

# **THE MARCH OF EMPIRE THROUGH THREE DECADES**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649500352

The March of Empire Through Three Decades by Mrs. Mallie Stafford

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.

Cover @ 2017

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**MRS. MALLIE STAFFORD**

**THE MARCH OF  
EMPIRE THROUGH  
THREE DECADES**





*Mallie Stafford.*

THE  
MARCH OF EMPIRE

THROUGH THREE DECADES.

EMBRACING

**Sketches of California History :**

EARLY TIMES AND SCENES; LIFE IN THE MINES; TRAVELS BY  
LAND AND SEA BEFORE THE ERA OF RAILROADS; THE  
EAST DURING THE YEARS OF THE CIVIL WAR; LIFE IN  
THE BORDER STATES; CROSSING THE PLAINS WITH  
OX TEAMS; CROSSING THE PLAINS ON THE  
TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILWAY; PROGRESS  
AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE GOLDEN  
STATE; RESOURCES; ETC., ETC.

BY

MRS. MALLIE STAFFORD.

SAN FRANCISCO:

GEO. SPAULDING & CO., GENERAL PRINTERS, 84 CLAY STREET.

1884.

1884

TO THOSE  
WHO WERE EVER MY WARM FRIENDS, ALIKE IN SUNSHINE  
AND IN SHADOW,  
THIS LITTLE VOLUME IS MOST AFFECTIONATELY  
DEDICATED.

## PREFACE.

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IN response to many requests of friends and acquaintances, I have copied from the tablets of memory a brief recital of adventures which occurred during thirty years of wanderings in the West, mingling it with scraps and sketches of history. The author feels a natural timidity in presenting her personal experiences to the public, but hopes it may prove of sufficient interest to warrant a perusal, the object being to preserve, along with many other and worthier works, a remembrance of those old-time customs, scenes, modes of traveling, etc., which belong essentially to the past, and which are fast disappearing in reality, as also from memory.

To those who have participated in the stirring scenes of early days in California and the Western border, it is to be hoped this little volume will recall many similar adventures and pleasurable events; and to the general reader and the young, to whom these accounts are but as scraps of remote history and bygone times, it is my earnest hope that this brief recital will prove a faithful mirror, which will reflect the peculiar scenes and adventures connected with the dawn of civilization in the West.





# THE MARCH OF EMPIRE.

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## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTORY.

Looking back over the long, eventful trail of nearly thirty years, how distinctly one recalls to memory the fabulous stories of gold discovered on the Pacific Coast and the wild excitement they created; the smile of derision with which they were received by some, but with belief and faith by the many. And how vividly returns to mind the visions of long trains of emigrant wagons, that, winding slowly westward, moved out of the border cities, laden with their rich freight of human beings—men, women and tender children—bound for the country of their aspirations, California—the land to which so many longing eyes were hopefully cast, the Mecca to which thousands of pilgrims bent their daring and adventurous steps, and the shrine of many a splendid dream and gilded hope!

How well those ambitious dreams and gilded hopes were realized, the years have given us answer. Out of the then indiscernible and hidden future, time has enrolled chapter upon

chapter of our young State's dazzling history; a history that is replete with the daring deeds, heroic acts, privations and adventures of her early pioneers. The civilization and cultivation of the golden Occident is due to the brain, muscle and sterling principles of her early pioneers. To them the country was an almost unbroken wilderness, over whose rich but uncultivated valleys roamed herds of cattle and horses, and peopled by a rude, barbaric race. Unskilled and ignorant, and unambitious, they dreamed away an idle and listless existence—unenviable, indeed, save for its luxurious content.

But the discovery of gold, in 1848, opened up a new era on the Pacific slope, and immigration poured in by sea and land. It is the old story of how thousands left their cheerful firesides; left friends, kindred, wives, little ones, and all that centres in that sweet word *home*, and with the new, unexplored gold fields of California in view, they braved the terrors of the sea, the long voyage around the "Horn" and the dread malaria of the tropics; or, "crossing the plains," they braved "dangers seen and unseen" in the wild and trackless wilderness, over swollen rivers and across snowy mountains. Ever in danger of an attack from the hordes of merciless savages that lined their path, they toiled onward, often without guide, and nothing save the compass and their trust