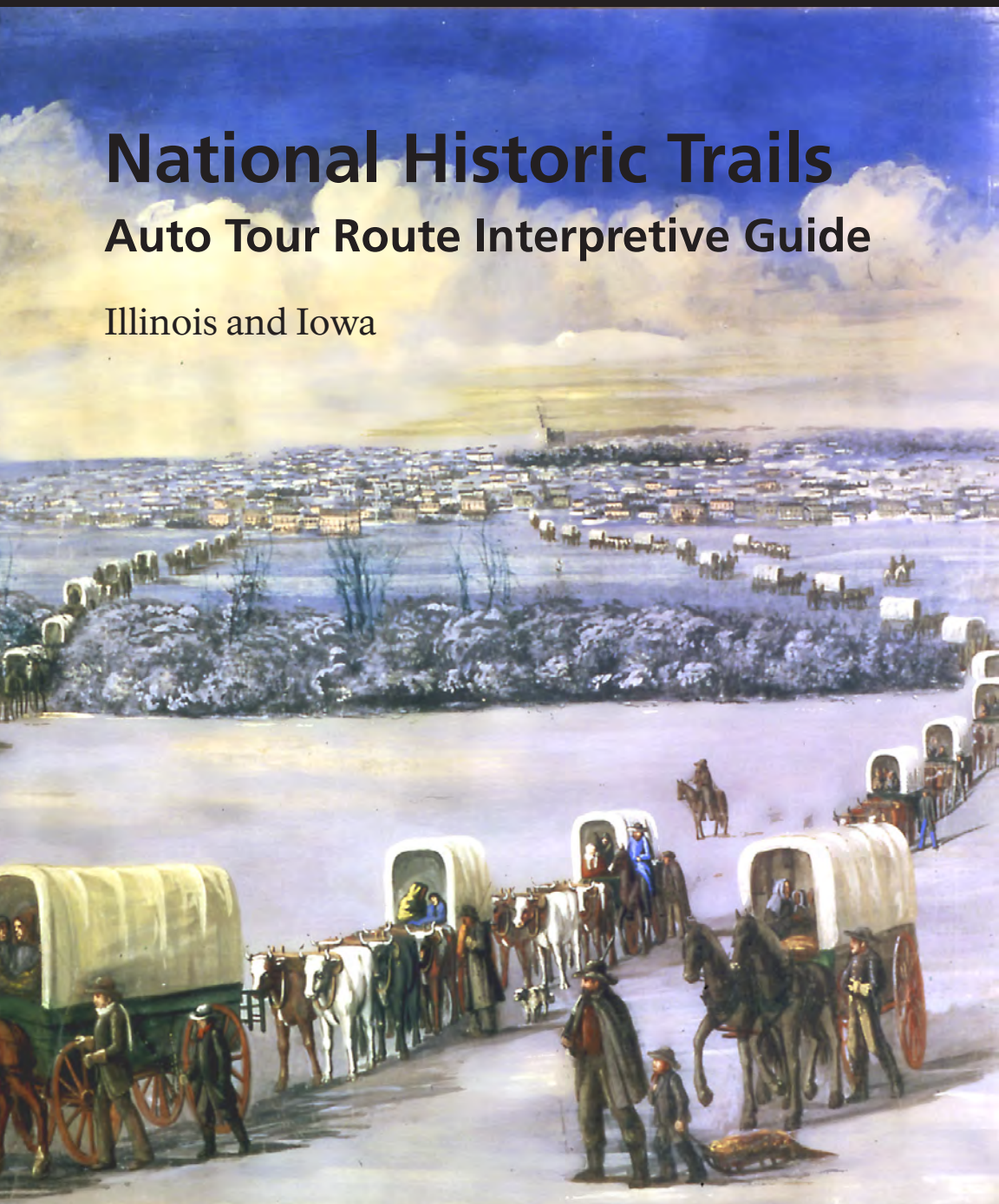




National Historic Trails

Auto Tour Route Interpretive Guide

Illinois and Iowa



Leaving Nauvoo and "Crossing the Mississippi on the Ice," by C. A. Christensen

NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAILS

AUTO TOUR ROUTE INTERPRETIVE GUIDE

Illinois and Iowa on the Mormon Pioneer Trail

Prepared by

National Park Service
National Trails

www.nps.gov/mopi

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Reconstructed Latter-day Saints Temple at Nauvoo, Illinois.

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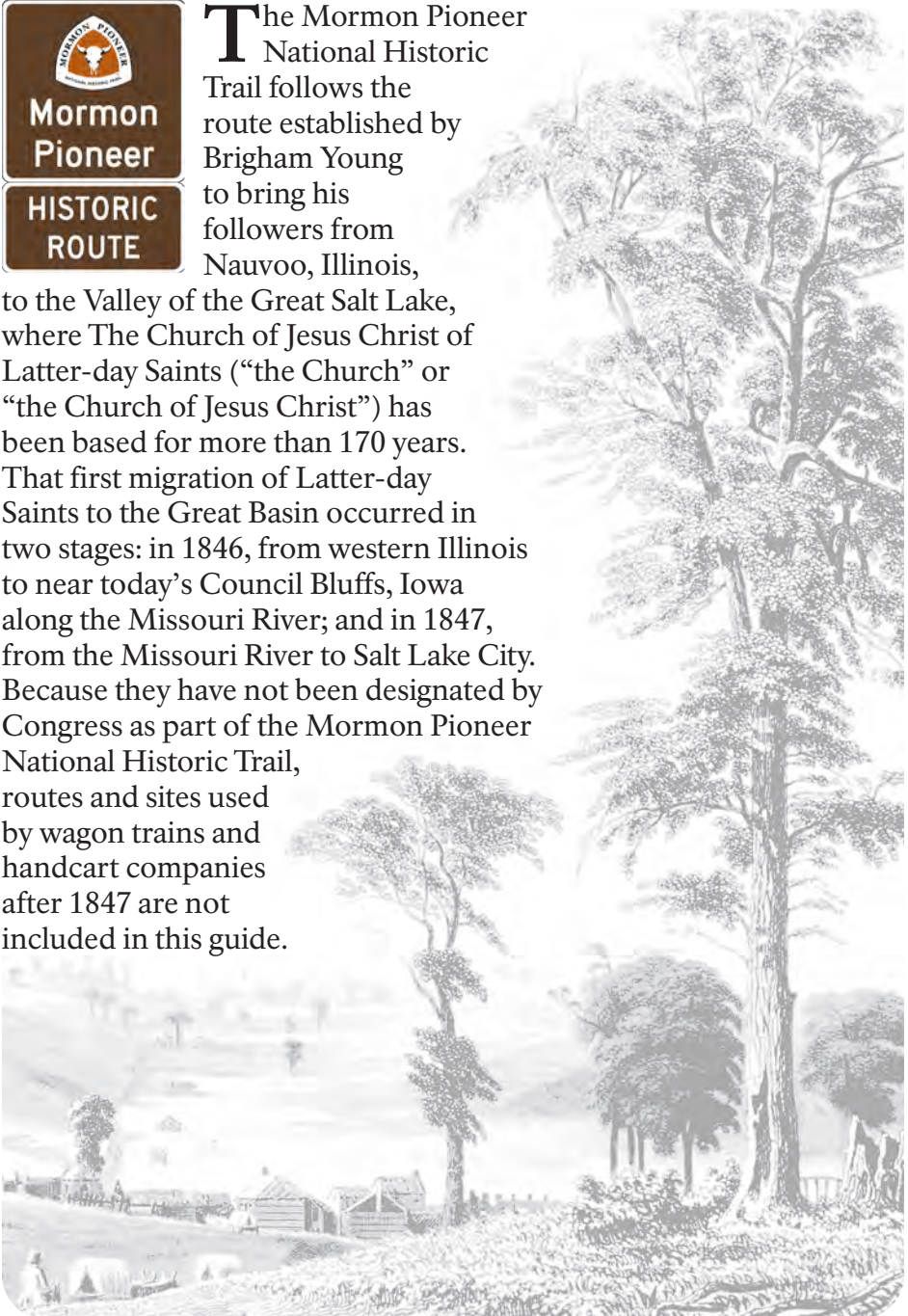
Sarah Granger Kimball home in Nauvoo, Illinois.

