

**Main Purpose of the Pike NHTA:** To Establish federal designation of the Pike National Historic Trail (for the 1806-1807 Zebulon Montgomery Pike Expedition.)  
There may be 2006 miles of the 3664 miles or 55% already in place.  
1658 miles to go



## ***Giving Zeb His Due Honor***

If you were not aware, there seem to be many questions surrounding the Pike Western Expedition that continue to be raised.

**We believe that Pike is rarely, if ever, given credit for his monumental accomplishments.**

### ***Let us get on with giving due credit!***

A careful, probing reading of Pike authors (about Pike's Mississippi River and Western Expeditions, and the 1812 War) can start to change each of our perspective and direction to discussing Pike's Great Accomplishments.

*An example:* General Henry Dearborn (the person General Wilkinson reported to during the Pike Expeditions, Jefferson's Secretary of War) was the commanding general during the War of 1812. His inept preparation and losses to the British led to his removal.<sup>1</sup>

Brig. Gen. Zebulon Pike was the only commander of two to completely win a battle in the War of 1812<sup>2</sup>, losing his life in the capture of York, now Toronto, Canada.

One author has the guts to mention how he died- i.e. a British bullet allegedly missing Pike, hitting the British magazine, with shrapnel killing Pike. Come on- a side circus. Pike died a hero, whatever way, winning the battle, with the British flag under his head, and the respect of those serving under him.

-Pike was the American sent to explore the north eastern and south western boundaries of the 1803 Louisiana Purchase. Others were sent up the Red River<sup>3</sup> and to the northwest, but Pike was the one sent to the northern and south western extreme ranges.

-On both missions (Mississippi and Arkansas/Red), he, for the U.S., explored, mapped and found the character of

- a) major sections of the new American empire, i.e. the newly purchased 1803 Louisiana Purchase.
- b) the headwaters of the Mississippi, S. Platte, and Arkansas Rivers and to large extent their watersheds.
- c) the route of the Osage River, today, in part, comprised of the massive Truman Reservoir and the Lake of the Ozarks.

<sup>4</sup> - Pike asserted American control and national honor, both with British fur traders in the north and with the Pawnee on the Plains of Nebraska.

- Pike dealt directly with three opponents of American liberty- Spain, Great Britain and native nations.

- He purchased land from the Lakota Sioux for the U.S., which is now St. Paul MN.

- He established American ties with native American people, and provided revelations regarding Indian tribes.

- He returned captured Osage to their homeland, and used Osage guides to the Great Bend of the Arkansas.

- He provided revelations concerning Spanish settlements, and military strength.



<sup>1</sup> Portraits from the Northern Theater: Henry Dearborn, National Park Service Museum Collections- American Revolutionary War, Oct. 17, 2001; Wikipedia, Henry Dearborn, 27 Dec, 2007; and Johnson and Malone, Henry Dearborn, Lane Memorial Library, Hampton NH, Dec. 22, 1999.

<sup>2</sup> ibid. (Lane NPS Wikipedia) Pike captured York on Apr. 23, 1813. Fort George (on the mouth of the Niagara River) was captured on May 27, 1813, however, with the British escaping.

<sup>3</sup> See separate article in this newsletter by Rex Rideout.

<sup>4</sup> Much of what follows is found in numerous articles and books about Lt. Pike.

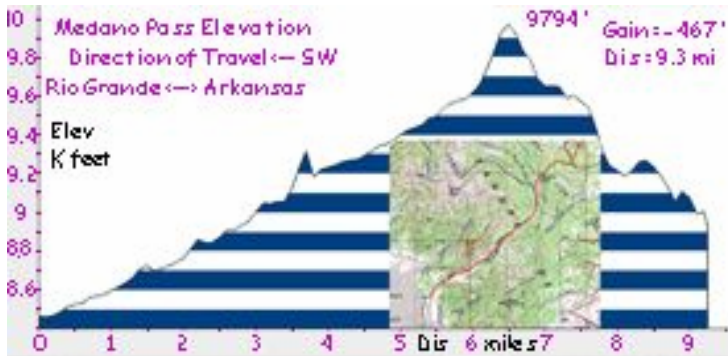
### Giving Zeb His Due Honor- continued

- He provided observations of terrain, climate, flora and fauna, local customs, military force strength and placement, commerce, geopolitical information about the American southwest AND MEXICO.
- He provided reconnaissance about Mexico undoubtedly used by Stephen Kearney and Alexander Doniphan in the Mexican/American War [1846] by gaining
  - a) cartographic information about Mexico as a result of his more than cordial treatment by the Spanish.
  - b) a great deal of information about New Spain/ Mexico as a result of a very close friendship with a Spanish lieutenant, Facundo Melgares.
- His comments spurred the establishment of the Santa Fe Trail.
- He provided the basis of knowledge for the formation of numbers of states.

