

Pike National Historic Trail Association Newsletter Dec. 2010 Vol. 4 No 10

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

“Zebulon Pike was an American hero, a patriot who lived and died for his country.” -Thomas Jefferson

www.zebulonpike.org

- **Passage of Pike National Historic Trail Feasibility Study bill** We are currently looking forward to the reintroduction and passage of the Pike National Historic Trail Feasibility Study bill in the 112th Congress. For those contacting Senators during the 111th Congress-**Thank you!** We expect the process of designation of the Pike National Historic Trail to be lengthy. We ask that you continue your interest and support.
 - We have been assured that the bill and trail designation is not controversial and will continue to receive bipartisan support. The low cost of National Historic Trails, because they use public roads to view sites instead of building and maintaining paths, remains critical for passage and support.
 - Senate committees, through which the bill must be heard, are being contacted. There has been a favorable awareness of the Feasibility Study bill in these committees. The U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources is the committee where the Pike National Historic Trail bill resides. **Senator Jeff Bingaman** from New Mexico is the committee chairman, and is well aware of our efforts to make this bill a reality. The subcommittee on National Parks is chaired by **Senator Mark Udall** of Colorado. We are fortunate to have Senator Udall co-sponsor the Pike National Historic Trail Feasibility Study bill and have been assured continued support in the U.S. Senate!
 - We are attempting to contact the newly elected US Senators and Representatives, especially in the states and districts through which Pike passed in 1806 and 1807.
 - We will keep you informed as to the progress of our efforts.

- **Logo Committee-** Professional designer Katherine McCoy is working with the Association's Logo Committee, headed by Tom



Rollings of Buena Vista CO. Preliminary designs were reviewed on Dec. 20th and the full committee is now selecting one of four designs.

New Info from the National Park Service Following last month's Newsletter, we were asked not to use the triangular form as the National Park Service is likely to adopt a similar logo when the Pike National Historic Trail is designated. The Logo Committee has been asked to adopt two, non-triangular logos- one for use by the Association and one for trail use [before designation.] Pictured: Katherine McCoy, Harv Hisgen and Tom Rollings- Meeting on 12/10.

- **John Patrick Michael Murphy** Our dear friend and Vice President, John Murphy, is



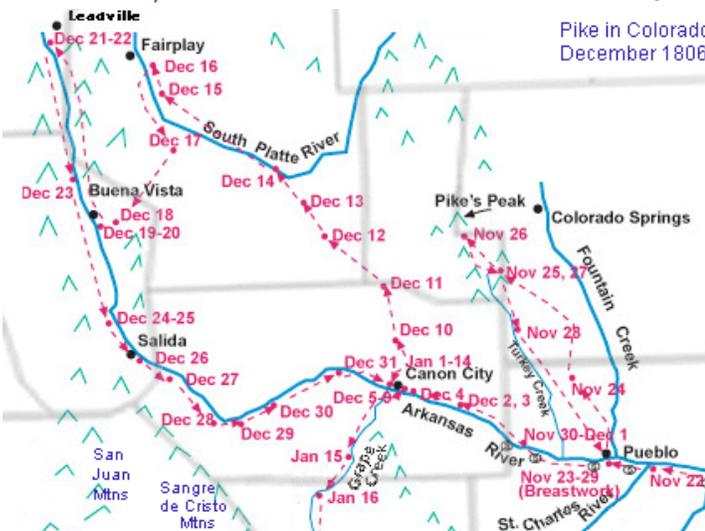
fighting cancer in a tumor in his lung. He is receiving treatment at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. We would like you to keep him in your thoughts and prayers.

John Patrick Michael Murphy is quite a guy. Recently he solo climbed the most difficult 14er in Colorado. "... and now we were doing a late-season Colorado 14er, a special one, Capitol Peak, one of the harder ones. That day I think I went out looking for the Reaper." from **The Knife Edge & the Reaper: Part II** written by John 12/26/2010. We include a picture taken by John of the Knife Edge after he reached Capitol's summit.



Capitol Peak Colo Knife Edge John Patrick Michael Murphy

- **Pike's Experiences in December 1806-**



- **Cañon City South Park Leadville Christmas in Salida Royal Gorge** by Allan

Vainley
 During the month of December 1806, Zebulon Montgomery Pike and his men:
 ● Traveled up the south side of the Arkansas River from Pueblo CO to Cañon City, 12/1 to 5/ 1806, after Pike and three others attempted to climb Pike's "Grand Peak" [Pikes Peak] from Nov 24 to 29,
 ● Scouted the area around present day Cañon City for 4 days, dealing with harsh weather and moved their encampment west on the 8th*,
 ● Scouting had found the last of the trace of the Spanish and that the Arkansas "was merely a brook" up toward the Royal Gorge,
 ● Decision time had arrived. **What was the next best move?**
 ● Ascended Four Mile Creek [or Oil Creek] NW into South Park discovering the South Platte River. 12/10 to 18/ 1806,
 ● Discovered the true headwaters of the Arkansas River, 12/21 thinking it to be the Red River.
 ● Spent Christmas near Salida and found themselves back in the Royal Gorge and Cañon City on the 31st.
 *The encampment was moved to the west side of Cañon City [marked today] where US 50 bends right [north] and ascends up the entrance to the mountains.

