



Pike National Historic Trail Association Newsletter

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Interpretation of Zebulon Montgomery Pike



On the 19th of June, Tom Rollings* gave his Pike in-person presentation to the Buena Vista, CO Historical Society. We can report that Pike would be proud of Tom. In three segments, with costume changes, he gave his audience accurate, delightful descriptions of Pike's life, Pike the person, and a recounting of the Southwest Expedition. He recounted well Pike's experience in the Upper Arkansas River valley. This reporter and his wife brought two of their grandsons- Aidan and Solan Hisgen (pictured with Zeb) to learn more about Zebulon Montgomery Pike.

They were thrilled and asked many questions after the presentation. It will be remembered that this drawing appeared in the April 2008 edition of the Pike Newsletter---

with the caption "*From Cochabamba Bolivia* Solan, who lives in Cochabamba Bolivia sent us this drawing "Pike on His Horse." The original is PRICELESS."



* Tom is our Upper Arkansas Coordinator



Royal Gorge Bridge and Park comes back

This picture we presented in the April 2014 edition (Pike NHTA) Newsletter has changed a great deal since our April meeting. This picture of the new expanded Visitor's Center has walls, and all the fixin's to be able to open Saturday, August 30, 2014.

The Royal Gorge Bridge & Park in

Cañon City "soft" re-opened for one day- Labor Day Saturday, after a 14-month closure to rebuild the 360-acre park due to a wildfire on June 11, 2013 at 1 p.m. The Royal Gorge Fire destroyed 48 of its 51 buildings and damaged about 100 bridge planks. The repaired Bridge and Royal Rush Skycoaster have been available for use by the public since spring. "The Visitor's Center will be open seven days a week, beginning Sept. 6", commented Mike Bandera, vice president and general manager of the park and one of our Pike NHT Association Board Members.

The fire

The wildfire charred 3,200 acres. It jumped 1,600 feet across the gorge, destroying the 48 buildings and melted the incline railroad tracks. Crews demolished the remains of most structures, but the bridge was spared. The fire started on the gorge's south side. Investigators suspect lightning caused the fire. By April, charred hillsides remain, and trees have been cut to make way for seedlings and newly planted grass.

Construction continues

Mike indicated that it took about seven months to demolish the burned buildings and another seven to construct new ones. **Continued page 2**

Rebuilding is being completed in phases.



Phase one of the construction is almost complete.

- The bridge- guests will again be able to walk and drive across the bridge to enjoy the excitement of standing 956 feet above the Arkansas River,
- The 14,500 square foot visitor center complex is open which features admissions, shopping, and Café 1230, named for the height of the deck above the river, and
- The Royal Rush Skycoaster, an internationally recognized thrill ride sitting on the edge of the Royal Gorge is open.

Phase two is expected to be finished in mid-November. Mike said the

- aerial tram- a new, 2,400-foot aerial gondola system by POMA,
- zip rider with two racing zip lines that will also travel 2,400 feet nearly a quarter mile above the Arkansas River, and

-Plaza Theatre and Children's Playland should open in November.

"Once we get these two phases completed, we will start on the third and fourth phases, which are still in the planning stages to add more attractions in the coming months," he said.

Grand opening should be in the spring of 2015.

Zebulon Pike connection

Pike and his men encountered the Royal Gorge before and after Christmas of 1806. Many believe that Pike climbed out of the Gorge where the incline used to exist.

Brown's Canyon The Brown's Canyon bill has gotten NPS support in the US Senate. This is on Pike's path and we hope the support will aid in our effort to gain a Feasibility Study for Pike.

