

# Pike National Historic Trail Association Newsletter



**Our Purpose:** To Establish federal designation of the Pike National Historic Trail Feb. 2011 Vol. 5 No 2

We are a Charitable nonprofit organization Our website is [www.zebulonpike.org](http://www.zebulonpike.org)  
 "Zebulon Pike was an American hero, a patriot who lived and died for his country." -Thomas Jefferson

• *The Pike National Historic Trail* **NEEDS YOUR HELP** The Pike National

Historic Trail Feasibility Study bill (**S.276**) was reintroduced in the 112th Congress on February 3rd by Colorado's two US Senators.

US Senators (Ask for staffer who handles National Park legislation)

STATE	US SENATOR	PHONE #
Missouri	Roy Blunt	(202) 224-5721
Missouri	Claire McCaskill	(202) 224-6154
Kansas	Jerry Moran	(202) 224-6521
Kansas	Pat Roberts	(202) 224-4774
Nebraska	Mike Joanns	(202) 224-4224
Nebraska	Ben Nelson	(202) 224-6551
New Mexico	Jeff Bingaman	(202) 224-5521
New Mexico	Tom Udall	(202) 224-6621
Texas	John Cornyn	(202) 224-2934
Texas	Kay Bailey Hutchison	(202) 224-5922
Louisiana	Mary L. Landrieu	(202) 224-5824
Louisiana	David Vitter	(202) 224-4623

• **Co-sponsors:** For those in the "Pike states" to the left---Please call your two US Senators requesting them to Co-sponsor the Pike National Historic Trail Feasibility Study bill- S 276. When calling the number of your Senator [listed on the left], indicate that you are a constituent and that you would like to speak with the staffer who handles National Park legislation. Indicate to the staff person that you wish the Senator to Co-sponsor the Pike National Historic Trail Feasibility Bill, and mention the economic, educational, recreational, tourism advantages of the Trail in your state.

• The Pike Trail Fact sheet is: <http://zebulonpike.org/docs/PikeFactSheet.pdf>

{Click here}

• We have been assured that the bill and trail designation is not controversial and will continue to receive bipartisan support. The fact that National Historic Trails have low cost, because they use public roads to view sites instead of building and maintaining paths, remains a critical plus for passage and support.

**It is essential that we ask for their support and co-sponsorship now !  
 They MUST know that you support the Pike National Historic Trail !**

• *Rock Slide on Pike's route* A major rock slide closed US 50 in Colorado between Coaldale and Cotopaxi, west of the Royal Gorge during February. It took 300 large dump trucks (16-wheelers) working from both ends to clear the rock. Workers had to use dynamite on many 20 foot rocks blocking the highway and in the Arkansas River and possibly where Pike walked. Colorado Senator Grantham from Cañon City CO said, "US 50 was cleared and repaired [no structural problem] early the week of the 20th."

Monty Pike [Association VP] affirmed that his great, great, great grand uncle nor his men had anything to do with the rock slide. Monty said, "The slide was the result of erosion caused by ice melting and freezing." He also commented that suggestion that the long horn sheep, which were seen above the slide, had nothing to do with causing the slide.



*We Love zebulonpike.org!* A person from Online College Degrees.net contacted us in February writing: I really appreciate your collection of resources on the [zebulonpike.org](http://zebulonpike.org) website, <http://zebulonpike.org/pike-in-colorado.htm>.

I became interested in genealogy after I was assigned a research project in the field. From that research, we ended up publishing a great article here: <http://www.onlinecollegedegrees.net/beginning-genealogy>, that covers all areas of genealogy, and after finding your site through my research, I thought I might pass this link on to you as a thank you for your wonderful resources.

• *Founding Father Visits Jefferson County* Colorado See page 3

•Pike's Experiences in February 1807- Pike Stockade [San Luis Valley]. Recovering men, "Arrest", and the Rio Grande- by Allan Vainley

During the month of February 1807, Zebulon Montgomery Pike and his men:

- Ascended the Conejos River (a tributary of the Rio Grande [Rio del Norte]) {San Luis Valley CO}, south of Alamosa CO and built a stockade,
- Located what Pike thought to be the Red River, his last assignment (actually it was the Rio Grande, not part of the Louisiana Purchase),
- Dr. Robinson left for Santa Fe on 2/7 on "pecuniary demands",
- Remained at the stockade from the 1/31 until February 26th,
- Rescued 5 men left behind,
- Were "arrested" and brought along the Rio del Norte toward Santa Fe, ending the month in Ojo Caliente NM (Rio Arriba County), north of the San Juan Pueblo.