INTRODUCTION



The Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail follows the route established by Brigham Young to bring his followers from Nauvoo, Illinois,

to the Valley of the Great Salt Lake, where The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (“the Church” or “the Church of Jesus Christ”) has been based for more than 170 years. That first migration of Latter-day Saints to the Great Basin occurred in two stages: in 1846, from western Illinois to near today’s Council Bluffs, Iowa along the Missouri River; and in 1847, from the Missouri River to Salt Lake City. Because they have not been designated by Congress as part of the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail, routes and sites used by wagon trains and handcart companies after 1847 are not included in this guide.



This Auto Tour Route interpretive guide covers the 1846 segment of Mormon Trail from Illinois through Iowa. Tour stops along or near the route include Historic Nauvoo, original wagon ruts, emigrant camps, and other sites. Site-by-site driving directions to these places of interest are included, and an overview map is located inside the back cover. As you follow the guide, watch for the Historic Route highway signs marking the route of the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail.

Entrance and parking fees may be charged at some locations and hours may vary at the discretion of the managers—you may want to call ahead for current information. Large groups are encouraged to make prior arrangements for tours, where available.

National Park Service interpretive brochures for the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail are available at many trail-related venues, or can be requested by sending an email to ntir_information@nps.gov. Additional information on the Trail can also be found on its website, www.nps.gov/mopi.



Steel engraving of 1855 Nauvoo, Illinois by Herrmann J. Meyer, Library of Congress.

A NEW FAITH

Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Latter-day Saints) practice a unique religion that arose in 1830 from the teachings of the Church's founder, Joseph Smith, Jr. Early converts to the new faith followed their prophet from New York to Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois through the 1830s and 1840s. These first Mormons, the previous name for the Latter-day Saints, were driven from each state by threats and violence.

The reasons for the Latter-day Saints' early troubles still are debated, but religious, political, economic, and social practices all were at issue. Because the Church's beliefs about God and family differed in important ways from mainstream Christianity, they drew criticism and scorn. Because the Latter-day Saints created their own separate towns, religion-based governments, and security forces, their neighbors became uneasy and fearful. Resentment grew as the Church's leaders became involved in local, state, and eventually, national politics. Disagreements led to legal battles and, in cases, violence and retribution. Joseph Smith and his followers were repeatedly forced to move on.



Portrait photo of Joseph Smith, Jr.

...I intend to lay a foundation that will revolutionize the whole world. —Joseph Smith, founder, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Why it is, that so many professing Christianity, and so many professing to reverence the sacred principles of our Constitution (which gives free religious toleration to all), have slandered and persecuted this sect of Christians? —Unknown correspondent, Juliet (Illinois) Courier, June 1841

CLASH OF CULTURES

In 1839, Joseph Smith and his faithful fled Missouri, whose governor had ordered the Latter-day Saints to leave or be exterminated. They found refuge in Illinois, where an advance group of them had prepared a new town site. There, in a horseshoe bend of the Mississippi River, they built up the settlement of Nauvoo, meaning “The Beautiful Place,” and began work on a stately limestone temple.

It was the most beautiful town site that I ever saw. The temple was built on the high ground about the middle of the town plat and was a perfect building, built of cut stone. . . —Hawkins Taylor, Sheriff, Lee County, IA

The Saints impressed their new neighbors with their industry and order, but goodwill soon was eroded by disputes over money, livestock, and politics. Nauvoo’s neighbors warily eyed Joseph Smith’s impressive Nauvoo Legion, a 3,000 to 4,000-man militia that the Illinois state legislature had authorized Nauvoo to form. (County militias were common at that time.) Latter-day Saints were accused of protecting law-breakers and debtors among them; anti-Mormons were accused of kidnapping citizens of Nauvoo to face charges elsewhere. Feelings heated further as a result of doctrinal disagreements within the Church itself, fuelled by whispers that some leaders at Nauvoo were secretly practicing “plural marriage” —polygamy, the marriage of a man to more than one wife.

Tragic events began unfolding in June 1844 when disaffected Latter-day Saints published a newspaper criticizing Joseph Smith. The Nauvoo city council, acting under a new libel ordinance, declared the paper a “public nuisance” and had the Nauvoo Legion destroy the press. Angry free-speech supporters and anti-Mormons accused Smith, who was Nauvoo’s mayor, of ordering the destruction, and demanded his arrest. Authorities charged Joseph Smith with inciting riot and ordered him to appear in court at the county seat of Carthage, about 25 miles southeast of Nauvoo. Fearing violence, Smith briefly fled Nauvoo but went voluntarily to Carthage after the governor of Illinois guaranteed his protection. Joseph, his brother Hyrum, and several other high leaders of the Church were jailed there and placed under the guard of local units of the Illinois State Militia. A few days later, on June 27, a mob of some 200 men —likely with

help from some hostile militia guards— stormed the Carthage jail and murdered Joseph and Hiram Smith.

