

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Washington	
COUNTY: Pierce	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 718.53.0009	DATE 8/26/71

1. NAME

COMMON:
Ezra Meeker Mansion

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
321 Pioneer Ave. East Honorable Floyd V. Hicks

CITY OR TOWN:
Puyallup CONG. DISTRICT # 6

STATE Washington	CODE 53	COUNTY: Pierce	CODE 053
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3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious	Was nursing home, now vacant.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: (Structure) Ezra Meeker Historical Society	(Realty) J. M. McConkey & Company, Inc.	STATE: Washington
STREET AND NUMBER: Post Office Box 187	320 Spring Street, S. E.	
CITY OR TOWN: Puyallup, Washington	Puyallup, Washington	

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Pierce County Auditor's Office, County-City Building

STREET AND NUMBER:
930 Tacoma Avenue, South

CITY OR TOWN: Tacoma	STATE Washington	CODE 53
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6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Plan Book of the City of Puyallup, Washington

DATE OF SURVEY: 1890 (approximately) Federal State County Local

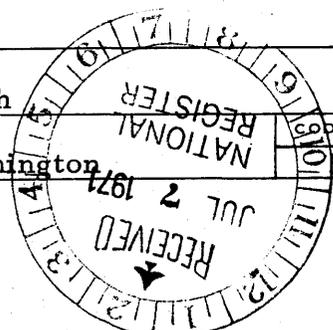
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Pierce County Auditor

STREET AND NUMBER:
County-City Building, 930 Tacoma Avenue, South

CITY OR TOWN: Tacoma	STATE: Washington	CODE 53
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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Original Appearance

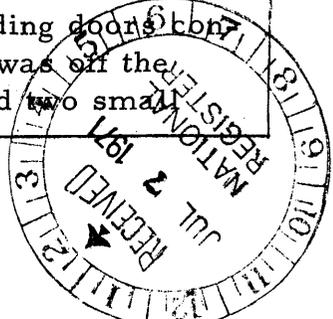
1. Exterior--The Ezra Meeker Mansion had white clapboard siding and very ornate, wooden trim around all the window casings and below the eaves. There was a large front porch with a corresponding balcony on the second floor. A small balcony was on the east side of the house on the second floor. A porte-cochere, or carriage entrance, was on the west side of the house and had wooden, circular stairs which led into the mansion's sun porch. The porches and balconies had elaborately decorated, wooden railings and pillars. The bricks in the chimneys were assembled to be decorative as well as useful. The foundation was made of gray stone and a widow's walk topped the mansion. *iron cresting*

2. Interior--The mansion had fifteen rooms, with twelve-foot ceilings. Six beautiful fireplaces with hand-carved wooden mantels, ornate tile work, and mirrors heated the mansion. Metal coverings and tile flooring of the fireplaces were part of the decor. Speaking tubes helped communication in the mansion. Gold-leaf molding, fancy metal doorknobs and hinges, built-in bolt locks on the doors, and old-fashioned inside blinds were part of every room. There were frescoed ceilings, decorated ceilings, and plaster sculptures mounted near the window casings. Huge light fixtures for gas lights illuminated the mansion. Indoor plumbing with marble fixtures and tin bathtubs added luxury. Beautiful leaded, stained glass windows were framed with casings of ash and walnut. The patterns of the woodwork in the doors, baseboards, and window casings were hand crafted to custom-fit the areas of the house.

Special Features--The foundation, a wall of gray stone four feet thick, surrounded the basement. Small metal doors at the base of each chimney opened for removing ashes. The pillars and floor joists for the massive building were in full view. Wooden partitions made up four small rooms that were used as a fruit room, dairy room, and possibly a fuel and storage room. Gas lights were in the basement.

The main floor consisted of the drawing room, parlor, library, a bathroom, dining room, kitchen, pantry, hallway, and sun porch. The floor in the drawing room was teakwood. The decor of the parlor was cedar and the library was of redwood. The hallway had the main entrance, comprised of double doors of walnut with panels of leaded, stained glass. The main stairway had a newel post of hand-carved cherry wood, and the railing and balustrades of the stairway were hand-turned cherry wood. A large stained glass window was on the west side of the hallway and was also part of the sun porch. Double sliding doors opened off the hall into the parlor and the drawing room. A third set of double sliding doors ⁶ ~~connected~~ connected the parlor and the library. The servants' stairway was off the kitchen and went up to the third floor. The second floor had ~~two small~~

