Wend Your Way: a Guide to Sites Along the Iowa Mormon Trail

Loren N. Horton

Reviewer Loren N. Horton, of Iowa City, Iowa, retired as the State Historical Society of Iowa's Senior Historian in 1996. He has given public presentations and written articles about the Mormon Trail in Iowa.

The movement of Mormons from Nauvoo to the Salt Lake Basin is one of the best-known episodes in Iowa history. Many people have written about aspects of the experience. This brief guide is a welcome addition to the literature. The material is logically organized to follow the sequence of the journey itself. The division by counties makes it easy for readers to locate specific sites, and the directions to the sites are extraordinarily clear and complete.

Several features of this book are especially commendable. The maps are clear and appropriately placed. The illustrations actually portray scenes from the text. Additional historical sites in each county are noted. The text is concise and focused. The contents of the book fulfill the expressed goal stated at the beginning. All of these features make this a useful as well as interesting book.

Only two corrections need to be made, remarkably few considering the vast amount of detail contained in the book. On page 47, the park at the Garden Grove site is west, not north, of the settlement site. On page 63, it is a crushed rock road, not a dirt road, that leads to the Mount Pisgah site.

This book will be helpful to any traveler in southern Iowa, as well as anyone interested in the Mormon Trail, or in the histories of the U.S. frontier, Iowa, or the Mormon church. I enthusiastically recommend it.


Reviewer David Hudson is acquisitions librarian at the State Historical Society of Iowa. He is the co-compiler of Iowa History and Culture: A Bibliography of Materials Published Between 1952 and 1986 (1989) and compiler of Iowa in the Past: A Bibliography of Materials Published Before 1952 (forthcoming, 2001).