The brutal shootings shocked the Latter-day Saints settlements, leaving both them and their neighbors fearing more bloodshed. Officials on both sides struggled to keep the peace as rumors flew and fears deepened. During that uneasy time, several followers of Joseph Smith claimed the right to succeed him as the Church's leader. Brigham Young, who was already a senior official and a strong supporter of plural marriage, soon assumed leadership.

Acts of violence sparked now and then over the following year, but serious hostilities flared again in September 1845 when anti-Mormon raiders burned about a hundred homes and several farmsteads. Weary of conflict, Brigham Young promised Illinois state officials that the Latter-day Saints would leave Nauvoo and their outlying farms the following spring.

...[Nearly] all of the old [non-Mormon] citizens are anxious to sell their property, and many of them I have no doubt will move away. There is not only in this village, but all through the country, a strong disinclination to live near the Mormons. —Benjamin F. Morris, American Home Missionary Society, Warsaw, IL, August 21, 1841



Joseph Smith Mansion House in Nauvoo, Illinois.

EXODUS FROM NAUVOO

Over the winter, the stricken Latter-day Saints labored to complete their temple even while preparing to move to some undetermined place beyond the Rocky Mountains. The Church's members gathered money, maps, and supplies, built sturdy wagons, and organized themselves into companies. They planned to begin an orderly, phased emigration of up to 17,000 Mormon pioneers in the spring, but rumors of a coming raid prompted Brigham Young to evacuate the families of the Church's key leaders late in the bitter winter of 1846. Young hoped the early departure of these authorities

Oh wretched murd'ers, fierce for human blood! You've slain the Prophets of the living God, Who've borne oppression from their early youth, To plant on earth the principles of truth. —Eliza Roxcy Snow, poet of the Latter-day Saints and plural wife of Joseph Smith, July 1, 1844



Final resting place of Joseph Smith in Nauvoo, Illinois.

would deflect further attacks on Nauvoo by showing that the Latter-day Saints were serious about leaving in the spring, as promised.

The first wagon train of Mormon pioneers ferried across the Mississippi on February 4 and then camped for nearly a month at nearby Sugar Creek while waiting for Young to conclude business at Nauvoo. During the wait, temperatures dropped further and the river froze. Some from Nauvoo, afraid of being left behind, took advantage of the apparent miracle by crossing the ice to join the advance company, the “Camp of Israel.” Others crossed the river in both directions to retrieve supplies, visit relatives, and conduct business. By the time camp was ready to move, the company had grown to about 2,500 emigrants.

Some 500 wagons in Brigham Young’s Camp of Israel rolled northwestward out of Sugar Creek Camp on Sunday, March 1, 1846, heading across southern Iowa Territory toward the Missouri River. If all went well, they would cross that river by late April, leaving enough time to reach the Rocky Mountains by fall.

Meanwhile, the main body of around 10,000 Mormon pioneers prepared to leave the Nauvoo area in spring, as originally planned. Once the grass was high enough to feed their livestock, they set out in small companies to catch up with the Camp of Israel. This was the second, and largest, emigration from Nauvoo. Over the summer, a few hundred of those who had stayed behind left to join dissident factions of the Church. (Several of those groups merged in 1860 to create the New Organization, later called the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, now named the Community of Christ. This group, which followed Latter-day Saints teaching but opposed polygamy, eventually was led by Joseph Smith III, oldest son of Joseph Smith, Jr. and his widow, Emma.) Other families quietly remained in the area and peacefully continued their lives there.

By early autumn, only about 700 Latter-day Saints remained in once-bustling Nauvoo and nearby settlements. Many of those left behind —too poor, too ill, or too infirm to travel— were driven out by anti-Mormon raiders in September 1846. Some of these refugees found shelter and work in surrounding communities, while others

camped on the Iowa side of the river, in need of food, transportation, and medical help. Several died there, outside of Montrose, Iowa, of hunger, disease, and exposure. Leaders of the Church sent back three rescue wagon trains to move these people to places where they could spend the winter safely. Theirs was the third and final Mormon pioneer emigration from Nauvoo.

As they started West, many emigrants looked back across the river for a last glimpse of Joseph Smith's shining, white temple. At a public dedication on May 1, shortly before the main body of Mormon pioneers left Nauvoo, the people had prayed that the temple would stand as a monument to their prophet. Despite the prayers, an arson fire destroyed the abandoned structure in 1848 and a tornado knocked down some of its remaining walls two years later. By then, the Latter-day Saints would be planning a new temple and building their greatest tribute to Joseph Smith: a Mormon Zion in the Valley of the Great Salt Lake, in present-day Utah.



Painting of Nauvoo Temple by C.A. Christensen.

We all halted & took a farewell view of our delightful City. . . . We also beheld the magnificent Temple rearing its lofty tower towards the heavens. . . . we also took a farewell look of our Comfortable homes we had labored so hard to rear for the Comfort of our families. . . . my heart did swell within me. — Newel Knight, Nauvoo, April 24, 1846

Great injustice inflicted by a lawless and irresponsible mob. Can these things be done in a republic and not be rebuked by an efficient expression of public sentiment? — Bloomington (IL) Herald, October 30, 1846

WINTER RETREAT ACROSS IOWA

In February 1846, the first party of emigrants faced nearly 300 miles of winter-bare prairie stretching between Nauvoo and the Missouri River gateway to the Oregon Trail. Those who left Nauvoo in a panic were poorly equipped for the trek, and few carried enough feed for their draft animals. Lacking spring grasses along the established roads, Young's company traveled poorer tracks close to the Missouri border in order to trade with the Missouri settlements for livestock feed and supplies. Bad weather made travel more difficult. As rain set

The great body of [Mormons] removed voluntarily, but a small remnant of them were barbarously expelled with force, and in a manner which reflects but little credit on the state or its institutions. —
Illinois Governor Thomas Ford, December 7, 1846



*Mormon
Pioneer
National
Historic Trail
through Garden
Grove Historic
Site, Iowa.*

in and the ground thawed, narrow wagon wheels mired axle-deep, bringing wagons to a halt. Families waited miserably in camp as the men fanned out across the lightly settled territory to work for food and pay, and trade teams crossed cautiously into unfriendly Missouri for needed supplies. The Camp of Israel spent a month crossing the first 100 miles, a distance that should have taken but 10 days.

