Map of the Oregon Trail Routes of 1852

by
Ezra Meeker

Modernized Trail Map

by
Steve F. Russell, PhD, PE

Abstract: In 1852, Ezra Meeker, a young man of 22, followed the Oregon Trail from the Missouri River, to the Columbia River in Oregon, and finally to Puget Sound in Washington. In 1906, at the age of 76, Meeker retraced his 1852 route, as close as possible, with an Ox and Cow team, going eastward from Puget Sound to eastern Nebraska, at Grand Island. Meeker wrote about many topics, including information about the 1852 trip, and he kept a diary of his 1906 trip. In addition, he also provided a map of the Oregon Trail, as he knew it in 1852. This document provides a modern interpretation of the routes he shows on his trail map. The modernized map was prepared, using information from many years of the author's Oregon-California Trails research.

2016
Revised: 2022

Explanations and Instructions

The map was prepared using a geographic information system (GIS) known as the National Geographic TOPO! State map series. Although this computer program and its map database are obsolete, they are still very valuable tools for doing historical trail research. TOPO! will not run on Windows programs any newer that Windows 7, so this valuable resource must be run on Windows XP legacy computers.

The trail map is a single, large format map that can be displayed with Adobe Acrobat Portable Document Files (PDF), but it cannot be printed in large format. It can only be printed in small segments that the reader can choose. A list of PDF "bookmarks" are provided so that the reader can quickly scan and enlarge various portions of the trail route. However, the reader can scroll to any part of the map using the PDF scroll feature.

To print a segment of the map, simply scroll to the segment and set the desired magnification (a magnification of 50% works well for printing). Then, use the PDF print function to print the screen view of the map. The print range must be set to "Current View," to work properly. The Adobe PDF print driver will work fine but some 3rd party print drivers may fail. In summary, to print, do the following steps:

1. Set the PDF magnification to 50%
2. Scroll the map to the desired location and/or trail segment
3. Chose the Adobe Printer option
4. Select the "Current View" for the print range
5. Print the map segment shown on the screen

Bibliography

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2. Ezra Meeker, Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ezra_Meeker
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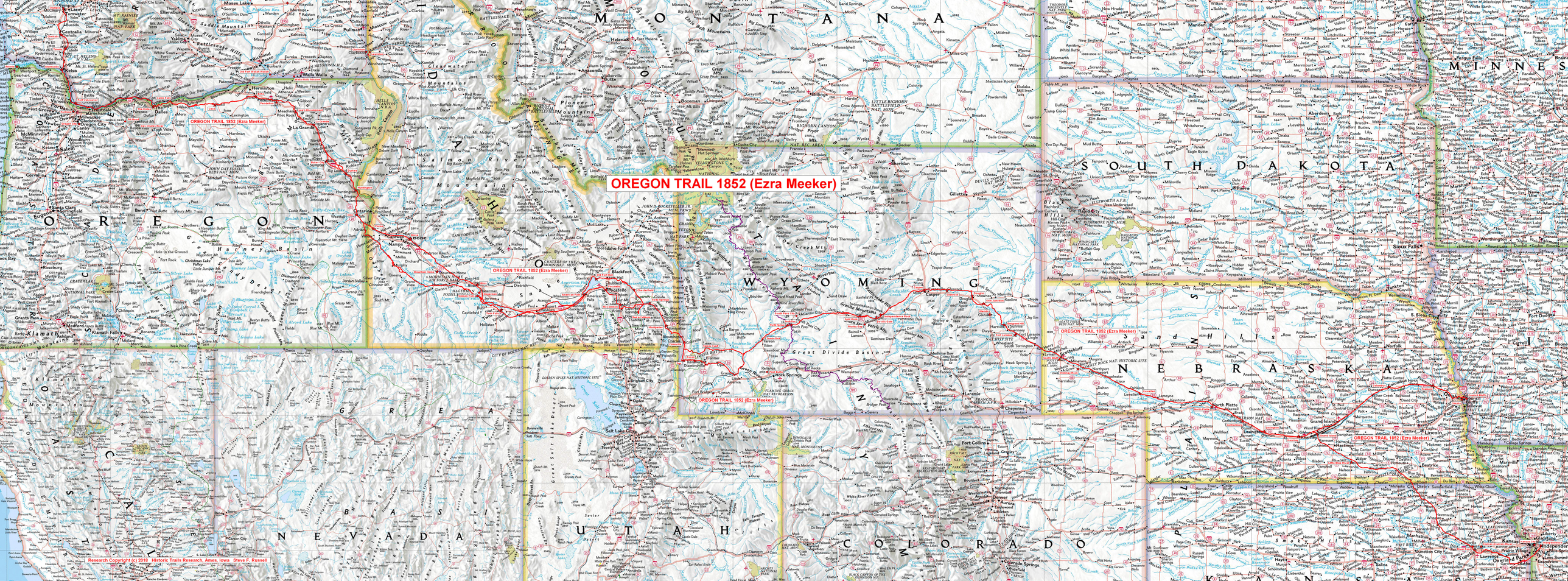
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