



On the Street, Terre Haute, Ind. 1910.



EMIGRANT TRAILS HALL OF FAME

OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION

Ezra Manning Meeker

Biography

- Born: 1830, Huntsville, Ohio
- Died: 1928, Seattle, WA
- Married: Eliza Jane Sumner
- Farmer, emigrant, author, merchant, trail preservationist

Achievements

- Emigrant 1852
- Founded Puyallup, Washington
- Brought trail preservation to the attention of others
- Founded Oregon Trail Memorial Association
- Marked trail with “Meeker Markers”

Ezra Meeker, Oregon Trail pioneer of 1852, is OCTA’s inspiration for its preservation and education missions. He dedicated the last twenty-five years of his life to saving the trail for future generations. His crusade introduced tens of thousands of people to the history of the trail and the need to preserve it.

In 1903, as president of the Washington State Historical Society, Meeker led efforts to record the stories of trail pioneers. In 1905 he published his personal trail story, *Pioneer Reminiscences*, and drove an ox team to Portland, Oregon for the Lewis & Clark Exposition. In 1906/08 he traveled from Washington State to Washington, D.C., where he met with President Theodore Roosevelt. He placed markers as he traveled and began the national discussion on the fate of the trail that continues today.

In 1910 Meeker returned to the trail campaigning in the Midwest and as far south as Texas. In 1915 he exhibited his ox team at the Panama-Pacific Exposition. He made yet another trek over the trail in 1916 in a Pathfinder automobile. In 1924 Meeker flew over the trail in an Army biplane to meet with President Coolidge to urge him to join the trail-promotion effort. In 1926 he and others founded the Oregon Trail Memorial Association, the spiritual predecessor of OCTA. His last trip over the trail was in a touring car at the age of 96.

In 1930 President Hoover issued a proclamation which commended both the heroism of the Oregon Trail pioneers and Meeker “for carrying over into our day the personal memory of this historic epoch.”