

# Pike National Historic Trail Association Newsletter May-June 2010 Vol. 4 No 5

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

Our website is [www.zebulonpike.org](http://www.zebulonpike.org)



## *Feasibility Study bill about to be introduced-* Much of our effort during the past 6

months has been concentrated on demonstrating support for the establishment of the Pike National Historic Trail. We received support from 24 states including all 7 of the Pike states. County Commissions in the 5 Pike states, 17 County Commissions in Colorado, have lent their support. We are working to achieve our goal of 500 letters. With the help of many we have 350 letters with 380 signatures. Our goal is to gain 500 letters of support.

**If you have not written a letter of support, please help us, sending them to the Association address found at the end of this newsletter!**

Historians, historic and preservation groups, long distance trails, chambers, and individuals have joined our effort.

If you have relatives and friends who will write a letter to us, have them get suggestions at <http://zebulonpike.org/docs/OpenLetters.pdf> !

Not only have we been in contact with Senator Bennet's Colorado offices, the effort now centers in Washington where the Feasibility Study bill will be introduced by Senator Bennet's and his staff. The first committee it reaches for reading and preliminary vote is Senator Mark Udall's Subcommittee on National Parks which he chairs and then on to the full Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. [Senator Udall is from Colorado.]

On June 14th, a conference call between Senator Bennet's offices, Senator Udall's Denver office and the Association occurred. Senator Udall's staff indicated full assistance and they have received information regarding the trail proposal, trail location, and support letters [as has Senator Bennet.]

## *Annual Member and Board Meeting- POSTPONED November 5&6, 2010 [Friday and Saturday]*

The Pike NHT Association Annual Meeting has been postponed and will be held at the Royal Gorge's **Bighorn Mountaintop Lodge** outside Cañon City, Colorado on Saturday November 6th. Please contact the Association with confirmation - 303/816-7424 or by email to [harv.pike@gmail.com](mailto:harv.pike@gmail.com). Please mark this event on your calendar.

Plan to arrive on Friday 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!

## *Wildfires Burn many Pike acres in Colorado*

Three wildfires continue to concern many on the Pike route in Colorado, and things are getting worse.

There is a fire southwest of Pueblo, another in the Royal Gorge at Parkdale, and another in the Great Sand Dunes National Park/Medano Pass area.

Aside from what you may have seen in the media from Flagstaff, a local Denver station has reported on the Medano fire for a week. [This story- written June 22, 2010.]

These fires are being fueled by high winds, low humidity, heavy fuels and dry conditions.

**Pueblo Fire-** Little is known regarding this late fire.

**Royal Gorge-** Dorothy Urban, our secretary who resides in Westcliffe, CO. near these fires, reports that the "Royal Gorge at Parkdale is roaring with a wild fire and evacuating a lot of people including Buckskin Joe's." She believes food is being brought in.



Medano Pass/ Sangre de Cristo from Great Sand Dunes NP [other side of close ridge and prior to the fire]

### **Medano Fire burns more than 7,000 acres**

The Medano Pass fire began on June 6th in Saguache County in the San Luis Valley on the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve by a lightning strike. It has spread to the east driven by strong winds and continues to burn.

The Medano Fire in Huerfano County has exceeded the boundary of the San Isabel National Forest, San Carlos Ranger District.

Smoke may be visible in Cañon City, Pueblo, southeast Colorado and parts of New Mexico. On 6/19, Dorothy said, "The fire has started belching out black and gobs of whirling white smoke again today(Sat) and I can watch it from my back deck."

Later in the day she said that "the smoke has drifted to Colorado City, Rye and other places. It is at the ridge they say at this time and the damage has not been estimated." "It looks like the fire has calmed down and some cool air coming in with just a weird haze flowing to the east."

There has been no structural damage reported as the fire is

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*Medano Pass fire*- burning in rugged, steep terrain of the Sangre de Cristos with limited access. Smoke clouds were over 14000' high, as seen from the Mt. Blanca and Crestone 14ers, with bright red burst at times. Media footage continues to show smoke in Medano Pass and north in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains.

