

Pike National Historic Trail Association Newsletter March, 2009 Vol. 3 No 3

A Charitable nonprofit organization

See- zebulonpike.org

Our Purpose: To Establish federal designation of the Pike National Historic Trail.

Our First Board & Membership Meeting

We are here announcing the first Pike National Historic Trail Association Board and Membership meeting in Cañon City, Colorado on Saturday, May 30, 2009.

The meeting will be held in the Bighorn Mountaintop Lodge- Royal Gorge Bridge and Park Cañon City CO (pictured to the left and below).

On Friday afternoon, we expect your arrival in Colorado Springs, Pueblo or Denver (transportation will be available); Evening- Get to know each other reception. **Board Meeting; tour of the "Scholarly" articles with**



May 30 (Sat) Membership and park, and presentation of discourse.

May 31 (Sun) Field Trips to Pike sites such those in the Great Sand Dunes National Park, Wet Mountain Valley, South Park, Pueblo, Mt. Rosa, [Salida/ Buena Vista and, of course, the encampment in Cañon City.

The agenda for the meeting will include Officer and Board elections, Association direction, and policy [discussion and setting of] and formal adoption of documents [Bylaws, Non-discrimination, etc.] Spouses are welcome and lodging options have been arranged as well as alternative activities in the area should we outgrow the Lodge.

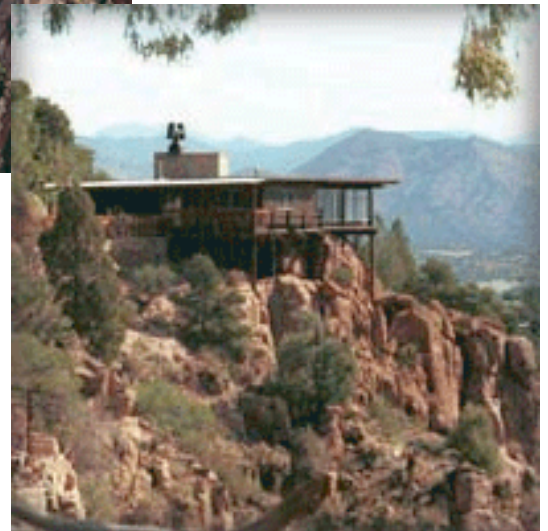
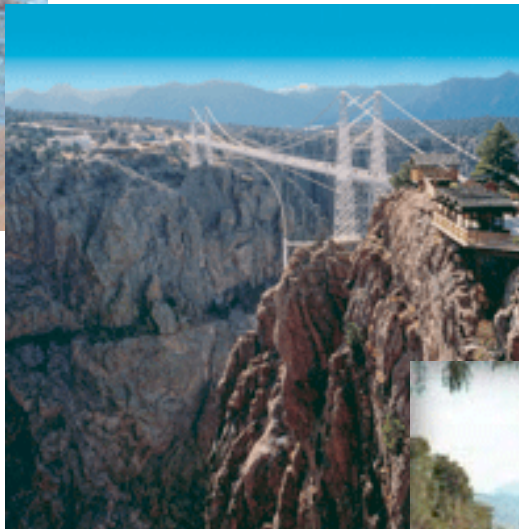
We will share the reduced cost of the lodging and meeting space at the Bighorn [provided by our Board member and Superintendent of the Park], meals, etc.

Cañon City was selected because of the richness of scenery, the numbers of area Pike sites and because Pike was obliged to make major decisions here. A 5 minute video of the Royal Gorge featuring Pikes Gulch in the Park (where the incline now resides) and the Lodge (pictured in this article) is available at <http://www.royalgorgebridge.com/ParkVideo.aspx>

Policies [not yet set and ripe for discussion] include: Who is authorized to make decisions; Budget and Spending Limits; Association properties; State and/or Regional structure; Funding of Activities and the Educational Outreaches; Site Interpretation/Preservation; Scope of involvement in related historical sites/ persons; and cooperation with other associations and governmental entities.

A MEETING BROCHURE IS AVAILABLE.

HELP! The Pike computer - The Pike computer, on which the the membership records were kept, for the Pike Association was destroyed. Many were recovered because many had email addresses, but some did not. We need your help in recovering members who did not have email. **Please let us know the names and addresses of those folks at harv.pike@gmail.com**



Which Mountain Did Pike Climb?

