



# Northwest Trails

Newsletter of the Northwest Chapter of the Oregon-California Trails Association

Volume 21, No. 1

Winter 2006

## 2006 Ezra Meeker Oregon Trail Monument Expedition

by Dave Welch

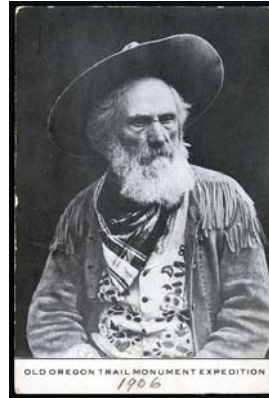
A century ago 75-year-old Ezra Meeker left his front yard in Puyallup, Washington, with two oxen, a wagon, a driver, and a dog to retrace and mark the Oregon Trail. His purpose was to mark the Oregon Trail as a monument to the pioneers who settled the West.

In summer 2006 a dozen members of the Ezra Meeker Historical Society (EMHS) and the Oregon-California Trails Association (OCTA) will retrace part of Ezra Meeker's journey with one of the Meeker wagons from Puyallup, Washington, to St. Joseph, Missouri, to coincide with the opening of the OCTA national convention on August 8. The expedition will be joined by an ox drover and a yoke of oxen in Oregon.

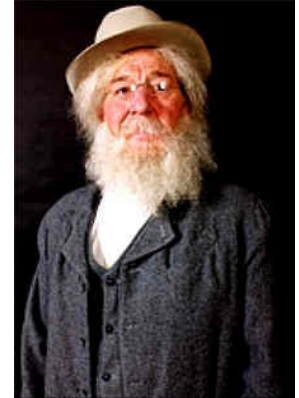
At each location there will be performances by "Mr. Meeker," portrayed by Ray Egan, the telling of the story of the 1906 expedition by Dennis Larsen, as well as programs organized locally. Also, markers will be placed in Chehalis and Claquato, Washington, in late April and in Soda Springs, Idaho, in July. Despite promises made to Meeker in 1906, these markers were never erected. One hundred years later we will correct this oversight.

We encourage all to join the procession from site to site. Period attire is encouraged. Join in the Celebration!

**For more information visit**  
[www.meekermansion.org](http://www.meekermansion.org)



Ezra Meeker postcard 1906



Ray Egan as Ezra Meeker

## 2006 Schedule

- Jul 22 Puyallup, WA
- Jul 23 Tumwater, WA
- Jul 23 The Dalles, OR
- Jul 24 Pendleton, OR
- Jul 25 Flagstaff Hill/Baker City, OR
- Jul 27 Boise, ID
- Jul 28 Three Island Crossing /Glenns Ferry, ID
- Jul 29 Pocatello / Fort Hall, ID
- Jul 30 Soda Springs, ID
- Jul 31 Rock Springs, WY
- Aug 1 South Pass, WY
- Aug 2 Casper, WY
- Aug 4 Scotts Bluff, NE
- Aug 5 Kearney/Fort Kearny, NE
- Aug 6 Alcove Spring, KS
- Aug 7 Arrive St. Joseph, MO
- Aug 8-12 OCTA Convention**
- Aug 10 Independence, MO
- Aug 16 Fort Bridger, WY
- Aug 19 Walla Walla, WA
- Aug 21 Return to Puyallup, WA

## NW Chapter Directory

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## President's Message

For my first president's message, I thought I would write about me and my interest in emigrant trails. In 1973 I was employed as Parks and Recreation Director for Washington County in Hillsboro, Oregon. I bought my first book on the Oregon Trail then—a book of diary excerpts—and I was hooked. After a brief period in Phoenix, I worked as a Recreation Planner for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in St. George, Utah. There the trail bug took a bigger bite when I worked on the Dominguez-Escalante Trail as well as the Honeymoon Trail, a regionally significant Mormon trail.

At my next stop in Wyoming, I administered the BLM recreation program for the entire state and became involved in working with the National Park Service (NPS) in preparing their Comprehensive Management Plans for the Mormon Pioneer and Oregon Trail National Historic Trails.

In August 1982 I learned of a meeting Greg Franzwa, Merrill Mattes, and several others were holding in the Denver NPS office regarding the emigrant trails and how they might go about protecting what is left. I crashed the party—it was the organizational meeting of OCTA—and have been involved with OCTA ever since. My first role was as the first new board member replacing one of the original twelve self-appointed board members.