An interagency incident management team is managing the fire with local fire managers.

The Medano Road (the four wheel -Forest Service Road 559) off of Colorado 69 is closed in Huerfano County from the National Forest boundary west. Rangers expect to issue further road closures as well as a closure to the Rainbow Trail, south of the Music Pass trailhead, while the fire is active.

Pike was in the San Luis Valley in January and February, 1807.

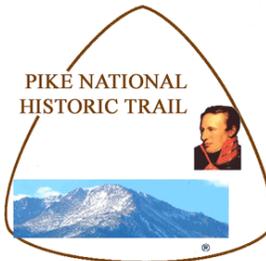
*Association Logos*- We have been looking at ideas for an Association logo so that it can be placed on maps and literature. We printed the first 5 ideas in the April Newsletter [A through E below- with some using different colors and placement]. Five more have



**A** Stockade & flag



**B** Picture & Flag



**C** Picture & Pkes Peak



**D** Picture & Silo.



**E** Pike Big (Mtn)



**F** Silo. on Orange



**G** Picture & Pkes Peak



**H** Route Map in US.



**I** Pike Big (Simple)



**J** Pike - red, white & blue

been suggested. Some folks have been constructively critical of colloquial aspects of some, color use and placement in others. Some suggest keeping it simple. Some wish Pike's picture on it. Some say the route map is appropriate.

*Please voice your opinion with the ballot at the end of this newsletter. Former opinions will not count.*

*Zebulon Pike Tours Texas*- "Pike's report on Texas was in many ways a revelation for Americans" *by Dr. Clive Siegle Part 2 of 2*

[continued from the last newsletter - April] All newsletters can be viewed in pdf form on our website-

[www.zebulonpike.org](http://www.zebulonpike.org)

That notion vanished in the dust of Governor Cordero's carriage, which met the party just outside of town on June 7. Pike recorded that the ragged Americans were received "like their children." That evening, a baile was held on the public square in their honor, and a bemused Pike observed that governors Cordero and Herrera, who he described as men of "super-excellent qualities," danced with people of social stations who "in the day time would approach them with reverence and awe." During the following week filled with a welter of dinner parties, sightseeing, and socializing, the simmering tensions on the Sabine must have seemed at least a bit more distant.

As the Anglo-Spanish contingent marched through Nacogdoches and ever eastward after leaving San Antonio on June 14, evidence of the polyglot U.S.-Spanish borderlands culture grew, and by the time the party reached the banks of the Trinity, traffic included French and Irish frontiersmen, and slaves fleeing Louisiana plantations for the freedom of Spanish law. And in the astonishingly small world of a deceptively immense western frontier, Pike first learned here of the safe return of the detachment under Lieutenant Wilkinson that he had sent back to U.S. territory some eight months previous.

On June 29, only a few weeks shy of a year since the expedition took to the field, the Americans crossed the Sabine River into U.S territory and bid farewell to their Spanish escort. Significantly, Pike's first house call on friendly soil turned up a cabin full of smugglers. The following day at 4:00 p.m., returning on a path no one could have envisioned twelve months before, the expedition entered Natchitoches.



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*Zebulon Pike Tours Texas [continued]*- Pike's report on Texas was in many ways a revelation for Americans, particularly since his status as an American officer lent an "official" air to its publication. His observations of the sweep and richness of the land, with its prairies teeming with game and wild horses, became a primary document in the bibliography of America's nascent march toward the Texas Republic and Manifest Destiny. But Pike's commentary also provided one of the first literary snapshots of the human side of Spanish Texas written by an American citizen. Although colored at times by cultural prejudices, the Captain's account populated the province with men and women great and small, good and bad, wise and foolish. Across Pike's pages, "super-excellent" men like Cordero and Herrera partner with everyday folk as they dance the night away on a dusty square in honor of a bunch of ragged foreign interlopers whose odyssey will soon change both of their worlds in ways they could never have imagined.