By John Patrick Michael Murphy

continued from the February, 2009 issue Part 3 of 6

Pike's field map (enhanced)

The Investigation

My investigation began about 1985, when I first heard of Glenn Scott's map of all the historic trails in this area, and, in the beginning, consisted of climbing Mt. Rosa by various routes to see if I could find a "cave" about an hour from the summit. A cave would be found and excavated by Professor Michael Nowak of Colorado College on June 4, 2001. It was clear that some of the historians had actually been in the field and climbed Blue Mountain (Hart and Jackson), but none of the historians had done extensive field work by test climbing all of the mountains that were possible Pike mountains to see if the climbing time matched Pike's time and terrain description.

With the help of Armando Lee, Cody Kreamer, and others, all of the mountains were test climbed and compared to Pike's journal entries dated November 24 to November 29, 1806. In each case the climbers started "at the foot of the mountain on a stream." The climbs were made in winter to try to replicate as close as possible the conditions on Pike's climb which was in mid-fall of 1806. Mt. Rosa was the only mountain to match his journal entries. The mountains climbed were, Cheyenne Mountain, (author) Gray Back Peak (south summit), Black Mountain, Blue Mountain, Mt. Miller (author), and Mt. Rosa.

Testing the Evidence

1. Can base camp be reached "at the base" of the mountain "on a creek" with a march of 34 miles from the then confluence of Fountain Creek and the Arkansas River?

Pike was very accurate in his estimates of mileage when the terrain was open and not too difficult. Coues noted that Pike was extremely accurate in judging the distance from the Great Bend of the Arkansas River, near Learned, Kansas, all the way to near Lamar, Colorado. Pike gave no estimate of mileage for the entire days of Wednesday (from base camp to the "cave" bivouac) and Thursday, the day of the ascent and return to base camp. In reviewing both the Nau map, published in Pike's book, and Pike's field map (the one that was hidden in Mexico for over 100 years and discovered by historian H.E. Bolton) there is only a loop to show that his return was down Turkey Creek and his approach march was in the Fountain Creek watershed (a fact that is overlooked by the historian who place his approach march on Turkey Creek). Two full days of climbing are only represented by the loop.

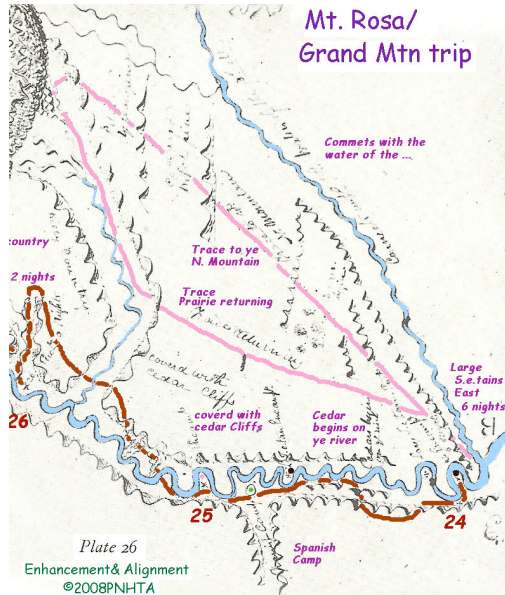
By measuring the distance from the breastwork at Pueblo, and realizing that the confluence of Fountain Creek and the Arkansas River was in Pike's day about a mile farther to the northwest that it is today, one can draw a line of 34 miles and find his base camp at Little Fountain Creek at the "foot of the mountain." If a base camp is established at the foot of Blue Mountain it becomes less than 34 miles, and for Turkey Creek it becomes much less. Furthermore, it is clear that once Pike was on the Gray Back ridge, in the fine weather he had on Wednesday, November 26, 1806, he could see that it would be much easier to climb the hill up Deadman Cañon and return via Little Turkey Creek. He noted on Friday, after his climb that they "Kept straight down the creek to avoid the hills."

The hills he was referring to were the minor drainages coming from the front range of hills to the downrange of today's Ft. Carson. Had he trekked up Turkey Creek on the approach march as many had claimed, it would have been a valley walk with no hills to ascend and descend. Moreover, the two maps he produced would not have shown his approach march to the east of his retreat march as it clearly shows. The mistake made by historians when they read "the creek" was thinking that it was the same creek as his retreat from the climb.

Moreover, if Pike had ascended Turkey Creek, it would have been a continuous uphill grind, and he would not have been complaining about the hills they had to pass over on Tuesday. In addition, Pike had a fine view of the mountains before him as he marched across today's Ft. Carson. There is only one obvious ridge system that leads from the plains toward Pikes Peak; it is the Gray Back Peak ridge leading to Mt. Rosa, to Pikes Peak. A ruler placed on a map will show almost a straight line touching all 3 summits. The skyline stops at 10,000' as one looks at Black Mountain or Blue Mountain. Cheyenne Mountain is far off to the east. The most direct climbing line leads directly to Mt. Rosa. He really didn't want to climb it but it was in the way to get to "Grand Peak."

