

THE STUDENT LIVING HISTORY PROGRAM



Dear Educators, Group Leaders, & Parents,

Since 1988, Fort Tejon State Historic Park has offered a unique hands-on interpretive “living history” program for students. Fort Tejon invites you and your fellow educators, group leaders, and parents to consider enrolling your class or group in our Student Living History Program (SLHP). The program allows students, teachers, and parents/adult assistants to stay overnight at Fort Tejon during an immersive 24-hour program and take a field trip back in time to the California of the 1850s and discover everyday frontier life through the “lens” of a mountain outpost of the U.S. Army.

During the SLHP, children take on historic roles and engage in activities of the past in order to “live history.” Children learn to work together as part of a program that emphasizes leadership, self-learning, and teamwork in their roles as new Army

“recruits” in the mid-nineteenth century who just arrived at their new duty station in the new state called California in the midst of a wild rush for gold. Historic activities include blacksmithing, frontier carpentry, preparing their own period-appropriate meals through open hearth cooking, adobe brick making, candle making, Army laundry practices of the period, in addition to other “living history” exercises. The program seeks to compliment classroom learning and can be enhanced by classroom activities prior to and following the program. Students, teachers, and parents/adult assistants spend the night in the old Army barracks that normally functions as a museum display space.

The History of Fort Tejon

From 1854 to 1864, the horse soldiers of the U.S. Army’s 1st Regiment of Dragoons who were garrisoned at Fort Tejon, as well as California volunteers during the Civil War, served to help settle the West Coast of the United States, enforce treaties, maintain law and order, keep the peace, defend the Constitution, and generally contribute to the civic life of the American republic before and during the American Civil War.

People from all over the area looked to Fort Tejon for employment, safety, social activities



and the latest news from “back East.”

The Program

The SLHP was developed from the National Parks Service’s Environmental Living Program. With continued restoration and reconstruction, Fort Tejon offers the experience of early frontier life in California. The SLHP is an important and rewarding interpretive program that seeks to let its participants “touch, taste, and feel” the history of frontier California.



The SLHP requires extensive preparation on the part of both park staff and teachers. Teachers, parents, group leaders, and adult chaperones work with park staff to facilitate the program. Park staff are on hand throughout the program to provide guidance, insight, and assistance with the activities. Park staff and volunteers also conduct the pre-training for the participating adults necessary for the effective, safe, and fun operation of the program. A 15 minute “virtual” pre-visit orientation for students is also provided for programs scheduled through the State Parks passPORTS Project web site.

Some Particulars & Options about this Unique Educational Program

The Student Living History Program (SLHP) is designed for students learning mid-nineteenth century American or Californian history at or above the fourth-grade level.

- It is designed to be an overnight “living history” experience beginning at 9:00a.m. on either a Monday or a Thursday and ending around 11:00a.m. the next day. A 15 minute “virtual” pre-visit orientation for students is also provided for programs scheduled through the passPORTS Project web site.
- There is a \$60.00 fee per student and \$40.00 fee for each adult. This fee includes two meals, supper & breakfast, and all program materials. A minimum of 20 students is required and a maximum of 40 students is permitted per visit for this program.
- Teachers and adult assistants must attend pre-program training at Fort Tejon in order to help facilitate the overnight program.

We also offer a day program and guided tours.

- The day program is an abbreviated “living history” program lasting approximately six hours from 9am. to 3p.m. No pre-training is necessary for this program. There is a \$35.00 fee per student and \$10.00 per adult for this program. A maximum of 24 students is permitted per visit for this program.
- A two and a half hour guided tour of the historic zone of the park is also available at \$5.00 fee per person.



Student Living History Program
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