Early on I served as assistant secretary and as chairman of the Long Range Planning Committee. With medical school in Omaha, residency in Spokane, and my first job in Sheridan, Wyoming, I have been a member of the Nebraska, Wyoming, and Northwest Chapters at different times and served a term as Vice-President of the Wyoming Chapter and was a board member of the Northwest Chapter in 1992 and 1993.

After a second term on the national board, a stint as national Vice-President, two years as President, and an extended term as Past President, I decided to slow down, and I chaired the national Awards Committee for the next three years. After that I chose to sit back and take it easy as “an elder statesman.”

But here I am the incoming Chapter President. How did that happen? What was I thinking? Or perhaps more appropriately, what were you thinking in electing me to this office? Me—an elder statesman! However, I will serve the chapter as best I can, but call upon each of you to participate to truly make it your chapter. You and the chapter both will benefit from the experience.

—Roger Blair

## A Familiar Marker?

by Chuck Hornbuckle

Did you miss Ezra Meeker's 1906 marker dedication as he set off on his mission to preserve the old roads? You still have the opportunity to be a part of history. Mark your calendar and be a witness to history in the making, the placement of two Meeker markers in Lewis County, Washington.

After leaving his home in Puyallup in early 1906, Ezra Meeker passed through Lewis County, Washington. There he left instructions for the placement of a stone to honor Oregon Trail pioneers. Of the 42 towns asked to install markers, only three failed completely; Soda Springs, Idaho; and Chehalis and Claquato, Washington. That commitment is being honored one hundred years later in all three towns.

In celebration of Ezra Meeker's landmark journey the Lewis County Historical Society has put together an exciting program on April 28 and 29.

When the Historical Society learned of plan to re-enact Meeker's eastward trek this summer, the Lewis County folks immediately contacted the Meeker Society with the plan to fulfill the long delayed marker installation. Through the efforts of Dennis Larsen and Ray Egan the plan was set in motion.

The Daughters of Pioneers of Washington learned of the effort and offered substantial funds toward the purchase of markers. With that, the program was officially underway.

One of the primary goals, in addition to marker installation itself, was to involve Lewis county school children.

Friday April 28 will feature Ray Egan and Dennis Larsen as they thrill grade school children with the story of Ezra and his monumental journey. In the afternoon the Lewis County Historical Museum will unveil their pioneer exhibit.

The following day will feature dedication ceremonies for two Meeker markers. The first, in the morning at Claquato, three miles west of Chehalis, will be unveiled on the grounds of the

1858 Church. Tours of the church and early pioneer grave sites will be given.

The program continues Saturday afternoon in Chehalis at the Museum with the marker dedication and speeches. There will be a covered wagon parade and display, an old fashioned chuck wagon dinner, display of Meeker's 1906 wagon and much more.

These markers complete Meeker's original plan within Washington. One hundred years from now this promise fulfilled will be a part of the emigrant trail history. Be a part of it.



### Directions

From I-5 take EXIT 78 and go east on Commerce Way one block to NW State Avenue. Turn right about ¾ mile to NW West St. Turn left at the stop sign. The museum is on the right immediately after crossing the railroad tracks at 599 NW Front Way.

For further information call Karen Johnson at  
360-748-0831

email [lchm@lewiscountymuseum.org](mailto:lchm@lewiscountymuseum.org)  
or visit their website at  
[www.lewiscountymuseum.org](http://www.lewiscountymuseum.org)

**Congratulations NW OCTA members**  
for your continued support of OCTA's mission. You reported 21,597 hours and \$36,736.96 in trail related time and expenses during 2005. I am proud of our commitment.

—Chuck Hornbuckle  
NW OCTA Volunteerism Coordinator

## The Dalles: A Place with an Abundant History

by Paul Masee

In March we have our annual OCTA Northwest Chapter meeting in The Dalles, Oregon. A wealth of history awaits you in The Dalles, as well as many historical resources and wonderful facilities to help you tour the town. I hope to have information on some of these available for you at our meeting.

In visiting the Wasco County museum, the library in The Dalles, Fort Dalles museum, Chamber of Commerce, Wasco County Historical Museum, and many surrounding points of interest, it is worth your time to learn how wonderful the history of Wasco County and The Dalles is. Just stop and think why The Dalles should be such a fascination to any tourist, visitor, and, most importantly, the membership of OCTA.

