

The Annals of Iowa

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SPECIAL COMMEMORATIVE ISSUE: MORMON HANDCART TREK

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In This Issue

FIVE HISTORIANS of the Mormon experience treat the details of the Mormon handcart trek of 1856–1857. William G. Hartley provides an overview of the experience, setting it in the context of the overall overland trail migration from the 1840s to the late 1860s. Don H. Smith discusses the leadership, planning, and management of the 1856 handcart migration. He argues that those aspects of the plan were executed with care and skill and that the disasters that befell the last two companies of 1856 were due to factors beyond the leaders' control. Fred E. Woods, often using the voices of the emigrants themselves, narrates the experiences of those emigrants as they made their way by ship from Liverpool to the United States and then by rail to Iowa City. Lyndia Carter picks up the story from there, following three of the handcart companies—the Willie, Haven and Martin companies—across Iowa as they were tested to see if they were up to the challenge of crossing the Plains all the way to the Salt Lake Valley. Finally, Steven F. Faux carefully maps the route the handcart migrants followed across Iowa.

Front Cover

In the early 1900s the Daughters of Utah Handcart Pioneers commissioned a statue to memorialize the handcart trek. Sculpted by Torleif Knaphus, the 3-foot-high bronze monument, unveiled in 1926, was displayed for years in Salt Lake City's Temple Square Information Bureau. Then, for the Mormon Pioneer Sesquicentennial in 1947, LDS church leaders commissioned Knaphus to create a heroic-size copy. Cast in bronze in New York, it has been displayed prominently ever since near the Tabernacle in Temple Square in Salt Lake City. The well-known and widely replicated image has come to symbolize for many the heroism of the handcart emigrants whose experience is commemorated in this special issue of the *Annals of Iowa*.

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