

Pike National Historic Trail Association Newsletter March 2010 Vol. 4 No 3

Our Purpose: To Establish federal designation of the Pike National Historic Trail A Charitable nonprofit organization zebulonpike.org



Annual Member and Board Meeting- April 22 & 23, 2010 [Thurs & Fri]

The Pike NHT Association Annual Meeting will be held at the Royal Gorge's Bighorn Mountaintop Lodge outside Cañon City, Colorado on Friday April 23rd. Please contact the Association with confirmation - 303/816-7424 or by email to harv.pike@gmail.com by April 5, 2010 {Monday}.

We plan to arrive on Thursday afternoon to share a meal and warm conversation. There will be an evening presentation and lively debate regarding Pike legislation and Pike Interpretive sites. Lodging will be available that evening in the warm Lodge. We had a wonderful experience in this facility last year!

Appointment of State Coordinators We have appointed three Coordinators to aide in the work of the Association.

☉ Dale Blevins has been appointed as the Missouri State Coordinator. He recently retired from the US Geological Survey in Missouri, and grew up in the Nevada/Butler area in southwest Missouri. Pike returned Osage here to their villages in 1806.

☉ Pat Palmer, Chairman of the Bents Fort Chapter of Santa Fe Trail Association, has been appointed as the Pike Southeast Colorado Coordinator. He is with Prowers County Development in Lamar, CO.

☉ Tom Rollings has been appointed as Upper Arkansas River Coordinator. Tom is a retired educator and lives in Buena Vista, CO. He taught history, psychology and Special Education in Kansas.

Volunteer or suggest names- We are looking for additional Coordinators for the other 5 states and three remaining areas of Colorado.

Legislative Effort The effort to establish the Pike National Historic Trail as a National Historic Trail is moving ahead with our Letter effort. This effort was established for the introduction of the Feasibility Study bill in Congress for the Pike Trail.

We have acquired letters of support from county commissions, mayors, historians, historic and preservation groups, long distance trails, and shorter trails, chambers, and individuals. We have received over 200 letters with 9 of the 15 county commissions in

Colorado counties [our goal - 8] and 4 in other Pike states. **Keep those letters of support rollin' in from relative and friends!**

Norm Meyer in the Wet Mountain Valley Norm Meyer, a former Pike National Historic Trail Association Board member and retired airline pilot with his 3 grown children and a grandson, gave a stirring account of his life this month.

What was particularly interesting for our readers was his account of growing up as a cowboy in Gardner CO. Gardner is in the Wet Mountain Valley almost due east of Medano Pass in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. Most historians believe that Pike crossed Medano to get to the Great Sand Dunes and the San Luis Valley on January 27, 1807.

Norm explained the life on his father's ranch as a great deal of work. In the winter, snow or no snow, they had to bring feed to the cattle. They had to dam the creek running east from Medano for a water supply. It was back breaking labor. He even described his exploring of the two valleys crossing the Pass to the Sand Dunes as a young man.

Norm recalled that back in his teens and early twenties a hermit named Ulysses Herrard lived at the top of Medano Pass and would periodically come down into the Wet Mountain Valley and Gardner to visit and stay with folks uninvited.

Joining Norm was Rex Rideout, current Pike Board member, with period cowboy songs & playing instruments from the early 1900's.

Zebulon Pike's 1810 Report on New Spain's Mexico Leo Oliva [from Carta's *Chronicles*]

ZEBULON MONTGOMERY PIKE'S REPORT ON THE INTERNAL PROVINCES OF NEW SPAIN, 1810. PART 2

[Biscay, present states of Durango and Chihuahua] continued from February Newsletter

I am told that an European employed some hands and wrought at the cinders and that it yielded one dollar and twenty-five cents for each per day; but that this not answering his expectations, he ceased his proceedings. At Mauseme [Mapimí] there is one gold and seven silver mines.

At Durango there are many and rich mines, but the number to me is unknown.

