

Bayfield Heritage Association: To celebrate the life of one of its founders, Captain R.D. Pike

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Bayfield, Wis. (Aug. 8, 2023) – The Bayfield Heritage Association (BHA) in partnership with the City of Bayfield will proclaim August 23 Captain Pike Day in honor of one of Bayfield’s founders, Robinson Derling Pike. Descendants of his family will be in Bayfield to help honor Captain R. D. Pike in two celebrations.

Capt. Pike has been called the outstanding citizen of Bayfield’s first century. He was a soldier, entrepreneur and promoter who worked tirelessly to improve and further the fortune of Bayfield.

The Bayfield Heritage Association will host a Free Community Ice Cream Social at the Bayfield Lakeside Pavilion on Tuesday, August 22 from 5:30 – 6:30 p.m.

On Wednesday, August 23, Bayfield Mayor Gordon Ringberg will proclaim it Captain Pike Day with the official opening of BHA’s R.D. Pike exhibit. A presentation by Dan Wilczek and the city proclamation will start at 7:00 p.m. at BHA.

In the fall of 1855, 17-year-old Pike arrived in Bayfield with his father, mother, sister and grandmother from Toledo, Ohio. Pike’s father, Elisha Pike, purchased a water-powered sawmill along with 40 acres of land which is now known as Pike’s Creek.

In 1862, Pike answered the call to arms and enlisted in the Union Army. He was transferred to the 1st Michigan Cavalry and participated in major battles throughout the Civil War, including the Siege of Vicksburg, the Battle of the Wilderness, and the 1864 Shenandoah Valley Campaign. Upon his return to Bayfield, he organized and commanded as Captain the Bayfield Rifles, a local militia group.

Capt. Pike is best known for his lumbering and shipping enterprises. He also had a quarrying business that produced brownstone used to construct public buildings, some of which can still be seen today around the area, including at his family home south of Bayfield called Pinehurst and the Bayfield Bank building located on the corner of Rittenhouse Avenue and 2nd Street. Capt. Pike is also responsible for Bayfield's first street lights and telephone line.

To learn more about the life of R.D. Pike, please stop and see the new exhibit now on display at the Bayfield Heritage Association, Tuesday – Saturday, 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Thank you to BHA's Board of Directors and the Pike Exhibit Committee, with the expert assistance of Cindy Arbiture of Museum Professional Services, for their time, talents, and resources in bringing Capt. Pike's life and achievements to a broad audience of locals and visitors.