Regarding his character- He was a loyal, observant, U.S. Army officer to the core.  
 He was a gutsy explorer, an uncomplicated man of action.  
 He inspired a generation of soldier explorers.  
 He followed orders to at times to extremes.  
 He took initiative when conditions warranted as a diligent Army officer is trained to do.

### Discovery Project #1 Was the crossing at Medano Pass, Mosca Pass, or La Veta Pass on 27 Jan 1807?

Not many responded to Project #1- We give you three more clues!



### Which Red River? DISCOVERY PROJECT #2- Why was the Canadian called the Red and

which river was Pike assigned to find?

1st Response- The Canadian River is named the Red River in some sources. The source of this river begins near where the Red was thought to begin and passes near the actual headwaters of the Red River. This leads to some confusion. The mystery of which river Pike was sent to explore is explained by looking at the full salvo of expeditions that were sent by Jefferson to define the boundaries of the Louisiana Purchase. The mouth of the Red River where it joins the Mississippi was well understood and defined the South-East boundary of the territory. So it was useful to map this river. The following are but two of many expeditions put to this mission. The William Dunbar/ George Hunter group started from Natchez in 1804 up the Mississippi to the mouth of the Red river seeking its source. They were turned back by the Osage but did discover the Arkansas Hot Springs. Later in 1806 Thomas Freeman and Peter Custis again lead a party up the Red river only to be turned back by the Spanish. It is noteworthy that this expedition was the equal to the Lewis and Clarke venture for its number of men and support of money and provisions. But its failure has diminished its importance in the eyes of historians. The explorations of these and other parties up the Red River point out where the interest of Washington was focused. -Rex Rideout

**Do you, our readers, have more ideas? By the way you don't have to "know about Pike" to conceive possibilities, comment on or participant in Discovery Projects!**





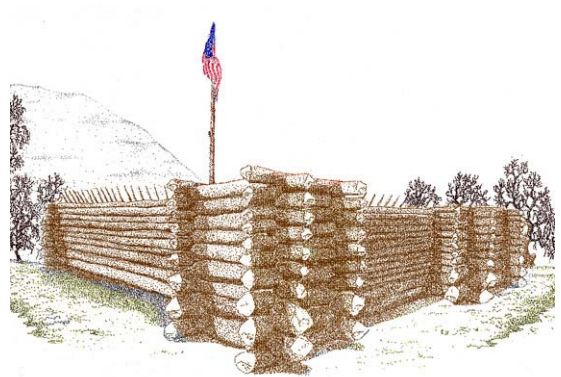
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**Ten Garden activities to accomplish on your trip to the Southwest-**

1. Plan a river trip with 75 or more people through Missouri.
2. Sun bathe beside the Smoky Hill, Platte, Purgatoire or Arkansas Rivers.
3. Ride a horse across Cheyenne Bottoms (N. of Great Bend KS above).
4. Climb Mt. Rosa (CO) from Gold Camp Road on any snowy Nov. 26th.
5. Cool yourself down bathing in the Arkansas north of Leadville CO.
6. Find a Rand McNally in Cripple Creek CO
7. Climb up\* Pikes Gulch out of the Royal Gorge on your birthday.
8. Play in the sand at 8735 feet above sea level.
9. Locate Dr. Robinson's grave.
10. Maintain or build a stockade using the shape below on the Conejas River in the dead of winter.

\* 618 feet up- nearly vertical: 70+% grade with 60 lbs. packs.  
Of course, you may be aided or hindered by the mechanical Incline the Park installed.

They are not dead who live in the hearts they leave behind - Tuscarora



*Pike National Historic Trail Association*

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