There are also gold mines in the Sierra Madre, near Alomas [Alamosa], and many others of which I have no knowledge. There is in the province, about one hundred miles south of Chihuahua, a mountain or hill of loadstone [magnetic oxide of iron]. [Juan Pedro] Walker, who had been on the ground and surveyed it, informed me it appeared to be solid strata, as regular as that of limestone, or any other of the species. He had brought home a square piece of near a foot and half, was preparing some to be sent to Spain, and likewise forming magnets to accompany it, in order that their comparative strength might be ascertained with magnets formed in Europe.

Rivers.—Rio Conchos is the largest in the province. It takes its source in the Sierra Madre, near Batopilis in 28° N. latitude, and discharges itself into the Rio del Norte in the 31°, after a course of about 300 miles. It is the largest western branch of the Rio del Norte, and receives in its course the Rio Florido from the east and San Paubla [Pedro] from the west, where we struck the Conchos. It appeared to be nearly as large as the Rio del Norte at the Passo.

The Rio San Paubla is the largest western branch of the Conchos, and heads in 28° 50' N. latitude, and empties into the latter at Bakinoa. Its whole course is about 150 miles: in summer it is nearly dry, and in the rainy seasons impassable.

The Rio Florido takes its rise in the latitude 26 1-2 N. and after a course of about 150 miles, discharges itself into the Conchos. Guaxequillo [Guaajoquilla, present Jiménez] is situated on its east bank about its center.

The Rio Nassas is in part the line between Biscay and Cogquilla: it runs north and sinks in the lake du Cayman; it is nearly dry in the dry seasons, but at some seasons it is impassable.

Lakes.—Lac du Cayman and lac du Parras are two small lakes, situated at the foot of the mounts and are full of fish.

Animals, insects, &c.—There are some few bears, deer, and wild horses, but they are not in abundance.

The scorpions of Durango are one of the most remarkable instances of the physical effects of climate or air that I ever saw recorded.

They come out of the walls and crevices in May, and continue about a fortnight in such numbers that the inhabitants never walk in their houses after dark without a light, and always shift or examine the bed-clothes and beat the curtains previous to going to bed, after which the curtains are secured under the bed, similar to the precautions we take with our mosquito curtains. The bite of those scorpions has been known to prove mortal in two hours. The most extraordinary circumstance is that of taking them ten leagues from Durango, they become perfectly harmless and lose all their venomous qualities. Query, Does it arise from a change of air, sustenance, or what other cause?

Population and Chief Towns.—The population of **Biscay** may be estimated at 200,000: of these three-twentieths may be Spaniards from Europe, five-twentieths Creoles, five-twentieths Metifs and Quatroons, and seven-twentieths Indians. Durango was founded in 1550. It is the principal city, the seat of government for that province of Biscay and of the bishoprick of Durango. Its population may be estimated at 40,000 souls. It is situated in 25° N. latitude and 107° W. longitude.

Pallalein, situated somewhere at the foot of the Sierra Madria, is supposed to contain 25,000 souls.

Chihuahua, the place of residence of the commandant general of the internal provinces, was founded in 1691, is situated in 29° N. latitude, 107° 30' W. longitude. Its population may be estimated at 7,000. It is an oblong square, on the east side of a small stream which discharges itself into the river Conchos. On its south extremity is a small but elegant church. In the public square stands the principal church, royal treasury, town-house, and the richest shops. At the western extremity is another church for the military, a superb hospital, belonging formerly to the Jesuits' possessions, the church of the monks of St. Francis, St. Domingo, the military academy, and quartel del tropa [barracks for the troops]. On the north-west were two or three missions very handsomely situated on a small stream which comes in from the west. About one mile to the south of the town is a large aqueduct which conveys the water round it, to the east, into the main stream below the town, in the centre of which is raised a reservoir for the water, from whence it is to be conducted by pipes to the different parts of the city, and in the public square is to be a fountain and jet d'eau, which will be both ornamental and useful. The principal church of Chihuahua was the most superb building we saw in New Spain. Its whole front was covered with statues of the apostles and the different saints, set in niches of the wall, and the windows, doors, &c. ornamented with sculpture. I never was within the doors, but was informed by Robinson that the decorations were immensely rich. Some men, whom we supposed entitled to credit, informed us that the church was built by a tax of 12 1-2 cents laid on each ingot of gold or silver taken out of the mines in the vicinity in — — years. Its costs, with decorations, was 1,500,000 dollars, and when finished there remained 300,000 dollars of the fund unappropriated. At the south side of Chihuahua is the public walk, formed by three rows of trees whose branches nearly entwined over the heads of the passengers below. At different distances there are seats for persons to repose themselves on. At each end of the walks there were circular seats, on which, in the evening, the company collected and amused themselves with the guitar, songs in Spanish, Italian, and French, adapted to the voluptuous manners of the country. In this city, as well as all others of any consideration, there are patrols of soldiers during the night, who stop every person at 9 o'clock and examine them. My countersign was "Americans."