While in the San Luis Valley from late January to 2/26/1807, Captain Pike and his men were in view of the valley, the San Juan mountains from which the Rio Grande River originates, the two sets of 14,000 foot mountain groups: Blanca Massif and Crestone Needle of the snow covered Sangre de Cristo mountains, and the Great Sand Dunes which Pike had climbed. (The Great Sand Dunes, now a National Park, is the tallest sand dunes in North America {approx. 8000 ft}. The dunes cover approximately 39 square miles and rise to almost 750' above the eastern valley floor.)

Approaching the Stockade one views just south over the New Mexico border, San Antonio Mountain (10,908 ft, the largest "free-standing" mountain in the continental United States. The mountain's rounded volcanic dome, nearly four miles across at the base.) I believe that Dr.



Robinson and Pike climbed it on 2/5. "we

*ascended a high hill which lay south of our camp, whence we had view of all the prairies and rivers to the north of us. It was at the same time one of the most sublime and beautiful inland prospects ever presented to the eyes of man."*

They encamped near Zapata Falls, CO on 1/29/1807 below Mt. Blanca (Cerro Blanco, 14,431 ft high) staying just below the base to save elevation. They were about 300 feet above Alamosa and the future Stockade. Possibly a hot springs on the Conejos where they headed was showing it's water vapor.

They (11 of them-Pike, Robinson, Brown, Carter, Gorden, Jackson, Meek, Miller, Mountjoy, Roy, and Stoute) had moved up the Conejos River about 5 miles and 14.7

mi SE of Alamosa CO on Saturday, Jan. 31st. "*We descended 18 (13-Coues) miles when we met a large west branch (Rio Conejos), emptying into the main stream, about five miles which branch we took our station.*"-Pike 1/31 On 2/1, Pike wrote, "*Laid out the place for our works, and went out hunting.*" The stockade was built for shelter, and possible protection from indian attack and the Spanish.

Having left 5 men- A.F. Baroney Vasquez, the interpreter, and Private Patrick Smith in Cañon City on 1/14/07; John Sparks and Thomas Dougherty at Horn Creek in the Wet Mountain Valley on 1/22, & Hugh Menaugh at Muddy creek near the head of Grape Creek in the Wet Mtn. Val. on 1/27 behind, Sergeant Meek and Private Miller volunteered to return, rescue and retrieve the 5 men. Menaugh was rescued on 2/18 and Smith, Sparks, Vasquez, Dougherty were rescued or retrieved after 2/26.

On Wed. February 18, when Menaugh was returned with Meek and Miller, Pike writes: "*The other two boys arrived; in the evening I ordered the sergeant and one man to prepare to march tomorrow for the Arkansaw, where we had left our interpreter, horses, &c. to conduct them on, and on his return to bring the two lads who were still in the mountains.*"

Pike and others hunted a great deal in the San Luis Valley. One can only, by conjecture, suppose that Pike possibly explored northwestern portions of his Red River. This is the subject for another article after further study of Pike's Journal and comments of Coues and Jackson.

On Saturday, February 7th, Dr. Robinson left the Expedition for Santa Fe. Pike wrote on that date, "*The demands which Dr. Robinson had on persons in New Mexico, although legitimate, were in some degree spurious in his hands.*" Elliott Coues, editor of one version of Pike's Journals questions Robinson's motives and points out that "meanwhile, Pike sat down on the Conejos to wait for the Spaniards to come and catch him."



*(Pike's February 1807 Experiences continues)* On February 16th- "...I discovered two horsemen rising the summit of a hill, ... As my orders were to avoid giving alarm or offense to the Spanish government of New Mexico, I endeavored to avoid them at first; but when we attempted to retreat, they pursued us at full charge, flourishing their lances." They established a parley. "They informed me that this was the fourth day since they had left Santa Fe; that Robinson had arrived there, and been received with great kindness by the governor. ... I thought it proper to inform them merely that I was about to descend the river to Nachitoches." Pike identified the river as the Red, and brought them to the stockade flying the 15 star American flag. The two horsemen left the next morning "but were careful never to suggest an idea of my being on the Rio del Norte."