The emigrants comforted and helped each other: those who had food, bedding, and shelter shared with those who had none; those with musical or literary talent tried to cheer and inspire the camp. Their hardships brought the people together, forging their faith, group identity, and sense of destiny. The spirit of these Mormon pioneers rings in the lyrics of their now-famous anthem, “Come, Come, Ye Saints,” written one miserable, muddy night in south-central Iowa by emigrant William Clayton, in honor of the birth of his son.

Come, come, ye Saints, no toil nor labor fear; But with joy wend your way. Though hard to you this journey may appear, Grace shall be as your day....All is well! All is well! —
William Clayton, author of *Come, Come, Ye Saints*, April 13, 1846

A large portion of our journey in Iowa seemed to me to be a continuous mud hole. —Benjamin Critchlow, autobiographical account of the 1846 Mormon emigration



Grass marks the location of former cabins at Garden Grove, Iowa.

PLACES TO PAUSE, TO REST...TO DIE

Two months of battling mud and mishaps on their slow journey across the first half of Iowa, exhausted the Camp of Israel, depleted its food supplies, and threatened to unravel Brigham Young's loose-knit plan to reach the Rocky Mountains that summer. Many emigrants were too ill or too poorly equipped to continue west. The Church's leaders worried, also, for the thousands of faithful who followed.

The vanguard wagon train stopped far short of the Missouri River on April 19 to build a temporary way station called Garden Grove. Almost overnight, the Mormon pioneers dug wells, built houses, bridges, and fences, plowed and planted. Several hundred of them settled in to rest, heal, and prepare for the final push to the Rockies. If their crops were successful, they would also help feed the later Nauvoo wagon companies that would soon be arriving. Garden Grove was good farming country, but it was infested with rattlesnakes. It was not the entire solution to their problems. The main body of the company rolled on.

On May 16, a scout selected a beautiful site that he named Mt. Pisgah, after the hilltop from which Moses looked upon the chosen land. The Mormon pioneers built more cabins and dugouts there, and they plowed and planted a thousand acres of prairie. At least 200 emigrants stayed there, and the population grew to about 700 as

This was a great place for rattlesnakes. Either an ox or a horse came up almost every night with a swelled head, etc. I became very much dissatisfied with this place, and it seemed as though I could not tarry there under any consideration. —Ezra Benson, autobiographical account, Garden Grove, Iowa, 1846

[My son] died in my arms about four o'clock....He died with the hooping cough & black canker [scurvy]... We are entirely destitute of any thing even to eat much less to nourish the sick. —Hosea Stout, Garden Grove, Iowa, May 8, 1846

later arrivals joined them over the summer. Despite the beauty of its setting and the promise of its name, however, Mt. Pisgah was a place of sorrow. Several score of people, forced from their homes and weakened by exposure, exhaustion, and poor nutrition, would die there over the coming months.

Meanwhile, the bulk of the Camp of Israel moved on once more, finally reaching the Missouri River Valley on June 14, 1846—too late for even a “swift company” to start across the Great Plains and over the mountains. On the Iowa side of the river they established a “Grand Encampment,” which continued to receive oncoming emigrants throughout the summer. By winter, some 2,500 emigrants would be settled into make-do shelters along the east bank of the Missouri River. Thousands more fanned out from the Grand Encampment, ultimately establishing over 90 cluster settlements within a 40-mile radius of Council Bluffs.

In return for sending 500 men (the Mormon Battalion) to serve in the recently declared US war against Mexico, Brigham Young received



“Kanesville” Mormon pioneer settlement on the banks of the Missouri River (present-day Council Bluffs). Courtesy of the Utah State Historical Society.

permission from the federal government to camp on Indian lands west of the river, as well. Many Mormon pioneers crossed over to Nebraska, built more temporary towns, and settled in for the winter “on the edge of the wilderness.” By December, the largest community, called Winter Quarters, consisted of about 540 cabins, dugouts, and shanties, home to nearly 4,000 people.

At Mt. Pisgah, Garden Grove, Winter Quarters, the Grand Encampment, and other scattered settlements, hundreds of emigrant men, women, and children died that sad winter. All told, more than 700 perished of exposure, malnutrition, scurvy, tuberculosis, pneumonia, malaria, and other diseases during the winter and spring of 1846-47.

The shaking ague fastened deathless fangs upon me. . . I shook till it appeared my very bones were pulverized. I wept, I prayed, I besought the Lord to have mercy on me. —Louisa Barnes Pratt, Cold Springs encampment near Winter Quarters, 1846



*"Winter Quarters" on the banks of the Missouri River, by C.A. Christensen.
Courtesy of the Brigham Young University Museum of Art.*

The Mormon Pioneers' hope for a new Zion could have died there, as well—but it did not. Under Brigham Young's encouragement and leadership, the survivors soon would pick up their feet and begin the second half of their journey to the Valley of the Great Salt Lake.

There are times and places in the life of every nation when great spiritual heights are reached, when courage becomes a living thing, when faith in God stands as the granite mountain wall—firm and immovable—while hardships, want, hunger, sickness, sorrow, and death beat down to crush. Winter Quarters was such a time and place for the Mormon people. —Heber J. Grant, President, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, September 20, 1936



Mormon pioneer graves at Richardson's Point.

And at [Mt. Pisgah] we had many testimonies that the Lord had not forsaken us, and that He was mindful of His people who put their trust in Him. —Sarah Rich, autobiographical account of 1846 emigration

*There was great want of bread in camp, so that we were oppressed on every hand, but we cried to the Lord, who heard our prayers, and we were fed by his all-bountiful hands. . .
—Allen Stout, Garden Grove, Iowa, April 3, 1846*

*Scarcely a family escaped sickness and very few where death did not make an inroad. A general spirit of lamentation and sorrow pervaded Pisgah.
—Lorenzo Snow, Mt. Pisgah, Iowa, 1846*

A FAR-REACHING IMPACT

Brigham Young and many of his followers left their Missouri River prairie settlements for the arid expanses of the Great Basin in the spring of 1847. There, the Mormon pioneers hoped they would be out of the reach of old enemies. Young and a small advance party of emigrants and scouts arrived in the Valley of the Great Salt Lake in late July 1847. The main body of Nauvoo emigrants, including many who had wintered at Garden Grove and Mt. Pisgah, soon followed their trail into the valley to begin new lives in an unfamiliar land of desert, mountains, and salt flats.

