
Zebulon Pike

Founder of Pike's Peak

The founder of Pike's Peak not only has a very cool name..
he has an awesome story.

His story first began when Zebulon Montgomery Pike was born January 1st, 1779, in New Jersey. Later, he and his family moved to the midwest. Little is known about his childhood.

In 1805, when Zebulon was 15, he decided to join his father's army regiment as a cadet. He and a party of soldiers were instructed to find out where the Arkansas River's source began. The next November, they passed what Zebulon called, "a small blue cloud." Can you imagine what that was? Right! What he discovered was what would be later known as Pike's Peak.

As winter approached, the group of explorers built a stockade which is like a fort. It was meant to protect the soldiers from hostile Indians and severe weather. As winter passed, Pike wanted to climb to the top of the mountain, but he underestimated how fierce the weather conditions could be at the top of a 14,000 foot mountain. They were not able to accomplish their goal. However, they were able to find the mouth of the Arkansas River.

Since they completed their original goal of exploring the Arkansas River, they decided to head back east. As

they began their journey home, they were all captured by the Spanish! They were sent to Santa Fe, where they were held as prisoners for five months. After that period of time, they were released.

Pike enjoyed great adventures in the West, and then went back east to a new life where he married Clarissa Harlow Brown in 1801. They had one child who was able to survive to adulthood. She would later marry the son of president William Harrison, John Cleves Symmes Harrison. There are no descendants of Zebulon Montgomery Pike because his daughter and son-in-law had four children, but they never survived to adulthood.

Sadly, Zebulon Pike died six years after his quest to the west. Today, there is a statue so that everybody can remember the man who first discovered this gorgeous mountain in our backyard. Everyday when I look to the west, I am blessed to see the magnificent view of these mountains. I will remember the man for whom it is named, Zebulon Montgomery Pike.