



PIKE AND HIS PEAK

Which Mountain Did Pike Climb?

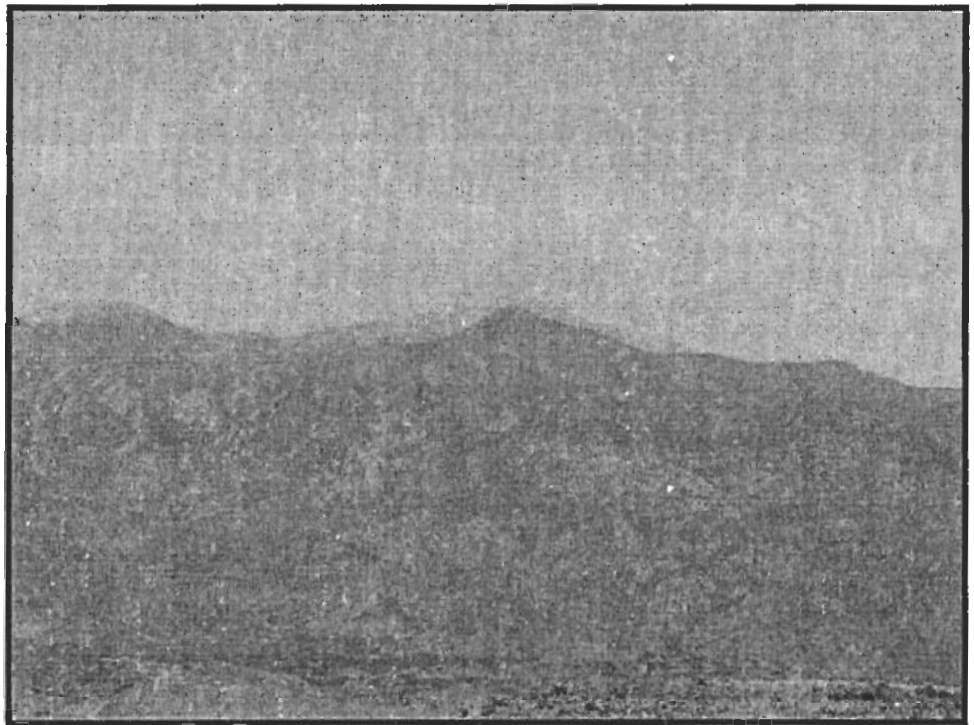
By John Patrick Michael Murphy

Zebulon Pike's failed attempt to climb the mountain known worldwide as Pikes Peak was an historic mountaineering triumph. Many historians do not realize that Pike and his three companions did climb a mountain in their attempt on the great peak. In fact, they were on the top of a mountain when they gave up their attempt to climb Pikes Peak. That mountain was the first recorded to be climbed in the entire American West.

Captain Zebulon Montgomery Pike, Dr. John Hamilton Robinson, and Privates Theodore Miller and John Brown started recorded mountaineering history west of the Mississippi River. The climb and retreat took a full five and a half days, involved a hike of near 100 miles, and an elevation gain of almost a mile and a half. Most mountaineering mysteries involve a known mountain with the question being who ascended it first. Did George Mallory and Andrew Irving make it to the summit of Everest before Sir Edmund Hillary and Tensing Norgay? In

the United States there have been controversies concerning who first climbed Denali, Fremont Peak, Grand Teton, Mount Whitney, and a host of others. Pike's controversy is different. We know they were first to record a climb, but which mountain was it?

