely, signed and dated. A photograph of your outfit and trade goods must accompany all "first timer" applications. **Old-timers: please include all information and trade goods – Don't leave it blank even though it is same as last year!**

(over)

WHEN YOU FIRST ARRIVE - CHECK-IN: use east door of museum!! Upon arrival, all participants MUST check in at the museum to get their Participant Packet. Crossing the culvert into the primitive area will not be permitted until this packet is obtained and vehicle marker is in windshield. **YOU MUST HAVE PACKET & VEHICLE MARKER BEFORE YOUR CAMP**

COMMANDER WILL LET YOU SET UP. If you arrive after dark, you will be escorted to your campsite. Museum closes at 5 p.m. but stays open for check-in until 11 p.m. Thurs. and 12 midnight on Friday. Museum closes at 6 p.m. on Saturday & Sunday.

PARTICIPANT PACKET: Pick this up at check-in at museum when you first arrive as it contains important receipts you need to participate in the Trail: your designated historic camp or booth, trade license, shooter's receipts, Trail of Courage rules, a map of the grounds, event schedule, vehicle marker, and participant badges. **CHECK YOUR PACKET** to be sure you have all you paid for. Ask for corrections immediately if needed.

SCHOOL TOUR DAY: Friday 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. has been designated as "Trail School Tour Day" – please volunteer to come and give an educational program. **Absolutely no driving in and out during the school tour because of accident liability and insurance.** Registered Sex Offenders cannot be here on school day.

COMING EARLY- Camping areas are open from Wed. on. If you come early, please lend a hand cutting firewood, distributing trash barrels, setting up Indian dance arena or whatever needs doing.

PRIZES: Prizes will be on display in special prize display case at the Chippeway Village stage. Free literature and coupons from various black powder dealers are available in the museum also. You can donate a prize worth the cost of your fee.

HOW TO GET IN FREE: earn free camping, shooting & trading! Participant fee can be waived in several ways:

1. Donate a pre-1840 type prize of a wholesale value equal to your fee total. Prizes in lieu of fees cannot be accepted at the gate - they must be received with your application or turned in at museum when you check in! Prizes to honor winners should be donated by noon Sunday at the Chippeway Village stage.
2. Be program personnel - perform on the stage, fur trade skit, or dance. Indian dancers admitted free.
3. Work as security personnel or quality concern or other job, such as FCHS food booth. See below.

FREE ADMISSION: available by working a 4 hour shift for FCHS, either getting grounds ready ahead of time or during the event by working in FCHS positions such as in FCHS food booth, Admissions Gate, Chippeway Post Office, museum, or drive a tractor, If you have friends who like to attend, tell them of this offer. Please call us and make arrangements at least 2 weeks before the event.

MODERN NECESSITIES: such as rest rooms, pop & snack machines, bags of ice, water hose, electric hook-up (for emergency use only) are at the museum. For sale in the museum: many historic books, how-to material, patterns, historic clothes, gift shop items, souvenir postcards, etc. Also free showers in shower house west of museum!

THE TRAIL PROVIDES:

An educational experience for nearly 2,000 participants and 12,000 - 18,000 visitors and growing every year!

Festival grounds including 10 acres of woods, 25 acres of parking.

Fire and first aid service, 24 hour limited security.

Free camping for participants, free firewood, water, showers, privies and porta-pots including handicapped facilities.

Primitive wooden booths for booth traders, craftsmen, food purveyors.

Historic programs on the Chippeway Village stage in the woods, Hillside Amphitheater stage and special Indian Dance Arena.

Primitive shooting range and hawk range in a shady wooded area.

Historic foods, including breakfast, offered for sale.

Free Fulton County Museum, Round Barn Museum, Living History Village at north end of grounds.

Approximately \$500 worth of prizes awarded to shooters, hawk & knife throw winners, most authentic craft, trader, camp, etc.

The Sentinel Cup for most authentic (category to be announced).

Meet other re-enactors, crafts people, American Indians, public.

Exchange ideas, get jobs or find information on other events.

Learn the true history of American Indians & their genealogy from descendants of those who were here in 1830's.

Lots of fun and interesting things to see and do and learn!

Great food cooked on wood fires. Many people come to the trail just for the delicious foods!

