

**SCENERY OF THE PLAINS, MOUNTAINS
AND MINES, OR, A DIARY KEPT UPON THE
OVERLAND ROUTE TO CALIFORNIA, BY
WAY OF THE GREAT SALT LAKE; BY THE
PACIFIC OCEAN AND CENTRAL AMERICA
IN THE YEARS 1850, '51, '52 AND '53**

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Scenery of the Plains, Mountains and Mines, or, A Diary Kept upon the Overland Route to California, by Way of the Great Salt Lake; By the Pacific Ocean and Central America in the Years 1850, '51, '52 and '53 by Franklin Langworthy

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FRANKLIN LANGWORTHY

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SCENERY

OF

THE PLAINS, MOUNTAINS AND MINES:

OR

A DIARY KEPT UPON THE OVERLAND ROUTE

TO

CALIFORNIA,

BY WAY OF THE GREAT SALT LAKE:

TRAVELS IN THE CITIES, MINES, AND AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS—
EMBRACING THE RETURN BY

THE PACIFIC OCEAN AND CENTRAL AMERICA,

In the Years 1850, '51, '52 and '53.

BY

FRANKLIN LANGWORTHY.

I speak of things which I have seen and do know, touching men and objects
in a stirring period of my country's history.

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PREFACE.

The year Eighteen Hundred and Fifty, is an epoch that will be memorable in the history of the United States. It was a year that will be long remembered, as one of unparalleled emigration, suffering, and death. The official announcement of the astounding facts in relation to the Gold Discoveries in California, seemed to move the whole Nation, as with an electric shock, and a vast multitude, of more than sixty thousand human beings, were seen rushing across immense plains and deserts, and over tremendous mountains, flushed with high hopes, and eager to fill their coffers with the glittering dust. I was an eye-witness of these exciting scenes, and assisted by my presence to swell the numbers of the mighty throng.

The following pages consist of a brief description of the varied scenes I have witnessed, and the countries through which I have passed, in going the Land Route

to California, by way of the Great Salt Lake, and the return by way of Central America, and the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans.

I have personally surveyed many of the wildest and most picturesque scenes to be found upon our globe. I have kept a Daily Journal, while going and returning, (but not while I was residing at Salt Lake, or in California.) Of those countries I have given general descriptions. I have designed to give such plain and graphic accounts, as would enable the reader to see the various objects delineated, as though he was personally present.

The work, with all its imperfections, is hereby offered to an inquisitive and enlightened public, by its most devoted and humble servant,

THE AUTHOR.

Near Mount Carroll, Illinois.

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JOURNAL.

CHAPTER I.

Start for California—Outfit—Mississippi river.—Companies of fifty persons recommended.—A returned Californian.—Tipton.—State of Iowa.—Lost from my Company.—Iowa City, the Capital.—Iowa river, &c.—Number of Emigrants passed Iowa City.—Newton, Jasper County.—Quarrel at Skunk river—Fort Desmoines.—Scarcity of timber in Western Iowa.—Fondness for Titles.—Inscriptions on trees, bones, &c.—Mormon settlements.—Kanesville, a Mormon town—Emigrants.—Country about Council Bluffs.—High price of Provisions.—Mormon Speculations.—Trade among Emigrants.—Organization of Companies.—Mormon Emigrants for Salt Lake.—General Character of the Emigrants.—Captain Turner's Company.—Preaching.—Crossing the Missouri.

START FOR CALIFORNIA—OUTFIT—MISSISSIPPI RIVER.

April 1st, 1850.—Early in the morning I took leave of home, and with somewhat anxious forebodings traveled to Savanna, a small town and steamboat landing on the Mississippi river, thirty-five miles below Galena, Illinois. I was aware that, I had now undertaken a long, wearisome, and hazardous journey; that two or three years must, in all probability, roll away before I could expect to return, if life and health were spared.

I however made an effort to drive all gloomy thoughts from my mind, and to set my face with determined resolution towards the West. My associates were nine in number. Our conveyance was two wagons, with seven horses; a team by no means sufficient for the undertaking. There should have been twelve horses to a company as numerous as ours. A less team might suffice, if travelers knew what kinds and quantities of baggage to take on board. It is not necessary to start for California with any surplus bedding or clothing; it makes heft and especially bulk, is generally thrown away on the road, and if not, is seldom needed after you arrive there. Two blankets, one suit of clothing, made of strong cloth, an extra shirt or two, and an extra pair of shoes and hose, is a sufficient outfit as to bedding and clothing. To every ten men, there ought to be a cloth tent, twelve feet square. If, in addition to these, you have a few dishes, and simple cooking tools, and provisions for each person sufficient to last one hundred days after leaving Council Bluffs, you will be prepared to go to the gold region without going through the valley of the Great Salt Lake.

COMPANIES OF FIFTY PERSONS RECOMMENDED.

I would also recommend that men go in companies of fifty or more, as it makes easy the duty of standing on guard. Each individual ought to be armed with either a rifle or revolver. It is small parties, from five to twenty, and those who are badly armed, that have been pillaged or massacred by the savages.

As to the kind of team requisite, I think it makes but little difference whether oxen, cows, horses, or