

# Pike National Historic Trail Association Newsletter Dec. 2009 Vol. 3 No 10

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

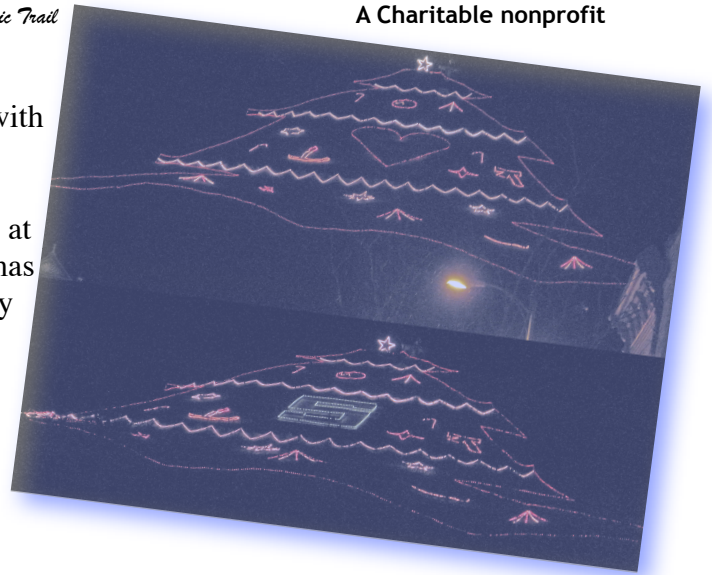
A Charitable nonprofit



## Salida Colorado 2009

On Saturday, November 28, we visited with Zebulon Montgomery and Alice Pike in Salida, as well as checking out the Big Bend Christmas site and the 3 new signs at the Colorado Historical Society 'Christmas 1806' marker on US 285. During the day we climbed to the top of Tenderfoot Hill where their "S" is adorned with a Christmas tree [lights] and a heart.

Salida tree switches from a heart to an S.



## Zebulon M. Pike in Mexico by Hal Jackson

[1st in a series]

I will describe Pike's journey from El Paso del Norte (Cd. Juarez, Mexico) to the present international boundary at the Rio Grande between Coahuila, Mexico, and Texas.

A word here on the political geography of Pike's journey from St. Louis to Louisiana. The Spanish did not accept the U S claims made for the Louisiana Purchase. While the U S claimed territory to the headwaters of the Arkansas and Red rivers (finding these sources was a major part of Pike's reasons for coming), the Spanish position was that Pike was trespassing almost from the instant he left St. Louis. The vast area traversed by Zebulon Pike was "disputed territory."

Now, when we begin with Pike at El Paso del Norte in the province of Nueva Vizcaya this was not a political boundary. Pike had entered Nueva Vizcaya when he crossed the Sangre de Cristo north of Santa Fe. There was no Mexico until 1821 so our divisions are arbitrary. Pike left El Paso del Norte on March 23, 1807 and stayed at the presidial town of [San Elizario](#) until the 25th.

Pike and Melgares (Melgares

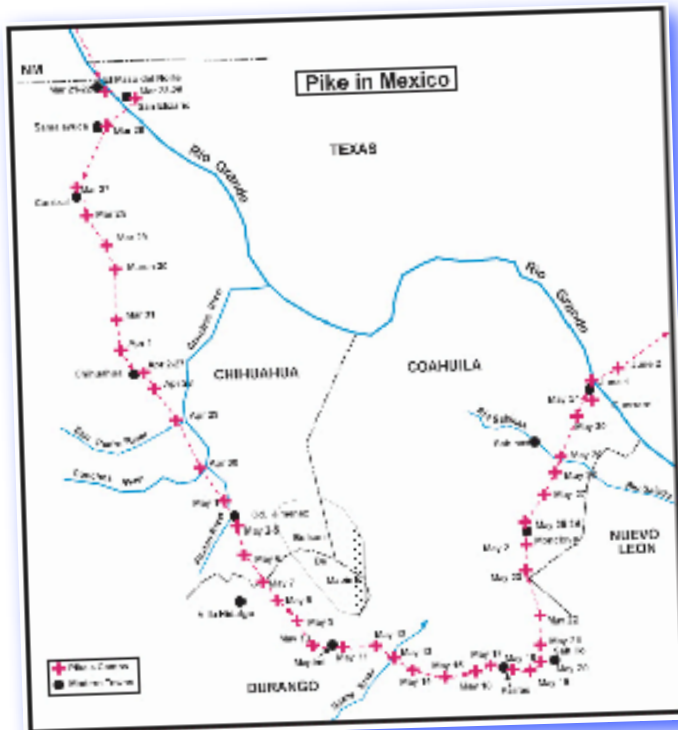
was commander of the escort) traveled on the two hundred-year-old Camino Real (Juan de Oñate had opened the Camino in 1598) toward Chihuahua. Their first stop was at the spring at Samalayuca (Pike's "Ogo mall Ukap") and then the presidio at Carrizal.

