

WILSON'S 'TRAIL TO SANTA FE' BECOMES OFFICIAL SONG OF SANTA FE TRAIL ASSOCIATION

"I love the tradition of telling our American story through music," Kansas Flint Hills Balladeer Annie Wilson says of her new song, "Trail to Santa Fe," recently designated the "Official Song of the Santa Fe Trail Association."

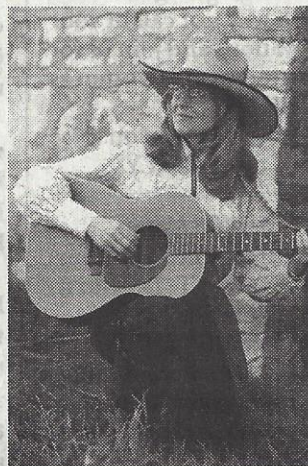
At their national board meeting in September in Larned, the group officially adopted Wilson's musical chronicle of this commercial artery through Missouri-Kansas-Oklahoma-Colorado-New Mexico, begun in 1821 and lasting nearly sixty years.

Wilson is an accomplished musician and songwriter whose songs celebrate the flora and fauna, the cowboy and cattle industry heritage, and the stunning beauty of the Kansas Flint Hills. The Santa Fe Trail passed through the Flint Hills area on its path from Old Franklin and later Independence, MO to southwestern Kansas and on to Santa Fe, NM.

The Santa Fe Trail Association was formed in 1986 to preserve, protect, and promote the Santa Fe Trail and its history. Sixteen local chapters along the trail hold field trips and social events. The Santa Fe Trail has been designated by the U.S. Congress as a National Historic Trail administered through the National Park Service.

Wilson's lyrics in "Trail to Santa Fe" tell how early traders along this arduous trail "wagered fortunes and bet their lives against the desert sun, going back and forth to Santa Fe and past the Cimarron."

Travelers passed herds of countless buffalo as they crossed the lands of the Comanche, Kaw, Kiowa, Cheyenne, and Osage Indians, where "each day you'd hear



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the hoof beats of the oxen and the mules, the creak of wood and leather as they'd lift their iron shoes."

Verses also chronicle use of the route during the U.S. war with Mexico, and tell how the construction of railroads led to the eventual demise of the trail. Its ruts today, the song says, are a reminder of how the human urge "to trade and wander to places far away, led all those souls to follow the trail to Santa Fe."

For assistance in writing the song, Wilson credits the research of active Santa Fe Trail Association member Steve Schmidt who owns Marion County land with visible Santa Fe Trail ruts.

"Trail to Santa Fe" is one of 30 songs on the new double CD recorded by Wilson's Tallgrass Express String Band, called "Sky & Water, Wind & Grass," part of their "Songs of the Kansas Flint Hills" album series, available in stores or on-line.

For "Trail to Santa Fe" lyrics and more information, see <http://www.tallgrassexpress.com/TrailSantaFe.html>

For more information about the Santa Fe Trail, see www.santafetrail.org/index.html or <http://www.nps.gov/safe/index.htm>.