

THE TOMPKINS FAMILY

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THE Samuel Brannan Company of Mormons from Steuben County, New York, left for San Francisco, February 4, 1846, sailing on the ship Brooklyn, via Cape Horn. Included in this party were my father, Thomas Tompkins, my mother, my sister, Amanda, five years old, and myself, aged three.

I have heard my mother relate many times the terrible experiences of our trip. We were shut in the hold of the vessel for three days and two nights, the water dashing over the ship in waves that seemed mountain high. We were obliged to eat sea biscuit and drink water, it not being possible to have either lights or

fires. We had on board two hundred and thirty-eight passengers, seventy men, sixty-eight women, and one hundred children, bound for their new home in California. I remember hearing mother tell of the death of Mrs. Goodwin, who died and was buried on San Juan Island, or what we now call Robinson Crusoe's Island, leaving seven children, who were given to members of the party, my mother taking a little boy. After six months of many hardships we reached San Francisco, July 31st, 1846, about two weeks after the American Flag was raised at Monterey.

A short time after reaching San Francisco my father and family crossed the bay and lived on the Senor Castro Rancho, situated in what is now known as West Berkeley. We remained there until midwinter, when Samuel Brannan and several others of the company, together with my father and mother's father, decided to locate on the Stanislaus River in the San Joaquin Valley. It proved to be barren, unfertile land, without irrigation, and there were many mosquitoes, with the result that there were poor crops and much sickness.

I remember many incidents of the Castro Rancho, but perhaps the following made the most impression: Senor Castro had a very pretty Spanish girl for a cook, who was much admired by one of the vacqueros, but Senor Castro would not permit them to be married, so they ran away, going to the mountains, both riding the same horse. Senor Castro was very angry and turned the Mexicans out in force to capture them. It was several days before they were found and brought back to receive their punishment, which was one hundred lashes on the bare back. Pedro was tied to the whipping post and each lash brought blood and groans. My mother, who witnessed this from our two-room adobe house, became so enraged at the cruelty that she took up the butcher knife and rushed through the line of Mexicans to Pedro's side, cut the ropes and took him by the hand and led him to our house, later going to Senor Castro's home and demanding Pedro's clothing.

I also remember Senor Castro sending his vaqueros to the mountains to bring down the



THOMAS TOMPKINS