They found themselves up against severe weather, possible encounters with the Spanish and Indians, the Rocky Mountains and the Royal Gorge.

The weather-On Dec. 1- "The storm still continuing with violence, we remained encamped;" Tuesday, Dec. 2nd, Pike reported, "It cleared off in the night, and in the morning the thermometer stood at 17 below 0 (Reaumer = -6°F) being three times as cold as any morning we had yet experienced." 12/3- "The weather moderating to 3 below 0 (25°F)"

The Spanish Pike had been concerned about a large Spanish party [in search for him] since leaving the Pawnee in Red Cloud, Nebraska on the 7th of October. The Spanish had proceeded them two weeks before and they found evidence of encampments on their way west along Arkansas River. On Dec. 6th- "Sent out three different parties to hunt the Spanish trace, but without success." Pike's scouting party on the 7th had crossed to the north side of the Arkansas, "and discovered (as they supposed) that the Spanish troops had ascended a dry valley."

The Arkansas Dec 6th- "The doctor and myself followed the river into the mountain, which was bounded on each side by the rocks 200 feet high, leaving a small valley of 50 or 60 feet." A scouting party on the 7th reported, "to have ascended until the river was merely a brook, bounded on both sides with perpendicular rocks, impractical for horses ever to pass them." Pike's map is labeled "Last of ye Arkansas." Scouting had determined the streams in the Cañon City area which fed the Arkansas from the north and south.

Decision time had arrived CAÑON CITY CO. Some have compared the decision made in Cañon City by the Pike Expedition to that made in late July 1805 by the Lewis and Clark Expedition at the headwaters of the Missouri River [three forks of the Missouri River, the Gallatin, the Madison, and the Jefferson.] Which party made the "right" decision can be debated, but it seems to me Pike had four options. Option One- Go EAST → where they had come. Out of consideration.

Option Two- Go WEST. ← The Royal Gorge stood in their way and the Arkansas, they thought, had played out becoming "merely a brook." They had found the headwaters of the Arkansas River. Hadn't they?

Option Three- Go SOUTH. ↓ Pike knew that the Expedition had to eventually turn south to reach the headwaters of the Red River [his last assignment.] He knew that his government and, in particular, Thomas Jefferson considered the whole of the Arkansas River watershed including its south side to belong to the US [1803 Louisiana Purchase.] It was also known that the Spanish considered the south side of the Arkansas to be Spanish territory. On January 15, 1807 they would follow Branch Creek [now called Grape Creek] south into the Wet Mountain Valley.

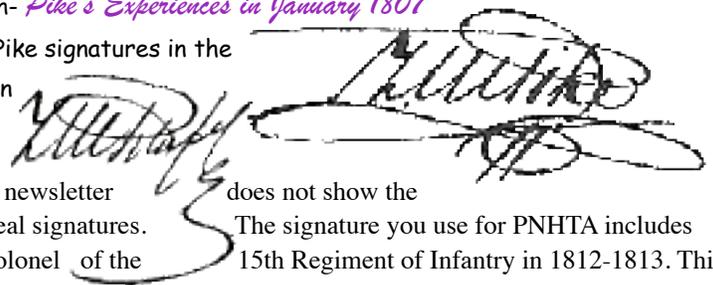
Option Four- Go NORTH. ↑ Although traveling north into the mountains would expose the party to adverse weather and uncertain terrain and food sources, the party might avoid exposure to Spanish control. **This option was first taken** and by the end of the month they found themselves back at [and Pike in] the Royal Gorge. Finding the headwaters of two major rivers and what was later determined the Continental Divide were remarkable accomplishments.

Thinking [mistakingly] that if they followed the Spanish troop trace, it would lead them south toward the headwaters of the Red River [his last assignment] and Santa Fe. He learned later that they had followed an old Indian trail.