2. Is there a rock shelter (cave) area about an hour from the summit?

Pike's bivouac was in a rock shelter that he called a cave. On January 1, 1999 I climbed to the 11,000' south ridge of Mt. Rosa with Gary Betchan and his dog Darwin to search for a cave that would hold 4 men where they could share body warmth and build a fire. After about an hour,



Which Mountain? continued from Page 2

I saw Darwin's rear end but not his head. He had found a perfect shelter that was "on line and on time." That is to say it was about an hour from Rosa's summit (in knee deep snow conditions) and it was on the line of travel that Pike had to have taken if he had climbed Mt. Rosa. It was at 10, 700', overlooking the east side of the south ridge. I received permission from the Supervisor of the Pike National Forest, Mr. Al Kane, to excavate the cave hoping to find any artifact of the first quarter of the 19th century that was non-Native. Ideally a .54 caliber ball or a penny dated 1806 or earlier.

Dr. Michael Nowak, of Colorado College, Professor of Archeology was in charge, and on June 4, 2001, historian James McChristal, Anna Skorut, Ranger Jeff Hovermale, and I, joined him to excavate the floor of the shelter. We found only charcoal that could have been from a Pike fire, a native fire, or from lightning. The problem was that normally only 3 or 4 inches of soil would have to be examined to go back two centuries, but there was a skylight to the cave in its uphill side, (the one Darwin had his head in) which allowed much more gravel to rush into the cave during cloudbursts. We took out well over a cubic yard and screened it. After several hours Dr. Nowak explained that the floor of the rock shelter could have been many feet lower in Pike's day due to the amount of material that had entered over the years. It is possible that it is or is not the cave. During the uranium mining that occurred in the 1940s and 50s, a huge quarry was dug a few hundred feet below the cave, and the real cave could have been there and destroyed in the process. The quarry below the south ridge scars the mountain today and it also is "on line and on time." [Article continues next month]



First siting- Great Sand Dunes National Park [Colorado] By Laura Billingsley

Have you ever seen a vast open area of pure white sand? Zubulon Pike, I (Laura B.) and others have seen it. When I first saw the sand dunes it looked like someone made a huge sandbox for everyone to play in. Oh, and the mountains behind it [Sangre de Cristo] made it look like a painting from a book.

When I saw it the Park Service had a Visitors Center, stairs and a path. When Pike saw it there was no human touch to it; it would have been a better site to see. To see the dunes you first have to go down a hill with shrubs and then you hit the beautiful stream called Medano Creek. Beyond that are beautiful mounds of sand. When you start to climb the mounds of sand, you will think it will be easy. But, no it's like trudging through a couple feet of snow! You will think you will have a footing to take another step, but then you start to sink. Next thing you know it you are crawling on your hands and knees like a baby trying to climb this steep mountain of sand. But be careful the sand can be very hot during the summer!

Zubulon Pike saw the Great Sand Dunes from Medano Pass. I bet it was an incredible site to see. You can see what Zubulon Pike saw too. Every year in September Huerfano County Historical Society sponsors a trip through Medano Pass commemorating the crossing of Zebulon Pike and his men in early January, 1807.

Join Now! Please consider membership in our organization

Level	Amt.	Level Name	Level	Amt.	Level Name
Student	\$15	Corporal Jackson	Small Business	\$75	Robinson-Brown-Miller
Individual	\$25	Sergeant Meek	Corporation	\$200 & up	Carter-Gordon-Mountjoy-Roy
Family	\$35	Menaugh-Stout	Benefactor	\$500	Sparks-Daugherty
Non profit organization	\$50	Vasquez-Smith	Life	\$1000	Zebulon Pike

Name _____

I will be able to help with:

Address _____

The Pike Assoc. website

Town _____ State _____ Zip _____

Historic/heritage investigation

Phone (____) _____ Cell _____

Providing educational opportunities

Producing educational materials

e-mail _____

I /we will personally contact legislators for legislative support

I /we will write letters of legislative support

I/we would like to help in any way (Assoc. will contact)

Contact us: 303/816-7424 harv.pike@gmail.com Additional gifts are tax deductible. Make checks payable to:

Pike National Historic Trail Association 10060 Blue Sky Trail Conifer CO 80433