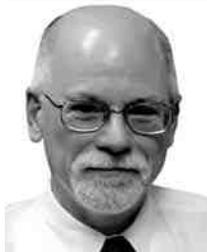


Viewpoints

Hiking across the centuries along Ogden's East Bench

Top of Utah Voices



Michael Vaughan

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Commentary

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Waterfall Canyon, taken from the July 6, 1884, Standard-Examiner, which may entice you to undertake the hike:

"In a little canyon, or ravine, which lies east ... of this city ... is a beautiful waterfall from which the people have named the ravine Waterfall Canyon ... About half the distance up the canyon ... a precipice of solid rock rises nearly perpendicular to a height of 200 feet, over which the water rushes with a roar that, in the stillness of night, can be heard in

this city sounding like a distant wind storm in a forest. For a distance of one hundred feet from where the water falls a continual rain descends, caused by the water striking the rocks in its downward course ... The unusual amount of snow in the mountains, this season, has caused more water than usual, which in turn has made the Waterfall a popular Mecca for pleasure seekers who go in small companies to admire the scenery and the wild picturesque surroundings."

If you make the hike, you will find that 122 years after that description was written, the scene at the base of the waterfall is remarkably unchanged.

This year, an abundant snow pack adds to the flow of the waterfall, as it did in the summer of 1884.

Waterfall Canyon isn't the only notable hike on Ogden's East Bench. There are many others.

Another of my favorite hikes is in Taylor's Canyon where you will find both scenic beauty

and physical challenges. The trailheads at 29th, 27th and 22nd streets are common points of departure for the hike.

Taylor's Canyon offers multiple options for day hikes. You may simply take a short excursion up the canyon. Taylor's Canyon is also the access point for the Malan's Peak hike, one of the more popular hikes on the East Bench. From Malan's Peak, hikers can continue to the top of Mount Ogden.

The hike to Mount Ogden is an ambitious hike that offers an exceptional vantage point. Here is a description of the view from the top of Mount Ogden taken from the Aug. 24, 1903, Standard-Examiner:

"Standing on an elevation more than ten thousand feet above sea level, and facing east, we are viewing a scene of such heroic magnificence as would have seemed impossible except that the eye actually beholds it.

"Hundreds of mountains broken into by valleys, canyons

and basins, toss their proud and lofty heads to the east as far as the eye can reach.

"Turning to the westward we see a glorious panorama, which includes Ogden, Salt Lake City, numerous small villages and the Great Salt Lake, all in the remarkable Utah valley, which is walled in on the far west side by the Nevada mountains."

Many generations have exercised stewardship over the Northern Utah canyons and trails, and their efforts allow us to share a common experience with fellow hikers from another century.

If you haven't experienced the trails on Ogden's East Bench, you have missed one of the primary attractions of living in Ogden.

If you undertake one of the hikes I have mentioned, you may give some thought to those who walked the trails more than a hundred years ago, experiencing a sense of nature something akin to those who walk the trails today.

This thought gives me both pleasure and gratitude.

I moved to Ogden a little more than 25 years ago. Shortly after my arrival, a friend gave me some excellent advice: "If you plan on living in Utah for any length of time, you need to learn to enjoy Utah's greatest asset — the natural beauty of the Utah outdoors."

I took that advice to heart. My earliest path to the Utah outdoors was the network of trails on Ogden's East Bench, and these trails remain my most frequent source of recreation.

Like many in the Top of Utah, my first Ogden hike was Waterfall Canyon.

If you have not made the trip up Waterfall Canyon, the late spring and early summer months are a perfect time to make the hike.

There are several ways to approach Waterfall Canyon, but many prefer the trailhead at the top of 29th Street, where the trail is well marked and ample parking is available.

I offer a description of