The historic “Gathering to Zion” that began in 1846 continued via Brigham Young’s original route and other trails, from many points of departure and by various means—including handcart brigades—until the transcontinental railroad was completed in 1869. Altogether, the Mormon pioneer wagon trains and handcart brigades were the greatest organized movement of people across the American West in the entire emigration era—an emigration based on the deeply held American principle of freedom of religion. Other emigrants traveling to California and Oregon also used the roads, bridges, ferries, settlements, and trading posts established by the pioneers on their way to Utah. Under the Church’s direction, Latter-day Saints settled throughout the Southwest and Intermountain West. The journals, letters, sketches, and photographs they created to document their experiences across that vast region remain invaluable to historians. Their stories continue to inspire and fascinate. Today, Latter-day Saints are recognized participants in national politics, international economies, and the global community.

Clearly, the Mormon pioneer exodus to Utah was not a mere footnote in the history of the American West. It is an integral part of the American story.

SITES AND POINTS OF INTEREST

NAUVOO, ILLINOIS TO COUNCIL BLUFFS, IOWA

The Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail begins at Nauvoo, Illinois, and ends at Salt Lake City, Utah. This guide follows only the route taken across Iowa by the 1846 Nauvoo emigrant company led by Brigham Young. Routes and sites used later by Latter-day Saint emigrant wagon trains and handcart companies, are not included in this guide because they have not yet been added to the congressionally authorized Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail.

Begin this segment of your trip at Nauvoo, Illinois, and follow the trail west toward Council Bluffs, Iowa. The driving directions below, along with Auto Tour Route signs along the major highways, will help you along the route.

Please respect private property by staying in public areas, and help protect our national heritage by leaving all historic sites undisturbed.



Grounds of Historic Nauvoo Visitors' Center.

1. Nauvoo National Historic Landmark (Nauvoo, Illinois) is the historic town site of old Nauvoo, established in 1839 by followers of Joseph Smith. The Nauvoo Temple, destroyed shortly after the Mormon pioneer exodus, was rebuilt on-site and re-dedicated in 2002. The temple is not open to the public, but tours of the historic district, with 25 historic homes, businesses, visitor centers, and demonstration sites, are available free to all visitors.

Attractions at the Joseph Smith Historic Center (operated by the Community of Christ)

include the Joseph Smith Homestead and Mansion House, a reconstruction of his Red Brick Store, and the Smith Family Cemetery, where Joseph and many of his family members are buried. Tours start at the Joseph Smith Historic Site Visitor Center; orientation and exhibits are



Browning Home and Gunsmith in Nauvoo.

available there, as well. Attractions are open March through October. Admission to the visitor center, site orientation video, museum exhibits, and museum stores is free. There is a modest fee for the guided tour of the Smith homes. Visit www.cofchrist.org/tour-nauvoo for hours and information.

The Nauvoo Visitor's Center (operated by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) offers site orientation and historical information, theatrical performances, and exhibits. It is open daily year-round, but hours vary seasonally. Other attractions include the Brigham Young Home, the reconstructed Nauvoo Temple, the Trail of Hope interpretive walk, plays and musical programs, ox-drawn wagon rides, carriage rides, and horse-drawn wagon tours of historic Nauvoo. All except the temple interior are open to the general public. Some activities require reservations, but all are free. Historic sites are open year-round, but some activities are available only seasonally. Go to www.historicnauvoo.net to plan your visit.

Location: Nauvoo, Illinois, is the trailhead of the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail. It is located on the east bank of the Mississippi River, across from the southeastern-most

corner of Iowa. To arrive at the main historic district, follow IL-96/Mullholland Street west through the town's business district and past the temple. Where the paved highway makes a sharp bend to the left, leave the pavement and continue straight on the gravel street toward the river, then turn left on Main Street. Maps to specific historic attractions are available at local guest establishments and the Church's visitor centers.

2. Nauvoo Landing (Nauvoo, Illinois), at the foot of Parley Street on the riverfront, is one of the eastern departure points from Nauvoo where emigrants lined up their wagons to be ferried across the Mississippi River in February 1846. Later that month, during several days of freezing weather, a few



Nauvoo Landing.

hundred people drove their wagons across the ice from this location. Nearby is a memorial naming those who died on the Mormon Trail.

Directions: Take IL-96/Mullholland Street west toward the river, through the town's business district. Follow the paved highway where it makes a sharp turn to the left (south). Continue south on IL-96 for 6 blocks to Parley Street. Turn right and drive to the riverfront.

3. Nauvoo State Park and Museum (Nauvoo, IL) is the location of Nauvoo's first vineyard, which began producing grapes in the mid-1800s. The park features an 1840s-era house with museum exhibits, wine cellar, and press room, an 13-acre lake, camping, hiking, fishing, and other outdoor activities. Free.



Nauvoo State Park & Museum.

Directions: Take IL-96/Mullholland Street west toward the river and through the town's business district. Follow the paved

highway where it makes a sharp turn to the left (south). Follow IL-96 for 4 blocks and turn left onto a gravel road leading into the park, then continue for approximately 0.15 mile to the vineyard and museum on the right side of the road.

4. Carthage Jail & Visitor Center (307 Walnut St., Carthage, IL)

Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum lost their lives here on June 27, 1844. The jail and visitor center may be viewed by the public year-round. Hours vary seasonally. Free guided tours available.

Directions: From Nauvoo, take IL-96 southward along the Mississippi River for approximately 10 miles to Hamilton. Turn left (east) onto US-136 (E County Road 1350) and continue another 12 miles to Carthage. Turn right on North Fayette Street and follow directional signs to the jail at the corner of Walnut and North Fayette streets.



Carthage Jail.

5. Riverview Park (Chestnut

Street, Montrose, Iowa) is the location of old Fort Des Moines, and the initial place Latter-day Saints settled in Iowa while creating Nauvoo across the river. Because the fort had been abandoned before Brigham Young and others arrived in early 1839, numerous families, including that of Young, temporarily took shelter in the vacant barracks. Here, Joseph Smith performed faith healing and predicted that his Latter-day Saints one day would gather in the Rocky Mountains. Here, too, Smith hid from hostile anti-Mormons shortly before his arrest and murder. At the river's edge is Montrose Landing, where emigrants came to shore after leaving Nauvoo in 1846. Open dawn to dusk.

Directions: From Nauvoo, follow IL-96 east then north for 9 miles to Niota. Turn left onto IL-96, a toll bridge (fare is collected when crossing east to west only; no fare for crossing west to east) over the river. On the Iowa side, look for Business US-61. Enter Fort Madison and turn left on Business US-61, paralleling the railroad, and continue 1.8 miles. Business US-

61 takes a left then a right jog. Continue on Business US-61 to US-61. Cross over it, turn left, and merge onto southbound US-61. Continue south for 5.8 miles. Upon passing 280th Street to the left, slow and watch for a left turn onto Mississippi Road, which parallels the river.