Over the decades, Pike has been moved about like an undeliverable package from summit to summit in the mountains to the southeast of Pikes Peak. Because of the general disagreement among historians the significance of his accomplishment has waned. He has been treated harshly by uninformed historians



Mount Rosa directly below Pikes Peak taken from the Southeast between I-25 and Fort Carson

Old Colorado City Historical Society
 1 South 24th Street, Colorado Springs, CO 80904-3319

WEST WORD

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LETTERS, PHOTOGRAPHS, ARTIFACTS AND STORIES CAN BE DELIVERED
 TO THE OCCHS CENTER OR MAILED TO:

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 Colorado Springs, CO 80904-3319
 Or Merv Casey - thequill@adelphia.net

SUBMISSION DEADLINE IS THE 15th OF EACH MONTH

MISSION
 Revised April 2004

The Old Colorado City Historical Society was founded as a volunteer organization to recognize the historical significance and unique culture of original Old Colorado City and early El Paso County. This spirit is perpetuated through the preservation of artifacts and archival materials, encouragement of research, education of the children and the community, through the membership and the operation of the History Center at 1 South 24th Street, Colorado Springs, Colorado.

MEMBERSHIPS

Memberships are welcome at any time. Membership renewals are due on the anniversary date of the initial membership. Members receive the West Word newsletter, discounts, local meetings and programs.

Annual membership classifications are:

Individual	\$20	Business	\$ 50
Family	\$25	Lifetime	\$150
		Corporate	\$250

Funds from a Lifetime membership are placed into a Perpetuity/Endowment Fund to be used only for projects which have been approved by two-thirds of the membership. Only the interest will be used for current expenses. We welcome gifts to this fund, which will be credited to the donor or as a memorial.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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MEETINGS

OCCHS Monthly Meeting & Program is held at 11 a.m. on the second Friday of each month, except during June, July, and August. The History Center opens at 10 a.m. on the day of the meeting for refreshments and visitation. The program begins at 11 a.m. This meeting is free and open to the public.

Next Monthly Meeting
September 12, 2006
at the History Center



Explore the REAL History
 at the
**OLD COLORADO CITY
 HISTORY CENTER**

1 South 24th Street
 (the corner of Pikes Peak & 24th Streets)
 (719) 636-1225

FREE ADMISSION

Old Colorado City History Center encourages you to attend its events, meetings, and projects. Please call 636-1225 for information

Summer Hours
 (June – September)

TUES – SAT 11 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.

Closed Sunday & Monday

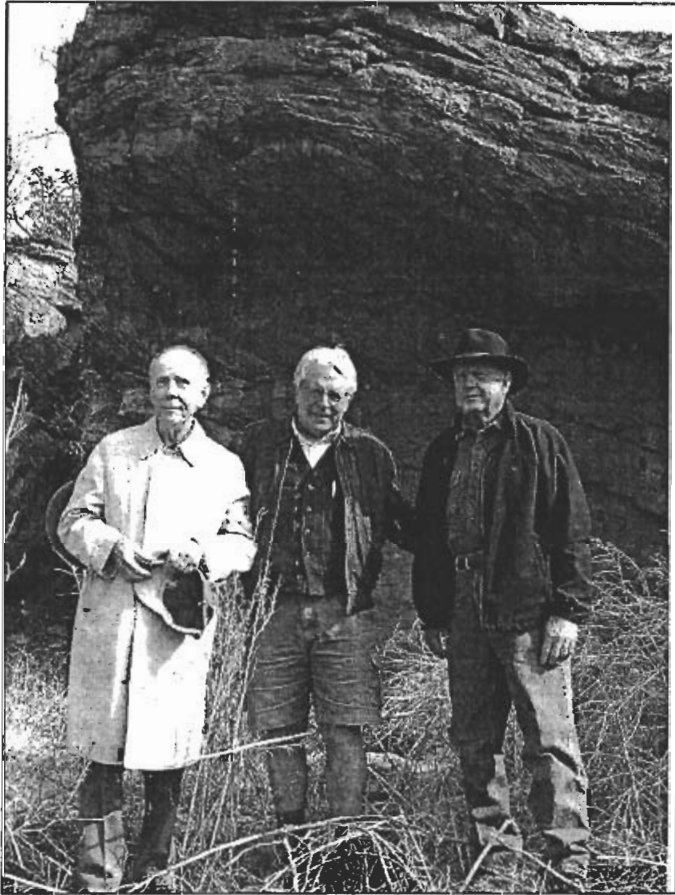
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who thought that Pike claimed the great mountain named for him would never be climbed, when he was only stating that, under the conditions that existed during his ascent, no one could have done it and survived.