GENERAL RULES APPLYING TO ALL PARTICIPANTS

"Modern" camping available for participants only, no public. Sorry, no hook-ups for electricity except for medical needs. \$10 fee will be charged for RV's and tents.

Historic clothing must be worn by all booth workers, craftsmen, shooters, Indians, and families both Saturday and Sunday during open hours. You are encouraged to wear historic clothing at all times, bringing old worn historic clothing for work time.

Only authentic historical crafts and food (prepared in 1800's style) will be admitted. All cooking must be over wood fires.

Only those with a Food Purveyors license may sell food and beverages. Fulton County Health Officer will inspect the food operations. Require to be a Fulton County Non-profit group or be grandfathered in to festival before rules came into effect.

Quality Concern Committee has the power to tell vendors to remove inappropriate items. Such items are not to be displayed anymore during event or you will be asked to leave, thus forfeiting your fees.

No vehicles in the primitive area at any time except to load or unload ONLY before 9 a.m. both days and Saturday evening 6 to 8 p.m. Unload and remove vehicles immediately. DO NOT let vehicle block roadways while you arrange your camp or booth - or eat or talk or sleep or whatever!

No modern materials or equipment is to be seen. Tables will not be allowed to take the place of renting a booth. Blanket traders must be true blanket traders with blankets lying on the ground. **If you want to trade off of tables, rent a booth or pay for a Merchant license. Skirt tables to the ground with blankets, old quilts or skins to hide boxes.**

NO DOGS, ANIMALS, PET SPIDERS OR INSECTS ALLOWED, except program dogs or companion dogs for handicapped and educational hive of honey bees. The public is not allowed to bring pets. You are responsible for your pet, need proof of insurance, required immunizations. DNR no longer gives permits for wild pets at public events. **NO LIVE ANIMALS ALLOWED TO BE BUTCHERED AT THE FESTIVAL. All program animals have to be pre-approved with all paperwork SUBMITTED 6 months prior to the festival. Birds and wild animals must be held only by the owner/presentor – do not allow other participants or public to hold them. Safety first – you are responsible.**

No alcoholic beverages will be consumed during the day - between midnight and 5 o'clock in the afternoon. All beverages must be consumed from primitive containers. **No drugs or illegal substances allowed.**

MINORS: No minors allowed to camp alone outside their parents' or guardians' designated area. **NO MINORS ALLOWED TO CONSUME ALCOHOL. Do not bring in alcohol during public hours – this is a family oriented event.**

QUIET TIME after 12 a.m./midnight so all can sleep! Be considerate of others.

Trail is a family-oriented event. Please conduct yourselves and your business in a non-offensive manner.

Fire safety - please put a rope around your fire to keep children out. Bring a shovel or fire extinguisher.

RAIN OR SHINE - the Trail of Courage will go on as scheduled! We request that you stay until 4 p.m. Sunday. The Trail is advertised widely and people come from great distances and expect it to be going strong till closing both days! Help us build a good reputation!

Except with special permission secured in advance, camps and booths will not be broken prior to 4 p.m. Sunday. **No vehicles will be let in to pack up until after 4:45 p.m. Sunday.**

NO – REGISTERED SEX OFFENDERS allowed to spend the night at the festival. Background checks are being done. THIS IS SAFETY FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS. During festival hours they can be here!

No loaded or primed firearms outside shooting area.

No raffles allowed. No contests allowed without prior consent by Fulton Co. Hist. Soc. Board of Directors 60 days before event.

No vendor is to provide or sell **face painting** for children. Indians have objected to this.

Indiana Code Art. 35 Sect. 47 prohibits selling **edged weapons** to minors age 16 and under!

No sling shots, no whips, no railroad lanterns, no Medieval or sorcery items, no compound bows, will be displayed or sold.

No inappropriate touching or making inappropriate comments. Violators will be expelled.

No profanity, indecencies or belligerent behavior allowed. This is a family-oriented event. Violators will be expelled.

Please be aware that the gate opens to the public at 8 a.m. even though the event officially opens at 10 a.m. Please dress historic when you first get up and be ready for the day.

NO camp will be allowed to tear down or leave before 4 p.m. Sunday. Let's build a good reputation by staying for the public!