Following Pike's Footsteps in and about the Royal Gorge-

D. Nelson Walker Part 3 'Dec. 11' - Further Up 4 mile Creek

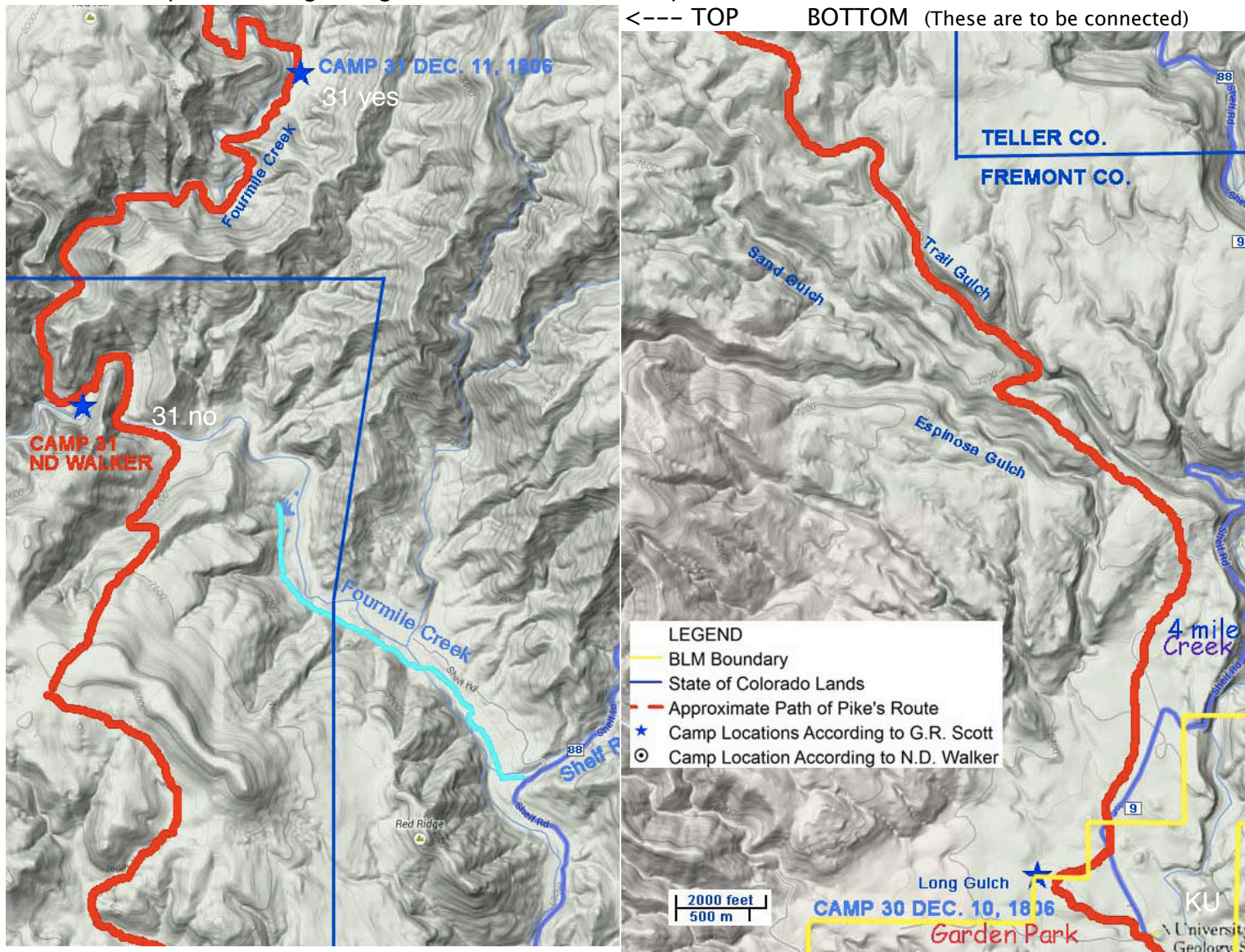
Camp 31, December 11, 1806; located about 0.8 miles east of Booger Red Hill on Fourmile Creek. The coordinates are N 38-42-36.92; W 105-14-39.86. The legal description is NE Sec. 32, T15S, R70W, 6th PM, Teller County.

As mentioned in the narrative for Leg #4 (in the previous article- last issue) , an interpretive sign already exists at the Cleveland Quarry Recreation Site, but there is also a great opportunity for a sign where the BLM road to the Bank Campground joins CR 9 (where the paved portion of CR 9 ends and the dirt/gravel Shelf Road begins. There is a large BLM parking lot located here that would make a good place for the sign. Also, the road to the Bank Campground, and the Trail Gulch jeep road could also be designated as a Pike Route car-bike-hike trail.

I have some strong reservations about the location of Camp 31, as depicted on Scott's map. Remember that Pike is still following the Indian trail, which he thought had been used recently by the Spanish. Scott's map shows Pike's path leading northward from Camp 30 in Garden Park (see maps p.3), but not directly along the bottom of Fourmile Creek. Instead, the path runs parallel with the creek, but a considerable distance west and south of it; as far as a mile or more in some instances. About 1.5 miles north of Camp 30 the path veers northwest away from the creek; most likely following the current road to the Bank Campground, then going up Trail Gulch to a point where it crossed a ridge (Red Ridge) before again descending onto Fourmile Creek. The point where it merges with Fourmile Creek is shown on Scott's map to be about 1.5 miles above the mouth of Cripple Creek. From this point the trail runs northward along the bottom of Fourmile Creek to Camp 31, located east of Booger Red Hill.

I reason that I find this leg of the route most interesting is because it supposedly traces an old Indian trail. Since the first four miles of the leg from the KU Geology Camp to Red Ridge is relatively accessible via existing BLM roads and trails, I have been able to easily access most of the area to search for evidence of the trail or the likely terrain where it might have been located. In addition, I have also hiked the entire section of Fourmile Creek that lies between Cripple Creek and Booger Red Hill on three

different occasions, and as result of these outings I feel that Scott's map provides an accurate representation of Pike's path through this area. This being said, as I did with the location of Camp 30, I have serious questions regarding Scott's location of Camp 31.