This was Pike's campsite Friday night, November 28, 1806. It is located on Turkey Creek about 5 miles north of the Pueblo County line, on today's Fort Carson. Located on Ft. Carson on the east side of Turkey Creek, about 5 miles north of the Pueblo County line. Dr. Frank Tucker, the author, and Dr. Jack Cooper, three Pike scholars.

As a retired trial lawyer I looked at the matter as if it were a criminal case. Pike and his men could have been killed by the attempt had they not been favored with fine weather and Pike's decision to take a different descent route, a valley and canyon retreat, rather than retracing his ascent route, which was a face and ridge climb. To my mind, the various

mountains advocated by the earlier historians were in a criminal line up— as if they were possible defendants answering to the charge of crime for attempting to kill Pike, Robinson, Miller and Brown. Pike was the only one who left a victim statement that gave a description of the mountain that could have killed them. If his description was clear enough to rule out all but one, then the oldest American mountaineering mystery could be solved. Here we have an advantage over a normal criminal case in that the real perpetrator could possibly not be in the line up and everyone could be innocent. Not so with Pike's mountain because the real culprit had to remain at the scene of the crime.

The Climbers

Zebulon Montgomery Pike was 27 years old when he entered what was to be the State of Colorado on November 11, 1806. He was ambitious, thoughtful, and tolerant. He was selected to lead two expeditions into the newly acquired Louisiana Territory by the commanding general of the United States Army, General James Wilkinson. In 1805 he was sent to find the headwaters of the Mississippi River and based upon his success he was again selected by General Wilkinson, in 1806, to proceed to the southwest to find the source of the Arkansas River which he did. In addition he was to find the headwaters of the Red River (the last tributary to the Mississippi River on its west bank) and return home by following and mapping it back to the Mississippi. This latter order was impossible as he would be nowhere near its source which is in the panhandle of Texas. His side trip toward Pikes Peak was not in his orders but as General Wilkinson noted, "Pike likes to stretch his orders" and accomplish more than he was ordered.

Instead of following the Arkansas River upstream once he reached the mouth of Fountain Creek, Pike decided to climb what he called Grand Peak. He left 12 men on the south side of the river in a small breastwork they erected and

. The following chart takes Pikes description and compares it to what is found by climbing each mountain:

Issue	Black Mt.	Blue Mt.	Mt. Miller	Grey Back Peak	Cheyenne Mt.	Mt. Rosa
1. Can base camp be reached "at the base" of the mountain "on a creek" with a march of 34 miles from the then confluence of Fountain Creek and the Arkansas River.		XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXX		XXXXXXX
2. Is there a rock shelter (cave) area about an hour from the summit?	XXXXXX					XXXXXXX
3. Is the summit of Pikes Peak obscured by intervening terrain during the entire climb?					XXXXXXX	XXXXXXX
4. Does the summit of Pikes Peak appear only when the summit is reached?						XXXXXXX
5. Can the summit of Pikes Peak be seen from the summit of the mountain Pike climbed?	XXXXXX				XXXXXX	XXXXXXX
6. Will it take about 10 hours to complete the climb from base camp to the summit?						XXXXXXX
7. Is there an area where Pike could see buffalo below him?						XXXXXXX
8. Is there an easy descent route by following a stream back to base camp that can be described as a "deep ravine?"						XXXXXXX
9. Is the shelving rock on Turkey Creek about 4 1/2 hours from the base camp?						XXXXXXX
10. Is the lapse rate (temperature decline at elevation) consistent with the height gained from base camp to the summit?						XXXXXXX
11. While on the summit can one reasonably describe it as the highest one in the area excepting Pikes Peak?						XXXXXXX
12. Is the summit about 15 to 16 miles from the summit of Pikes Peak?						