It was at Carrizal that Pike learned of Burr's conspiracies in the U S. From Carrizal, Pike continued south on the Camino Real arriving at Chihuahua on the 2nd of April where he remained until the 28th.

Commandant General Salcedo interrogated Pike at great length during his stay in Chihuahua. From this point on Pike was fully aware of the military importance given to his trip by the Spaniards. Salcedo needed to know if Pike was sent to reconnoiter for an American invasion.

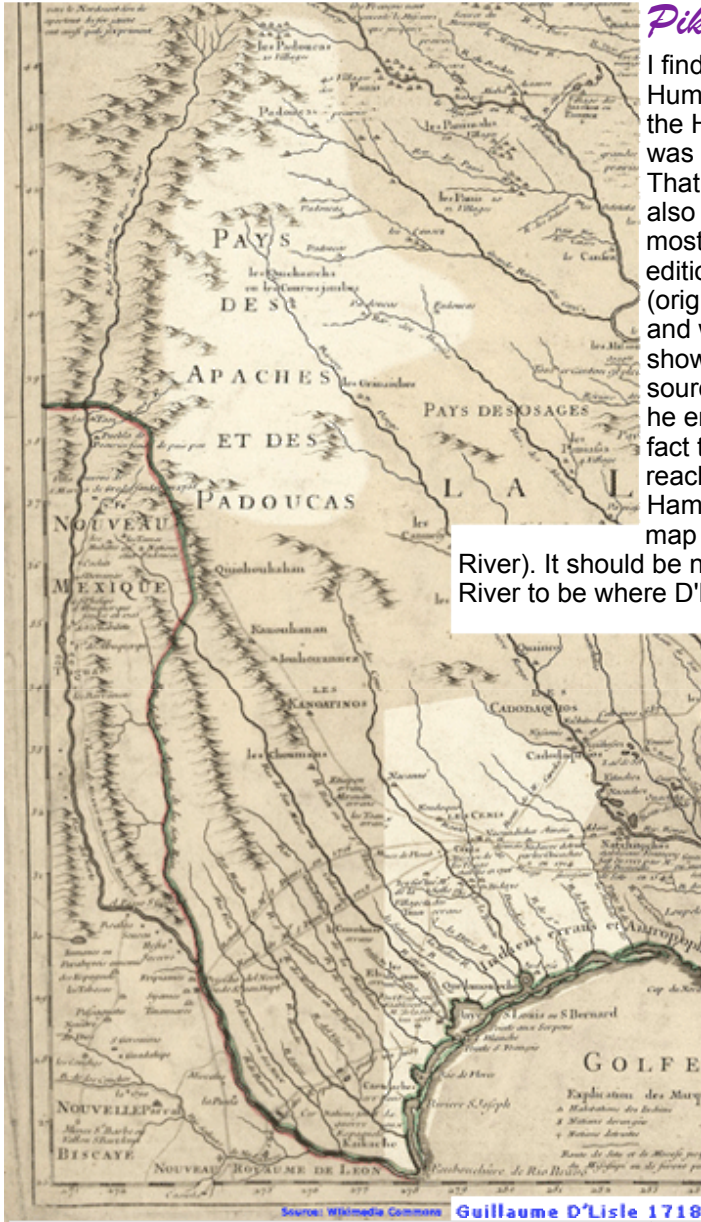
Pike and Melgares left [Chihuahua](#) on the 28th of April staying at several villages along the Camino Real before reaching the presidio town of Guajoquilla on May 2nd. Melgares passed his responsibility for Pike to another officer, Varela, at Guajoquilla (present name is Cd. Jimenez).

