

NEWS FROM FULTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.
37 E 375 N
ROCHESTER IN 46975
PHONE 574-223-4436 E-MAIL: fchs@rtcol.com
Website: www.fultoncountyhistory.org

Annual Trail of Courage Sept. 20-21, 2025

The excitement and adventure of Frontier Indiana comes alive at the 48th annual Trail of Courage Living History Festival Sept. 20-21 at Rochester, Indiana. Since 1976 it has been a place where history is depicted, where you can trace the very footsteps of history, and have a good time doing it. Over 1,000 people in historic outfits participate.

Frontier Indiana comes alive with foods cooked over wood fires, period music and dance, traditional crafts, historic camps and trading, canoe rides on the river, and much more. It is produced by the Fulton County Historical Society. This event combines genealogy of the Potawatomi Indians and the settlers who lived in Fulton County and northern Indiana in the early 1800s with rendezvous events, period music and dance on two stages, canoe rides on the Tippecanoe River.

The Trail of Courage will be held at the FCHS grounds four miles north of Rochester on US 31 and Tippecanoe River. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$5 for children (6 through 11), and free ages 5 and under. Hours are Sat. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sun. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Opening ceremony will be held just south of Admissions gate with bands leading the way to Chippeway Village.

New performances in dance area

The public is invited to join Sonny Ledford, Cherokee Ambassador in the Indian dances area 1 p.m. to 2:00 p.m., Also new this year we will be have River Valley Colonials and 42nd Royal highlanders doing a field demonstration while playing music. We will also have a oxen team doing demo. Indian dances will not place this year due to lack of Indian drum.

The Trail of Courage includes historic encampments representing the French & Indian War, Voyageurs, Revolutionary War, War of 1812, Western Fur Trade, Plains Indians teepees, and Woodland Indian wigwams. A re-created Miami Village includes wigwams and lifeways demonstrations, such as making cattail mats.

Another re-creation is of Chippeway Village, which had the first trading post, post office and village in Fulton County in 1832. Food purveyors and traditional craftsmen set up in wooden booths. Craftsmen also sell pre-1840 trade goods from blankets and in historic merchant tents, offering a variety of items from clothing and jewelry to knives and candles, everything needed to live in frontier days.

Fun frontier activities for all

Canoe rides, muzzle loading shooting and tomahawk throwing contests, and a Mountain Man Tug of War add to the frontier activities. Local Scouts offer candle dipping to all children.

Two stages with frontier music and dance present programs from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday. Since the early 1980s FCHS has received grants from the Indiana Arts Commission/ National Endowment for the Arts to help pay for musicians and dancers. This year they include River Valley Colonials Fife & Drum Corp, Aztec dancers, Sonny Ledford, Cherokee Ambassador; Danny Russel as Daniel Boone, Mark and Liza Woolever- music ; Anderson Marching Highlanders, Genot Picor Storyteller, LLC. And 42nd Royal highlanders, This year's grant is for \$4,000 which is less than half of the approximately \$15,100 cost of the performers. Sponsorships and donations to match the grant are required by the Indiana Arts Commission and can be mailed to FCHS, 37 E 375 N, Rochester, IN 46975.

Many volunteers provide programs such as Margo Moore's dog pulling travois and Mark & Molly Gropp – bagpipes.

Both Catholic and Protestant worship services are held at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday. Father Denny Kinderman, Chicago, has celebrated Mass for over 10 years at the Hillside Amphitheater. Todd Wilson, Rochester, will lead the Protestant service at the Chippeway Village stage.

-more-

P. 2 Trail of Courage

Outdoor foods taste so good!

Pioneer foods are cooked over wood fires. Visitors can feast on buffalo burgers, Pork Chops, , duck and apple slices, pulled pork, turkey and noodles, ham and beans, vegetable stew, potato chips cooked in big iron kettles, pork sandwich,, chili, corn on the cob, apple sausage, Kettle Korn and Rootbeer, and includes ice cream, one of George Washington's favorite treats. Local clubs cook and serve these historic foods to fund their projects: American Cherokee Confederacy, Rotary, Knights of Columbus, Masonic Lodge; and Fulton County Historical Society. Mark Gropp family brings homemade fudge. The apple sausage booth will have biscuits & sausage gravy until 10 a.m. and again this year the Masonic Lodge will be doing pancakes and sausage. Many people come to the festival just for the delicious food!

