

Pike National Historic Trail Association Newsletter April 2010 Vol. 4 No 4

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

If Zebulon were around today- Perhaps he would support the Pike National Historic Trail. Let's see what is in the mail bag... I support the Pike National Historic Trail as our nation's 20th National Historic Trail. May I point out the many economic, educational, recreational advantages of this trail



and further that our Nation's history would be further preserved for this generation and those to come. If you have not sent your letter of support, send it today to the Association address.

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. 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!

Legislative Effort The effort to establish the Pike National Historic Trail as a National Historic Trail is now in the hands of Senator Bennet [CO] in Washington to introduce the Feasibility Study bill. Other Colorado congressmen's offices have been contacted. We have received over 300 [our goal- 500] letters from 23 states. 27 mayors have sent their town's support.

We have acquired letters of support from 22 county commissions-- **CO Counties: Alamosa, Bent, Chaffee, Conejos, Costella, Custer, Fremont, Huerfano, Lake, Mineral, Park, Prowers, Pueblo, Rio Grande, and Saguache.**
KS Counties: Bourbon **NM Counties: Bernalillo, Sandoval** **MO Counties: St. Louis, Bates**
TX Counties: Sabine, San Antonio.

Historians, historic and preservation groups, long distance trails, chambers, and individuals have joined our effort. **We need your help. If you have relatives and friends who will write a letter to us, have them get suggestions at <http://zebulonpike.org/docs/OpenLetters.pdf> ! We want to keep the support letters coming which will aid in our legislative effort.**

Additional appointments of State Coordinators We have appointed additional Coordinators to aide in the work of the Association. Last month we introduced Dale Blevins {MO- who spoke recently at the Bates Co. Historic Society in Butler on Pike,} Pat Palmer, our SE Colorado Coordinator, and Tom Rollings, our Upper Arkansas Colorado Coordinator. We now announce additional appointments. We are applaud their abilities, their knowledge about Pike, their willingness to help and their help especially in our support letter effort.

Leo Oliva has been appointed as the Kansas State Coordinator. Leo brings not only vast, accurate knowledge about Pike, but an enthusiasm for trails. Many of us know him as a true gentleman and helper. We recently printed Leo's Pike in New Mexico/Mexico and plan to print Leo's work on Pike in Kansas. He served on the Pike Bicentennial Committee.

Cara Fisher has been appointed as the Central Colorado Coordinator. She is founder Cañon City Historical Center and Pike enthusiast.

Kit Shy has been appointed as Wet Mountain Valley Coordinator. Kit is a Pike enthusiast who worked hard in installing 16 Pike informational signs throughout the Arkansas River, Wet Mountain and San Luis valleys of Colorado.

Erwin Young has been appointed as San Luis Valley Coordinator. He served on the Pike Bicentennial in the San Luis Valley and was involved with the Colorado Pike Trail Association.

Brian Murphy has been appointed as New Mexico State Coordinator. Brian is very knowledgeable about post expedition Pike and heads an antique business [Pike included]. Enjoy Brian's Pike antiques and a little bit about his recent Pike talk at the Palace of the Governors in Santa Fe [page 2].

Clive Siegle has helped greatly in our support letter effort in Texas. He served on the Pike Bicentennial Committee. We begin Clive's two part article on Pike in Texas in this issue.

Jim Mallory has agreed to serve as an advisor. Jim lives in Lexington KY and serves the Lewis and Clark Foundation as President.

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

Historian Brian Murphy spoke on "Zebulon Montgomery Pike: Anglo Interloper, American Hero." Apr 14, 2010.

Pike, a New Jersey native, led a U.S. expedition from Fort Bellefontaine near St. Louis to explore the Southwest. In this journey, which he is most remembered for, ended with his capture on February 26, 1807 by Spanish authorities in what was then northern New Mexico, now part of Colorado. Pike and his men were taken to Santa Fe, then to Chihuahua, where he appeared before the Commandant General Salcedo. Salcedo housed Pike with Juan Pedro Walker, a cartographer who also acted as an interpreter and transcriber for Pike's confiscated documents. While with Walker, Pike had access to various maps of the Southwest and learned of Mexican discontent with Spanish rule. Pike and his men



were released, under protest, to the United States at the Louisiana border on July 1, 1807.

Pike's accounts dramatically changed exploration of the Southwest. His description of Chichuahuan politics led to the Mexican independence movement and improved trade conditions, which promoted development of the Santa Fe Trail.

Brian's Pike collection- Here are two examples of Brian's Pike materials. On the left is a Zebulon Pike plate ca. 1815 and on the right is a Pike Staffordshire pitcher [Hull]. He also has letters from one of the men in Brigadier General Pike's 1813 regiment. We believe the pitcher is for sale.



Logos- We have begun asking for logo designs for the Pike Trail and for the Association. Here are some examples, but we need more ideas. Colors, design, wording and shape are your choice. Send your ideas to the Association address found at the end of this Newsletter.



Pike in Texas Pike was in Texas from June 2nd through the 29th, 1807. Pike's path in Texas is called today the El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail.