Mount Rosa summit, 11,499' Pike's route from the south ridge

took three men with him to climb the great mountain. They left at 1 PM Monday, November 24, 1806, thinking they would climb the peak and return Wednesday evening. Instead they arrived back at the Arkansas River camp on Saturday evening after covering almost 100 miles and gained and lost well over a mile in elevation.

The mystery of which mountain was solved by re-tracing each potential route and comparing it to Pike's description of the ascent and descent. Here is what was found:

The chart on page 5 takes Pikes description and compares it to what is found by climbing each

mountain:

It is clear that Pike climbed Mt. Rosa, one of our most beautiful mountains. As one looks at Pikes Peak, move your vision to the south skyline and the first to be seen is Almagre aka Bald Mountain, and then to its left is the great pyramid of Mt. Rosa only 8 miles from Pikes Peak and about ½ mile lower in elevation. Pike climbed a great mountain, and it is symbolic of his general accomplishments, in that he has been given credit for less than he deserved.

Tuesday Nights in July:

A Series of Colorado History Programs
Admission free. Donations help support these programs. Families welcome.

WHERE: Old Colorado City History Center
1 South 24th Street (corner of West
Pikes Peak Ave. & 24th Street)

WHEN: 7 p.m.
Doors open at 6:30 p.m.

July 11 – “John Harper, Deported Miner: The Cripple Creek Strike of 1904 as Family and Social History.” Katherine Scott Sturdevant presents a personal view of the miners and their families during this turbulent time. Ms. Sturdevant is Chair of History for Pikes Peak Community College. Her teaching specializations include western, women’s, environmental, ethnic, Colorado, and Pikes Peak regional history. She is a well-known local and national speaker, very active in the local history community, the author of two books on the scholarly approach to doing family history, and has won local, state, and national awards for teaching excellence.

July 18 – “History of Cowboy Songs of the West.” Mark Gardner is a professional musician, historian, and author living in the foothills of the Rockies. Recently, Mark was awarded the New Mexico Ralph Emerson Twitchell Award for “*Significant contributions to the field of history*”. Mark’s areas of expertise include the Santa Fe Trail, 19th-century American popular music, cowboy songs and ballads, Western film history, and Western Americana in general. His research has taken him to museums and antiquarian book stores across the country. Mark’s program will include performing with vintage musical instruments. His books and CDs will be available for purchase.

July 25 – “The Secret Treasure Inside Gold

From the President

Our fifth annual Victorian Tea and Fashion show Saturday, May 13, was a big success with a sold out crowd. Jo Cervone, our Chairman did a superlative job organizing it. Many of our volunteers were the key to our success. Betty Baker and Pat Fejedelem made the clever table decorations. Joanne Karlson was a delightful mistress of ceremony. Marge Knorr and Muriel Dunkley made tea in the kitchen. Barbara Barbaro, Jackie Acker, and Louise Wynne served the tea from tea pots wearing darling Victorian costumes. Sharon Swint arranged to have the Bona Dea Tea House cater our lovely tea. The teas were donated by Bernideen’s and Bona Dea, the tables by Goodwill, and the linens by Snow White. Many merchants gave our lovely door prizes. Rita Wilhem and her lovely young models showed the clothes for the fashion show. Everyone had a great time and we’ve had people come back because they so enjoyed our teas. Kudos to all who were involved to make the tea such a success.