On Thursday, 2/26, 50 Spanish dragoons and 50 mounted militia sent from Joachin Allencaster, the Spanish governor in Santa Fe, arrived. "After breakfast the commanding officer addressed me as follows: 'Sir, the governor of New Mexico, being informed you had missed your route, ordered me to offer you, in his name, mules, horses, money or whatever you might stand in need of to conduct you to the head of the Red river.' 'What,' said I, interrupting him, 'is not this the Red river?' 'No, sir! The Rio del Norte.' I immediately ordered my flag to be taken down."

It is interesting that the Spanish did not simply offer to escort the Expedition party back east (from where they came), did not arrest them, and allowed them to carry their arms. Instead they were offering to take them to the Red River with supplies via Santa Fe. As we shall see Pike's party was treated with respect, would later be offered hospitality (fandangos), be celebrated by the Mexican locals, be housed in cartographer's homes, be brought deep into Spanish territory, be allowed to speak to and dine with the native population, be assigned in their route by a cordial lieutenant allowing Pike to make careful notes of the military strength and civilian population.

When informed of the absence of Miller and Meek (the relief-party) on their mission to rescue the four remaining behind, the Spanish offered to "leave an Indian Interpreter and an escort of dragoons" to bring the remaining party to Santa Fe.

The Spanish left the Stockade on February 27th with Pike, Brown, Gorden, Menaugh, Mountjoy, Roy, and Stoute (7 men). (Corporal Jackson Stockade head, with Meek and Miller rescuing the 5 men.)

Meek, Miller, Jackson, Carter, Dougherty, Smith, Sparks, and Vasquez (8 men) were brought to Chihuahua by 3/27.

February 1807, the men of the Expedition were all alive. They were exploring the southwest portion of the Louisiana Purchase and now more, mapping, taking readings for latitude and longitude, and discovering many items in the new Southwest America. Next month- *Pike's Experiences in March 1807*

• *Founding Father Visits Jefferson County- Thomas Jefferson* Thomas Jefferson, our third president, scientist, architect, farmer, educator,



Jefferson reviews color guard

inventor, geographer, lover of the arts, author of the Declaration of Independence, and Freedom's Guiding Light, visited Evergreen Colorado, Jefferson County on February 19th. With full color guard carrying our 15 star flag (carried by Pike on his SW Expedition) and a fife and drum ensemble, Jefferson led us to the Hiwan Museum's meeting hall to deliver an address to the 75 assembled. He gave reasons why he supported sending Lewis and Clark as well as Pike to explore the Louisiana Purchase, answering his critics for doing so. His critics asked why would Jefferson desire more land when he had never ventured more than 50 miles west of Monticello. Explaining his desire for making more land available for his countrymen, he discussed his friend's interest (George Washington) in the rivers in the east and considered the possibility of locating a route to the west for establishing trade with nations west of America.

He discussed how he was chosen to write the Declaration of Independence and how Benjamin Franklin asked him to alter his first phrase.

When discussing the apparent conflict with his purchase of the territory west of the Mississippi for less than three cents per acre from France and Napoléon Bonaparte (a privilege reserved by the Constitution for Congress), he pointed out that he had detractors in Congress and Napoléon advisors were pressing him not to make the deal. "I had to act, and told Livingston to make the deal."

When asked if he designed the home of his Monticello neighbor James Monroe's (a man who studied law under Jefferson) home facing his with a low front entry therefor Monroe bowed each morning toward Jefferson, he said, "Monroe was a large man and would have to duck to remove himself from the home." He then added, "As to whether I designed it so that he would have to bow to me, that is for you to judge."

When asked why he hadn't removed General James Wilkinson from his post as head of his Army; when did he learn of Wilkinson alerting the Spanish of Pike, Lewis and Clark's presence in the Louisiana Purchase, and the pursuit by the Spanish of his personal secretary (Lewis), he responded, "I was more concerned about Aaron Burr." He asked that we speak further with him about "that American hero and true patriot- Pike."

*Please consider joining us with your membership. The membership form is on our website or contact us at 303/816-7424.*

*Please, call your US Senator's office in Washington requesting that the Senator co-sponsor our bill- S 276.*

**Pike National Historic Trail Association** 10060 Blue Sky Trail Conifer CO 80433