Turn there and continue south on Mississippi road into Montrose. The road becomes First Street. Turn left onto Main Street, cross the railroad tracks, and enter Riverview Park. The wayside is near the flagpole at the end of the park.



View of Nauvoo from Riverview Park.

6. Sugar Creek (near Montrose, Iowa) is the staging ground where the first group of emigrants gathered and waited for Brigham Young while preparing for their journey west. The main camp was east of the creek; later, the company also camped briefly on the west side. They departed Sugar Creek on March 1, 1846. The site is on privately owned land 6 miles west of Montrose in the vicinity of the bridge. No traces of the original camp are visible and no on-site interpretation is provided. Please view from the road. Do not enter property without owner's permission.

Directions: From the wayside exhibits at Riverview Park in Montrose, return to cross the railroad tracks and continue to the four-way stop. Go straight (southwest) on Main Street. At the west edge of Montrose, Main Street becomes J-72. Where J-72 intersects US-61, you can stay on primary roads or follow an unsigned gravel road for a short distance along the actual route traveled by the emigrants.

To stay on primary roads, turn left (south) on US-61 and follow it to its junction with US-218. Turn right and drive northward on US-218. Turn left (west) onto J-72/300th Street and continue for 2.9 miles to the unsigned bridge that crosses Sugar Creek.

To follow a portion of the original route between US-61 and US-218, cross US-61 and continue west on 300th Street (unpaved and

unsigned at this location) for approximately 0.4 mile. As you near the top of the ridge, stop and look back for a glimpse of the Nauvoo Temple—this was the emigrants' last view of home as they headed west. Continue to the junction, turn right (north) onto US-218, and drive 0.10 mile to county road J-72, the next road to your left. Turn left (west) on J-72/300th Street and continue for 2.9 miles to the unsigned bridge over Sugar Creek.



Sugar Creek.

7. Des Moines River Ford (Bonaparte, Iowa). Some emigrants who crossed the Des Moines River here on March 5, 1846, took note of the “splendid Mill” at the village of Bonaparte. The mill is now part of the Bonaparte Historic Riverfront District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Tours of the district are available. No set visiting hours.



Bonaparte - Riverfront Park.

Directions: From Sugar Creek, go west on county road J-72, then turn right (north) on IA-27 and continue about 8 miles toward Donnellson. On approaching town, IA-27 merges with US-218. Take Exit 19 to Donnellson.

At the end of the exit, turn left (west) onto IA-2/

Madison Street and drive west for 10.5 miles to Farmington. In Farmington, follow IA-2 to the intersection of Olive Street. Turn right on Olive Street/W46. Follow Olive eastward across 6th and 7th streets. Olive Street continues as County Road W-46 heading north and becomes 100th Avenue. Drive north and cross 185th Street; continue north to the junction with county road J-40. Turn left (west) on J-40 and continue to its intersection with county road W-40. Turn left (south) and

drive into Bonaparte. In town, the road becomes Washington Street. Turn right at First Street and enter the historic district. Continue through town to view wayside exhibits at the riverfront park on the left.



Bonaparte - Des Moines River Crossing.

8. Bentonsport National Historic District (Bentonsport, Iowa) boasts a number of buildings said to have been built by Nauvoo refugees who stopped and labored to earn money for their trip westward. One of these buildings is the Mason House Inn, which retains its original 19th century furnishings. Tours of the inn and a self-guided walking tour of the district are available; no set visiting hours. Shop hours are seasonal.

Directions: From Bonaparte, go west on First Street/J-40 and follow J-40 about 4 miles to Bentonsport. Upon approaching the village, turn left and follow signs to the riverfront historic district.



Mason House, Bentonsport Historic District.

9. Van Buren County Courthouse (406 Dodge Street, Keosauqua, Iowa) is one of several places along the route where the Nauvoo Militia Band (also called Pitt's Brass Band), traveling with Brigham Young's company, performed in exchange for supplies and money to support the emigrants. The original courthouse is the nation's second oldest courthouse still in use. It is open free to the public during business hours, and tours may be available when court is not in session.

Directions: Watch for horse-drawn vehicles! Go back to J-40 west out of Bentonsport and follow it south across the Des Moines River. Continue on J-40 west to its intersection with IA-1. Turn right (north) and cross the river again into Keosauqua.

Turn right (northeast) onto Broad Street/IA-1 and follow it 3 blocks to Dodge Street. Turn left on Dodge Street and then right on 4th Street to the rear of the courthouse. The exhibit is on 4th Street by the old courthouse.



Van Buren County Courthouse.

10. Richardson's Point

(Van Buren County, Iowa). While the brass band raised money in Keosauqua, the rest of the company was bogged down at Richardson's Point, where they waited miserably from March 7-18 for the road to become passable. Some of the first deaths of the emigration occurred at this location, just 35 miles from Nauvoo. The graves of an emigrant man and a 15-month-old child are here. The site is open to the public courtesy of the landowner. Please respect private property by staying on the trail.

Directions: Watch for horse-drawn vehicles! From behind the courthouse on 4th Street in Keosauqua, turn right, back to Broad Street/IA-1. Turn left onto Broad Street/IA-1 and continue to Franklin Street, 0.3 miles from the courthouse. Turn left on Franklin, which becomes county road J-40. Follow J-40 west across the Des Moines River for 8 miles to Chequest. Cross V64 and continue west for 4 miles. The entrance at Richardson's Point is a signed farm lane on the right. Keep right at the fork in the lane. Park in the marked area and follow the footpath to the graves.



Richardson's Point.

11. Drakesville Park (Drakesville, Iowa). Brigham Young's company turned south here toward Missouri, where they could buy supplies and feed. Later emigrant parties from Nauvoo left the original trail

to stay on higher ground and avoid the mud. A wayside exhibit interprets the location and a historic cabin can be seen at another location in town.

Directions: Continue west on J-40 from Richardson's Point to US-63 in Bloomfield. Turn right (north) onto South Washington Street/US-63 and continue out of Bloomfield for 3.3 miles. Turn left (west) on 180th Street and continue 4.3 miles to Drakesville. At the east edge of the village, turn right (north) onto Madison Street. The log cabin is a few blocks north. Return to Main Street and turn right (west). The exhibit is in the center part of the divided street.