The three days of Territory Days for the Society were a totally smashing success, absolutely over the top. The bake sale brought in \$900 and between the cabin, the bookstore and the booth \$700 in sales were racked up. This is by far the most successful Territory Days we have ever had. And it’s all thanks to the cadre of volunteers that participated over the span of the event. Some helped setup, others manned the three venues and others baked cookies. We wish to thank them all; Marge & Joe Knorr, LaRue & Pat Ebersole, Nancy Miseli, Martha & Curtis Miller, Eloise Wynne, Barbara & Gary Barbosa, Lorena & Dona Bymaster, Vera Westcott, Muriel Dunkley, Leland Fietz, Jakie Acker, Dave and Pat Hughes, Betty Baker, Leslie Bergstrom, Kay Atteberry, Tom & Doris Hendrix, Pat and Andy Fejedelem, Werner and Joanne Karlson, Betsy Evans, Betty Grout, Eunice Quinn, Merv and Arlene Casey, Charlie Patterson, Elinor Messerschmidt, Betty Magninie, Dorthy Zidel, Carol Stooddy, Marty Walker, Sharon Swint, Liz Geiss, Gordon and Becky Gray. If I have left anybody out please accept my apologies and again many thanks for the wonderful work everybody did to make Territory Days such a rousing success.

Bev Disch, President

Editor’s note: I wish to thank our most wonderful President Bev Disch for the tireless time and energy she puts into each and every event the Society has and her ongoing dedication to us. Without her guidance and energy we surely would not accomplish nearly as much as we do.

Old Colorado City Historical Society

Welcomes the Pike Family to Colorado Springs

The Board of Directors of the Old Colorado City Historical Society

Invites the OCCHS members to a reception welcoming the Pike Family to Colorado Springs

Thursday, July 13, 2006 4:00 – 7:30 p.m.

Old Colorado City Historical Society Museum
One South Twenty-fourth Street
Colorado Springs, Colorado

R.S.V.P to Gordon Gray on or before June 25th
Phone: 719-630-8238 E-mail: ggray01@aol.com

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Would you like to add your personal welcome to the Pike Family?

A commemorative book is being prepared and will be given
to each person attending the reception.

The book will contain pages of OCCHS member names who are sending their welcome.

If you would like to have your name included in this greeting, we are asking
for a donation of any amount to help with the cost of this publication and the event.

Checks should be made payable to OCCHS and mailed
to Gordon Gray, 1975 Pine Mesa Grove, Colorado Springs, CO 80918

You can take your donation to the History Center and leave it with your name
in an envelope marked "Pike Celebration – Welcome donation".

Hill." David Hughes' program will concentrate on the four historic gold mills of Colorado City, including the area being developed for homes and businesses along Highway 24 at 21st Street. At one time, the gold mills and railroads provided jobs for many of the people living in Colorado City. Mr. Hughes is a Colorado historian, an active supporter of the Old Colorado City neighborhood, and a board member of the Old Colorado City Historical Society. His expertise also includes his wireless communications business and the digitalization project of photos of homes and businesses on the Westside of Colorado Springs.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Contact the Old Colorado City History Center at 636-1225 (Tuesday thru Saturday, 11 a.m. til 4 p.m.) or history@oldcolo.com

Katherine Sturdevant's email is Katherine.Sturdevant@ppcc.edu

Mark Gardner's website is www.songsofthewest.com and includes his photos.

Photo available for David Hughes. To contact him Dave@oldcolo.com

OLD COLORADO CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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COLORADO SPRINGS, CO 80904-3319

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The Statue

El Paso County has honored Zebulon Pike with a beautiful bronze statue that is displayed proudly outside the new justice building on Tejon Street. It is larger than life size and depicts Zeb in his officers outfit, pistol in sash, spyglass in hand, a contemplative look on his handsome face.

It is however problematic as just why this great explorer is facing to the northeast as if he were looking out across the plains.

One, well maybe not one, but at least I wonder just what he might be thinking.

Has he just turned to his companions and is saying to them, "holy bananas do you see the size of that mountain? I'll bet no one will ever climb to the top of it! OR

You know guys we have crossed all that flat arid land and now we are stuck up against a mountain that we can't get over. So what now?