From Guajoquilla, Pike and escort went south along the established route through another old presidio town Mapimí. Looking at a map of Pike's route one notes the wide detour around the [Bolsón de Mapimí](#) an extremely arid region in southeast Chihuahua state and western Coahuila state. Even



*Zebulon M. Pike in Mexico continued* today there are few settlements in this environmentally hostile area.

Pike's journal, now considerably abbreviated because of restrictions placed on his note taking by General Salcedo, is difficult to follow in this region. We find him at Parras on the 17th of May and [Monclova](#) on the 25th. They arrived at the presidio Rio Grande (today Guerrero, Coahuila) on June 1, 1807. At the Rio Grande he crossed the river, still in Coahuila, and heads toward San Antonio. The boundary between Coahuila and Tejas was just west of San Antonio.



### *Pike- D' Lisle- von Humboldt letter*

I find the speculation in the Nov newsletter<sup>1</sup> about Pike and von Humboldt interesting. There is no evidence that Pike saw a copy of the Humboldt map of 1804 until after his expedition (he probably was familiar with it when he prepared his reports for publication). That he may have been told about the map before the expedition is also speculation (there is no source of evidence). The map Pike most likely had access to, because it had been printed in numerous editions and was readily available, was that of Guillaume D'Lisle (original in 1703 with several later editions), which was well known and widely used. The configuration of the rivers shown by D'Lisle, showing the source of the Red River not far southwest from the source of the Arkansas, explains exactly what Pike was doing when he ended up on the Rio Grande (thinking it was the Red River). The fact that John H. Robinson headed west from their stockade to reach the Rio Grande and Santa Fe is strong evidence that Pike & Hamilton truly believed they were on the Red River (the D'Lisle map showed the source of the Rio Grande to the west of the Red River). It should be noted, too, that Gen. Wilkinson believed the source of the Red River to be where D'Lisle showed it, which explains his several warnings to Pike to watch carefully about getting into Spanish territory and watch out for Spanish troops, all of which makes since if one believed the source of the Red River was near Taos. The source of the Red River confused other explorers, especially Stephen H. Long, and I think it was George Sibley, during his survey of the Santa Fe Trail, who first reported that the Red River did not rise in the Rocky Mountains but on the Great Plains (1825-1827). The Humboldt map shows a similar configuration for the rivers as D'Lisle. Everything Pike did in the Southwest indicates that he either had the D'Lisle map or was familiar with it (and it was available to him while the Humboldt map was not). Pike scholars need to give more attention to the D'Lisle map.

Best regards, Leo E. Oliva [Woodston KS]

<sup>1</sup>From Nov. '09 Pike Newsletter- "Pike presumably had access to Humboldt's map [right] of New Spain Note- Some accounts relate that von Humboldt loaned Jefferson his New Spain map. He in turn showed and loaned it to General Wilkinson, who, under the table, made a copy of it."

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*Join or Renew Membership Now!* Please consider membership in our organization

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

I will be able to help with:

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ The Pike Assoc. website

Town \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Historic/heritage investigation

Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Providing educational opportunities

e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Producing educational materials

\_\_\_\_ 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](mailto:harv.pike@gmail.com) Additional gifts are tax deductible. Make checks payable to:

*Pike National Historic Trail Association*

***Please, renew your membership for 2010.***

Membership & Board meeting- April 24, 2010 Royal Gorge Cañon City Colorado

Discovery Project #5 - How tall was Zebulon Montgomery Pike?

Legislative- Strategy meeting Jan. 4 with Senator Bennet's Washington staff

*Pike National Historic Trail Association*

10060 Blue Sky Trail Conifer CO 80433