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## Mormon Trail, The

William Hill

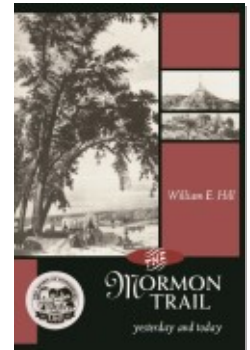
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# Illinois



**NAUVOO WELCOME CENTER (LDS)**

Both the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints have visitor centers in Nauvoo. Both have been active in restoring

new life to old Nauvoo. Each center has fine displays and programs and should be visited. Many of the restored pioneer shops and homes are located near them.



**JOSEPH SMITH HISTORIC CENTER (RLDS)**



**NAUVOO—From Piercy’s *Route from  
Liverpool to Great Salt Lake Valley***

The Mormon exodus from Nauvoo began in 1846. Piercy did not visit Nauvoo until 1853. By then Nauvoo had been sold to the Icarians, a French utopian society. The town and the Temple had deteriorated. This is how Piercy saw Nauvoo, and he described it as follows: “The city is first seen from the top of a hill about two miles from Montrose. From this point the beauty of its situation is fully realized....It is the finest possible site for a city....The first objects I saw in approaching the city were the remains of what was once the Temple, situated on the high-

est eminence of the city, and which, in the days of its prosperity must have been to it what the cap or top stone is to a building.”

Here is a similar view of Nauvoo today. If you look closely to the right of the center of the photo, you will note the Nauvoo water tower. To the left of center is the steeple of The Holy Apostles-Sts. Peter and Paul Church. The water tower is situated only a block from the location of the Nauvoo Temple. The Temple was even taller than the water tower.



**NAUVOO—Today**



**OLD NAUVOO—Courtesy  
Library-Archives of Reorganized  
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter  
Day Saints**

This old daguerreotype of Nauvoo showing the Temple on the hill was taken from the southwest section of the city, probably taken in 1845, the year before its final completion and the beginning of the Mormon exodus in 1846.

Within a few years after the exodus of the Mormons, what was once the second largest city in Illinois, and one of the largest cities in the United States, had begun to deteriorate. Most of the old buildings don't exist today. Only a few of the buildings have been restored. Fortunately, many of the most historic buildings remain today. A close-up of the carriage house in the old photo is shown below. Today Mormon missionaries and volunteers are continuing to restore or reconstruct replicas of the original structures and conduct highly professional and friendly tours throughout old Nauvoo.



**CARRIAGE HOUSE—Today**



**BRIGHAM YOUNG'S HOUSE—Hall, LDS Church Archives**

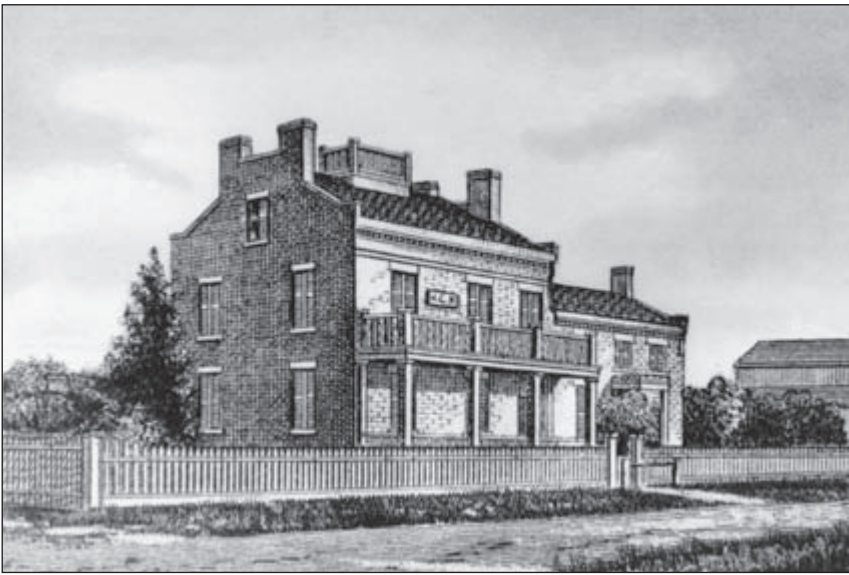
This early engraving shows Brigham Young's home in old Nauvoo, which has been restored. After Joseph Smith died, many of the important

meetings that helped to guide the Mormon Church took place in the room on the left of the outside door.



