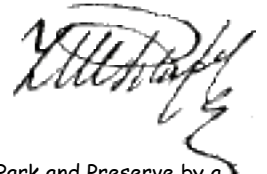


Pike National Historic Trail Association Newsletter July-Aug. 2010 Vol. 4 No 6

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

Our website is www.zebulonpike.org



Wildfire Burn at Medano Pass in Colorado

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. Art Hutchinson [Superintendent Great Sand Dunes NP]- As of 7/23 the Mandano fire is a "controlled, contained wildfire. We are letting Mother nature accomplish what she wishes in a controlled manner." "I've been dealing with logging operations who want to get that timber out of there, but how is the concern because we're talking 60% grades."

Many believe that Zebulon Pike crossed Medano on the 28th of January 1807, and was in the San Luis Valley in January and February, 1807. His men crossed the pass in February and March 1807 to retrieve 3 frostbitten men in the Wet Mountain Valley and recover men and equipment in Cañon City [Colorado.]

Additional County Support

All Colorado County Commissions through which Pike passed [of which there are 15] have all sent their letter of support, including the counties in the San Luis Valley [southern Colorado [recently Costilla County]], and Otero County. The San Luis Valley County Commissioners Association [including 3 counties- Mineral, Rio Grande, and Saguache which are "non-Pike counties"] lent the Association's unanimous support.

Support from other states' County Commissions including St. Louis and Bates in *Missouri*, Bourbon in *Kansas*, Bernalillo and Sandoval in *New Mexico* and Sabine and San Augustine in *Texas*. *These represent the states in which Pike passed. If your Pike county is not represented- please encourage your County Commissioners to write and send a Letter of Support or Resolution to the Association address - 10060 Blue Sky Trail Conifer, CO 80433.*

County Commission support is important because the county commissions represent a greater number of people. A map of the Pike trail is on our website- www.zebulonpike.org.

County Commissions {28 counties}, mayors {25}, historians, historic and preservationists {16}, long distance trails associations {8}, chambers, and individuals {188} have joined our effort.

We will need your HELP to contact your US Senator

Senator Bennet's [Senator-CO] Washington DC office has indicated that the Pike National Historic Trail Feasibility Study Bill will be introduced soon. There is no number yet. They have asked us to have people ready to call or visit their Senators in each state to **ENCOURAGE their Senators to:**

- a) **Become a cosponsor for the Pike National Historic Trail Feasibility Study Bill, and**
- b) **Vote yes for the Pike National Historic Trail Feasibility Study Bill, in committee [if they sit on Committees through which the bill passes [see address/phone list]] and on the Senate floor.**

Please write an email to harv.pike@gmail.com to let us know you are willing to make Senator contacts

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

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

The Pike NHT Association Annual Meeting will be held 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. 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!

Membership Drive

The Association thanks those who are members or have been members. We are

currently asking those who have not renewed their membership to do so. Expenses incurred since January during the effort to acquire Letters of Support for the Pike Trail legislation have been over \$1000. **We must ask for your financial support by renewing your membership and possibly considering an extra contribution.**

Please send your new membership or renewal today with the form on the top of the next page.

We need your FINANCIAL SUPPORT!

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

I will be able to help with:

Name _____

The Pike Association newsletter

Address _____

Historic/heritage investigation

Town _____ State _____ Zip _____

Providing educational programs/opportunities

Producing educational materials

Phone (____) _____ Cell _____

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)

e-mail _____

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

Tom Rollings Interview On June 10th, KVRH radio in Salida interviewed Tom Rollings about the Pike National Historic Trails Assoc. and its effort to commemorate the Pike Expedition of 1806-1807. Topics discussed included a review of the goals of the organization, the route that the explorers took through Chaffee County, and some of the historical camp and discovery sites in the area. Mention was made of the ongoing effort to encourage local people to participate in a letter writing campaign to our Colorado congressional delegation in support of the Pike National Trail. Furthermore, the possibility of a bill designating a feasibility study for the trail and the momentum for congressional action was discussed. Literally hundreds of letters from various private parties in numerous states have been received by our members of congress.