Christmas in Salida Thursday- "It being stormy weather and having meat to dry; I concluded to lie by this day. Here I must take the liberty of observing that in this situation, the hardships and privations we underwent, were on this day brought more fully to our mind. ... here 800 miles from the frontiers of our country, in the most inclement season of the year; not one person clothed for the winter, many without blankets (having been obliged to cut them up for socks, &c.) and now laying down at night on the snow or wet ground; one side burning whilst the other was pierced with the cold wind: this was in part the situation of the party whilst some were endeavoring make a miserable substitute of raw buffalo hide for shoes &c." Next month- *Pike's Experiences in January 1807*

• *Pike Signatures*- Our inquiry regarding the authenticity of the Pike signatures in the November Newsletter, brought this interesting response from Brian Murphy, our New Mexico State Coordinator:

I have owned several Pike autographs over the years and have studied copies of his letters in public institutions. Although the pdf file of your newsletter signatures very clearly, I believe both these facsimiles to be of Pike's real signatures. "Col" after his name, which is how he signed his name while he was colonel of the explains why the two signatures look somewhat different.



does not show the The signature you use for PNHTA includes 15th Regiment of Infantry in 1812-1813. This

• *The "Mountjoy Hills"* by Tom Rollings, Upper Arkansas Coordinator PNHTA

In December 1806, when Zebulon Pike ventured down Trout Creek Pass in Colorado, he pointed out a good campsite for his men, then proceeded down the creek to discover a major river. Thinking it could be the Red River he stayed the next two days in and around present-day Johnson Village. It was snowing and his hunting parties were coming back empty handed. Here he made an interesting decision. He split his party into thirds, sending the Doctor and another party downstream to find food. He, on the other hand, took privates Miller and Mountjoy with him to explore the headwaters of the newly discovered (Arkansas) river.

Imagine the conditions...hungry, cold men, negotiating rocky and snow-covered terrain, searching for the headwaters of an unknown river. Despite these challenges, the men went up a narrow valley that turns into a mountainous canyon with a rocky river rushing through it. As it turns out, the party eventually discovered the headwaters of the Arkansas River after

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viewing the upper valley from an unknown "point of the mountain." This hill from which Pike saw the entire valley and the headwaters of the Arkansas, and exactly how far up the river he went, are points of contention.

Famous authors Hart and Hulbert mention that the party went north of the Twin Lakes area, and Donald Jackson states that they made it somewhere above Twin Lakes as well. Jackson even went to the great trouble of hiking and flying over the area in search of the hill from which Pike saw the headwaters. He states that he was unsure which hill Pike viewed the valley from.

My wife and I decided to see if we could find the "viewing point," and make our own guess as to where Pike travelled in the Upper Arkansas River Valley. After reading several accounts of the party's journey in Zebulon Pike's journals, I poured over USGS maps of Chaffee and Lake Counties. Using Pike's own estimations of distances travelled, several possible viewing sites were marked on the map. One November day after a small snow, my wife and I went on our own little journey of discovery. It only cost me a dinner in Leadville, so I considered it a bargain.

Looking at a map is helpful to understand locations, but it is illuminating when one walks and climbs around the countryside to see what the maps can't reveal. Don Jackson says that surely Pike would have seen Mt. Elbert and Mt. Massive from the "viewing hill," as well as the Tennessee Creek drainage.

According to the journals, Pike, Mountjoy, and Miller travelled 13 miles to the "point on the mountain" from which they could see the headwaters of the river. My wife and I went 12 and ½ miles north of Riverside (near present-day Numbers river rafting access) to see if this "point" was the area we were looking for.

At Kobe, across from the old Hayden Ranch, is Lake County Road 55 that crosses the Arkansas River. There is a rocky hill that stands out very near the river. Above and behind (east) of the hill is a site that meets the map requirements for the "viewing hill." Turning right off CR 55 takes one to some real estate development roads that go right to the "Mountjoy Hills." Just for fun we named these the "Mountjoy Hills," since private Mountjoy surely deserved some credit for helping Pike make this journey.

The "Mountjoy Hills" fulfill all of the requirements for the site where Pike saw the central headwaters of the Arkansas River. The view is spectacular! One can see Mt. Elbert, Mt. Massive, and the entire Tennessee Creek drainage area.

After trudging along the river north of Buena Vista, with the valley narrowing to a steep and mountainous canyon, Pike would have been glad to see that the river valley began to open up a little near Balltown/Twin Lakes. It is not until one reaches Kobe, however, that the upper river drainage can be seen. The hills on the east side of the river are treeless and easy to climb. Surely Pike would have viewed the valley from here, then gone north to near the Mt. Massive Lakes area, where he "got his feet wet" and noticed that the river was greatly reduced in size. There are a few streams running parallel to the Arkansas at this point, which would have been dangerous to cross, especially covered with snow and hidden from sight. This brings the party to a point a couple of miles south of the Crystal Lakes area, just below the confluence of the Lake Fork, Tennessee, and East Arkansas forks of the Arkansas River. Under a blanket of snow, the Arkansas would appear to be much smaller than it is at this point. As Jackson points out, Pike was most likely "deceived" by the snow.