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



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71.8.53.0009	8/36/97

(Number all entries)

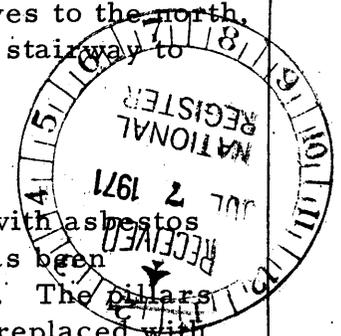
rooms which were used as servants' quarters. The master bedroom was built with a small dressing room adjacent that had a built-in wardrobe closet used by the Meekers. The billiard room had a fireplace mantel, window casings, and baseboards of curly maple. A large bathroom, the oak room, and the ash room are on the second floor. Access to the second-floor balcony was furnished by an unusual window which raised high enough to allow a person to walk through the opening. A door provided access to the second smaller balcony on the east side.

The ballroom was located on the third floor, and there was a stage for actors and musicians. There were four rooms under the eaves to the north, west, and south of the ballroom which were for guests. The stairway to the widow's walk was on the third floor.

Present Appearance

1. Exterior--The original clapboard siding is now covered with asbestos shingle siding. Most of the wood trim around the windows has been removed. The wood spheres on the balcony railing are gone. The pillars of the front porch and the carriage porte-cochere have been replaced with ordinary wooden posts. Most of the wood trim that remains on the house could be sanded and painted. Some of it has rotted and will have to be replaced. The wooden steps for the front porch and the carriage porte-cochere have been replaced with ugly concrete. The decorative chimneys were leveled to the roof by two previous earthquakes; however, many of the bricks were salvaged. There are no cracks in the four-foot-thick stone foundation. Structurally, the house is very SOLID! There is no evidence of dry rot or any other structural defect. Routine maintenance and cleaning will go a long way toward restoring it. The widow's walk is intact. Fire escapes were added when the mansion was used as a nursing home and will be removed in the restoration.

2. Interior--Some of the ceilings have been lowered and some of the decorative molding has been removed from the walls. Some molding was kept. The original light fixtures are gone, although a few plaster bases still remain on some ceilings. All of the original flooring is covered with linoleum tile. There have been a few minor changes, such as added closets or the removal of a door or window in a few places. The changes are minor and pose no problem in restoring the house to its original state. Most of the woodwork is in beautiful condition with no change in the baseboards, doors, or window casings. Where changes have been made, the woodwork doesn't match; however, some of the woodwork that was taken up was kept. The tin bathtubs have been removed, although some of the marble slabs for the plumbing still remain. The fireplaces are in very good condition



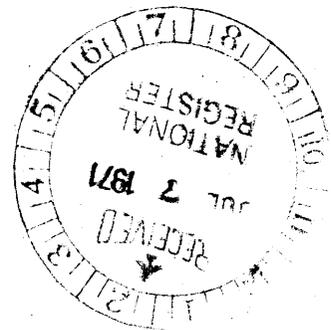
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considering the age of the house. Some extra tiles for the fireplaces were kept. A recent arson fire damaged a portion of the main staircase but the damage can be repaired. The lead melted out of a nearby stained glass window which can also be repaired since there was no breakage. Two carved doors were found which were part of the house. Cleaning up will go a long way toward restoring the house.



4. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1890

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

EZRA MEEKER--BUILDER AND FIRST RESIDENT OF THE MANSION

- 1637 The first Meekers came to America from England. Ezra Meeker's ancestors include a Timothy Meeker who fought in the Revolutionary War, and Nathan Meeker, founder of Greeley, Colorado.
- 1830¹⁷⁹⁸ Ezra Meeker was born near Huntsville, Ohio, on December 29.
- 1852 Ezra Meeker traveled over the Oregon Trail from Iowa with his wife and infant son. From Portland, they traveled north to the Washington Territory. For a time they settled near Kalama, on McNeil Island, and the Fern Hill area farming. Meeker also helped operate a general store at Steilacoom with his brother and father.
- 1862 Ezra Meeker, his wife, and four children came to Puyallup and purchased Jerry Stilly's homestead claim. This land is now the center of town. Home was a two-room cabin, which the family occupied from 1862 until 1886.
- 1877 Ezra Meeker platted the town of Puyallup and gave the settlement its name. Some settlers suggested the name of "Meekerville," but Meeker did not want his name used.
- 1880's Ezra Meeker's father brought him some hop plants. Ezra promoted the growing of hops in this area, which resulted in bringing a \$20 million industry here. He was known as the "Hop King of the World" because his method of curing hops made them the finest in the world. His 500 acres yielded a crop of 400 tons annually with an income of \$500,000.
- 1887 Ezra Meeker was President of the Pioneer Association of the State of Washington. The Meeker family moved to the Ezra Meeker Mansion even though construction was still in progress.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
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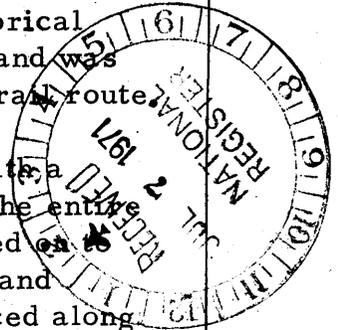
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8. Significance (continued)