Please remember that the gate does not open to vehicle traffic until 6:15 p.m. (Sat.) and 4:45 (Sun.) or later to allow the public, especially older folks walking slowly to get out without being run over! Let's be patient, kind and considerate!

Compliance with the rules will determine the participant's return to Trail in future years.

NO VENDORS WILL BE ALLOWED TO SETUP OUTSIDE THE FESTIVAL AREA IN PARKING LOT.

NO CROSSBOWS OR ZINGERS.

(OVER)

PARTICIPANT CATEGORIES

- 1. Traditional Craftsmen:** (green license) Must demonstrate 75% of the time a craft of the early 1800's and produce an authentic replica. You may sell only the craft you demonstrate! **Educational Display:** one who brings pre-1840 educational exhibit and demonstrates or teaches the public 75% of the time.
- 2. Booth Trader:** (blue license) Sells pre-1840 trade items or things made of natural materials that existed before 1840. Most booths are in Chippeway Village, which represents a trading center on the Michigan Road, where trade goods might be shipped in. You can rebuild your booth using old barn boards or slab wood, (**You must give a written plan & drawings to steering committee by July 1 before you add-on or revamp – these then will be submitted to FCHS Board of Directors for approval**) and you can keep the same booth from year to year. **All buildings here on the museum grounds belong to the historical society – if you have built a building here for the festivals it is yours to use as long as you participate. Once you give up your booth – you cannot sell it to another group.**
- 3. Merchant Tent:** (yellow license) Marquees or other historic structure used primarily for trading quarters. Sells pre-1840 trade goods or items made from natural materials and in use in North America before 1840.
- 4. Blanket Trader:** (white license) Sells pre-1840 trade goods from blanket or skins: 8'x7'. Not to exceed allotted space dimensions without paying additional blanket fees. **If you put up a table, hang things from a frame or ladder or tripod, you are not a blanket trader – you must pay merchant price (see no. 3.)**
- 5. Food Purveyor:** (pink license) Sells early 1800's foods cooked over a wood fire. Must comply with Indiana Health Laws. Fulton County non-profits and those food purveyors already at Trail will be given priority. **LIMIT ONE LOAD OF FREE FIREWOOD PER FOOD BOOTH – bring some from home to help- No firewood from quarantined areas please. NO BAKE SALE ITEMS ALLOWED BY VENDORS.** (**You must give a written plan & drawings to steering committee by July 1 before you add-on or revamp your booth– these then will be submitted to FCHS Board of Directors for approval**). See Booth Trader information.
- 6. Shooter:** (receipt issued) Muzzle-loading, fixed open sights, round ball ammunition only, no revolvers, shoot from pouch only, NMLRA rules. All shooters must wear pre-1840 clothing and must sign a liability waiver. Adjustable sights will be fixed with a drop of wax by the Range Officer. Single matches are \$1 each, or save and get full both days' matches for \$10. **Point muzzle up when carrying gun at all times as you walk through camps. No loaded or primed firearms outside shooting area.**
- 7. Program Personnel:** By contract arrangement in advance with Fulton County Historical Society. Includes military, voyageurs, musicians, dancers, storytellers, etc. **Indian dancer:** free camping and trading. Family must have at least one member who has Indian dance outfit and who actually participates in several of the dances in order for family to get free admission.
- 8. Trail Worker:** all others who provide necessary services such as security, parking, admission gate checking, FCHS food booth, museum host, Chippeway Post Office, driving tractor, etc. Work 4 hours and earn free admission for both days. Must wear historic clothing, which can be borrowed from the FCHS museum.

The Philosophy of Trail

The Trail of Courage Living History Festival is a family-oriented event, so please make your behavior and apparel appropriate. Many school students attend on Friday and Saturday. We appreciate you explaining your portrayal of history and taking time to teach them. The kids will be the re-enactors of tomorrow, so we need to pass our knowledge on to them. Remember you are setting an example. Make it a good one!

We ask your help to maintain Trail's atmosphere of historic authenticity and to help build a reputation of being friendly and helpful. These rules apply to all participants in the festival. They are enforced to keep the Trail as historic, safe and enjoyable as possible for everyone. We thank you for your cooperation. If you have questions and/or suggestions, please contact FCHS. Don't believe rumors. Call the FCHS office.

