

OREGON TRAIL MARKER

The Tenino Sandstone Oregon Trail marker on the north-west corner of Sussex and Sheridan in Tenino was placed during Ezra Meeker's 1906 "expedition to perpetuate the memory of the old Oregon Trail."

Ezra (1830-1927), a Puyallup pioneer, retracing the Oregon Trail west to east with an ox-team (Dave and Twist) and covered wagon, arrived in Tenino on February 20th.

In his journal for February 21st he wrote "A red-letter day; drove over to the stone quarry and hauled monument over to site, where workman followed and put same in place. This monument was donated by the Tenino Quarry Company and is inscribed, 'Old Oregon Trail, 1845-53.' At 2 o'clock the stores were closed, the school children in a body came over and nearly the whole population turned out to the dedication of the **first** monument on the Trail. Lectured in the evening to a good house – had splendid vocal music. Receipts \$16.00."

Twenty-two months after leaving his home in Puyallup, on November 29, 1907 Ezra arrived at the White House in Washington, DC and was received by President Theodore Roosevelt.



Photo courtesy of Monte Dodge



Postcard image of Ezra and his camp including his "prairie schooner" and the people of Tenino.

February 21, 1906.

President Roosevelt said "I am in favor of this work to mark this Trail and if you will bring before Congress a measure to accomplish it, I am with you, and will give it my support to do it thoroughly."

In 1908 Congress considered House Bill 11722 (the Humphrey Bill) which would appropriate \$50,000 for the cause but it was not passed.

Ezra finally completed the return trip (via various methods of transportation) and returned home on June 6, 1908.

By Richard A. Edwards, Historian, The South Thurston County Historical Society. January 2012.

Additional Reading: *The busy life of eighty-five years of Ezra Meeker: Ventures and adventures, sixty-three years of pioneer life in the old Oregon country; an account of the author's trip across the plains with an ox team, 1852; return trip, 1906-7; his cruise on Puget Sound, 1853; trip through the Natchess pass, 1854; over the Chilcoot pass; flat-boating on the Yukon, 1898.* Seattle, WA: Meeker, 1916. <http://books.google.com/books?id=pF9AAAAAYAAJ>