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## Mormon Trail, The

William Hill

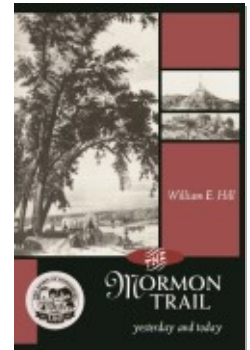
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## Recommended Readings

FOR THE MODERN TRAVELER INTENT ON FURTHER INVESTIGATING THE Mormon Trail there are a variety of books, both old and new, which are available covering the myriad of topics related to the Mormon Trail experience. Fortunately, some books that were out of print only a few years ago are now available to the public. While some of the books mentioned are concerned with the general migration westward, most will focus on some aspect of the Mormon Trail. This is but a sampling of books available for the Mormon Trail enthusiast.

For the modern traveler there are a few books that can act as your guide. Stanley Kimball is the author of many of these, among them his *Historic Sites and Markers along the Mormon and Other Great Western Trails*. Included in it are a series of thirty maps, detailing the major highways along with the Mormon Trail. The scale for many of the maps is about eighteen miles to an inch. However, the range of the scale varies from about eight miles to an inch to over sixty miles to an inch. Historic sites are noted and a brief description is given about each. As the title indicates, this book includes information about other trails as well. Some of these other trails, however, such as the Mormon Battalion Route, are related to Mormon history.

Another of Kimball's works, co-authored with Don R. Oscarson, is a fine little book called *The Travelers' Guide to Historic Mormon America*. Included in it are thirty-five site maps, pointing out the locations of a variety of places that have played a significant role in Mormon history since its beginning. These include sites in New England, the East, the Midwest, and the West. Information about each site is also given.

There is another travel guide edited by Kimball. It is William Clayton's *The Latter-Day Saints Emigrants' Guide*. This is the book written in 1847 by Clayton for use by future Mormons on their journey to Salt Lake

City. Kimball's annotations allow the modern traveler to read not only Clayton's description of the route, but also what it refers to in relation to the modern highways. The guide starts at Winter Quarters and ends in Salt Lake City. There are five small maps which show the trail in relation to the modern roads.

LaMar Berrett is publishing two new books. His first, *The Mormon Trail, Fort Bridger to Salt Lake Valley*, is just the right book for following the route west from Fort Bridger. It includes all the useful material—large detailed maps showing the trail and significant site locations, including directions and other information about the trail—that make locating and following the trail easy. The second book is a two-volume edition in which he wrote some sections and edited the rest. One volume is *The Mormon Experience: Vermont to Illinois* and the second, *The Mormon Trail: Nauvoo to Salt Lake City*. These two volumes identify all the sites related to the development of both the Mormon Church and the Mormon movement west. Detailed site maps provide information never found in any other work.

Since the Mormon Trail overlapped much of the Oregon Trail, it is possible to use Oregon Trail books to examine parts of the Mormon route. Gregory Franzwa's books *The Oregon Trail Revisited* and *Maps of the Oregon Trail* are two fine books in this respect. As mentioned earlier, the Mormon Historic Pioneer Trail followed the Platte River on the north side but crossed the river at Fort Laramie and then followed the older Oregon Trail until Fort Bridger in western Wyoming. These two books will take the modern traveler mile by mile as they head west from Independence, Missouri. Aubrey Haines's book *Historic Sites along the Oregon Trail* lists and describes many of the sites the trails had in common. These three books will be very helpful. Also, since some Mormons themselves started in Independence, Missouri, these three books would cover that route except for the portion west of Fort Bridger. What remain to be published are books similar to these for the eastern part of the Mormon Trail from Nauvoo to Fort Laramie. LaMar Berrett's books, mentioned earlier, come very close to doing this.