In the December 11 journal entry, Pike specifically records that he departed Camp 30 at 10 AM and established camp at 3 PM, which only allowed a total of 5 hours of travel time. He also estimates that they made 15 miles that day. This seems to be a rather long distance to cover in 5 hours, especially when it is considered that the party probably stopped for a while to water and feed the horses when they reached the grassy banks of Fourmile Creek, and marched slower than usual due to being "...frequently embarrassed as to the trace...". It should also be noted that this leg of journey was first encounter that Pike's entire party had experienced traveling through mountainous terrain with horses and all of their baggage. Until now, Pike and his men had been marching primarily across open prairie lands, which presented fewer obstacles to travel. Travel through the much steeper and rugged mountainous and forested terrain certainly would have reduced the distance that could be covered per day. Assuming, however, that Camp 30 was truly located near the KU Geology Camp and Pike traveled 15 miles, then Camp 31 would have been situated about 2 miles north of the place Scott shows it; near the mouth of Barnard Creek. Likewise, if Camp 30 was located near the northeastern edge of Shaws Park (as I believe) and he traveled 15 miles, then Camp 31 would have been located about 1,000 feet below the place denoted on Scott's map. However, if the party stopped to water and feed the horses, and was constantly delayed to

search for the “trace”, and was further slowed by the difficult terrain, then it is much more likely that they only covered 8 to 12 miles, instead of 15. When using the range of 8–12 miles for gauging the location of Camp 31, and if Camp 30 was near the KU camp, then it is possible that Pike could have reached Scott’s location east of Booger Red Hill, which is 11 miles away. If Camp 30 was near the edge of Shaw’s Park, then Scott’s location near Booger Red Hill is too far away, but it is possible that Pike could have reached the mouth of High Creek, which is almost exactly 12 miles away.

Actually, the High Creek location is the only place along the route which explains why Pike wrote that he **“...was frequently embarrassed as to the trace; at three o’clock P.M. having no sign of it, halted and encamped, and went out to search it; found it about a mile to the right.”** Pike’s description that he found the trace to the right of the camp makes absolutely no sense if Camp 31 was located at the spot denoted on Scott’s map, or for that matter, if it was located anywhere else along this stretch of Fourmile Creek. I say this because the terrain on the right side of the canyon is totally unsuitable for human travel, and would be challenging even for mountain goats. Thus, having been to this location I am convinced that he could only be referring to the place where High Creek joins Fourmile Creek, and where the canyon broadens to expose a flat open space of willows and grasses, about 8 acres in size, which would have offered Pike’s party a perfect camping site. It is also relevant to note that High Creek provides the only outlet along this stretch of Fourmile Creek that leads directly to High Park, located just a few miles to the west. The only other outlet to High Park is located 5 miles further upstream from here. Also, it is likely that the Indian trail that Pike was following split at this junction, with one branch of the trail going up High Creek, and the other branch continuing up Fourmile Creek. Consequently, I believe that when Pike reached this point and could find no recent sign of the “Spanish trace” that he halted here* to camp, and then went scouting for the trace until he eventually found it about a mile away on the right branch of the Indian trail, which would be the branch extending northward up Fourmile Creek.

*At coordinates N38-41-23.12, W105-15-40.80.

Interestingly, Donald Jackson also identified the location of Camp 31 at High Creek. See Jackson’s note #140, in which he discusses the locations of Camps 30 and 31 and says, “A difficult location (referring to Camp 30) to pinpoint. Pike had come north from Canon City, perhaps up Wilson Creek, and had then entered the Oil Creek watershed. His camp (again, referring to Camp 30) was about one mile from Oil Creek, about where it joins Milsap Creek in Fremont County. He will still be following Oil Creek tomorrow, camping (referring to Camp 31) about where that stream receives High Creek from the west, seven or eight miles southwest of Cripple Creek, Colo.”

I might be wrong about this, but I believe that the eleven-mile long section of the Fourmile Creek canyon that extends from the mouth of Cripple Creek northward to Barnard Creek is one of the most isolated sections of Pike’s entire route through Colorado. By isolated, I mean that it lies farther from any present-day public roads or trails and is less-traveled than even the section of the route along Grape Creek. During the early 1900’s residents of Garden Park and High Park referred to this stretch of the creek as “The Hole in the Ground”, which when viewed from atop the canyon cliffs appears as a deep and forbidding chasm. It is indeed one of the most beautiful and secluded sections of the creek.

Continues in the next issue of the Pike Newsletter

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