Zebulon Pike was one of the first U.S. citizens to make a significant contribution to Texas history. Prior to his expedition, the Spanish had largely drawn a veil of secrecy over Tejas, and Pike's passage through the province and his subsequent published report presented Americans with their first detailed look at Texas. His 1810 report was in many ways a revelation, particularly since his status as an officer lent an "official" air to its publication. His observations of the sweep and richness of the land, of its prairies teeming with game and wild horses, became a primary document in the bibliography of America's nascent march toward the Texas Republic. Pike's commentary also provided one of the first literary snapshots written by an American of the human side of Spanish Texas as well. We believe that not only is the saga of Pike's trip through Texas wonderful narrative history, but that economic and educational benefits would be derived through site preservation, tourism, and historical research for those communities who embrace the national historic trail concept.

A Texas historian claims that Pike was the 1st American to travel legitimately through a then [1807] sparsely populated Texas. He collected information perhaps leading to the Republic of Texas and statehood.

A Santa Fe Trail historian states that Pike was the first to provide details about Texas which led to increased U.S. interest and, in 1821 (Mexican Independence), & U.S. citizens settling in Texas. Pike deserves as much credit for encouraging settlement of Texas as he does for the opening of the Santa Fe trade.

Zebulon Pike Tours Texas by Dr. Clive Siegle Part 1 of 2



Captain Zebulon Pike's 1807 entry point into the Spanish province of Texas was probably not anywhere he had originally planned, and his traveling companions were probably not who he had expected. As scholarly debate continues to color the Pike expedition with the tinge of espionage; he was either extremely lucky, or haplessly unlucky, depending on one's interpretation of his ultimate mission. Either way, it had far-reaching consequences for the future of the American and Spanish Southwest.

A major component of Pike's mission involved locating the headwaters of the Red River and following it back to U.S. territory and the military post at Natchitoches, Louisiana. Since that river formed the ostensible boundary with Spanish Texas after the Louisiana Purchase, this would involve skirting Texas' northern boundary until finally arriving at Natchitoches. Despite the extraordinary rigors that the expedition had endured on their 1806-1807 mid-winter odyssey through the Rockies, they could reasonably expect to bask in the afterglow of the vaunted Lewis and Clark expedition that had preceded them.

Instead, Pike and his men entered Texas almost as far south of the Red River as geographically possible, fingered as principal characters in an incident with potentially serious international consequences, and accompanied by a contingent of Spanish dragoons who were turning the interlopers over to the nearest American cantonment. Ironically, it would be the post at Natchitoches.

Pike's sojourn through Texas, however, had less of a sanguine tenor than might be imagined—and much more profound consequences than the temporarily triumphant Spanish might have envisioned. Prior to 1807, Spanish Texas was largely hidden from the westward gaze of citizens of the burgeoning United States, and foreigners of all stripes seeking to penetrate its territory when captured remained Spanish prisoners in one degree or another to thwart filibustering and military or economic intelligence-gathering.

Pike's Texas trek, and his subsequent published report on the province, proved to be a vast canvas on which the alert and observant officer painted revealing portraits of people and cultures, landmarks and landscapes, of a rich land ripe with promise.

The Spanish knew very well the value of such a report for their U.S. neighbors, and had confiscated portions of the expedition's notes and other documents prior to their entrance into Texas. Captain Pike was likewise warned by this Spanish escort that he was forbidden to take written notes or take navigational bearings on their trip from Chihuahua through Texas. The canny Captain circumvented this problem, however, by daily making a "pretext to halt" on the march, where he would repair to the bushes and make his notes on the sly. As insurance that they wouldn't be discovered and confiscated, the pages were rolled up and either secreted in the men's clothes, or tapped down the cavernous barrels of their smoothbore muskets.

The Anglo-Spanish contingent crossed into Texas on June 1, 1807, at a point on the Rio Grande either some ninety miles above Larado or at Presidio del Norte de San Juan Bautista. After leaving Chihuahua, they had made a wide swing to the east around the Bolson de Mapimí, a vast and inhospitable area notorious as the lair of hostile Indian war parties, and then headed north to the crossing point. Their bearing would now be northwest across Texas toward the provincial capital of San Antonio de Béxar. More precise navigational bearings, however, would henceforth disappear from Pike's secret daily logs, because on June 2, his compass mysteriously went missing.

The natural wonders of the province soon drew his attention, particularly in light of some of the sere landscapes he had just emerged from to the south. The day after the compass incident, Pike's journal records seeing the first of Texas' legendary mustang herds swarming the plains—along with the accompanying swarms of pesky horseflies. The Captain encountered his first javelina, a wild hog "very different from the tame breed," a few days later. At the Nueces later on that same day, Pike and his men gazed on the first "woodland" that they had seen in the eventful year since leaving Osage country in eastern Kansas.

On this final leg of a journey marked by a panoply of provincial capitals and their officials, Pike's sojourn in what he referred to as "Saint Antonio" must have seemed slightly incongruous. The Texas-Louisiana boundary served as an uneasy and sporadically militarized borderland between the Spanish and United States Southwest. Only the year before Pike's arrival, the two had almost come to blows on the Sabine River frontier, and former Nuevo León governor (Simón de Herrera) was still posted to San Antonio with a detachment of troops to assist Texas Governor (Antonio Cordero) in anticipation of trouble. Given the circumstances, the appearance of a detachment of U.S. soldiers might be expected to meet with a chilly reception.