There are a few books which I consider to be both classics and basic readers. One of the best of these books is Wallace Stegner's *The Gathering of Zion: The Story of the Mormon Trail*. This excellent book covers the story of the Mormons primarily from their time in Nauvoo just before their exodus to their arrival in Salt Lake. It also includes information about the influx of Mormon emigrants from Europe until 1869. Written in an easy, flowing manner, it is a must for anyone beginning to study Mormon history. For those seeking additional information concerning

the handcart period, there is the book by Ann and LeRoy Hafen, *Handcarts to Zion: The Story of a Unique Western Migration, 1856–60*. This excellent volume provides the reader with a wealth of information about the Mormon handcart companies. It discusses the development of the idea of handcart travel, the Perpetual Emigration Fund, and the various handcart companies, as well as their songs and their journeys to Zion.

Frederick Hawkins Piercy's book *Route from Liverpool to Great Salt Lake Valley* is an excellent firsthand account of the journey over the Mormon Trail in 1853. Several of his drawings and diary excerpts are included in this book.

Mary Ann Hafen's *Recollections of a Handcart Pioneer of 1860* describes a woman's life in the Mormon frontier. She was a small child when she left Switzerland to come to Utah, and in this book she recounts her experience.

Another firsthand account is the reprint of William Clayton's *Journal* by the Daughters of Utah Pioneers. It traces the 1847 journey from Winter Quarters to Salt Lake, but omits the crossing of Iowa in 1846. For that information one has to find the 1921 edition of his journal.

Three other works should be mentioned. *I Walked to Zion* by Susan Madsen is a recent collection of short stories about the daily experiences of children on the Mormon Trail. The other two focus on the trails from Fort Bridger into Utah. The first is *West from Fort Bridger*, originally edited by Roderic Korn and Dale Morgan and recently updated by Will Bagley and Harold Schindler. This book follows the opening of the route in 1846 from Fort Bridger into the Salt Lake Valley and the routes across the Salt Lake Desert or north on the Salt Lake Cutoff. The journals of James Clyman, Edwin Bryant, Heinrich Lienhard, James F. Reed, plus related maps and waybills are identified and discussed. You can follow their progress as they helped to open the last segment of the route which the Mormons followed in 1847. The second book, *Trailing the Pioneers: A Guide to Utah's Emigrant Trails 1829–1869*, was edited by Peter DeLafosse. Included in it are some of the other trails used or opened by the Mormons in Utah. Small maps are included to help the traveler locate the routes today.

Then, of course, there are fine basic books about the westward migrations, such as Merrill Mattes's *The Great Platte River Road* and John Unruh's *The Plains Across*. Both of these provide the reader with excellent information about a wealth of topics. Mattes's book focuses on the Platte River corridor and the trails on both sides of the river. This is certainly one of the easiest books to read. Unruh's book deals with all the trails west and compares sections and examines different facets of the

westward migration, including much information about the role of the Mormons. It is full of detailed information. Irene Paden's book *The Wake of the Prairie Schooner* and Bernard DeVoto's *1846: Year of Decision* are also two fine classics that cover the development of the westward trails.

For those of you who are interested in obtaining and reading more diaries written by women on all the trails, including many written about the Mormon Trail, there is Kenneth Holmes's *Covered Wagon Women*. These volumes cover approximately a fifty year period from the 1840s until the 1890s.

For those primarily interested in the Mormon Church and history there are James Allen's and Glen Leonard's *The Story of the Latter-Day Saints*, Leonard Arrington's *Brigham Young: American Moses*, and Dean Hughes's *The Mormon Church*. Allen and Leonard's book is one of the most recent and in-depth books written about the subject. Leonard Arrington's *Brigham Young: American Moses* is an excellent biography which examines not only his life but the various roles Young played in the development of Mormonism. It is full of information. For those seeking an introduction or basic overview of the Mormon Church and history there is Hughes's book. It focuses primarily on Mormon development during the nineteenth century with a small portion devoted to the twentieth century.

In addition to the works mentioned, one should always consult the bibliographies of all these books. This is especially true of Allen and Leonard's book which lists references by topic. Davis Bitton's *Guide to Mormon Diaries and Autobiographies* describes about three thousand items. Most of the museums along the trail have books available to the public that relate to the trail. Some are very specific or local in nature and can prove to be both very interesting and useful.

For now, happy reading! Happy traveling! See you on the trail!