When Pike entered Chaffee County, Colorado, his actions illuminated his intent as an explorer and eradicated several myths about his expedition's purpose. Pike travelled over Trout Creek Pass and camped four miles above the Arkansas River near Johnson Village. He discovered the Upper Arkansas River - thinking it was the Red River - and was quite excited about discovering its headwaters. As it was snowing very hard, Pike decided to stay for a couple of days on a Pinon covered rise overlooking the Johnson Village area to scout the area and plan future travel. The horses were able to graze, but the hunting parties returned empty handed. Pike decided to split his party into thirds, and send two parties down the Arkansas River in search for game and a secure camp site, while he took two privates, (Montjoy and Miller) to discover the headwaters of the river. After trekking up the narrow, fast flowing river north of the Twin Lakes area, Pike was able to view the general headwaters of the Arkansas amidst some of the highest peaks in America.

If Pike's mission was to spy, surely he would not have chosen to risk death from starvation and exposure in the dead of winter near present-day Leadville to explore the headwaters of a river. As it turns out, Pike and his fellows got wet crossing the river, froze their pants almost instantly, and decided to return to their previous campsite near Riverside. The next day, they marched early, through mid-day and into the evening until it became too dark to continue, camping without food or dry clothing near Brown's Creek. The next day when they meet Doctor Robinson and camp at the Big Bend site for Christmas Eve, none of the men had eaten for days. Fortunately, a few men returned with buffalo from a hunting trip, then a few more brought buffalo. The Party went from starving to death to having "8 beeves in camp." Merry Christmas!

Other stories were told, about Pike giving up his tent for his men and camping in the snow at Salida (hardly the actions of a commander who lacks compassion) and his terrible trek along the Arkansas River through Big Horn Sheep Canyon. Zebulon Pike's journal entry as he decides to go through the canyon directly refute the spy myth again.

As Pike leaves Chaffee County, he shows the courage, compassion, and creativity of leadership that some fail to understand. All of KVRH's listeners were encouraged to read Pike's journals and learn more about the journey.

The interview concluded with a brief discussion of the historical and recreational significance of the Arkansas River. There are several groups in the area that are dedicated to preserving historical sites and the pristine condition of the river. We all have a stake in the effort, and it is up to us to get involved to whatever degree we can.

Tom Rollings is our Upper Arkansas River Coordinator

Zebulon Pike: Anglo Interloper, American Hero by Brian Murphy- Pike NHT Assoc. New Mexico Coordinator



Part 2 of 3 Continued from May-June Historian Brian Murphy spoke on "Zebulon Montgomery Pike: Anglo Interloper, American Hero." Apr 14, 2010. This is the 2nd part of the text of his presentation in Santa Fe.

Brian with his Pike Tavern sign

The other thing Pike was to proclaim American power over the American Indians. He was the first United States citizen to do that. He meets the Pawnee Indians at their camp [on the Republican River in now very southern Nebraska] and he finds that they are flying a Spanish flag. He actually orders the Indians to haul that Spanish flag down and run up the American flag. He did let the Indians keep the Spanish flag in case the Spanish came back to save them from getting in trouble.

This is in the period 1806-1807, less than three years after the Louisiana Purchase. The Spanish were very sensitive to this. They had a buffer zone they were trying to maintain around northern New Mexico. Basically, they were trying to protect their holdings in northern Mexico, vast mineral wealth- silver mines, etc. Santa Fe was on the outskirts of that buffer zone. The Spanish did not want the easterners to move in yet. Pike was treading in water where he was not welcome. For one thing I found in my research was that the Spanish felt they had a divine right. They were the first ones to colonize. One of the Popes said, "By the will of almighty God, the lands of the New World belong to the Spanish monarchy."

