



William

EXPLORING THE LOUISIANA TERRITORY by Allan Vainley

Besides Pike, Lewis and Clark, and their expeditions, the names Freeman, Custis, and Sparks continued to appear at the same times. I got curious. I investigated.

After the land called the Louisiana Purchase became part of the United States in 1803 (treaty signed on April 30, 1803), President Thomas Jefferson commissioned military groups to explore the unfamiliar territory.

These groups were to attempt to determine the extent of the Louisiana Territory, collect scientific data about flora and fauna, explore and map topography, describe Native American peoples ethnography, establish relationships with these peoples as well as attempting to enable the establishment of peace among the tribes.

The territory's boundaries were not defined and in dispute.

These treaties did failed to define boundaries:

The 1762 *Treaty of Fontainebleau* (ceded it from France to Spain),
the 1801 *Third Treaty of San Ildefonso* (ceding it back to France), and
the 1803 *Louisiana Purchase* agreement (ceding it to the United States.)

To give some perspective on when various expeditions left, here is a timeline:

March 13, 1804 Willam Dunbar's Red River expedition

May 14, 1804 Lewis and Clark Expedition to the Pacific Northwest,

August 9, 1805 Pike 1st Expedition of the Northern Mississippi River,

April 19, 1806 Freeman's Red River Expedition,

July 14, 1806 Pike 2nd Expedition to the Southwest,

Later Expeditions of Thomas Nutall, Edwin James (1820- Long Expedition) and Thomas Say

More specifically-

-The Willam Dunbar's Red River expedition of March 13, 1804 to assemble a scientific expedition into the lower Louisiana Purchase.

-The Lewis and Clark Expedition left from Camp Dubois, near present-day Wood River, Illinois on May 14, 1804 and returned September 23, 1806. Their journey lasted two years, four months, and ten days.

-Pike left Fort Belle Fontaine, Missouri on August 9, 1805, to explore the Upper Mississippi River. They returned on April 30, 1806, after eight months and 22 days in absence.

-The Red River Expedition departed on April 19, 1806 from Fort Adams near Natchez, Mississippi. They were intercepted by the Spanish and returned downriver on July 28, 1806.

-Pike's 2nd Expedition to the Southwest lasted 353 days from July 14, 1806 to July 1, 1807.

The Red River Expedition April 19, 1806 to ~ July 31, 1806 (103 days)

While Pike explored the Mississippi and the southwest, Lewis and Clark the northwest; the Red River (the northern boundary of Texas) was being explored by Freeman, Custis, and Sparks and 21 soldiers.

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The **Freeman-Custis or Sparks Expedition**, departed on April 19, 1806 from Fort Adams near Natchez, Mississippi on the Red River (TX-MS). They were intercepted by the Spanish and returned downriver on July 28, 1806. It was one of the first civilian scientific expeditions to explore the American Southwest.

They were ordered to:

- find the headwaters of the Red River (Red River of the South) from the Mississippi River (to seek a possible trading route to Santa Fe),
- contact Native American peoples for trading purposes,
- collect data on flora, fauna, and topography,
- map the country and river; and
- assess the land for settlement.

The party never achieved all of its goals.

The leaders of this 24 man expedition were Thomas Freeman, (astronomer/surveyor with an assistant) and Peter Custis (naturalist/botanist and ethnographer). Captain Richard Sparks led the military troops (two officers, seventeen privates, and a servant). Because of rumors of Spanish attack additional soldiers were added to number 45 men.

By July 28, the Freeman party was 615 miles upriver, and was stopped on the Red River by the Spanish near what is now New Boston and Texarkana, Texas. The outnumbered Freeman party returned to Natchez on July 29th. The "Spanish Bluff" worked.

James Wilkinson, Pike's commander had not only secretly notified Spain of Pike's Expedition in today's Kansas and Nebraska, and the Lewis and Clark Expedition to the Pacific, but also Freeman's presence on the Red River, with the explanation- "Hoping to provoke an international confrontation for personal gain." Wilkinson not only was a double agent, he was a scoundrel. Spain sent two teams of soldiers to intercept the Freeman party.

However, the expedition proved to be a success in some aspects.

- 1 established positive relations with the Caddo and Alabama-Quassarte (Coushatta) villages on the river.
- 2 recorded valuable information about the peoples and ecology of the area.
- 3 Spain changed its strategy and opened the Red River country to American traders, partly because of the diplomatic furor aroused by its interception of the expedition.

A ROUTE IN HISTORY Zebulon Montgomery Pike, American Explorer by Dorothy L Urban

The subject of Pike's expeditions are of interest to me because my family homesteaded this same area when they arrived in the United States. I have family maps of all that area and many family stories about Cold Water Creek in Missouri.

Fort Belle Fontaine was built in 1805 at the mouth of Cold Water Creek on the south bank of the Missouri River near the confluence with the Mississippi River in the newly acquired Louisiana Territory and served as a starting and ending place for Pike's expeditions to the American West.