Trade, Commerce, and Manufactures.—Biscay trades with North Mexico, Senora, and the viceroyalty, from the latter of which they bring on mules all their dry goods, European furniture, books, ammunition, &c. They furnish a great quantity of horses, mules, sheep, beeves, goats, &c. to the parts of the kingdom which are more populous and have less spare ground for pasturage, &c. Some persons make large fortunes by being the carriers from Mexico to Chihuahua, the freight being eight dollars per cwt. And they generally put 300 pounds on each mule. The merchants make their remittances twice a year in bullion. Goods sell at Chihuahua about 200 per cent on the prices of our Atlantic sea port towns. Their horses average at six dollars, but some have sold as high as 100: their trained mules at 20 dollars; but extraordinary matches for carriages have sold at 400 dollars per pair. Rice sells at four dollars per cwt.

They manufacture some few arms, blankets, stamped leather, embroidery, coarse cotton and woolen cloths, and a species of rough carpeting. Their blankets average two dollars, but some sell as high as 25 dollars.

Agriculture.—They cultivate wheat, corn, rice, oats, cotton, flax, indigo, and vines. What I have said relative to the cultivation of those articles in New Mexico will equally apply to this province, but it may be proper to observe here that one of [Philip] Nolan's men constructed the first cotton gin they ever had in the province, and that Walker had caused a few churns to be made for some private families, and taught them the use of them.

Timber, Plains and Soil.—To the north of Chihuahua, about 30 miles to the right of the main road, there is some pine timber, and at a spring on this side of Carracal [Carrizal] we saw one walnut-tree, and on all the small streams there are shrubby cotton-trees. With these few exceptions the whole province is a naked, barren plain, which presents to the eye an arid, unproductive soil, and more especially in the neighborhood of mines; even the herbage appears to be poisoned by the mineral qualities of the soil.

Antiquities.—There are none in the province which came within my notice but the Jesuits' college and church at Chihuahua, which were about a century old, and are used as hospitals. In these there was nothing peculiar, except a certain solidity and strength, which appeared to surpass the other public buildings of the city.

Aborigines.—There are no uncivilized savages in this province except the Appaches, of whom I have spoken largely [under New Mexico]. The Christian Indians are so incorporated amongst the lower grades of metifs that it is scarcely possible to draw the line of distinction, except at the ranelios [rancheros] or large land-holder, where they are in a state of vassalage.

This class of people laid a conspiracy, which was so well concerted as to baffle the inquiries of the Spaniards for a length of time, and to occasion them the loss of several hundred inhabitants. The Indians used to go out from their village in small parties: in a short time a part would return with the report that they had been attacked by the Indians; the Spaniards would immediately send out a detachment in pursuit, when they were led into an ambuscade and every soul cut off. They pursued this course so long that the whole province became alarmed at the rapid manner in which their enemies multiplied; but some circumstances leading to a suspicion, they made use of the superstition of those people for their ruin. Some officers disguised themselves like friars and went round amongst the Indians, pretending to be possessed of the spirit of prophecy. They preached up to the Indians that the day was approaching when a general deliverance from the Spanish tyranny was about to take place, and invited the Indians to join in concerting with them the work of God. The poor creatures came forward, and in their confessions stated the great hand that had already been put to the work. After these pretended friars had ascertained the nature and extent of the conspiracy, and had a body of troops prepared, they commenced the execution and put to death about 400 of the unsuspecting Indians. This struck terror and dismay through the Indian villages, and they dared not rise and declare their freedom and independence.

