

*Peabody Room Hours*  
 Mon. & 2nd & 4th Sat.  
 9:30-5:30  
 Thursdays 1:00-9:00

## Daniel Boone, The Oregon Trail, and the T St. Story Lady: A Burleith Mystery Solved

Last Wednesday, coming home from school the T Street Story Lady asked John and Justin if they would like to visit the neighborhood monument. Sure enough they spotted it through the Western High School fence - at the 35th St. gate at Reservoir Rd. - a rough hewn gray stone just big enough for the two metal plaques and a becoming border. The two boys climbed all over the monument while the T Street Story Lady read and pondered and finally copied the wording on the plaques.

### TRAIL MARKER

Presented to Western High School  
 by Ezra Meeker  
 Representing the  
 Daniel Boone Association  
 This monument was presented  
 by the History Club June 4, 1934  
 William Briggs, President  
 Geraldine Massey, Vice President  
 Mildred Hull, Secretary  
 Peggy Dow, Chairman  
 Historical Marker Com.

Above this plaque was another large metal tablet which depicted young Daniel Boone, in frontier dress, with rifle and powder horn, resting on a rock with his dog at his side, but facing west, across the Potomac. And along the base of the tablet it said - metal from the battleship Maine in marker.

"Get down boys you're covering up the dog" said the Story Lady as she busily sketched the tablet: "Do

you want to know why Daniel Boone's in Burleith?" "He's buried there," said Justin. "I don't think so but we'll see" said the Story Lady.

The Story Lady asked Western High, the DAR, the Columbia Historical Society, Mrs. Bowie and the Burleith Historian but finally came upon her first clue among the old newspaper clippings in the Western High School file in the Washingtonana Room at the Martin Luther King Library.

The first clipping is dated May 12, 1926 and it was a picture of a white bearded, long haired patriarch in a white suit, holding up a tablet draped with the American flag. The headline above the picture said "Veteran Trail Blazer Presents Tablet" and under the picture it describes, "A tablet of Daniel Boone, the marker of the Boone Trail Highway, was presented to Western High School because it is the nearest of any city school to the old trail followed by Boone in 1750."

The Boone biography mentions no trip in 1750. Perhaps they meant the march he made with Britian's General Braddock and the young Col. George Washington to claim Fort Duquesne from the French. That march from Alexandria, in 1755, ended with the complete rout of the British forces and the death of General-

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## The Story Lady and Friends CONTINUED

Braddock at what is now Pittsburgh. A more remote possibility is Boone's first trail blazing to "Kentucke", 1756, but that trip originated from the Boone family settlement on the Yadkin River in North Carolina.

The second clipping again shows the flag and a group of young people standing around the monument. Under the picture it says - "A stone marker, honoring Daniel Boone and marking the spot where the Old Oregon Trail passed the present side of Western High School, was presented the school yesterday by the History Club." History Club or not the Story Lady questioned that the Oregon Trail blazing was undertaken by Daniel Boone in Earleith in 1750.

Back at the library she looked up the Oregon Trail and there found a dusty slim green volume called *Ox-Team Days on the*

*Oregon Trail* by Oregon Trail blazer Ezra Meeker. It had to be the same Ezra Meeker who presented Western High with the Plaque. Scanning the book the Story Lady found that "Father Meeker" was another P.T. Barnam who "re-blazed" after 55 years, the Oregon Trail, in a rebuilt "prairie schooner" and a yoke of sturdy oxen, to publicize and to at last gain recognition for the pioneering work that he and other trail blazers had done.

The original trip was made from Kanesville, Iowa (now, Council Bluffs) to Portland, Ore. in 1852. The frontespiece says ".....from his home in the State of Washington and marking the old route as he went..... he went on to the Capitol where Mr. Roosevelt (Teddy) then President met him with joy." Ezra Meeker states that Mr. Roosevelt offered support for the legislation to mark the historic trail and I

quote from the book that in 1908 "The Committee of Congress in charge of the bill appropriating fifty thousand dollars to mark the trail, by that time had taken action and had made a favorable report."

Whether our neighborhood monument is the fruit of that appropriation or whether as the plaque indicates, it was the gift of the now defunct and not recorded Daniel Boone Assn., the Story Lady feels, is not important. It is a monument to trail blazing and pioneering and to the very human cry in all of us that says, remember me, remember my deeds.....along with the Maine.

No Justin, no John, nothing's buried there.

(Anne von Sothen of Burleith is the Story Lady, who creates her tales out of the experiences of her young son and his neighbors and classmates.)