- 1890 Ezra Meeker was Puyallup's first mayor. The city was incorporated in 1890 with Meeker being instrumental in the incorporation procedures.
- 1903 Ezra Meeker was President of the Washington State Historical Society. He wrote pamphlets and books on local history and was extremely interested in the preservation of the Oregon Trail route.
- 1906 On January 29, Ezra Meeker left his home in Puyallup with a prairie schooner pulled by a yoke of oxen. He retraced the entire route of the Oregon Trail across the country and continued on to New York City and Washington, D. C. He gave speeches and helped raise funds for markers and monuments to be placed along the Oregon Trail route.
- 1910 A second trip over the Oregon Trail route by ox team was made to further promote and publicize the need for markers along the Trail. He asked Congress to appropriate monies to make the Oregon Trail a national highway. Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and Calvin Coolidge encouraged Meeker in his efforts to preserve the Oregon Trail.
- 1924 At the age of 94, he flew over the Oregon Trail route with Lt. Oakley C. Kelly from Vancouver, Washington. He is credited with being the only man to cross the nation by ox team, railway, automobile, and airplane.
- 1926 There were 171 markers along the Oregon Trail route as a result of Meeker's promotional efforts.
- 1928 Henry Ford designed a special car shaped like a prairie schooner for Meeker to drive across the Oregon Trail. The "Oxmobile" was never used by Ezra Meeker because he was not well enough to make the trip. Meeker died December 3, 1928, with pneumonia in Seattle, Washington. In less than a month he would have been 98 years old.

Ezra Meeker was the founder of the Oregon Trail Memorial Association which is located in Gering, Nebraska. He is known in all the states that comprise the Oregon Trail, and the markers and monuments which he dedicated and helped to finance are still standing. Independence Rock, a



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8. Significance (continued)

famous landmark of the Oregon Trail, bears a bronze plaque with the likeness of Ezra Meeker set in the rock. The United States Treasury produced the Oregon Trail Commemorative 50-cent coins as a result of Meeker's promotional efforts.

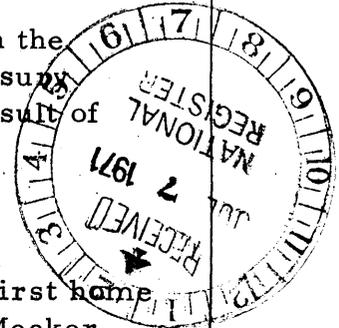
Historical Significance

Ezra Meeker owned and resided in two homes in Puyallup. The first home of the Meeker family was a cabin on the homestead claim which Meeker purchased from Jerry Stilly. At the time Meeker purchased the claim there was a one-room cabin, eight feet high and sixteen feet square. Meeker added a second room of the same dimensions to the existing structure, and the two rooms were connected by a five-foot-wide, double fireplace made of float lava rock. This two-room cabin was home for the Meeker family from 1862 until 1886. Unfortunately, this cabin was not preserved. The wooden cabin rotted away and eventually fell down.

When Ezra Meeker moved to the mansion he donated the site of the cabin to the city for a park. The park is appropriately named Pioneer Park (see map). The large ivy vine that once grew over the original cabin is still growing today. The vine is supported by several steel and concrete pillars which outline the dimensions of the original cabin. Next to the cabin site is a life-size statue of Ezra Meeker mounted on a large, concrete base. This statue was placed in the park and dedicated during Meeker's lifetime.