Government and Laws.—In this province there is some shadow of civil law; but it is merely a shadow, as the following anecdote may illustrate. An officer, on arriving at a village, demanded quarters for himself and troops. The supreme civil officer of the place sent him word that he must show his passport. The military officer immediately sent a file of men, who brought the judge a prisoner before him, when he severely reprimanded the judge for his insolence and obliged him to obey his orders instantly. This has been done by a subaltern, in a city of 20,000 inhabitants. The only laws which can be said to be in force are the military and ecclesiastic, between which there is a perfect understanding.

The governor is a brigadier-general, resides at Durango, and receives 5000 dollars, in addition to his pay in the line. It is proper to observe that there are ordinances to bear on each subject of civil discussion, but the administration of them is so corrupt, that the influence of family and fortune generally procure the determination that they have right on their side.

In each town is a public magazine for provisions, where every farmer brings whatever grain and produce he may have for sale, where he is sure to meet with a market; and should there be a scarcity the ensuing year, it is retailed out to the inhabitants at a reasonable rate. To this place all the citizens of the town repair to purchase.

Morals, Manners, &c.—There is nothing peculiar in the manners or morals of the people of this province, but a much greater degree of luxury among the rich, misery among the poor, and a corruption of morals more general than in New Mexico. As to military spirit they have none. At a muster of a regiment of militia at Chihuahua one of my men attended, and informed me that there were about 25 who had fire-arms and lances, 50 with bows and arrows and lances, and the balance with lances or bows and arrows only.

Military Force.—The regular military force of Biscay consists of 100 dragoons, distributed as follows: On the frontiers of the deserts of New Mexico and Senora, at the forts of Elisaira [San Elizario], Carracal [Carrizal], and San Buenaventura, Presidio del Norte, Janos, Tulenos, and San Juan Baptist. Farther south are Chihuahua, Jeronime, Cayone, San Paubla [Pedro], Guaxequillo [Guajoquilla, present Jiménez], and Conchos, with several other places which are appendages of these positions. The complement of each of those posts is 150 men, but may be averaged at 100 in all, say 100 at each post. The militia are not worthy of particular notice.

Religion.—Biscay is in the diocese of Durango, the bishop's salary being estimated at 100,000 dollars per annum. The catholic religion is here in its full force, but the inferior clergy are very much dissatisfied. The people's superstition is so great that they are running after the holy father in the streets, and endeavoring to kiss the hem of his garment, and should the bishop be passing the street, the rich and poor all kneel.

History.—I shall not presume to say any thing on this subject except that I believe this province has been populated about 270 years.

Questions about Local Costs and Impact on Land Owners

Some questions regarding costs to states and local governments as well as local property owners have been asked. We published a Pike Fact Sheet as an EXTRA last month. Here is an excerpt...

Cost and Land Usage

The cost for National Historic Trails [NHT] to states, counties and towns is minimal because NHTs are **not** placed on the actual wagon rut or footprint, but rather use highways to get to developed sites for viewing.

This also means that maintenance costs are very low.

Private properties, therefore, are minimally impacted. There are several Pike sites in federal and state inventories which are owned federally or by the state.

On top of that, **several landowners have promised donation of Pike site properties to state entities**, upon the Pike NHT designation, and they are willing to maintain these properties.

Another cost factor involves site maintenance and production of educational materials for interpretation. The private sector has indicated their support.

Bottom line- We are **not** asking for local or state funding rather simply support for federal legislation. Maintenance costs are minimal once the Pike NHT is designated (likely managed by the NPS and BLM.)

The Bottom Bottom line- Because the Pike Trail will be a Federal effort.
Counties and towns and the public will be the benefactors. It is a WIN-WIN!

We suggest that you link to: <http://zebulonpike.org/docs/PikeFactSheet.pdf> for a reading of the full Pike Fact sheet which includes a description of our proposed trail and its benefits. Also included are maps and new charts describing trails with which we are contiguous and designated and undesignated portions of the Pike Trail.