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Review of *The Mormon Trail: Yesterday and Today* By William E. Hill

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The Mormon Trail: Yesterday and Today. By William E. Hill. Logan: Utah State University Press, 1996. Maps, illustrations, recommended readings, bibliography. xxii + 216 pp. \$19.95 paper.

From 1839 to the beginning of 1846, the Mormons made their headquarters in Nauvoo, Illinois. Continuing persecution, however, forced them to leave, seeking a refuge in the West. By the end of 1846 migrating Mormons found themselves scattered across Iowa and other parts of the country, with headquarters at Winter Quarters, now Florence, Nebraska. On 5 April 1847, under the leadership of Brigham Young, the vanguard company set out from Winter Quarters, arriving in the Salt Lake Valley on 22 July.

The Mormon Trail: Yesterday and Today appeared, significantly, in 1996, just a year before the sesquicentennial anniversary of that famous trek. The book begins with thirteen pages on the nature of the trail, covering essential bits of Mormon history, organizational aspects of getting immigrants to and across the trail, and a variety of other important facts. William Hill then provides a useful chronology that includes both Mormon history and the history of the area covered by the trail. Part II consists of a discussion of the maps and guidebooks available to the Mormons as they prepared to cross the Plains, as well as a commentary on and quotations from the diaries of Mormon migrants.

Part III, "Pictorial Journey," is the heart of the book. Here the author provides numerous reproductions of contemporary artists' drawings, together with a few photographs, showing various scenes along the trail. In most instances these are paired with modern photographs showing the same scenes as they appear today. The section moves chronologically from Nauvoo to Salt Lake City, the short narratives on each page offering a connected story of the original pioneer trek as well as information on the significance of each particular site. For people interested in landmarks, illustrations like those on page 123 are especially worthwhile: a reproduction of Frederick Piercy's drawing of the famous Chimney Rock, in Nebraska, paired with a modern photograph, which makes clear how great a toll a century-and-a-half of erosion has taken. Finally, Hill briefly describes several museums and historic sites worth seeing and also provides a short list of recommended reading.

The Mormon Trail: Yesterday and Today, especially Part III, makes absorbing armchair reading. For anyone wishing to follow the Mormon Trail, it will be a useful companion but not, however, an adequate guide. The map is unsatisfactory and the narrative too brief. Travelers should arm themselves with at least two other publications: the Mormon Pioneer Trail brochure, issued by the National Park Service, which includes a detailed map showing the original trail in relation to current highways; and *111 Days to Zion* (1978), by Hal Knight and Stanley B. Kimball, which renders a detailed day-by-day account of the journey of Brigham Young's vanguard company, along with reliable maps that make following the trail (or as near to it as modern roads will allow) surprisingly easy.

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