The Ezra Meeker Mansion is the only remaining home of this famous pioneer, and it was the home of Meeker and his family for more than twenty years. The family moved into the mansion in 1886 or 1887. It is believed that construction on the mansion was completed about 1890. Mr. Meeker built the mansion from wealth he acquired while being internationally known as the "Hop King of the World." During the years that Meeker lived in the mansion, he became nationally known for his outstanding accomplishment of retracing and marking the Oregon Trail. Both the mansion and the property are significant. The Meeker Mansion was the end of the Oregon Trail for Mr. Meeker; however, it was also the site where he began his work of retracing and marking the Trail (see photo).

It is not surprising that the Meeker Mansion was built facing the railroad tracks to the north of the property. Ezra Meeker worked with financier Jay Cooke in promoting the building of the Northern Pacific Railroad in the Pacific Northwest. One of his early writings was a pamphlet called "Washington Territory West of the Cascade Mountains." The pamphlet



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8. Significance (continued)

promoted Washington, and the Puget Sound area in particular, and J. Cooke distributed them along with promoting the building of the railroad in the area.

While residing at the Meeker Mansion, Meeker devoted any spare time to writing. The result was twelve books, most of them dealing with the Oregon Trail and the history of the Puget Sound area in Washington State. He was Puyallup's most prominent citizen, known internationally, nationally, and locally as Puyallup's founder and first mayor. The Meeker Mansion was the social and political center of the valley, with many prominent guests including top railroad officials and lavish entertaining. Some of the plants that Meeker imported are still on the site today. There are holly trees which he brought from England and also a ginkgo tree.

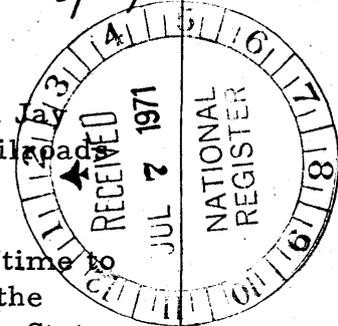
The Ezra Meeker Mansion is the most significant pioneer home in town and is one of a very few historic homes remaining in the State of Washington. It is the only remaining residence that Meeker occupied for a considerable period of time and it is even more significant because his homestead cabin was not preserved.

Architectural Significance

The Ezra Meeker Mansion is one of a very few remaining Victorian-style mansions built in the State of Washington. This mansion is an especially good example because of the very high quality imported fireplaces; leaded, stained glass windows; and unusual woods used in the interior of the home.

Educational Significance

Preservation of the Ezra Meeker Mansion as an educational facility is important because it is the home of the marker of the Oregon Trail. The Meeker Mansion is a monument to the American ideals of the pioneer spirit and hard work. It is a good example of the style of architecture of the 1890's. When restored and furnished, it will be an interpretive center depicting the style of living of the 1890's. A number of school groups have already toured the mansion, and requests for such tours are still being received and honored. From June, 1970, through December, 1970, the Meeker Mansion had over 10,000 visitors.



9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. McDonald, Lucille, Where the Washingtonians Lived, Seattle: Superior Publishing Company, c1969, p. 177
 2. Meeker, Ezra, The Busy Life of Eighty-Five Years, Indianapolis: William B. Burford Press, c1916
 3. Meeker, Ezra, and Howard R. Driggs, Ox-Team Days on the Oregon Trail, World Book Company, c1922
 4. Young, Robert W., Ezra Meeker in the Puyallup Valley, Seattle: August, 1949,
- and others.

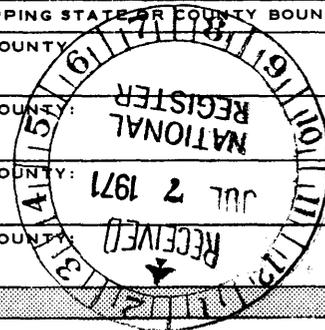
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	° ' "	° ' "		N47	11	29
NE	° ' "	° ' "		W122	17	21
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1.3 acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
None			
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



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5226400
CD

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Gale Brian Nickel, President

ORGANIZATION: **Ezra Meeker Historical Society, Inc.** DATE: **June 15, 1971**

STREET AND NUMBER:
Route 1, Box 835

CITY OR TOWN: **Sumner** STATE: **Washington** CODE: **53**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name Charles H. DeGroot

Title Director - Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission

Date July 6, 1971

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Ernest A. Connelly
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date **AUG 26 1971**

ATTEST

William J. Murty
Keeper of The National Register

Date **JUL 29 1971**