*Zebulon Pike: Anglo Interloper, American Hero* by Brian Murphy- Pike NHT Assoc. New Mexico Coordinator Historian Brian Murphy spoke on "Zebulon Montgomery Pike: Anglo Interloper, American Hero." Apr 14, 2010. This is the text of his presentation in Santa Fe.

You can hear the presentation on the internet at <http://media.museumofnewmexico.org/audio/chavezlibrary/BrianMurphy.mp3>

Thank you for inviting me to speak about my two favorite subjects- early colonial history and Zebulon Pike. Thank you, Tomas [Tomas Jaehn, New Mexico Museum at the Palace of the Governors, Santa Fe, New Mexico] and thank you all for coming.

You all probably know that Zebulon Pike was a young US Army officer and he came through Santa Fe in 1807. He was a native New Jerseyian like myself, so I'm kind of proud that he was an important early American explorer. I am interested in talking about Pike and his trip here. And moving here to Santa Fe was just the cream of the cake for me.

He was brought here into Santa Fe for questioning because he was trespassing on Spanish soil. He had a stockade that he had built and I'll get into his exploration in a little bit. He actually had a stockade in southern Colorado. They were hunkering down for the winter. It was a cold winter and the Spanish knew that he was there. The Spanish knew that he had come into their territory, and they sent men on horseback and brought Pike here for questioning. And they sent him down to Chihuahua for further questioning by the Governor down there.

Pike was in Santa Fe in 1807. Governor Allencaster invited Pike to dine with him at the Palace. After dinner they went for a ride around town in Allencaster's coach with a escort of military guys on horseback. He stayed here one or two nights in the Spanish Lieutenant Bartholemew's home and became very friendly.

You see these parts were Spanish territory and Americans were not welcome here. So that's why Pike was brought down here for questioning. They just didn't want people coming in from the east and infiltrating.

Pike, after his travels, published a book in 1810 about his explorations. He did two expeditions. One was up to the upper Mississippi for exploration and the second was the south west exploration which we are going to talk about. The book was really important because it focused the attention of the US government on this area of the country, the continent, and in that sense you could say that Pike paved the way for the Santa Fe Trail, the trading, and the settlement of Texas.

His book about his two explorations was published four years before Lewis and Clark published their official journal, having problems getting them to publishing. I know it was kicking around the political circles in Washington, it was an important book.

Today, I'm going to talk about his southwest expedition and touch on some of the controversy of his being in this territory.

**Pike's birth and early life-** I'd like to tell you about Zebulon Pike's route. You know now that he was a native of New Jersey, like myself. There is some confusion about where he was born. If you look on the internet you will see that he was born in Trenton. I don't believe that to be true. More research has been done. I believe he was born at a place called Alamitunk. That's an indian name, Delaware indians, and I'm not quite sure if that's a place name, a river, but it had something to do with this area where Pike was born. The Europeans had settled that area phonicized that word and the town is now called Laming, New Jersey. I have a book here which says he was born in Alamitunk, not Trenton.

I will tell you why I have this map. Pike was born in 1779 in Alamitunk and why was he born there? Well, Washington's army was camped in the Wahchung mountains in 1779 near Alamitunk. Pike's father was an officer in Washington's army. We think there was a relative of Pike's mother in Laming and it was not unusual to have officer's wives in towns nearby camps. That's minutia that guys like me really care about.

Pike was destined to be a military man. His father was a career military man- his name was also Zebulon. We can differentiate between them. The explorer I am referring to, who became a General, was Zebulon Montgomery Pike, so we can distinguish between them with the middle name Montgomery. Pike's father was career military. After the {Revolutionary} War there wasn't much of an army to speak of. The Americans didn't believe in a standing army. Pike's dad temporarily retired from the army. But then there were problems with the indians in the northwest territory who were harassing pioneers trying to settle in that area and Washington believed he had to raise an army to deal with these problems. So Pike's dad got a commission, he's back in the Army in 1791. Pike's father accompanies St. Claire to the Northwest Territory. They're going there to try to subdue the indians to calm things down.