The grounds are handicapped accessible. Free tram rides are available to bring people from the museum and Living History Village at the north end of the grounds. The museum and village are open with hosts and free admission.

Volunteers can earn free admission to the Trail of Courage by working half a day. To volunteer or for more information, call the museum at 574-223-4436. Free parking is provided on FCHS grounds. Many benches are available to sit and rest. For further details: www.fultoncountyhistory.org and www.potawatomi-tda.org.

Living history taught by real people living as history.

The primary purpose of the Trail of Courage is to educate the public, to preserve and promote an accurate picture of life in frontier Indiana, as well as other areas and time periods of North American history. Real people in historic clothing, real food cooked over wood fires, real fun

The festival is based on local history, before the Potawatomi Indians were marched west on the forced removal known as the Trail of Death. The Potawatomi were marched down Rochester's Main Street Sept. 5, 1838, on their way to Kansas, a journey of 660 miles that took them 10 weeks and cost them 42 lives. Since 1976 this festival has honored the American Indians and shown life before the removal. When Indiana became a state in 1816, northern Indiana was still Potawatomi Territory.

FOODS AT THE TRAIL

Old time favorites and some new menu items will be available at the Trail of Courage this weekend. Buffalo Burgers, Ham & Beans, Vegetable Stew, Turkey & Noodles, Chili, Apple Sausage, Duck and Apple slices, ; Pork chops, Corn on Cob, Pull Pork, and Pork Steak Sandwiches, potato chips, Ice Cream, Kettle Korn, fudge and Root Beer.

So definitely bring your appetite and come on out to the Trail of Courage.

-30-

AZTEC DANCERS RETURN

For all who love to watch the Aztec Dancers perform you will get your opportunity on Sat. & Sun. at the Trail of Courage. They are scheduled from 11:30-12:30 p.m. and 1:30-2:30 p.m. each day.

They also have a booth in the woods south of the stage where they sell items as well.

-30 –

American Cherokee Booth

You will see familiar faces at the Cherokee booth with homemade Chili. No fry bread this year due to death of Kathleean McClellan – there will be a memorial. Stop by and say Hello. The McClellan family has participate every year since 1976. .

-30-

ICE CREAM AND POTATO CHIPS

The Fulton Co. Hist. Soc. will again be serving Ice Cream but not Apple Dumplings. We need a group to help run this booth if interested contact the museum.. Potato Chips will also be back on the menu again this year with Sue Tyler and helpers running the booth. . Thank you to everyone for supporting the Trail of Courage .

-30-

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Volunteers are still needed for the festival this weekend. Sign up to work a four hour shift and earn free admission to the festival. Needed are people to help have buildings open in the Living History Village up by the museum, people to ride the trams in the parking area, and people to help in the food booths.

Interested persons please call 574-223-4436 to volunteer.

-30-

FCBS receives Grants

The Indiana Arts Commission granted FCBS a grant for \$4,000.00 and the Fulton County Tourism a grant for \$1,000.

These funds are used to help pay for program personnel and Tourism funds used to help pay for advertising the festival to bring in more Tourism dollars into the community. Monies collected at local hotels and Air b n b places in the county goes toward Tourism Commission to be able to give grants to local festivals and activities within the community.

Hoots to Howls Return

Kristeen Werling, Decatur, Ind. will be here this year on Saturday and Sunday from 12- 1 p.m. and bring part of the animals that she is working with. This is a non-profit that helps with injured animals and could always use financial support and do a wonderful job with the work they are doing.

New this year this program programs will take place just south of Admissions building in a historic tent.

Come on out and learn more about these groups during the festival.

-30-

Traditional crafts still being taught

The Trail of Courage is an excellent place to see historic crafts still being taught from long ago. These crafts include Basketmaking; Blacksmithing; Pewter Casting; and Tinsmith. Stop by these booths or camps and learn from the people teaching. The Blacksmiths also have a monthly class at the Fulton Co. Hist. Soc. grounds each month on the 2nd Saturday and you are welcome to join the group.

-30-

New Programs this year

Sonny Ledford, Cherokee Ambassador will give history in the Dance area; 42nd Royal Highlanders will return after several years absence. Oxen And Clockwork Clown. Sonny Ledford and the marching bands will perform at the bleachers area and Oxen Team as well.

-30-