The emigrants we study and learn from, spent many weeks gathering supplies as well as preparing and organizing wagon trains in and near Independence or St. Joseph, Missouri, before departing on the Oregon Trail. Likewise, The Dalles, at the other end of the trail, was a “camp” where limited supplies could be obtained, wagons repaired and preparations made to complete the journey to their ultimate destination. It had a significant role to play in the completion of the 2000-mile journey west. It was a place to rest after an arduous journey and a place to restore their resolve to go the last 100 miles to their ultimate destination and start a new life.

Some historical facts about The Dalles:

- The Discovery Center where we will meet is located at Crates Point, home of an early settler, Edward Crates, who arrived in The Dalles in 1842. It would seem he was the first permanent resident, although Nathan Olney (a significant member of the Meeks lost wagon train in 1845) is sometimes given the credit. I am not sure who was first. Crates rafted early emigrant families part

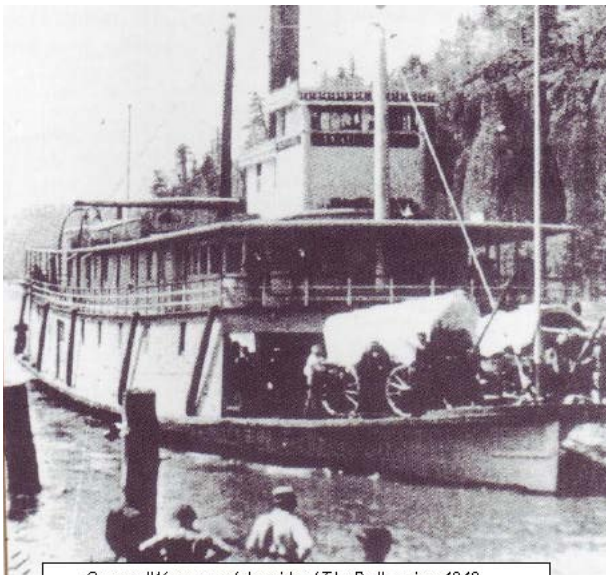
way down the Columbia to near Fort Vancouver and to the south side of the Columbia east of where Portland now stands. On the return trip to The Dalles, he ferried supplies and Hudson’s Bay traders from Fort Vancouver using a borrowed battelle from the fort.

- The old Indian Trail to Klamath and Modoc country began near the Methodist Mission (11th and Court Street) and went south up Dry Hollow Road to Three-mile Creek, Dufur, and then Tygh Valley, following the west side of the Deschutes River all the way to where the California border lies today.
- Hudson’s Bay Company maintained a trading post here in the 1830s that was known as “Baches Fort.”
- The Methodist Mission in The Dalles was established in 1838 and abandoned in 1847 after the Whitman massacre. It occupied an Indian campsite where The Dalles High School football field is today.
- Lt. John Frémont, early military explorer camped at 15th and Dry Hollow Road in 1843 on his journey to California.
- The first U.S. military outpost at The Dalles utilized the abandoned Methodist Mission buildings in 1848 and called it Fort Drum.
- The first duty of the first two companies of volunteers assigned to Fort Drum was to help clear the Barlow Trail around Mount Hood.
- Sam Barlow’s road followed the Indian Trail from Dufur south and then blazed his own road around Mount Hood’s south side. Barlow’s wagon train left The Dalles, going up today’s Brewery Grade to Old Dufur road, staying just west of today’s town of Dufur, joining the Indian Trail to Tygh Valley.
- Before the Barlow Road offered an alternative to rafting the Columbia in 1846, Daniel Lee established a cattle trail in 1836 that went to Oregon City via Mosier, Hood River Valley, near Lost Lake and Bull Run, Zigzag, and

Sandy. Thousands took this route in later years, but they had to abandon their wagons or ship them by water to take this route. Until the 1860s, it was the only way to get cattle to Oregon City.

- In all, there were at least eight exits from The Dalles, four of which were wagon-accessible prior to 1848. Thus the land trail did not necessarily end at The Dalles.