**BRIGHAM YOUNG'S HOUSE—Today**





**HEBER KIMBALL'S HOME—Hall, LDS Church Archives**

This engraving shows the home of Mormon leader Heber C. Kimball. Because of the growth of the trees around the building, the picture below was taken from the opposite side. The

home is also open to visitors to tour. The roof of Kimball's home can also be seen in the old photo of Nauvoo on page 89, just below the Temple.



**KIMBALL'S HOME—Today**



### JOSEPH SMITH'S HOME AND GRAVES—Today

Here is Joseph Smith's first home in Nauvoo. He bought the structure and lived there from 1839 to 1843. It is referred to as "the Homestead." The home was enlarged as is evident by the addition. In the foreground are the graves of Joseph Smith, his wife, Emma, and Hyrum Smith. "The Mansion," Smith's second home, which he built, is across the

street. Both homes are open to the public.

This daguerreotype shows the Mormon Temple before it was completed in 1846. Even though the Mormons had agreed to leave Nauvoo, they still kept on working on their temple until it was completed.

In 2002 the Nauvoo Temple was rebuilt.



NAUVOO TEMPLE—Utah State Historical Society

NAUVOO TEMPLE—Today



### **OLD STONE ARCHED BRIDGE—Today**

This old bridge at one time carried the main road into Nauvoo. Today it is situated in a small park off the main road. You cannot drive over it, but you can walk on it. Think of all the historic figures and thousands of common people who used it coming to Nauvoo.

Below is a painting by C. C. A. Christensen depicting the route taken by many of the Mormons when they were forced to leave Nauvoo in 1846. Fortunately, the winter was so cold that for a short time the Mississippi River froze, and many of the Mormons were able to drive their wagons and teams safely across the ice.



**EXODUS FROM NAUVOO—Christensen,  
Museum of Art, Brigham Young University**





#### **DESTROYED TEMPLE—Piercy, LDS Church Archives**

Piercy visited the site of the Nauvoo Temple. The Temple had been burned on October 10, 1848, and a few years later a storm blew much of it down. Shortly after Piercy made this drawing, the rest of the temple was torn down for safety reasons. Piercy had noted that the people who moved in after the Mormons left “have used the stones of the Temple

to build workshops and a school-house.”

Below is a view of the Temple site today. The new Temple was built on the original site in 2002. In 1962 the original site was excavated and then stabilized. It remained as such until the decision was made to rebuild the Temple. See also page 92 for a comparison.



#### **NAUVOO TEMPLE—Today**



**CARTHAGE JAIL—Piercy, LDS Church Archives**

Piercy visited the Carthage Jail, the site of the murders of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, in 1853, nine years after the event. Joseph and Hyrum were being held in jail awaiting trial on trumped up charges when a mob broke in, killed the two brothers, and critically wounded John Taylor. Only Willard Richards escaped serious harm. Joseph fell through the second floor center window on the left when he was shot. Piercy wrote, "I felt very anxious to visit

Carthage...I considered that sketches of its jail would possess undying interest for tens of thousands, and concluded not to return without them." He was right!!

Here is the Carthage Jail today. The building functioned as a jail until 1866, after which time it was used only as a residence. It was acquired by the Mormon Church in 1903 and restored in 1939. It seems that only the well housing and the trees have changed.



**CARTHAGE JAIL—Today**



**CARTHAGE JAIL ROOM—Piercy, LDS Church Archives**

This is the room where Joseph and Hyrum Smith were shot and killed. Writing about his tour of the jail, Piercy recorded, “The keeper was away, and I was shown over it by a young girl. The holes in the wall by the bullets still remain unstopped. The bullet hole in the door is that made by the ball which caused the death of Hyrum. I was told that the stains of blood were still in the floor, but I could not see them, as the room was covered by a carpet.... After his brother Hyrum had been shot dead at his feet [while attempting to hold the door closed], and John Taylor wounded, Joseph attempted to leap

from the window. He was shot [in the back] in doing so and fell through it, which drew the murderers from the interior, and gave Dr. Richards an opportunity to carry Elder Taylor into the inner prison and secrete him. Having seen the place and made my sketches, I was glad to leave.”

Today the room looks much the same as it did then. Visitors can also see the bullet hole in the door from the ball that killed Hyrum Smith and see the window from which Joseph tried in vain to escape. Look closely at the door and you can see the bullet hole.



**CARTHAGE ROOM—Today**