All paperwork is done through the FCHS office, Rochester, IN. If you have questions or hear negative comments, contact FCHS office, open Monday - Saturday, phone 574-223-4436. During the event, if you experience problems you need help in solving, contact the Committee members. **We hope you all have a really good time at the Trail.**

Will you help publicize the Trail by distributing brochures? We are sending you 2 brochures with this letter - please give them to friends or people who have never heard of the Trail of Courage. Check the appropriate place on your application and we will send you a packet of the new brochures to distribute. Thank you!

Check the up-dated FCHS Web Page. You may see a picture of yourself! Or someone you know.

Trail of Courage Sept. 19-20, 2026

Hours: Saturday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sun. 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

PARTICIPANT APPLICATION

Fulton County Historical Society, Inc,
37 E 375 N, Rochester, IN 46975

Phone 574-223-4436 Mon. - Sat. 9 to 5

Website: www.fultoncountyhistory.org E-mail fchs@rtcol.com

Note: Late fee will be assessed after Aug. 15. Please register early!

You must register and not come unbeknownst to the FCHS office. in case of emergency, we need to be able to find you.

Check all areas of participation for you and your family. Adults (except husband/wife) must fill out separate forms -- BOTH husband & wife & all adults must sign liability waiver. See parts 4 & 5 & 9.

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE:

1. Name _____ Nickname _____

Those accompanying you _____

(Adults other than spouses must fill in separate applications.)

Address _____ Phone _____ - _____ - _____

City _____ State _____ zip _____

Name of your business or group _____

E-MAIL _____ Web page _____

2. Participant categories: **Previous participants – please fill in. Don't expect us to dig out last year's application.**

LIST ALL to be sold in spaces below. Anything not on your list cannot be sold. Use separate sheet if more space is needed.

Traditional Craftsman or Educational Display. No fee if you demonstrate or teach 75% of time at Trail.

Check here if you need a 10x10 booth provided for you. Your craft or display: _____

Booth Trader. Fee before Aug. 15: \$25; after Aug. 15: \$35. 10'x10' booth in Chippeway Village. List merchandise: _____

Merchant Tent. Fee before Aug. 15: \$45; after Aug. 15: \$67.50. Dimensions: _____ List merchandise: _____

Blanket Trader. Fee before Aug. 15: \$15; after Aug. 15: \$22.50 - for one 5 point size blanket (8'x7'). List merchandise: _____

Food Purveyor. Fee before Aug. 15: \$120; after Aug. 15: \$150. WRITE FOR SEPARATE APPLICATION. Non-profit Fulton County groups and those already in will be given priority. **(NO BOTTLED WATER TO BE SOLD IN FESTIVAL AREA). NO BAKE SALES ALLOWED.**

Shooter. Fee \$10. (Must wear historic outfit.) Your club: _____

Names of shooters _____

Hawk Throws - Blanket Throws - see schedule for time.

Program Personnel. Must be arranged ahead of time by contacting FCHS. **Free camping, trading & shooting.** Check appropriate blanks If you wish to shoot or trade. Group name: _____

Function: Fashion Show _____ Musician _____ Other: _____

Indian dancer or singer. **Free camping and trading.** Check appropriate blanks if you wish to camp or trade.

Group/tribe/band name: _____

Names of those who dance: _____

Trail Worker. **Free admission & camping.** Working for FCHS _____ Working for _____

Earning Free Admission. (Names) _____ will work 4 hour shift in FCHS food booth _____ Post Office _____ Ticket taker at gate _____ Museum host _____

Tractor driver _____ Village building host _____ Other: _____

3. Dimensions: frontage _____ sides _____

4. Camp you will set up in (check only one area). If you have a lean-to, we encourage you to check the Chippeway Village in the woods as open area is needed for larger lodges.

French & Indian War 1700-1765 Plains Indian 1750-1840 tepees

Voyageur camp Woodland Indian 1700-1840 wigwams

Revolutionary War 1765-1800 Frontier Indiana in 1830s Chippeway Village (woods)

Western Fur Trade 1800-1840 Me-to-cin-yah Village

War of 1812

5. Camping: \$10 per lodge (\$15 if after Aug. 15) if you have checked no other area of participation. Limit 4 adults (18 & over) per camp fee- must fill out liability waiver. No minors allowed to camp alone outside their parents' or guardians' designated area; this is for their safety!