Drakesville Park.

12. Chariton River Crossing and Campsite (South of Exline in Appanoose County, Iowa). After a very difficult crossing of the Chariton River near this location, the Mormon pioneers again made camp to wait out the worst of a storm. From here, travel grew increasingly rough as territorial roads and rough trails dwindled and disappeared altogether. Please view from the road. Do not enter property without owner's permission.



Chariton River Crossing & Campsite.

Directions: Portions of the route to this site are unpaved and unsigned. To stay on the paved designated Auto Tour Route, proceed directly to Corydon.

Otherwise, continue west through Drakesville

and turn left (south) onto South Washington Street, just past the divided Main Street. Continue south (the road becomes Ice Avenue) for 3.7 miles to its intersection with US-63/IA-2. Turn right (west) on IA-2 and drive 20.7 miles

to Centerville. Turn left (south) onto IA-5/18th Street and continue for 5.4 miles to T-30. Turn left (east) and drive 1 mile toward the village of Exline.

As it approaches Exline, the road turns south and forks. Follow T-30 as it jogs left (east) into Exline, and continue through the village to the church and cemetery at East 2nd Street. Turn right (south) on 2nd Street and drive 1 mile south to 580th Street. Turn left (east) onto 580th Street (unpaved) and drive 1.6 miles. The road splits: go right (south) on 251st Street for 0.25 mile. Turn left (east) and follow 582nd Street 2.6 miles to 269th Avenue. Turn right (south) and follow 269th Avenue 0.3 mile to the pullout and wayside exhibits. From there, visitors can follow a walking trail to the river crossing, which is 0.3 mile beyond the pullout on the left side of the road. Watch for poison ivy. Return to Centerville to continue on the Auto Tour Route.

13. Prairie Trails Museum (515 E. Jefferson Street, IA-2 East, Corydon, Iowa) features an excellent Mormon Trail exhibit. The museum is open mid-May to mid-October. Closed on Mondays. A modest admission is charged. Inquire here for map to Locust Creek Campsite.



Prairie Trails Museum.

Directions: From Centerville, drive west on IA-2 for 23.7 miles to Corydon. The museum is located in the east side of the town, on the north side of the highway.

14. Locust Creek Campsite (Southwest of Seymour, Wayne County, Iowa). At this campsite on April 15, 1846, William Clayton wrote the lyrics to the inspirational Latter-day Saint's anthem, "Come, Come, Ye Saints." The event is interpreted at the Prairie Trails Museum in Corydon and a wayside exhibit located at the actual campsite, which is now an agricultural field. No remnants of camp use are visible. Prairie Trails Museum provides maps to the site.

Directions: Portions of the route to this site, located near the Tharp Cemetery, are unpaved and unsigned. To stay on the paved portion, proceed directly to Garden Grove. Otherwise, backtrack east from Corydon on IA-2 for 2 miles. Turn right (south) on S-40 and drive approximately 5 miles to J-46. Turn left (east) and continue 5 miles to 210th Street. Turn right, following the sign to Tharp Cemetery. Go 2.7 miles as the road curves east and south again to the cemetery. Locust Creek Campsite was along the ridge west of the cemetery, (which is unrelated to the Mormon pioneer emigration) and south of the creek. Return to Corydon to continue the trail tour.



Tharp Cemetery and interpretive exhibit for the Locust Creek Campsite.

15. Garden Grove Historic Site (Garden Grove, Iowa) served as an emigrant way-station for the Church until May 1851. Outlines of cabin walls are visible in the grass and a pioneer cemetery is located nearby. Wayside exhibits interpret the site. The fenced area, owned by the County Conservation Board, is open to visitors and tour groups. Watch for poison ivy!



Garden Grove Historic Site.

Directions: From Corydon, drive west on IA-2 for 14.4 miles. Turn right on R-69 toward Garden Grove and drive for 4.5 miles. Turn left (west) on J-20 and continue through the modern village of Garden Grove, past the water tower. On the west side of town, do not follow J-20 where it turns south; instead, stay right (heading west) on the Mormon Trail Road (unpaved) for approximately 0.5 mile. The site, on the right, is well marked. To reach the cemetery, walk or drive west 0.1 mile to the fenced

memorial at Decatur County Trailside Historical Park, which commemorates those who died at Garden Grove.

16. Seven-Mile Creek Campsite (Murray, Iowa). The swale of the original wagon road crosses this privately owned pasture land outside of Murray. The property owner has provided a viewing platform with interpretive information for visitors. Please view from the platform. Do not enter property without owner's permission.

Directions: From Garden Grove Historic Site, return to J-20 and turn right (south). Drive about 7.5 miles and turn right onto US-69. Drive north 15 miles to Osceola. Turn left (west) on McClain Street/US-34 and drive 9.7 miles to R-15/130th Avenue, the western of two entry streets into Murray. Drive 1 mile north and turn left (west) onto Kansas Street. Follow Kansas Street (unpaved) for 2.3 miles. The site, on the left, is well marked and has a roadside viewing stand.



Seven-Mile Creek Viewing Platform.

17. Mount Pisgah Historic Site (near Thayer, Union County, Iowa). The sufferings and sorrows afflicting Mount Pisgah, a village established by the Camp of Israel in May 1846, tested the faith of the emigrants. The site is now a mix of privately and publicly owned lands. The county park area has wayside exhibits, historical markers, a monument, and a pioneer cemetery. Much of the village site itself is located on adjacent private pasture lands, which the owner opens to interested visitors and tour groups. Traces of wagon roads and outlines building footings are visible in places. Watch for poison ivy!

Directions: Take US-34 west through the community of Thayer and turn right on US-169. Drive two miles. If approaching from the west, do not turn onto any gravel or dirt road. Turn north at US-169. GPS may suggest other routes. Do not follow them or your vehicle may become stuck. Follow signs to Mount Pisgah. The farm road splits in two locations. Bear left on the gravel road to the Mt. Pisgah site, a Union

County Conservation Park. Please drive slowly upon approaching the site, as the road passes through a private farmyard.

18. Pote Farm Ruts (1285 290th St., Bridgewater, Iowa).

Mormon Trail wagon ruts, among the few still existing in Iowa, are deeply eroded and visible in a pasture one mile south-southwest of Mormon Lake. Please view from road. Do not enter property without owner's permission.