1. The Oregon Trail to the east (1841)
2. Lee's cattle trail to Oregon City (1836), established by the missionary Daniel Lee.
3. Rafting the Columbia (1841)
4. An old Indian trail (used by American Indians as a trade route even before they had horses, and horses date back to 1730 in the Northwest). This is the trail that John Frémont, Kit Carson, Peter Skene Ogden, Nathaniel Wyeth, and many others used to head south out of The Dalles and was also the route followed by Sam Barlow and his party as far as Tygh Valley in 1845.
5. Steamboat ferry to Cascades, then by wagon road to Fort Vancouver (1848). A steamboat is pictured below:



Covered Wagons catch a ride at The Dalles circa 1848

6. Ferry to Wishram (today's Spearfish, WA), a traditional trading center for the Indians, then by wagon road to Fort Simcoe and on to Naches Pass (1855).
7. Dalles-Canyon City Freight and Stage Road (1859).
8. Dalles Military Road (1860). Both this and the stage road began as trails and gradually evolved into wagon roads after Joe Sherar improved the old bridge at Sherar Falls and the roads on both sides of the Deschutes.

- Originally The Dalles was an Indian village called Winquet. The area around the mouth of Mill Creek was named Quinnet. The main part of The Dalles was known as "the landing" in 1850, Wascopam in 1852, Dalles City in 1853, and finally The Dalles in 1860.
- Steamboat service on the Columbia River began in 1848 hauling freight and passengers to "the landing", and emigrants and wagons were transported down to the Cascades. It soon made The Dalles a prominent port city as well as the largest city in the Northwest.
- The oldest house still standing in The Dalles was built in 1850. It is located at 300 13th Street, known as The Rorick house and is open for tours Friday through Sunday. The home was built by a noncommissioned officer stationed at Camp Drum. The home is now in the possession of the Wasco County Historical Society.
- In 1861 so much gold was coming out of Canyon City, Idaho, and the Blue Mountains that the U.S. government began building a U.S. mint in The Dalles. It was never completed. When the gold supply dwindled the federal

*Continued on next page*

## The Dalles

*Continued from previous page*

government eventually sold the property located at 710 E 2nd, between Madison and Monroe Streets. It is now a Cellular One retail outlet.

- The Fort Dalles museum, located in the restored Surgeon's quarters on Fort Dalles, at 15th and Garrison streets is the oldest museum in Oregon. It is certainly worth a visit.

Enjoy your stay in The Dalles, load up on tour brochures at the Chamber of Commerce, say "hello" to Mary Stock at the Chamber, and have a look around the town. Behind the Chamber building sits the first County Courthouse, built in 1859, which is still maintained and open to the public. They are very history-conscious in The Dalles and are interested in sharing their knowledge with our group, so don't hesitate to ask lots of questions.

## Wind and Wine: A View from the Northwest

*by Chuck Hornbuckle*

While Trail preservationists struggle with underground energy sources in Wyoming, the Northwest Chapter has become the hot spot of above-ground energy development. Wind turbines have been installed on the west side of the John Day River, and at least three more installations are planned in the not-too-distant future. Test sites are in the works near Virtue Flat, Cecil, and Rufus, Oregon. In addition to wind energy development, a vineyard is proposed near the Deschutes River trail crossing on the south side of the Columbia River.

The Durkee and Cecil locations are within sight of pristine trail remnants. While historical documentation shows the trail crossing farmland east of Rufus, evidence of the trail is only visible as a slightly different wheat or stubble coloration. Each of the development locations is

primarily on private land, with some BLM land involved in the Durkee location. Private landowners have been very supportive of trail protection in the past and say that will continue to the extent possible.

Developers gave assurances that access road crossings of the trail will be minimized and Northwest Chapter members will continue to work with all involved. However, energy production is a significant national concern, and it may be counterproductive to oppose such development unless it poses a direct threat to visible trail segments.

Much of the land near the proposed vineyard has been under cultivation for decades. While early GLO survey maps indicate the trail locations in the area of the vineyard, onsite surveys have been unable to locate verifiable trail evidence.

Trail Monitor Rich Herman has met with significant success in working with local governmental agencies. His secret is to give a copy of the *Saving a Legacy* video and a NW OCTA newsletter to the office responsible for approving such land development. Rich stated that the planning folks now understand the vital need to protect this dwindling national treasure and have included his name as an interested party in future proposals near the Oregon Trail.

## Donations to NW OCTA Chapter

It has come to the attention of the Treasurer that some members are adding donations to their membership dues that you want to go to the Chapter. Unless this is clearly specified on your membership form, this money actually goes into OCTA's national treasury. If you want to donate to the chapter, please send these funds separately to **NW OCTA Treasurer, Joyce Bolerjack, 10813 NE 20th St., Bellevue, WA 98004-2907** and indicate for which chapter fund they should be used. You will receive a letter for tax exemption purposes.