Historic. Type of lodge _____ Base dimensions _____

Number of lodges _____ Total size needed for camp _____ Frontage _____

Only lodges you list here will be allowed: no more. If you are with a unit: unit name: _____

I want to camp next to _____

No set ups before Wed. All set-ups must be removed by following weekend.

Modern. Type of camping - **\$10 fee** (trailer, RV, tent) _____

6. Camping with someone else, helping someone else - you still must sign Liability Waiver and fill in application.

I will be staying in (name's) lodge: _____ Limit 4 adults (18 & over) per camp fee - must fill out liability waiver. .

7. Vehicle markers. Number you will need (not to exceed 2) _____

8. I plan to arrive: date & time _____

I plan to stay both days _____ Sat. only _____ Sun. only _____

9. Volunteer to give presentation to school groups on Friday: I alone _____ My group (name) _____ will present

_____ I will help as a volunteer to lead the school groups around the grounds.

10. Pets or animals must be approved ahead of time as part of the program or handicapped assisting. I plan to bring:

Animal's name(s): _____

Enclosed: Certificate of insurance _____ Proof of all required immunizations _____

Proof of Companion Dog or other certification _____ **COPIES OF ALL PAPERWORK REQUIRED 6 MONTHS AHEAD OF EVENT.** NO DOGS, animals, pet spiders or insects allowed except pre-approved program animals, such as travois dog or honey bees in hive as educational display. No bringing live animals to butcher at the festival. **ALL BIRDS/WILD ANIMALS ARE TO BE HANDLED BY OWNER/PRESENTER ONLY – NO PUBLIC OR OTHER PARTICIPANTS SHOULD HOLD THEM.**

11. PLEDGE: By signing this application, you are agreeing to this pledge.

I will stay until 4 p.m. Sunday, rain or shine, and I will not tear down my camp until that time. If emergency requires me to leave early, I will notify my Camp Commander and carry my possessions out. I will not bring vehicles across the culvert until closing.

12. I give my permission for FCHS to use any pictures of me and my outfit and camp at the Trail of Courage on the FCHS web page or to be published in newsmedia and newsletters,

13. Liability Waiver: I waive and release the Fulton County Historical Society and its agents, representatives, committees and members from any and all claims or rights to damages for injuries or losses suffered by myself and/or members of my family, directly or indirectly while participating in the Trail of Courage Living History Festival and all its activities. I alone am liable for loss, damage, or injury to myself and my property and damage to others and their property by me, my property, family and pets while on the property of the Fulton County Historical Society. I agree to abide by the rules of the Trail of Courage. I am liable for my own sales tax. I UNDERSTAND THAT BACKGROUND CHECKS ARE BEING DONE FOR REGISTERED SEX OFFENDERS AND THAT THEY ARE NOT ALLOWED TO SPEND THE NIGHT AT THE FESTIVAL.

Signature _____ Date _____

Spouse's signature _____ Date _____

This must be dated to be a legal signature!

14. Enclosures:

First timers: Color photo of yourself in historic garb, your lodge and set-up, and your trade goods. Photos become property of FCHS. Print identifications on back, naming all people left to right.

Check made payable to Fulton Co. Hist. Soc., Rochester, IN 46975.

Self-addressed long (4 x 9 1/2) envelope stamped with 99 cents for reply. We send you a lot of material and it won't fit in a little envelope!

All applications will receive a written reply on or about Sept. 1 and Trail of Courage rules and news.

15. I want the Trail to grow and be successful so I will volunteer as follows:

I will help to publicize the Trail. Send me 50 brochures to pass out to relatives, friends, schools, church classes, traveling, other events, wherever I go. (Order more when these are gone, if you can get them out to people.)

I am an EMT, nurse, doctor or other medical person & willing to help in case of emergency.

I have a cell phone that can be used in case of emergency.

DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE

Date received _____ Payment: \$ _____ Check # _____

Accepted (please initial) _____

Rejected (please initial) _____