This map shows the route that Pike took in his southwest exploration. He embarked from a point above St. Louis, in a keel boat, much like Lewis and Clark. They make their way up the Missouri. They also have horses and gather horses to cross Missouri and Kansas. They travel north in Kansas to southern Nebraska, which is where they met the Pawnee, and went back down to the Arkansas. The Spanish military were out in the area to intercept Lewis and Clark. I don't know if they knew about Pike specifically, but they were under instructions to capture or turn back Americans. Pike came across the Spanish trail, the trail they left when they were looking for Americans. He followed their trail for a time and of course came across things left behind, their campfires. They only missed each other by a couple of weeks.

So Pike made his way across the Great Plains toward the headwaters of the Arkansas. He makes a circle, as the maps of the time were not completely accurate. The Red River on Humboldt's map was in the wrong spot. That was one of the reasons he was here- to record the geography, to make maps. He gets into Colorado. He crosses the Rocky Mountains. He endures many hardships during this time. He was unprepared not realizing how long he was going to be gone. He didn't have winter clothing for his men. They were really under a lot of duress and suffered a lot of hardships.

They nearly starved several times. They lost nearly all of their horses near Pueblo, Colorado and had to carry 70 pounds of supplies on their backs. They didn't have the winter clothing. They were there during the coldest part of the year. They encountered snow 4 or 5 feet deep. It is a wonder that they didn't perish. Some of them were frost bitten and had to be left behind in the mountains left with provisions. He promised them that he would come back to them.

At one point, he and Dr. Robinson, Robinson was a civilian who accompanied the men who may have been the true spy on the expedition, at one point there, they are out of food going four days without food, they are hunting buffalo. They shot some buffalo, injuring them so that the buffalo got away. They were hunkered down for the night and basically said good bye to each other- they're not going to make it. But the next day luckily the buffalo stumbled into them. They are able to bring down one buffalo, get that food and bring it back to camp. They had some close calls when they were out there.

At one time during the expedition they are trudging along with their 70 pounds, one of the men began to complain with the other soldiers around. These guys were really being tested with the hardships that they are under. Pike lets it go for the time being, but when they are camped during the night he calls the men together around the fire and makes an example out of the soldier who was grumbling. He pointed out that he's enduring the same hardships that they are enduring. He's often running ahead doing reconnaissance. He's the one out with Dr. Robinson hunting the buffalo bringing it back to the camp. So he doesn't think the soldier has any right and as a soldier he doesn't have the right to complain. Pike thinks he has got to nip that in the bud. He calls the men around the fire, makes an example of this man, and says that if you complain again I'll put you to death. So you see that Pike is a tough guy, he had to get tough. That action probably kept those guys together, kept those guys alive. He did what had to be done at the time, but did take the moment thanking the men for enduring the hardships they had been through, thanking them for their loyalty.

This map by Carey from 1814 showing Pike's two expeditions going up the Mississippi and crossing the Rocky Mountains and into New Spain. It is cool because it shows features which Carey learned from the Pike expedition. It shows a river called Pike's River in the upper Mississippi. That blob shows Pikes Peak which Pike tried to climb but unsuccessfully. It does show a blockhouse that Pike built on the Arkansas River. There is a line showing what Carey believed to be the line between the American and Spanish possessions that was disputed. The Spanish had explored this area before Zebulon Pike was there. So in that sense they had more of a right to this area than the Americans had. The Spanish were also in Texas and had their own arguments as to who's land that should be.

Pike was warned too that he would be coming close to Spanish settlements. Tensions were high between the Spanish and American armies. He was warned by General Wilkinson not to do anything which would start a war basically.

I touched a little about the Spanish who had gone out onto the Plains looking for Americans. One of the soldiers who had 600 soldiers versus Pike's 20 or so. The Indians said it was like a flock of blue birds. So Pike's party was rinky dink compared to that party. Now that party was led by Fecundo Melgares, they're the ones who missed each other by a few weeks. Pike would later meet up with Melgares in Spanish territory and they became friendly.

Jefferson claimed, I read, that Americans were entitled to the land all the way to the Rio Grande. I think that was pretty wishful thinking at the time.

[Continued as Part 3 in the next Newsletter edition - September]

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303/816-7424 www.zebulonpike.org

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