**OCTA National Convention, August 8-12  
St. Joseph, Missouri**

## David and Joyce Hunsaker Moving to Washington, DC

The following article is from the *Salt Lake Tribune*, December 7, 2005:

David Hunsaker is stepping up in his Bureau of Land Management career by stepping down as manager of southern Utah's Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. In March, Hunsaker will move to Washington, DC, to become deputy director of the National Landscape Conservation System, which oversees the BLM's specially designated lands, including monuments, wilderness study areas and scenic rivers and national historic trails.

"I've been offered the job, and I've accepted," he said Tuesday. Hunsaker, who took the reins of the 1.9 million-acre Grand Staircase in 2001, said his departure has nothing to do with the BLM's ongoing road battles with Kane and Garfield counties. "This has been in the works for several months," said Hunsaker of his new post. "I've talked to my wife about this and agonized over whether we wanted to go back [to Washington] or stay here in the field. I've been here almost five years, and this is a great opportunity. I'm not being eased out at all."

But Sky Chaney—co-coordinator of Land Use Volunteers, a Kane County group that works with the BLM and off-road enthusiasts on public land projects—said he wonders whether some political maneuvering is at play. "It's a shame to transfer a guy who seemed to know how things work," Chaney said. "He seemed to be a moderate guy."

Heidi McIntosh, conservation director for the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, said two previous monument managers left after locking horns with the Kane County Commission. "This sends a terrible message to the next manager," she said. "It tells him or her that life is going to be hard if they try and enforce the laws that protect that special place."

Kane County Commissioner Mark Habbeshaw, who has jostled with Hunsaker over the roads issue, said Tuesday it would be inappropriate to "discuss differences we've had.

I'm not denying them," Habbeshaw said, "but I wish the best for Hunsaker and hope we get a manager with a somewhat multiple-use philosophy that will protect resource values of the monument and even offer some economic subsistence from those resources."

Such talk worries McIntosh, who argues that the federal act creating the monument bars "mining, oil and gas exploration and other extractive uses that would harm resources." She wants the Interior Department to pick a successor to Hunsaker who will "stand up to the county's intimidation tactics."

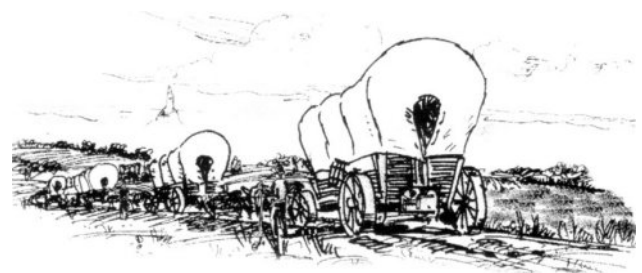
Don Banks, spokesman for the BLM's state office in Salt Lake City, said the post would be advertised within the federal system. He did not know when a replacement would be named. Banks said Hunsaker told him several months ago that he had applied for a new position. Banks said running Grand Staircase "is probably the toughest job in the BLM, and Dave has done an amazing job. We're happy for him and disappointed for us."

Hunsaker said that during his remaining tenure at Grand Staircase he plans to see that multiple use and resource protection remain a top goal.

## NW OCTA Election Results

Wayne Burck, Elections Committee Chair, reported the following NW OCTA election results for 2006:

President: Roger Blair  
Vice President: Susan Doyle  
Secretary: Peggy Baldwin  
Treasurer: Joyce Bolerjack  
Director: Jenny Miller



## *Northwest Trails*

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Material may be submitted via email or on disk or as email attachment in Word or Text format. Pictures can be sent via email, on disk (JPG format), or originals for scanning. Please send pictures separately from text document.

MASTHEAD: Replica of *The Old Oregon Trail* bronze relief sculpture created in 1924 by Avarad Fairbanks for Oregon Trail monuments.

## **MARK YOUR CALENDARS**

### **2006 NW OCTA Annual Meeting**

Saturday, March 11  
at the  
Columbia Gorge Discovery Center  
The Dalles, Oregon

### **Speakers**

Lethene Parks and Jenny Miller  
“A Visual Journey Along the Oregon Trail”

Linda Crew  
Author of *A Heart for Any Fate*

**A registration flyer will be sent out in late  
February**

## *Northwest Trails*

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