Zebulon Montgomery Pike was an American explorer and military officer that served in the War of 1812. Pike explored the Rocky Mountains and southwestern North America. Pike's Peak in Colorado is named for him as well as the Pike National Forest.

In the fall of 1805 Pike was sent by General James Wilkinson, Governor of the Louisiana Territory, to search for the source of the Mississippi River. Pike led a crew of 20 men from St. Louis to upper Minnesota. They traveled by boat, and then

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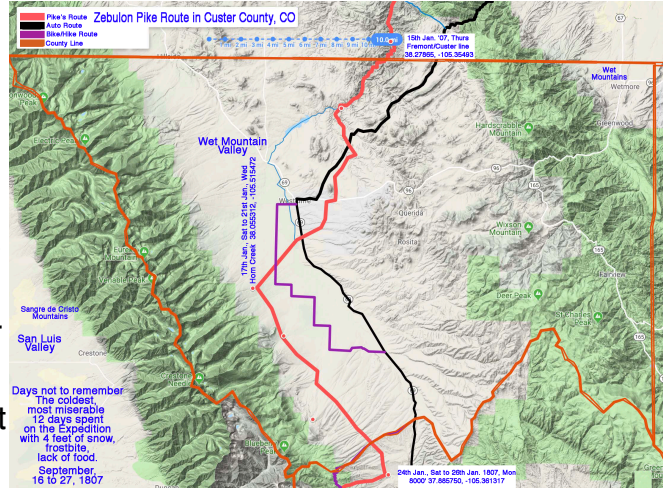


by sled when the river iced over. Although the actual source is Lake Itasca, Pike was convinced that the nearby Lake Leech was the source, then the assumed source.

In 1806 General Wilkinson sent Pike to the Rocky Mountains and the southwest and was officially cautioned not to enter Spanish territory. Pike discovered Pike's Peak in Colorado, but failed to climb it. Continuing south, Pike did enter Spanish Territory, and was arrested and taken to Santa Fe. Pike was one of the first Americans to see New Mexico (then New Spain). He was eventually released by the Spanish back in Louisiana.

We can trace his route in Custer County, CO and hope to soon have a sign designed by our board to mark this important route of an American Explorer. Map included for our readers to explore the route in Custer County.

(Information for this story was gleaned from a filing cabinet full of history about Zebulon Montgomery Pike and family history collected by Dorothy L Urban)



1820 ATTEMPT TO CLIMB PIKES PEAK

Edwin James, a scientist, is remembered as a member of the 1819-1820 Major Stephen Harriman Long Expedition .

On July 13, 1820 James and two others set out to climb Pikes Peak. As James writes in his *Account*: "On the morning of the 14th . . . we continued the ascent, hoping to be able to reach the summit of the Peak, and return to the same camp in the evening. . . . A little above the point where the timber disappears entirely, commences a region of astonishing beauty . . . covered with a carpet of low but brilliantly flowering alpine plants. . . . We now found it would be impossible to reach the summit of the mountain, and return to our camp of the preceding night, during that part of the day which remained; but as we could not persuade ourselves to turn back, after having so nearly accomplished the ascent, we resolved to take our chance of spending the night, on whatever part of the mountain, it might overtake us. . . . We met, as we proceeded, such numbers of unknown and interesting plants, as to occasion much delay in collecting, and were under the disagreeable necessity of passing by numbers which we saw in situations difficult of access."

THE MEN OF ZEBULON MONTGOMERY PIKE PARTY AT ST. ANTHONY FALLS, MN



Ed French has completed another painting to show events in various portions of Pike's life.

The party at SAINT ANTHONY FALLS- MINNEAPOLIS,
MINNESOTA

For 4 days, September 26-29, 1805, they labored to portage St. Anthony Falls. Today locks replaced the once beautiful but challenging falls.

Ed comments, "This complex painting is my most recent. On September 27th, 1805 Lieutenant Zebulon Montgomery Pike and his party of 20 men were in what would become Minneapolis, Minnesota, many years later. Here they are portrayed unarmed

and carrying luggage and various boats past the falls. One of Pike's men points out that 9 Sioux warriors

are watching them from the other side of the Mississippi River. At this same time Lewis and Clark were building 5 dugout canoes for the descent of the Columbia River.

This, like most of the paintings on my site is for sale and there are reproductions available at zebulonpike.org.
Watermarked version

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

We are a Charitable nonprofit organization

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PIKE NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL ASSOCIATION 10060 Blue Sky Trail Conifer CO 80433 303/816-7424

Pike July-Aug 2019 Newsletter

We are a tax exempt not-for profit Association under Section 501 (c) (3) IRC. Your contributions are deductible under section 170 of the Code.

Our **Vision** is **TO PROVIDE KNOWLEDGE ABOUT PIKE AND
CELEBRATE HIS MEMORY AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

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