We think that Pike would have crossed the river quickly and headed west to get out of the wide marshy valley and gone up the foothills on the other side of the river. He could not have gone too far west here for several reasons. First of all, the forest comes down to the valley roughly a mile or two from the rim of the valley. Secondly, Pike remarks that his pants become "frozen stiff." Thirdly, the party had seen what they came to see and realized that they were at risk of freezing to death while starving. They did manage to kill a rabbit and a turkey somewhere on this trip, but were definitely hungry by now. They made the decision to race southward back to re-occupy the Riverside camp in order to save their lives.

Drive up to Kobe, go across the river and walk the barren hills behind the rocky outcrop of the valley in Lake County while you still can. If you get to the "Mountjoy Hills," you will see one of the most beautiful sites in America!

• *Pike's Gulch Honored at Royal Gorge Bridge & Park* by Peggy Gair,

Human Resource and PR Mgr. Royal Gorge Bridge & Park

At the Royal Gorge Bridge & Park, Canon City, Colo., it is taken for granted that a trip from the bottom of the Royal Gorge, with the Arkansas River running through it, to the top will take about 5 to 7 minutes in the world class attraction, the Incline Railway. Traveling 1,550 feet at a 45 degree angle between 1,000 foot granite walls, it is one of the steepest Incline Railways in the world. Imagine having to crawl and fight your way up that spectacular climb – in freezing weather.

American explorer, Zebulon Montgomery Pike did just that in the winter of 1806-1807 (Dec. – Jan.) according to his expedition journals. During the Bi-Centennial Zebulon Pike Commemoration, the Royal Gorge Bridge & Park renamed that deep crevice "Pikes Gulch," in honor of his expedition through the Royal Gorge.

By going through Pike's dairies, the park recognized this gulch that now houses the Incline Railway built in 1931, and surmises that Pike and a handful of men trying to navigate the icy river with horses, could go no further and were forced to climb up this rocky and icy crevice. This was a miserable trip as the men were cold, half-starved, and ill prepared for winter.

The park and the Fremont County Commissioners during the Royal Gorge Bridge & Park Zebulon Pike Commemoration, July 2006, honored Zebulon Pike's trip through the Royal Gorge and his trek up the gulch with an Honorary Proclamation. Here are some excerpts:

"Whereas, Zebulon Pike, endured and fought his way up the Arkansas River in the winter, only to discover that the Royal Gorge would seem impassable, Pike found a gulch in the 1,000-foot walls that later would be known as Telegraph Gulch, and today houses the Royal Gorge Bridge and Park Incline Railway...."

"Whereas, Fremont County recognizes this gulch, or ravine, as Pike referred to it in his journals, from this day forward as "Pike's Gulch," an area where millions of visitors to the Royal Gorge Bridge & Park have now experienced on the Incline Railway..."

The 2006 Governor, Bill Owens also issued an Honorary Proclamation on behalf of the State of Colorado declaring Zebulon Pike's historic quests included "one of America's most distinctive landmarks, the Royal Gorge..." {Continues on page 4}



Zebulon Pike referred to the Royal Gorge, as the "Grand Canyon of the Arkansaw." When his men climbed up and out of the gorge, Pike realized they had been traveling in a circle in their search for the headwaters of the Arkansas River, and Spanish troops they believed to be in the area.

In his travels through the Royal Gorge, Pikes describes the Royal Gorge and his experiences as "bounded on both sides with perpendicular rocks, impracticable for horses ever to pass them....a narrow channel with immense cliffs on both sides...I came to a place where the rocks were perpendicular on both sides, and no ice....I discovered one of the latter (one of his men) climbing up the side of the rocks."

Pike's Gulch is the only natural significant break in the solid walls going through the Royal Gorge, and was thus named Telegraph Gulch in the late 1800's by the railroads due to the telegraph lines that were placed there. The trains would stop at Telegraph Gulch so their passengers could take in the Natural Wonder of the Royal Gorge. Several feet from the base of the Incline Railway sits the famous "hanging bridge," a length of track that was built to hang on the side of the Royal Gorge because it became impassable at that point. Thus, trains could complete a pass through the Royal Gorge and they still rely on that piece of "hanging" track today. The place which Zebulon Pike called unpassable.

Time to renew your membership or become a member for the first time.

Level	Amt.	Level Name	Level	Amt.	Level Name
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Non profit organization	\$50	Vasquez-Smith	Life	\$1000	Zebulon Pike

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