St. Claire's troops were massacred by the indians. In 1400 soldiers, 600 were killed and 250 of them were wounded. Pike's dad was there, he was one of the lucky ones who escaped with his life. That was probably the largest defeat of US forces at the hands of the indians to this day.

Washington still felt that he had to subdue the indians, so he appointed General Anthony Wayne, commander of the Army, to raise an army. Wayne raised a legend. Pike's father was in that legend, and Pike as a teenager accompanied Wayne to the Northwest Territory to subdue the indians.

What I am saying is that Pike had this military thing in his blood from day one. He was born near an army Revolutionary War encampment. He was going with his father as a young boy into the frontier to fight the indians. He knew what his future was going to be.

Anthony Wayne and his army met the indians at a place called Fallen Timbers in September 1794 and there was a fairly short battle there, Wayne beat the retreating indians. I don't believe that Pike and his father were at the battle but very close by. Pike's dad was a mile or so from the battle in charge of the supply depot. But you can see that Pike is growing up in this atmosphere. With the success at Fallen Timbers, the indians signed the Treaty of Greenville the following year and peace was brought to the Northwest Territory for a time.

Young Pike was in some good company being in Wayne's group because some other up-and-coming young stars in the military who would leave their mark in history. William Clark was there, Meriwether Lewis was there, William Henry Harrison was there with Wayne's legend. So Pike was being toughened up on the frontier.

1796, Pike's father is given command of Fort Massac on the Ohio River. To the left is where the Ohio empties into the Mississippi River. This is a very strategic location. Young Pike was here with his father when his father was in command. The map I hold was done by a Frenchman Callet in 1797. France still had designs of holding power on the North American continent. Callet came down the Ohio River drawing maps. Pike's father arrested Callet since he was acting very suspiciously, letting him go after a few days.

**Pike joins the military-** So at 15, young Pike joins his father's company as a cadet. He received his first commission in 1799 as an ensign and within fourteen years he rises to the rank of Brigadier General. He would be rising through the ranks very quickly.

He was a very ambitious man, focused on what he wanted to do. He believed in fighting for the glory of his country, was very idealistic guy. I think he had a lot of savvy and help, so to speak, which made him rise through the ranks quickly. Pike was a junior officer in the Army. He's basically moving up and down the Mississippi valley doing various things at different posts.

He was noticed by General James Wilkinson. Wilkinson was a questionable character. He was in the pay of the Spanish Army. Here he was a General in the American Army, the Commander of the Army after Wayne- he would feed and funneling information to the Spanish and getting paid. He was quite a dubious character, but he notices Pike and thought he was a competent guy. So he sent him up the Mississippi on his first exploration- 1805-1806.

**Pike's Expeditions begin-** He apparently does a good job on his first expedition, so Wilkinson decides to send him out on another expedition.

**Southwest Expedition-** He gives him orders to explore the headwaters of the Arkansas River and find the headwaters of the Red River. He had some other tasks to accomplish- deliver some indian captives to their homeland. What you have to understand is that Pike would be entering territory which was disputed. There was no line on a map or stakes in the ground that said here's where American soil ends and here's where Spanish soil begins. So he was entering in a disputed area which was not decided by a treaty in 1821, much after Pike was there.

From his Journal, he lays out what his purpose was in going to the southwest. I have no reason to believe that there were any other things going on. He was a trained military observer, doing military reconnaissance, gathering as much information, geographical and otherwise, about the disputed areas of the continent. He knew that he would be getting very close to the Spanish settlement Santa Fe. I'm sure he was instructed to find out as much about the state of all the things that they do in their daily life. [Continued in the next Newsletter edition - July August]

*Time to renew your membership- see the membership form on the website.*

*Association Logo Ballot-* Either mail this ballot to the Association or email [harv.pike@gmail.com](mailto:harv.pike@gmail.com) with your vote and opinions and suggestions. See page 2.

I vote for \_\_\_ A \_\_\_ B \_\_\_ C \_\_\_ D \_\_\_ E \_\_\_ F \_\_\_ G \_\_\_ H \_\_\_ I \_\_\_ J

*My comments-* \_\_\_\_\_