

Forgotten

VOYAGE

P R E S S R E L E A S E

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The Saga of the Ship *Brooklyn*

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2002 Not the First Time Mormons Have Played Host to An International Race for Gold

February 4th marks 156 years since Mormon refugees embarked on a little-known sea journey that sparked the California Gold Rush....

New York City (January 28, 2002) — A new documentary film by History Channel veteran Scott Tiffany reveals the historic saga of an overlooked sea trek. *Forgotten Voyage* relates the exodus of a clan of Mormon families who fled persecution in 1846 on an unprecedented sea journey—six months crammed into a ship with just two square feet of space per person. Aboard the ship *Brooklyn*, they became the first civilian families to sail the nearly 20,000-mile journey from New York to California, rounding the treacherous tip of South America at Cape Horn. These Mormons survived horrific storms, buried loved ones at sea, and—accidentally—settled San Francisco for America.

The harrowing voyage was led by a controversial Mormon elder and newsman named Samuel Brannan. He and nearly 250 Mormons fled American soil seeking religious freedom in the Mexican whaling village of Yerba Buena. After arriving July 31, 1846, the Mormons tripled the population and transformed the village. Its name was changed to San Francisco and it became “largely a Mormon town.” And the Mormon town was about to play host to an international race for gold.

In January 1848, foreman James Marshall and a group of Mormons building a sawmill found flakes of gold in the American river. Using the printing press he brought with him on board the ship *Brooklyn*, Sam Brannan printed a story about the discovery and sent copies of his paper East. When newspapers on the Atlantic seaboard picked up the story, an international rush for gold began.

Since they set sail 156 years ago next week, the sea pioneers of the *Brooklyn* have been largely overlooked. Written and directed by Scott Tiffany, *Forgotten Voyage* resurrects their saga using rare photographs, archival footage and expert interviews.

For more information, contact Tonia Fuller at tonia@timeframefilms.net or see the web site at www.ForgottenVoyage.com.

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Fact Sheet

Written and Directed by: Scott Tiffany

Running Time: Approximately 55 minutes

Order and Information Website: www.ForgottenVoyage.com

Summary:

In 1846, a clan of families fleeing religious persecution left New York City on an unprecedented sea journey—six months crammed into a ship with just two square feet of space per person. Aboard the ship *Brooklyn*, these Mormons survived horrific storms and suffocating heat on the first civilian sea trek to the West. At the time, only experienced seamen and merchants dared travel the sea route from the East Coast around Cape Horn at the extreme tip of South America. These passengers ran out of food, buried loved ones at sea, and settled San Francisco for America. Under the controversial leadership of newsman Samuel Brannan, these Mormons helped spark the California Gold Rush of 1849.

Date of Departure: February 4, 1846 (New York City)

Date of Arrival: July 31, 1846 (Yerba Buena/San Francisco)

Number of Passengers: Approximately 238: 70 Men, 68 Women and 100 children
All but about 10 crew & half a dozen passengers were Mormon

Duration of Journey:

Five months and 27 days; one stop at “Robinson Crusoe’s island” and one stop in Hawaii

Voyage Supervised by:

Samuel Brannan, 26 years old, a controversial leader who was a personal friend of the Mormon prophet Joseph Smith; Brannan abandoned the faith after the discovery of gold in 1848.

Summary Points & Highlights:

- 20,000 miles from New York City to present-day San Francisco
During the voyage, 10 passengers and one crewmember died from disease and exhaustion
- These Mormons were fleeing America for Mexico to seek religious freedom. As the Mexican-American war broke out during their voyage, they were shocked to find themselves back on American soil when they arrived in California.
- On January 24, 1848, James Marshall and a handful of Mormons discovered gold in the American River. The Mormons’ leader, Sam Brannan, sparked the California Gold Rush when he printed the news in his newspaper printed on a press brought over on the *Brooklyn*.

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Bios

Scott Tiffany

Director & Senior Producer

Scott Tiffany is an historical documentary film writer, director and producer. He has worked on more than 40 hours of television programming for The History Channel, including the groundbreaking series, *History's Lost & Found*, the flagship series *This Week in History*, several two-hour specials and the "historical aftermath" mini-series *What Happened After?* In addition to writing and producing *Forgotten Voyage*, he is also currently supervising production of a business mini-series titled *Big Deals* (wt) for The History Channel. Mr. Tiffany attended Brigham Young University where he studied and worked in journalism and public relations. He began work in non-fiction programming at Capstone Entertainment in Salt Lake City in 1994. Three years later, he moved with his wife, Mariah Proctor-Tiffany, to New York City. There, he learned about the voyage of the Ship *Brooklyn* and began researching and developing the story for a documentary film.

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Sample Film Interviewees

Will Bagley

Historian

Mr. Bagley is the author of the award-winning historical biography, *Scoundrel's Tale: The Samuel Brannan Papers*. He is a respected historian on Western America with an emphasis on Mormon history. He is also a columnist for the *Salt Lake Tribune* in Utah.

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Sample Film Interviewees Continued

Dale Goodwin

Passenger Descendant

Mr. Goodwin is a descendant of Isaac and Laura Goodwin. Laura Goodwin was the last of 10 passengers to die on the trek. Pregnant with her eighth child, she slipped on a stairwell and was buried on the Juan Fernandez Island. Dale Goodwin has written more than a dozen genealogical books tracing his family history.

E-mail: hdgabg@aol.com

Lorin Hansen

Historian

Mr. Hansen has been nearly twenty years researching and writing about the *Brooklyn*. His work is largely responsible for any recognition the ship receives. He is currently preparing a book about the voyage.

E-mail: LKHansen@attbi.com

Richard Bullock

President, Utah Ship Brooklyn Association

Mr. Bullock has spent nearly a decade researching and writing about the ship *Brooklyn*. He and a small task force have located more than 150 passenger gravesites. Mr. Bullock is preparing an historical book on the voyage.

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