Directions: Return to US-34 and drive 13 miles west toward Creston. Before reaching town, turn right (north) onto Osage Street. In 1.25 mile, turn left (west) onto 160th Street/Townline Road and drive 1 mile. Turn right (north) onto N. Cherry Street and drive 9 miles. Turn left (west) onto 310th street and continue for 15.8 miles. Turn right onto Bridgewater Road and drive 2.1 miles, then turn right (east) onto 290th Street/G-53 (unpaved) for 1.1 miles. Watch for a wooden Mormon Trail sign. The ruts are in a pasture on the north (left) side of the road, about 0.25 mile west of the nearby farmhouse. (Park along the road; do not block driveway.) The ruts run east/west and are visible from the road. After your visit, turn around and drive west on 290th Street/G-53 to Bridgewater Road, turn right (north), and continue through town to IA-92.



Mount Pisgah Historic Site.



Pote Farm Ruts.

19. East Nishnabotna River Crossing (Lewis, Iowa). The crossing of the East Nishnabotna River was the farthest north the Mormon pioneer companies traveled in Iowa. Spring 1846 was very rainy and streams ran high, requiring them to find a suitable place to ford this

formidable river. The original crossing was a mile or two farther south, but the Lewis crossing soon became the preferred route. It was used by seven Latter-day Saint handcart companies who set out from Iowa City in 1856-1857. Here, visit the home of Samuel Harlow Tefft, who operated the ferry in 1857-1859. The river at the time ran close to the home, but it was rechanneled in the 1920s. Although the house post-dates the 1846 Mormon pioneer exodus from Nauvoo, it is a good place to envision the river crossing experience.

Directions: From Bridgewater, take IA-92 west about 16 miles to US-71. Turn left (south) on IA-92/US-71 and drive approximately 2 miles. Turn right (west) and travel west on IA-92 for about 8 miles to the town of Griswold. Turn right (north) onto IA-48 and drive 3 miles, then turn right (east) on M-56 and follow it east, then north, through the town of Lewis, approximately 5 miles. Turn left (west) on Minnesota Street (at the north end of town) and drive 0.25 mile (crossing onto unpaved road) to the entrance on the right (north) side of the road. The house is the first building to the right, nearest the road. An interpretive wayside exhibit tells the story.

20. West Nishnabotna River Crossing (Old Towne Park, Macedonia, Iowa). This site is an undeveloped park with a wayside exhibit; the original Mormon pioneer bridge over the river no longer exists.

Directions: From Lewis, retrace your route to IA-92 at Griswold. Turn right (west) onto IA-92 and drive about 14 miles to US-59/G-60. Turn left (south) on US-59, then right (west) onto county road G-66. Continue another 2 miles through Macedonia to Old Towne Park. The exhibit is on the right side of the road, before the river crossing.



The tree lined Nishnabotna River is at the end of main street in Macedonia

21. The Grand Encampment (Iowa School for the Deaf, 3501 Harry Langdon Blvd., Council Bluffs, Iowa) was the primary Missouri River encampment in 1846. Stretching out over 9 miles,

the encampment was a temporary home to thousands of Mormon pioneers. Several markers and wayside exhibits at the Iowa School for the Deaf commemorate and interpret the camp.

Directions: From

Macedonia, head west on Main Street/County Road G-66 for 1.1 mile to M-16/370th

St. Turn right (north) toward US-92 for approximately 2.6 miles. There, take IA-92 left (west) for 18 miles to Harry Langdon Boulevard. Turn left (southeast) onto Harry Langdon Boulevard for 0.1 mile, then left again (northeast) into the Iowa School for the Deaf entrance. Keep to the left and park in the multipurpose complex parking lot. Follow the nature trail to view exhibits.



The Grand Encampment.

22. Western Historic Trails Center (South 24th Street, Council Bluffs, Iowa) provides exhibits and interpretive information for the Mormon Pioneer, Oregon, California, and Lewis and Clark National Historic Trails. Open year-round, but hours vary seasonally. Check website for details. Free.

Directions: Exiting the Iowa School for the Deaf, turn right (northwest) on Harry Langdon Boulevard. Turn left (southwest) onto IA-92 West/US-275 West and drive 3.2 miles to South 24th Street. Turn right (north) and continue 0.8 mile to the center entrance, which is on the left immediately before the on-ramp to the interstate highway. Look for a flagpole and rock wall with entrance sign.



Western Historic Trails Center.

23. Kanesville Tabernacle & Visitor Center (222 E. Broadway, Council Bluffs, Iowa). Kanesville, which served as a Latter-day

Saints emigration hub for several years, was an early name for the community that later became Council Bluffs. The building exhibited here is a reconstruction of the tabernacle in which Brigham Young was sustained as the Church president in 1847. The tabernacle and visitor center are facilities operated by the Church, open daily (including Sundays) year-round. Free.

Directions: In 2019, major highway realignment started in Council Bluffs. So, exit numbers, street names, and directions could change from those provided here. From the Western Historic Trails Center, turn left (north) onto South 24th Street and merge onto I-80 eastbound. Drive east 1 mile and take the exit for IA-192 North (South Expressway) toward the Council Bluffs business district. Continue north for 2 miles. Turn right (east) onto West Broadway (which becomes East Broadway) and continue for about 0.5 mile to Benton Street. Turn left onto Benton Street and then turn right into the parking lot at the tabernacle site.



Kanesville Tabernacle.

Additional sites relating to the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail can be visited in nearby Omaha, Nebraska.

The Mormon Trail Center (at historic Winter Quarters), 3215 State Street in Omaha, is a great first place for continuing your Trail journey across Nebraska. To get there, drive north on I-29 to I-680 West (Exit 61B) toward North Omaha. Drive 3.4 miles and leave the highway at Exit 13, to 30th Street/Eppeley Airfield. Turn left onto North 31st Street, pass under I-680, and continue straight onto U.S.-75 South. Turn right onto State Street and continue two blocks to the Center.

The Auto Tour Route guide for national historic trails in Nebraska, and other states, are available at local, regional, and state visitor and interpretive centers; travel and tourism centers; and museums. They can also be downloaded in Adobe PDF document format from the website listed on the title page.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

National Trails

ntir_information@nps.gov

Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail

www.nps.gov/mopi

Iowa Tourism

www.traveliowa.com

Mormon Trails Association

www.mormontrails.org

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REGIONAL NAT. HISTORIC TRAIL MAP

INSTRUCTIONS ONLY!

This space is for a small pocket and a folded map. The pocket is to be glued to the inside back cover in this location. The map is to be folded to fit within this pocket with approximately 1/2 inch of it extending above the opening of the pocket.

National Trails System
National Park Service
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